

City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 3, 2023
6:30 PM

Call to Order

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in regular session on Thursday, August 3, 2023. Mayor Kim Learnard called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Council Members attending: Frank Destadio, Clinton Holland, and Phil Prebor. Council Member Mike King was absent.

Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

A. Summer Interns Acknowledgment: Rebekah B. and Saivee C.

The Mayor presented certificates of appreciation to the two students who served as interns at City Hall this summer, saying their contributions were substantial. The young women, Rebekah Bushmire and Saivee Chintamaneni, both said they had learned a lot about the workings of local government and enjoyed their experience.

Public Comment

None

Agenda Changes

None

Minutes

A. July 13, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes

Destadio moved to approve the July 13, 2023, City Council meeting minutes. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Quarterly Reports

A. Second Quarter Reports

Destadio and Holland both noted there was a lot going on in the City. Learnard thanked Staff for their work and highlighted information about the City's public outreach, noting that they had topped 12,000 followers on Facebook, with Facebook reach going from 187,000 in Quarter 1 to 810,000 in Quarter 2. The success extended to Instagram and Twitter, all of which was helping the City drive its own message to the public.

Consent Agenda

A. FY-23 Budget Amendment- Tree Removal

Holland moved to approve Consent Agenda item A. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Agenda Items

A. 06-23-06 - Flat Creek Boardwalk Repair and Tree Removal

Public Works Director Jonathan Miller recalled that at the June 15 Council meeting they had discussed options for tree removal and boardwalk repair at the Flat Creek Nature Area. The damage was caused by storms and high winds that felled trees, some of them damaging the boardwalk on both the north and south sides. Miller showed photos of conditions as they now were. The boardwalk was unsafe and had been closed to the public.

At the June meeting, staff brought a proposal to trim approximately 30 trees and remove about 53 rotting and uprooted trees. They proposed removing ground debris within 20 feet of the boardwalk. Another part of the proposal outlined how they could stand up and trim the root ball of the large maple that fell through the boardwalk. Portions of the boardwalk would need to be removed or stabilized during this process, Miller continued.

Council had many questions and comments during the June meeting. What would be the cost if the trees were dropped and left in the wetlands? There was a discussion about demolishing the north side of the boardwalk, building a new lookout at the creek, and demolishing the remaining boardwalk on the south side. Another option was to demolish the north side of the boardwalk, build a new lookout on the southside about 100 feet from the path, and then demolish the remaining south side.

Based on that, staff came up with three options. They also removed the \$50,000 for unforeseen contingencies that had been included in the previous proposal. What Miller was presenting now was the cost of what they knew would have to be done, but he wanted them to be aware that other costs might come up.

Option A was the option that was brought before Council in June. It called for cutting and removing trees and debris on the north and south sides and repairing the north side damage at a cost of \$145,120. Option B called for cutting the trees, but not removing them or the debris, and also repairing the boardwalk on the north side. Miller said the contractor had told them the trees would eventually sink and be almost impossible to remove. Option B's estimated cost was \$113,675.

In Option C, there would be a new boardwalk at Flat Creek, and trees would be cut only to that point, which was about 503 feet from the path. This would involve removal of about half the boardwalk on the south side, and they would demo the remainder and all of the north side boardwalk. The cost would be \$134,625.

Option D called for cutting and removing trees to 100 feet on the south side, constructing a new lookout, demolishing the remaining south side of the boardwalk and all of the north side. The estimate was \$114,625.

The Communications staff conducted an online poll to get opinions from citizens. Of the 1,097 responses, about 75% said they would support the estimated

expenditure of \$200,000 to repair the boardwalk, and almost 80% supported repairing the boardwalk to its original condition.

Destadio noted the support for spending \$200,000, but Learnard reminded him that included the \$51,000 in contingencies that had been removed. That original plan was Option A, which now cost \$145,000

How did everyone feel about leaving the trees? Prebor asked, and Destadio said he was okay with leaving them in, as did Holland. Prebor said he was, too. Learnard asked if there was any environmental impact on leaving them? Miller said no, aesthetics were the only concern because it would take awhile to decompose.

Miller also noted that part of the cost for Option A was because of the difficulty of removing the felled trees. The contractor would have to set up rigging, and everything must be done slowly and methodically.

Did they all agree that they needed to keep the length of the boardwalk? asked Learnard, but Prebor said they needed to decide on the trees first. Three of them wanted to leave the trees, he remarked, and the trees that would be left were a small percentage of the total. It was a nature walk, he observed, and when a tree fell in nature, it stayed where it fell.

Learnard said she understood that and asked if she was correct in thinking they wanted to keep the length of the boardwalk. Holland said he reached his decision because of the strong support from the citizens. He said he could support Option B to rebuild the boardwalk but leave the trees where they fell, like in nature.

Destadio said he had lived through hurricanes, and the trees looked terrible. He thought there could be a way to remove some of the trees without getting into the serious costs. Prebor noted the cost was \$32,000, but Destadio said that was to remove all the trees. City Manager Bob Curnow said the rigging and all the effort was what drove the costs up and would be about the same even if they just removed a handful of trees.

