City of Peachtree City
WORKSHOP
Minutes of Meeting
May 1, 2007
6:30 p.m.

The City Council of Peachtree City met in workshop session on Tuesday, May 1, 2007, at 6:30 p.m. Council Members attending were: Mayor Harold Logsdon, Steve Boone, Cyndi Plunkett, and Judi Rutherford. Stuart Kourajian arrived at 6:50 p.m., and Plunkett left at 6:58 p.m.

Staff members attending were: City Manager Bernard McMullen, Assistant City Manager/Developmental Services Director Colin Halterman, Administrative Services Director/City Clerk Jane Miller, Public Services Director Tom Corbett, Finance Director Paul Salvatore, and Leisure Services Director Randy Gaddo.

The purpose of the workshop was to discuss contracting out maintenance services (landscaping, mowing) and to hear a presentation on Touch the World in Peachtree City.

Discussion on Contracting Out Maintenance Services (landscaping/mowing)
Corbett gave an analysis of the costs for seasonal grass cutting by the 13-member Right-of-Way Crew and for the seasonal landscape maintenance by the nine-member Landscaping Crew. (A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is included in the official meeting file.) Corbett noted that the tasks were carried out by the Public Works Department with in-house personnel and equipment. The issues covered by the analysis included working hours, salaries/benefits, and overhead costs allocated to seasonal landscaping and grass cutting. He continued that the analysis also included identification and analysis of the additional duties performed by both crews.

The 13-member Right-of-Way Crew worked 27,040 hours per year. The average paid leave per employee per year was 295.51 hours. The average number of hours of paid leave for the entire crew was 3,841.63 hours, which left a total of 23,198.37 work hours. The adjustment for training, seminars, and safety meetings for the entire crew was 312 hours, leaving 22,886.37 work hours. Secondary work activities for the eight-hour work day included preparation and travel time, lunch time and return to work site, travel time to the shop, cleanup, vehicle maintenance, paperwork, and communication with supervision, which left 6.5 hours per person in a workday, or 18,595.15 hours available for primary activities.

Corbett continued that the projected FY 2008 personnel expense for the Right-of-Way Crew was $619,167, including salary and benefits. The average hourly salary and benefit cost for the crew was $33.30 per hour. Vehicles, equipment, parts, repairs, fuel, oil, materials, supplies, liability insurance (a separate line item in the budget), utilities, uniforms, and overhead costs accounted for an additional $13.50 per hour in average hourly operation costs. The total average hourly cost per employee was $46.80.

Corbett compared the cost of the seasonal grass cutting operations on SR 74 North East with the cost estimate of a private contractor. The crew spent 1,024 hours on 53.8 acres at a cost of $47,923.20 per year compared to the contractor's estimate of $31,120. Corbett noted that he was only able to get one estimate from a professional landscaper. The crew mowed a total of 357.6 acres in the City, spending 8,484 hours at a cost of $397,052.20. Grass cutting, edging, and litter removal accounted for 40.9% of the crew's time during the year. Corbett said the litter in the rights-of-way had to be removed prior to cutting the grass. The crew's other functions included other litter removal, mulching/pruning/general maintenance, chipping/compost center operation, tree/bush removal, City Hall fountain maintenance, administrative, and special projects/building maintenance. The total work hours for one year were 20,140 hours. The seasonal operation was approximately 41% of the weighted time. Litter removal, mulching, and pruning were year-round activities. During the winter, the crew worked on building maintenance projects.

Rutherford said she was only interested in outsourcing the seasonal cutting. McMullen said that they had asked for grass cutting and associated litter removal. In order to do the rest of the work, 60% of the crew was needed. Plunkett asked if only 60% of the special projects would get done during the year. Corbett said that was hard question to answer since they never ran out of special projects. Plunkett asked what would happen if that crew was removed. McMullen said the hours might be available for a project, but the crew might not have the capabilities for certain projects. The entire crew was needed for the July 4th parade, the road race, or other events. Those issues would have to be dealt with some other way.

Rutherford noted that she was not looking to replace City employees with contracted work. She had wanted to know what other options were available to keep up with the grass cutting. She added that some communities hired students to do the grass cutting in the summer. She asked what else the employees could do if they were not cutting grass. Corbett noted that the numbers indicated that the seasonal cutting was only a portion of what the crews did. They were amenable to looking at the numbers differently. All of the other work had to be accounted for in some fashion. During recent years, the grass cutting had extended into the holidays due to the warm weather. More right-of-way maintenance was done during warm winters than building maintenance.

Corbett provided the same information for the nine-member Landscaping Crew. The crew had 18,720 fully paid annual working hours. The total average paid leave for the crew was 2,659.59 hours, which left 16,060.41 hours. An average 240 hours were used annually for training, seminars, and safety meetings, leaving 15,844.41 hours. The adjustment for the secondary work activities left 12,873.58 hours available for primary activities.

The projected FY 2008 total salary and benefits for the nine-member crew was $449,317. The average hourly salary and benefits cost for the crew was $34.90 per hour. Corbett noted that the difference in the salary costs was due to the longevity of the members of this crew compared to the Right-of-Way Crew. The additional average hourly operation costs were $13.50 per hour, which led to an average hourly cost of $48.40 per employee.

