

**City Council of Peachtree City
Special Called Meeting Minutes
August 14, 2014
6:00 p.m.**

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in a special called meeting on Thursday, August 14, 2014, at City Hall. Mayor Vanessa Fleisch called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Other Council Members attending: Terry Ernst, Eric Imker, Mike King, and Kim Learnard.

The purpose of the special called meeting was to hold a public hearing on the 2014 millage rate.

Financial Services Director Paul Salvatore said this was the first of three required public hearings regarding the proposed one mill increase to the Maintenance & Operation millage rate, which would increase the millage rate from the current 6.756 mills to 7.756 mills. The Bond rate would remain the same at 0.332 mills.

Salvatore gave a breakdown of the one mill increase, which was estimated at \$1,743,716. The list included the following:

• Landscaping Improvements	\$ 635,000	(\$253,000 FY2014 + \$382,000 FY2015)
• Infrastructure Improvements	\$ 200,000	(mainly bridge maintenance)
• Increase in path maintenance	\$ 75,000	
• Increase in Street Paving – G/F	\$ 717,000	
• Litter Removal (KPTCB)	\$ 45,760	
• Technology improvements	<u>\$ 70,956</u>	
	\$1,743,716	

Salvatore continued that the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) had generated \$2 million annually in the budget. The proposed one mill increase would put \$1.7 million back into the budget.

Salvatore concluded by saying staff believed they were presenting a budget in conformance with Council's state goals and objectives throughout the budget process, particularly in regard to landscaping, keeping up with infrastructure following the expiration of the SPLOST, litter removal, and some additions to the City website. Those were the components behind the one mil increase.

Fleisch opened the public hearing. No members of the public spoke. The public hearing closed.

City Manager Jim Pennington said the guiding document in developing the budget had been the strategic planning goals developed by Council in January. Staff had followed up with approximately four workshops to ensure the budget was addressing those goals.

Learnard asked for an example, and Pennington noted Council was interested in improving golf cart access across Crosstown Road. Following a study and a workshop that showed serious problems, they learned that could lead to some serious issues and was not currently feasible.

Number two on the list was to complete the employee pay and classification study, which should be completed by the end of August.

The third goal, all though all had received a highest priority ranking from Council, was to determine the best method for maintaining grounds, landscaping, and mowing in the City, and this item was addressed in the budget.

Learning noted that the grounds maintenance priority was directly related to two of the bullet items included in the proposed millage increase. She added the litter removal item had been included at \$45,000, which was \$100,000 less than had been proposed by other companies.

Pennington said another priority had been the Battery Way dock structure, and that item was completed but could not be installed at the current time due to the lake issues. Ernst emphasized to attendees that the dock was ready to go and would be replaced.

An annexation program workshop would be held in the next month on plans developed by staff and reviewed by the Atlanta Regional Commission.

Fleisch noted there had been no available funding source for street and path paving once the SPLOST expired, so the millage rate increase helped to address those unfunded items.

King addressed cart path maintenance, saying said one thing he frequently heard through the City was that they should increase the \$12 every five years for golf cart registration. He asked if state law impacted that idea. Pennington said that \$15 was the maximum and it had to be at least every five years.

King said the sentiment from the public was that would be a worthwhile venture supported by the community. He asked if a \$50 per year registration fee would cover paving costs. Pennington said staff currently did the registration during one year every five years. Performing the registration annually would also require the staffing costs to manage the program. It could be done, but might not yield the expected net revenue.

Pennington said the traffic study was another element to look at traffic on the west side. Those priorities had been the guiding factor in developing the budget and seeing what could realistically be accomplished.

Resident Garrett Merkley addressed Council, saying he did not think most citizens wanted a tax increase, but questioned if showing up and speaking against it mattered. Council assured him that public comments were factored in. Merkley said he ran a business and had to cut expenses. He asked if the City looked at possible cuts, and if there was a plan on what could be cut if the millage rate were not increased. He asked what other input Council received from the public beyond the public hearings.

Council each noted they received emails on topics throughout the year. Ernst said every email was answered, and if it was important to a citizen, it was important to Council.

Merkley said Council had noted in an earlier meeting that they received complaints about landscaping. He asked if the complaints were always from the same people, because he and many others thought the City was beautiful.

Fleisch said in her five years on Council and as Mayor, the top to subjects of citizen complaints she received were traffic on Highway 54 West and the overall landscaping of the City following the disbandment of the City landscaping crews in 2009. Fleisch said contracting some of the services had difficulties due to a set mowing schedule but varied growth rates and missed locations. Landscaped medians were slowly being taken over by City staff crews now, and they were doing a wonderful job. Progress was being made, but there was still a lot of work to do.

Pennington noted that the City had hundreds of acres of parks, miles of medians and right-of-way, including the state highways. Highway 74 alone was nearly 16 miles, with right of way on both sides and the median. Peachtree Parkway, Robinson Road, and all the other major roads added to that.

Ellen Minette said she and her husband were retired but believed taxes were the responsibility of every citizen in a democratic society. They had no problem paying the taxes. They had lived in New York City, and every time it snowed, the Upper East Side had their roads plowed first, and the rest of the City had to wait two days. With that in mind, she asked how the landscaping and street paving dollars were allocated throughout the City.

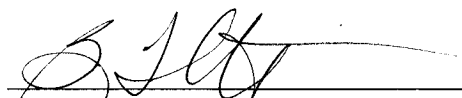
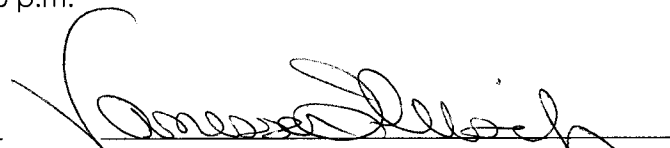
Fleisch noted that the City streets and paths were actually rated, and the lowest rated received attention first. Minette asked if those items were available on the web site. City Clerk Betsy Tyler said the proposed budget, along with the street and path ratings, were available on the site and that a map with landscaping zones could be added according to the Public Services Director, Jon Rorie. Rorie then explained that there were 471 subdivision islands and 171 subdivision signs they were responsible for maintaining. The budget only included \$20,000 for landscaping materials, and the budgeted amount was for personnel and equipment to maintain these areas. The City was currently paying contractors for most of these services with less than great results. Staff was not picking specific sites for landscaping, but was addressing all of them in rotation. Similarly for mowing, major thoroughfares throughout the City received mowing priority, followed by secondary streets. The money and time addresses all of these in a standard rotation.

Rorie said staff also received emails about problem areas, such as specific subdivision signs, and those items might have to be coordinated into the regular cycle when crews were already going to be there.

Bill Posey asked about the City's survey on subdivision signs, saying he thought the decision had been made to eliminate the deteriorating signs. Rorie said the survey had been conducted, but there was considerable support for maintaining them at some level. Funding had been included in the budget to address signage in the coming year.

Posey congratulated Council on an aggressive step in correcting what he had seen as a downhill slide on cart path maintenance and roadway appearances over the past ten years.

There being no further business, King moved to adjourn the meeting. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.


Betsy Tyler, City Clerk
Vanessa Fleisch, Mayor