The citizens wanted it cleaned up, Destadio remarked. That was nature, Prebor commented, but Learnard said they cleaned up after hurricanes. Did they clean up trees in the green space? Prebor asked, and Miller said they did not except in special circumstances, but they did spend \$150,000 last year to clean up the green belt along a stretch of North Peachtree Parkway. But, Prebor said, they usually did not pick up felled trees, and Miller said that was correct.

After Hurricane Hugo, Destadio said they went through the Air Force base where he worked and picked up the downed trees that were obvious and looked terrible. Did they want the city to look terrible? It was a nature area, Prebor remonstrated.

Destadio asked Curnow if they were talking about \$32,000? and Curnow said that was right. He also added that going back would not be an option if the trees were felled and left and then they decided they did not like the way they looked.

Learnard said 53 trees laying there would not be attractive, but Prebor replied there were probably 150 trees down even before the storms came through, and there were downed trees all over the green belts.

Holland said the 53 trees would be in 1,000 feet, but Miller said the 53 included north side and south side. The number of trees in that large area meant they would not be piled up like toothpicks, Holland remarked. Assistant City Manager Justin Strickland said there were 18 on the north side, and Miller said the north side was about 200 feet, and there was about 1,000 feet on the south side.

Prebor moved to approve Old Agenda item 06-23-06 - Flat Creek Boardwalk Repair and Tree Removal, Option B for a total of \$113,675. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Holland thanked Curnow for providing details on the options, and Curnow said staff should get the credit.

B. 07-23-05 Resolution to Adopt FY 2024 Operating Budget & CIP

Curnow said nothing had changed since the last budget public hearing, so this was just a request to adopt the fiscal year 2024 Budget and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Destadio moved to adopt Old Agenda item 07-23-05, Resolution to Adopt FY 2024 Operating Budget & CIP. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

New Agenda Items

A. 08-23-01 Step Two Annexation Application Acceptance for 52 acres on Stagecoach Road and Spear Road

This was a procedural action needed to start the 60-day timetable outlined in State law for the annexation process, Planning and Development Director Robin Cailloux explained. All deadlines were measured from the date Council approved this official action of accepting the application. Accepting the application in no way implied approval or denial of the annexation; this was just to start the review, she stated.

Once they started the clock tonight, Cailloux continued, the timeline started for such things as her notifying the County and them having 30 days to respond, in addition to all of the steps listed in State law.

Destadio said he had questions and asked if the developer was present? Cailloux

said he was, but again said this was just a procedural matter. Staff was not prepared to answer questions, she noted, saying that City ordinance did not allow them to even review the request until it had been accepted by Council.

Who do they ask their questions to? Destadio asked Curnow. It depended on the nature of the questions, Curnow told him, but at this point, Staff had not had the opportunity and would not have the opportunity to look at any details until Council decided if they wanted to accept the request.

Learnard called for a motion, but Holland asked if the two days of research he put into this would be wasted because he could not ask questions? Learnard said he could ask questions, but staff had not worked on this yet. Holland said he wanted to talk about anomalies in the proposal. If they accepted this, Learnard commented, it would be like a "go button," and then all that research would be valuable, and they could review the questions, as well.

Maybe he did not understand the process, Holland admitted. Prebor acknowledged that it was confusing. After consulting with the City Attorney, Curnow said he wanted Holland to know he was free to ask questions, but staff had not had an opportunity to digest any information because it was pending action by Council.

Holland said his questions were for the developer, and Destadio wondered if he could ask questions of the developer. Learnard said that was not what they were there to do; they were there to begin the process so they could start asking questions. If they accepted the Step Two annexation application, all of those questions could go to the City Manager, and he would start getting them the answers.

Destadio said he wanted to make a comment, and he said he thought Estate Residential was the correct zoning for the density that should be in this area. He also was concerned there was no road connecting to Spear Road, and the Mayor told him those were valid concerns and conversations they would have if they moved ahead with Step Two.

He also mentioned an annexation off MacDuff Parkway several years ago, saying there was an adjacent sliver of land that they were told would not be annexed, but it had been. He was concerned about 77 acres in this area that could be annexed. Learnard said they would have all of those conversations if Step Two was allowed to proceed.

Holland wanted the steps explained. City Attorney Ted Meeker said Step One decided if the developer would be allowed to submit an application. Did Council even want to consider it? If Council voted "yes," a formal application for annexation would be submitted. There was an Annexation Arbitration Process under State Law, so if there was an issue the County raised, such as with infrastructure or

incompatible zonings, there had to be a defining moment of when the City accepted that application. That was what was on the table with Step Two. If Council accepted it, that would start the timeline. They had so many days to notify the County that the application had been submitted, then the County had so many days to respond. If the County did not object, the annexation would go through the process, which was staff review, Planning Commission review and recommendation, then a public hearing with City Council for consideration of the application along with the zoning applicable to the property.