Corbett continued that the crew spent 1,232 hours working on SR 74 North and SR 54 East, for an annual cost of $59,628.80. The contractor's estimate for the work was $21,756. The crew spent 6,226 hours on subdivision entrances annually at a cost of $301,338.40. The crew's duties included subdivision entrance maintenance, mulch application, pruning/trimming/leaf removal, spraying/weeding/general maintenance, City Hall grounds maintenance, tree inspection/removal, sprinkler system repair, landscape design/planting, pest control, administrative, and special projects, which total 14,428 hours. He noted that 43% of the crew's available hours were spent on subdivision landscaping.

Rutherford asked if the City would become responsible for any more subdivision entrances. Halterman said that the City would become responsible for Cedarcroft and Centennial in the next two years. Rutherford asked why. Halterman said it was required by City ordinance. Rutherford said they needed to look at that ordinance.

Corbett said there were a number of areas, such as SR 54/SR 74 that could be contracted out. He was not sure if it would be profitable for a landscaper, but the only way to find out was to put it out to bid. Bulk grass cutting was the primary thing landscapers looked for. He noted that Fayetteville had contracted out the landscaped areas along SR 54 and SR 85, which was considered typical landscaping. Corbett continued that he had sent e-mails to all the communities in the metro area asking if they were thinking about or were contracting out seasonal landscaping and grass cutting. Fourteen of the 30 had responded. Some only contracted out their parks and cemeteries. Landscape work was really market-based. The contractor he had contacted was considered high end.

Rutherford asked Gaddo if he had any information regarding the recreation properties. Gaddo said no. She said he should look at the ballfields.

Touch the World in Peachtree City
Gaddo introduced Victoria Peterson, event director, Gerri Holt, and Dave Piet. He noted that the idea for the event began four years ago when Holt suggested the City host a "Taste of"-type event. A 501(c)(3) corporation had been formed, and Piet was the chairman. Gaddo continued that this would be the keystone event for the City's 50th anniversary celebration in 2009. (A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is included in the official meeting file.)

Peterson noted there was a huge international community within the City. There were 21 international businesses located in the City. When immigrant-owned and first generation-owned businesses were included, the number increased to over 32. It would be a diverse venue that would grow every year. The event would be held at the City Hall Plaza, and the proposed dates were October 6-7. The honorary chair was Joel Cowan, and Logsdon was the honorary co-chair. The target for attendance was the southern metro area. They also planned to target small, specific areas on the north side. The target age group was over 35. The venue would appeal to them, as well as to teenagers with disposable income. They also planned to market to the international business associations in Atlanta. The original goal for attendance was 50,000, but had dropped to 5,000. Peterson said her vision for the event was to increase the awareness of the City's cultural diversity.

Peterson continued that the City had 27 independent restaurants, who would be asked to have a booth. The chain restaurants were to be limited to sponsoring booths for various artists. It would be a tented venue so it would be held rain or shine. Peterson showed an overhead photo of the venue area, which had the location of the activities marked. She said the covered stage would have continuous entertainment. Admission would be either $5 or $6 per person, which would give each person 10 tickets and a passport. The passports would be stamped at the individual booths. Peterson noted that Marie Schlosser had been working on sponsors to underwrite the cost, and 15 sponsors were waiting to come on line.

Peterson said the tents would be put up on Friday afternoon. There should be minimal interference with parking for the library and City Hall.

The entertainment would include Japanese drummers, Italian tarantella dancers, English folk dancers, a 15-piece swing band plus dancers, Middle Eastern belly dancers, lots of bagpipers, and a traditional Irish band had been approached. Local talent would fill in when the major acts were changing. There would also be three auto club displays on Drake Field.

There would be plenty of golf cart parking. The Baptist and Presbyterian churches had been contacted regarding parking. Peterson said that attendants would be posted to ensure no one used the church parking until 1 p.m. on Sunday. Peterson said they were working with different groups regarding shuttles that would make the rounds of offsite parking lots every 15 minutes.

Olympic Gold Medal winner Ralph Boston was to lead a parade of children in costume to open the event. Boston planned to ask six other Olympians, as well as state Olympic organizations, to participate.

Peterson said she had gotten a good response from the community so far, and she had only been out talking to people about six days. Marie Schlosser was helping to get the information out in the community, the Rotary Club, and the Chamber of Commerce. The Rotary Club had just signed on to hold dragon boat races on Lake Peachtree. Eight of the boats had been donated to the Atlanta Rotary Club, and the Peachtree City club asked to include this weekend on the circuit.

Peterson said the event would be self-sufficient. It would get bigger and better every year. It would be one of the larger venues in the south for this type of event. Profits were not expected this year, but they hoped to be able to start putting the profit back into the community next year. She said they would specifically like to use the money to enhance Drake Field.

Piet agreed the event would not end in 2009, but would continue to get better each year. There was a reasonably solid plan and budget. The City had already given enormous support. As the independent non-profit corporation moved forward, everything would be done to benefit the City and Fayette County. Piet said they planned to market the event heavily on the local level this year.

McMullen asked why the event would move to the spring in 2008. Gaddo noted that the City was chartered in March. The plan had always been to hold the event in the spring, but it was time to get it off the ground. Rutherford said that would also build momentum. Piet agreed. He said it was time to put up or shut up.

Piet said the event needed major corporate sponsors. He asked the Council to help talk it up and point the committee in the right direction.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Jane Miller, City Clerk

Harold K. Logsdon, Mayor

Pamela Dufresne, Recording Secretary