

**City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 6, 2021
6:30 p.m.**

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in regular session on Thursday, May 6, 2021. Mayor Vanessa Fleisch called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Others attending: Terry Ernst, Mike King, Kevin Madden, and Phil Prebor.

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

American Legion Post 50 presented Officer Sean Ishihara with its Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award. Ishihara also was Georgia's Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.

Fleisch honored Youth Librarian Janice Dukes for 20 years of service.

Public Comment

There was none.

Agenda Changes

Ernst moved to amend New Agenda item 05-21-04 to read "plus or minus 5 acres" instead of 2 acres. Madden seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

King moved to approve the April 1, 2021, regular meeting minutes and the April 6, 2021, budget workshop meeting minutes as written. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Quarterly Reports

There were no comments.

Consent Agenda

- 1. FY2021 Budget Amendment**
- 2. 2021 Home Depot Community Grant**
- 3. Purchase of 5 Zero-Turn Mowers**

Ernst moved to approve Consent Agenda items 1-3. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Agenda items

None

New Agenda items

05-21-01 Public Hearing- Variance Request for Lots 6 & 7 MOBA Drive, Front Setback

Planning and Development Director Robin Cailloux reminded Council they recently granted this property a variance for a parking setback. The developer went to the Planning Commission asking to reduce the landscape buffer as part of the conceptual site plan. The Planning Commission suggested they consider moving their buildings further towards MOBA Drive so they could maintain the 60-foot landscape buffer along SR 74. The applicant agreed and applied for this variance.

Cailloux indicated the property on a drawing, pointing out SR 74 and MOBA Park, which surrounded the property on three sides in a reverse "C" shape street network. Two lots were being combined to construct two 50,000 square foot-plus buildings. She pointed to the 60-foot landscape buffer, and noted that in order to maintain it, they were asking to move the buildings, resulting in a reduction of the front setback on MOBA Drive from 50 to 30 feet. Overhead utility clearances required the clearing of at least half the 60-foot buffer, and that was why the Planning Commission wanted to maintain every foot they could.

She went over the six criteria required of a variance in the Zoning Ordinance. The property had technically three front yards: SR 74, MOBA Drive, and MOBA Way. Only three other industrial lots had this configuration, and two of those had been developed. Also, the overhead utility line was a factor. These conditions meant application of the Ordinance could create unnecessary hardship on the developers. The front setback, if applied, would consume more than 28% of the usable area of the lots. The third criterion asked if there were exceptional circumstances, and Cailloux said those were the configuration of the lots with three fronts. Given those unique limitations, granting the variance would not constitute a special privilege.

Granting the variance would not be detrimental to public health, safety, or welfare. It did not create any sight-distance issues; there would still be 30 feet to MOBA Drive. It did not conflict with the Comprehensive Plan or major policies. The Plan called for maintaining landscape buffers along major thoroughfares.

The applicant, Chuck Ogletree of Southtree Commercial Development, noted the property had some challenges, and the Planning Commission brought up the lack of existing buffer on SR 74 due to the Georgia Power easement. Their concern was the direct line of sight from the highway to the truck courtyard between the two buildings. The developers decided to shift the buildings and the courtyard to the east by 20 feet, giving them an additional 20 feet along SR 74 to use for plantings. That shift would cause an encroachment into the front setback on MOBA Drive, which was why they were asking for the variance to reduce the setback to 30 feet. Ogletree said it did not adversely impact adjoining property owners. The property across the street held the detention pond for the entire project, and there was a parking lot to the northeast. The buffer would benefit commuters who traveled SR 74.

Fleisch opened the public hearing. No one wished to speak either in favor or opposition, and she closed the hearing.

Council had no comments, and Prebor said he was glad the workshop with the Planning Commission had worked well.

Madden moved to approve New Agenda item 05-21-01, variance request for Lots 6 & 7 MOBA Drive, front setback. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

05-21-02 Public Hearing- Variance Request for 135 Loblolly Circle, Rear Setback Encroachment

This property was in one of the City's first neighborhoods, near City Hall. Cailloux indicated on a map the locations of Hip Pocket Road, SR 74, and Lake Peachtree. This property was at the corner of Loblolly Circle and Hip Pocket. The applicant was requesting a variance for an existing two-car-plus garage. They were asking for an encroachment of about 12 feet into the rear setback. If the variance was approved, staff asked that a foundation survey be conducted.