That was done in a 60-day period? Holland inquired, and Meeker said typically it was, but if the County objected, it would be a longer period because they had to see if the City and County could work out conditions. If they could not, an arbitration review panel would be assembled, and they would go through that process to determine what conditions should be imposed if Council decided to annex the property. Tonight was not a public hearing, Meeker continued, it was the middle point of defining the date when the City accepted the application.

So they were in limbo, Holland remarked, and had to approve Step Two so Staff could get the data they needed. Meeker said that was correct, but added that they did not have to do anything. They could deny Step Two.

Destadio said they went through the arbitration process for the property behind Governor's Square, but Meeker said it did not get to that point. The County objected, but the Department of Community Affairs could not get enough panel members for arbitration. The City and County then had discussions and agreed upon certain conditions.

Learnard told Holland his concerns were valid, and if they passed Step Two, they would take a look at them.

Holland moved to deny New Agenda item 08-23-01, Step Two Annexation Application Acceptance for 52 acres on Stagecoach Road and Spear Road. Motion died for lack of a second.

Prebor moved to approve New Agenda item 08-23-01, Step Two Annexation Application Acceptance for 52 acres on Stagecoach Road and Spear Road. Learnard seconded.

The point, Prebor commented, was to give the developer the opportunity to do something, if they wanted it to stay residential. Considering this would give Peachtree City the opportunity to have input into what went there. If they did not, the County could just do whatever, he remarked, adding that he was pretty sure houses were going to go there regardless.

Destadio said he was more in favor of industrial or commercial. Commercial required traffic, Prebor noted, so this probably would not be a good place for

commercial. Holland proposed a hidden away industrial area, noting there was a lot of land there on the other side. Prebor and Learnard pointed out that this could only be discussed if Step Two was approved. Destadio said he would like to see it die totally, but he would like to have those conversations because he was not in favor of the plan that had been proposed.

Motion carried 3-1, with Destadio, Learnard, and Prebor voting in favor, and Holland opposed.

B. 08-23-02 Library Elevator Maintenance

City Engineer Dave Borkowski said he recommended Council accept a proposal from KONE for the modernization of the elevator in the City Library for the total amount of \$215,950. He noted that the elevator system at the library was over 27 years old, and the average life of an elevator was 25 years. Some parts and electronic components were no longer manufactured, so repairs were getting harder to complete.

They had requested a modernization proposal from current elevator maintenance contractor KONE that included replacing all electronic and mechanical equipment for the elevator system. The proposal also included some aesthetic upgrades, including new interior wall panels and ceiling.

The Library Director had procured a grant from Georgia Public Library Service in the maximum amount of \$93,500, leaving the City to pay the remaining \$122,450, which was budgeted and available in the capital fund, Borkowski explained.

What would they be approving, Holland asked, the \$122,000 or the total \$215,950? The total, Borkowski replied, but they would be reimbursed the \$93,000.

Holland moved to approve New Agenda item 08-23-02, Library Elevator Maintenance, in the amount of \$215,950. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearings

Council/Staff Topics

A. Purple Heart Day Ceremony & Appreciation Breakfast- August 7, 2023

Learnard noted there would be a Purple Heart flag raising ceremony and recognition breakfast at City Hall on August 7. Destadio said Peachtree City worked hard to be designated as a Purple Heart City last year, and all veterans were welcome to the ceremony.

B. Winner of Promise Place Law Enforcement Challenge

Police Chief Janet Moon noted that the Police Department had responded to a request from District Attorney Marie Broder to collect materials for Promise Place, a provider of comprehensive domestic violence services to Fayette, Spalding, Pike, and Upson counties. The challenge between the District's law enforcement agencies ran from June 21 to July 31, Moon said. Peachtree City officers got involved and solicited much help from the community, including from the McIntosh High football team.

Thanks to all that support, Moon stated, Peachtree City won the challenge. She noted that almost 11 moving truck loads in total were delivered to Promise Place. People had asked how they could continue to help, so she also noted Promise Place was funded through the Fayette Thrift Shop in Fayetteville. Moon thanked The Home Depot for its participation in doing needed maintenance work at the Promise Place facility. She presented a short video made by the City's Communications Team showing the outcome of the donation efforts.

C. Algae blooms detected in Lake Peachtree

Curnow explained that the day before, they had been alerted by a Code Enforcement Officer of what they thought was a contaminant in Lake Peachtree. The County came out and tested the water and discovered an algae bloom, a naturally reoccurring process caused by high temperatures and lack of rain. Further testing revealed this was a type of algae that was an irritant when ingested, so the lake was now closed throughout for swimming and other water activities. They had been told the bloom would just have to run its course, so the lake would be closed until testing showed the water to be safe. Curnow said updates were posted on the City website and social media.

Executive Session

Adjourn

There being no further business, Prebor moved to adjourn. Holland seconded. Destadio said he wanted to point out that the Purple Heart recognition day had been publicized in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and the Fayette County News, and he thanked the Communications Team for seeing to that. Motion carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.


Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary


Kim Learnard, Mayor