

City Council of Peachtree City
Joint Workshop
Minutes of Meeting
April 26, 2010

The City Council of Peachtree City held a joint workshop with the Recreation Commission at the Gathering Place on Monday, April 26, 2010, at 6:30 pm. Members of the City Council present were Mayor Don Haddix, Doug Sturbaum, Eric Imker, Vanessa Fleisch, and Kim Learnard. Members of the Recreation Commission present were Chairman Mark Ballard and Shayne Robinson.

Staff members present were City Manager Bernard McMullen, Leisure Services Director Randy Gaddo, Recreation Administrator Sherry McHugh, and Leisure Programs Coordinator for Seniors Janet Werner. Gaddo started the meeting at 6:32 pm.

The purpose of the workshop was to discuss possible coordination between Fayette Senior Services and The Gathering Place.

Gaddo reviewed The Gathering Place's history and services with a PowerPoint presentation (included in the meeting file).

Debbie Britt, Executive Director of Fayette Senior Services, reviewed the history and services of Fayette Senior Services with a PowerPoint presentation (included in the meeting file).

Learnard noted that the background information was good, but wondered what was done now. Gaddo stated that he was interested in input from everyone, specifically to coordinate programs and services between the Gathering Place and Fayette Senior Services. Gaddo commented that it would be good to coordinate services, perhaps by better utilizing the Gathering Place. Gaddo specified that the Gathering Place could be a good transportation hub or distribution point for Meals on Wheels.

Haddix stated that there was no intent to shut down the Gathering Place or to put its services under the control of Fayette County. Haddix noted that Peachtree City was part of Fayette County, and the services offered through Fayette Senior Services were available to Peachtree City senior citizens. Haddix remarked that many of their services were not offered in Peachtree City, so they could offer more services to residents of Peachtree City. Haddix said that it was almost like being double taxed when services were duplicated, and the idea was to explore ways to expand offerings of both the Gathering Place and Fayette Senior Services to share.

Several members of the public commented that they were concerned about losing services or classes that were currently offered at the Gathering Place. Gaddo and Britt reassured them that the purpose of this meeting was merely to inform the public about services offered and the potential ability to better utilize those services. Learnard commented that rumors existed that Fayette County would take over the Gathering Place, and Haddix reassured everyone that these rumors were not true.

Members of the public also voiced concerns over transportation issues related to senior citizens in Peachtree City, specifically a desire to have a bus for patrons of the Gathering Place to use. There was discussion regarding legal issues that would prohibit raising funds or collecting donations to purchase a bus for seniors to use at the Gathering Place. Britt noted that several transportation options were available to Peachtree City senior citizens to use, including a 14-seat bus, vans, and cars, which offered seniors rides to doctors, hospital, stores, churches, and even to work for developmentally-challenged individuals and disabled citizens, as well as to the Fayette Senior Services center and back. Senior citizens could purchase vouchers to use the transportation. These services were available by calling Fayette Senior Services.

Discussion about the Meals on Wheels program was held. Britt noted that there were 35 routes in Peachtree City serving about 500 people, 31% of the deliveries. If the Gathering Place were used as a volunteer pick up station to deliver these meals, it would not take over the entire building. Approximately 30 coolers would be stored on site, and volunteers would stop in, pick up the needed food for their route, and be on their way quickly. Britt noted that it was not necessary for Fayette Senior Services to use the Gathering Place as a pick up station, but that it could be convenient for the volunteers who lived here. Britt commented that the Meals on Wheels program offered more than nutritional services to senior citizens; it also provided needed social contact to those who might be shut in their homes most of the time. Britt stated that the program offered a cupcake to patrons on their birthday and stressed how much this one small token was appreciated by those utilizing the program.

Ballard noted that both the Gathering Place and Fayette Senior Services needed to expand and grow, but that voters had rejected a bond referendum to fund an expansion of the Gathering Place. Ballard stated that a hub for seniors could be the Gathering Place or another facility, and as demand increased, time and money would always be an issue. Ballard wondered about a referral point, a place where people could find out what was available that could offer more services with room to grow. Britt commented that the Fayette Senior Services Center was about 22,000 square feet and was maxed out. Britt questioned what the citizens wanted, where the City was at today, and if Fayette Senior Services could help. Britt noted that the reason Fayette Senior Services Center was located in Fayetteville was because Fayetteville had the cheapest land available to purchase to allow for the facility to be built.

Werner expressed concerns that some of the programs offered through Fayette Senior Services, specifically day trips, would often fill up before Gathering Place patrons could reserve their place. Werner also stated that private coaches were too expensive to be affordable to the senior citizens. Britt stated that the information about day trips through the Fayette Senior Services was available. Werner noted that information needed to be shared better between the Gathering Place and Fayette Senior Services. Werner asked what Fayette Senior Services wanted from the Gathering Place. Britt responded that they were not looking for anything, but had been approached by staff to discuss the sharing of resources and to determine if there was more that could be offered to Peachtree City. Britt asked what Fayette Senior Services could do for them.

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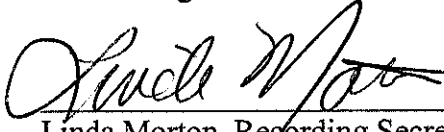
Page 3

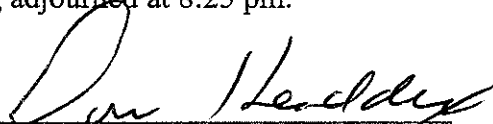
Haddix commented that not all services would be utilized by all the age groups; for instance, a 59 year-old would not want or need the same services an 80 year-old would. Haddix wondered if there should be a survey to determine what needs were most important, and what the demographics were of Peachtree City senior citizens. Britt stated that Fayette Senior Services was required to complete surveys each year, because of the grants and partnerships that they had. Britt offered to share the results of their survey with Peachtree City.

Haddix said that the City should establish goals for cooperating with Fayette Senior Services and perhaps conduct a feasibility study. The idea would be to progress one step at a time. Learnard added that the City needed to understand the needs before doing anything, and that transportation was a very obvious need. Learnard noted that more coordination between Fayette Senior Services and Peachtree City was needed. Haddix agreed that the need had to be defined. Fleisch stated that the bus availability needs could be determined through a sign up sheet. Haddix asked McMullen if it was appropriate to do a feasibility study. McMullen stated that it was, as they could modify the survey results that Fayette Senior Services already had. McMullen said that the City needed to get two answers –how much of the general population of Peachtree City were senior citizens, and how many of those seniors used the Gathering Place. Haddix noted that they had a starting place.

Imker wondered how many Peachtree City senior citizens used Fayette Senior Services and what services they used. Britt stated that information was available on their monthly report, and that more than 300 members were from Peachtree City. Imker asked what those residents were doing, and Britt stated that it would take a little time to extract the information from the social services database. Haddix directed Gaddo and Britt to coordinate the information.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.


Linda Morton, Recording Secretary


Don Haddix, Mayor