Cailloux explained this was two lots combined into one. She showed how the garage encroached into the 30-foot rear setback by 11.5 feet. Because of the grade, there was a retaining wall located close

to the house, along with a utility easement on the rear, which was common on older lots. They could not find who owned the utility easement, but the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) had said that if utilities needed to be placed in that area, the City-owned property behind it would serve as enough space.

Cailloux examined the six criteria, pointing out the challenges posed by the slope. An existing retaining wall would be difficult to move. Would strict application of the regulations pose a hardship? The garage was already built, without a permit, she noted. If the setbacks were strictly applied, the size of the garage would be limited to a one-car garage. The slope and existing construction created exceptional circumstances for the property and granting the variance would not constitute a special privilege. The applicant had submitted letters of support from neighbors. The variance was in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan, which encouraged residents to reinvest in their property.

Contractor Mark Murphy and property owner Ralf Koch spoke. Murphy said a permit was pulled prior to construction, and Cailloux apologized for her error. They did not do a form board survey. Fleisch clarified if he meant a foundation survey. Cailloux asked Murphy if they believed the property line was further back, so what was permitted would be okay. He said that was correct, adding they were 45 feet away from what he thought was the property line.

Koch said he was sorry there was a problem. He had talked to his neighbors, and they agreed this garage would benefit the neighborhood.

Fleisch opened the public hearing.

Paul Bureau said he lived on the next street over and drove by Koch's house frequently. The garage worked nicely in the neighborhood, and he had no objections.

A neighbor, Eileen Sargent, said she submitted a letter, and also wanted to voice support from another neighbor who could not attend.

No one else wished to speak, and Fleisch closed the public hearing.

Ernst said now that he knew the permit was approved, he had no problems. Prebor noted that the neighbors approved.

King moved to approve New Agenda item 05-21-02, variance request for 135 Loblolly Circle, rear setback encroachment. Madden seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

05-21-03 Public Hearing- Transmittal of CIE Update to Atlanta Regional Commission

The State required an annual update to the Comprehensive Plan's Capital Improvements Element (CIE), Cailloux explained. Because they collected impact fees, there was a separate report on that, along with an update on the five-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP).

She showed how impact fees were collected and spent in 2020. They were used for parks, library, police and fire, and administrative fees. They no longer collected fees for the library, but there was still a minimal amount remaining to be spent. Looking at all path projects on the CIP, Cailloux noted that they did not add any new projects, and many of those listed had been completed. Several more were under construction, while others had moved into design.

They were still collecting fees to be used for future Police Department expansion. Progress on some of the Fire Department items included purchase of a medical vehicle. Projects were coming up for other heavy vehicles.

After this public hearing and Council approval, Cailloux said they would submit the CIE to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) for review. Once the ARC approved it, she would return to Council, probably in June, for adoption.

Fleisch opened the public hearing. No one wished to speak in favor or against, and she closed the hearing.

Ernst moved to approve New Agenda item 05-21-03, transmittal of CIE Update to Atlanta Regional Commission. King seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

05-21-04 Resolution #05062021, Property Acquisition, Plus or Minus 5 Acres, Land Lot 29 on S. Hwy 74

City Clerk Yasmin Julio explained this was the property where the Fayette County Animal Shelter was located. The City would be purchasing the land, then leasing the Shelter back to the County. That lease agreement was the next item on the agenda.

Ernst moved to approve Resolution #05062021 with the amendment to replace the wording "2 acres" with plus or minus 5 acres. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

05-21-05 Lease Agreement- Parcels 0609023 & 0609009, S. Hwy 74 (Animal Control Property)

This lease agreement was for the Animal Shelter building until the County's new shelter was complete, Julio pointed out.

Ernst moved to approve New Agenda item 05-21-05, Lease Agreement- Parcels 0609023 & 0609009, S. Hwy 74 (Animal Control Property). King seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

05-21-06 Personnel Action-Finance Department

Human Resources and Risk Management Director Ellece Brown stated there was a need in the Finance Department to eliminate two part-time accounting technician positions and replace them with one accounting position. The responsibilities the accounting position would perform were outside the scope of an accounting technician. Current administrative staff in the Finance Department would absorb the duties of the two part-time accounting technicians. There was a copy of the accountant job description in the meeting packet. Brown said the budget impact for the remainder of this fiscal year would be about \$8,250, which could be absorbed by the Finance Department.

Madden moved to approve New Agenda item 05-21-06, Personnel Action-Finance Department. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

05-21-07 Personnel Action- Police Department

Brown reported the Police Department had requested changes that did not involve increasing headcount. The first recommendation was to eliminate two police officer positions within the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) and replace them with detective positions, which were at a higher level. For several years, the Police Department had had two officers performing with CID, along with CID staff. They were there to support CID and to be trained for succession purposes. They were unofficially called "investigators," but, because of the workload, were performing at a detective level. That needed to be corrected, Brown said, so they were recommending that the two officer positions be replaced with two detective positions.

The second part involved the elimination of one police officer and the addition of a hard stripe corporal position. With several retirements looming, the Department was looking at succession planning. One of the future retirees was the quartermaster in the Department, who maintained the police officer title. They wanted to replace him with a hard stripe corporal, one of five currently on staff. The title change was due to the magnitude of work in that position. Training the replacement would take several months. The end result would be the elimination of one police officer position and the addition of a corporal position. The budget impact for the remainder of this fiscal year would be about \$30,615, which could be absorbed by the Police Department.

Rorie said he wanted to be clear that they were not reducing police officers; they were aligning job responsibilities with their titles. Staff was aware that the models of community policing were changing, as were those in the Fire Department. They had spent a lot of time looking at retention and recruitment strategies to include career development programs. All of these changes were about succession planning.

Fleisch said succession planning had been missing among the new programs. Ernst noted he was familiar with the quartermaster situation. The officer doing that job had been doing it for about 15 years and would soon be retiring. The magnitude of the work he did was incredible, Ernst continued, and moving a corporal to that position to train before he retired was wise. When that corporal was trained, and the quartermaster retired, the Chief would need to hire a new officer. Many other retirements were coming up soon.

Madden commented that the budget impact of \$30,000 was commensurate with the new responsibilities the officers would be taking on. Ernst said that was a good point.

Madden moved to approve New Agenda item 05-21-07, Personnel Action- Police Department. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

05-21-08 Vacation Policy Change for New Hires

Employees accrued vacation hours every pay period, Brown noted, with a 2,080 hour employee earning 1.45 hours every two weeks, which meant they had 40 hours of vacation at the end of their first year of employment. That had been in place for more than 20 years. This policy had negatively impacted recruitment, and often caused them to have to go to the City Manager because a potential employee wanted more vacation time. Two weeks was the norm in the marketplace for new hires. They would not get the two weeks on day one, but would accrue the time at 3.08 hours a pay period for a 2,080-hour employee. There would be no budget impact because they City would pay the employee whether they were working or on vacation.

Prebor said it made sense to do this, and Madden added it was hard to hire and retain new police officers, or any employee, when the commercial world offered more vacation time.

Prebor moved to approve New Agenda item 05-21-08, Vacation Policy Change for New Hires. Madden seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Council/Staff Topics

Memorial Benches

Recreation and Special Events Director Quinn Bledsoe told Council that nearly every week her office was contacted by someone who wanted to place a bench somewhere in the city in memory of a loved one. Usually they wanted it located on Lake Peachtree, but they were running out of sites to place benches around the lake without going into the greenbelt. There were currently eight at

Battery Way, plus the swings. Therefore, they had decided to declare a moratorium on benches around the lake. They would still put them in other locations. If someone wanted it to be on the water, Three Ponds was a good location. She wanted the families to choose a spot. But because there were 15 benches around Lake Peachtree, they needed to halt the addition of more.

Rorie acknowledged this was a difficult topic. He said they had discussed connecting the memorial program to the Tree Fund, so people could plant trees in memory of someone.

Prebor said he liked that idea, with a plaque by the tree.

Fleisch asked how many trees had been replanted through the Tree Fund recently? Bledsoe replied that she believed it was 23. Rorie said that did not count the trees on Peachtree Parkway. They were leaving the Bradford Pears there, even though they knew they were coming to the end of their lives, but planting Red Maples, with the idea of letting them grow before they had to remove the Bradford Pears.

There being no further business, Ernst moved to adjourn. Madden seconded. Motion carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.



Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary



Vanessa Fleisch, Mayor