2012 CITY COUNCIL RETREAT
MINUTES
March 9, 2012
Council Chambers

Mayor Don Haddix called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. Council Members present: George Dienhart, Vanessa Fleisch, Eric Imker, and Kim Learnard.

Overview of Retreat, opening comments and presentation of Executive Staff's perception of Peachtree City, including Positives and Challenges – (Something to think about later in retreat)
City Manager Jim Pennington went over the positives in the City and the challenges, which, during his career, he found to be similar everywhere. There were a number of issues that would be addressed during the day, from the computer system to stormwater to the City's public facilities. He asked Council to think about the positives of the City in the coming weeks. The list included the AAA credit rating and low ISO rating. He said the list included items that were extremely important when comparing the City to other communities, particularly related to median income and the City's hallmark – the cart path system.

The challenges included attracting good employees. Pennington noted that Financial Services Director Paul Salvatore had spent months looking for someone to fill the Assistant Finance Director position when Janet Camburn retired, and it was taking a lot of time to find someone with the necessary talent. The City had no policy regarding annexation. The demographics were changing; the City was getting more mature. Growth was a subject for discussion, including what was good growth, bad growth, and controlled growth. The City's human resources policies were out-of-date and often went through several sets of hands. The policies needed to be refined. There was a lack of positive attitude, and lack of unified vision/plan. There needed to be a discussion on who and what Peachtree City was and where it wanted to be. The quality of life needed to be maintained, and it was getting harder and harder.

Pennington said the positives and challenges were not unique to the City. The same pervasive issues were dealt with by all cities.

Discussion of the SAVE and E-Verify mandates on the City's operations
City Attorney Ted Meeker briefly went over the requirements for E-verify and the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program, which had come into play with the Immigration Security & Compliance Act that went into law in 2011. He said staff now had an understanding of the impact of the programs from a documentation standpoint, explaining if someone other than a United States citizen applied for a benefit from the City, staff was required to get on the SAVE system and check on the person, and to make copies of the documentation provided from everyone. The same was required of every contract/purchase the City entered into with a third party, which increased the demand on the Purchasing Department. The Police Department issued solicitor's permits, alcohol handling permits, and gold permits that also required this process.

The law was written so the forms could no longer be mailed in. People would have to come in person, and staff had to make copies of the required documents and retain them. This was a state mandate, and the City had no choice but to comply. There would be more work on staff. Meeker referred to the Front Desk at City Hall, noting that the Front Desk would be left uncovered for the Customer Service Representative to go make a copy. They were looking at installing a copier in the Front Desk office or a scanner that work instantly. There might be some additional manpower needed to facilitate the transactions.

Public Information Officer/City Clerk Betsy Tyler said the City had approximately 80 alcohol licenses, and all those businesses had employees that were required to have handlers permits, and approximately 1,800 occupational taxes issued to businesses. Most annual payments for those were mailed to the City. Equipment and staffing challenges affected the Police Department, the Front Desk, and Purchasing.

Tyler continued that every time staff checked on a person who was not a citizen, the cost to the City was 50 cents for a Level 1 check verifying the person was a legal alien. If the check had to go to a Level 2, then another 50 cents was charged to the City and the check could require a few days. A Level 3 check was another 50 cents, and it took a few weeks to get an answer. She said a service fee might need to be added to cover staff time and the payments for the verification required for non-U.S. citizens. Meeker clarified the service fee was considered a regulatory fee and could be added to cover the cost, but it must accurately reflect the true cost.

Tyler said the requirements had been phased in over several years. Meeker added that people were used to mailing in their applications with the required documents. He expected that the City would get a number of complaints from those people who had done that. The surge of mailings came in November and December.

Meeker said in the past everyone could mail in applications. Since the requirements were phased in, copies of the documents had not been required for those renewing their Occupational Tax and alcohol licenses prior to December 31, 2011. Since January 1, 2012, the documentation had been required. Depending on the surge of people in November and December to renew, people could be waiting in line.

Pennington said the people manning the stations had to be very diplomatic as some people were very upset about the requirements. Staff had already seen it happen when people came in without all the documents. Having people who were bilingual on staff also helped in getting the job done. Staff knew compliance would cost more, and they had an idea of the equipment that was needed, adding Council that would hear more during the year.

Fleisch asked if the same process had to be done every year if the person was already in the system. Tyler said the same documents were required every year for every benefit.

Haddix asked how much training was required to use the E-verify system. Meeker said he did not know, but the system seemed to be somewhat user-friendly. Tyler confirmed that it was fairly easy to use once into it.

Presentation and discussion of the VC3 report and recommendations relative to the City's IT system and what impact it will have on current and future budgets

Fleisch noted that Matt Robinson, the City's Information Technology (IT) administrator, would be leaving the City's employ for another position on March 14. She thanked Robinson for everything he had done through the tight budgetary times, adding his efforts had not gone unnoticed.

Sandy Reeser, president of VC3, and Ryan Wilson, Georgia regional manager, presented the report and recommendations to Council, noting that VC3 had been asked to provide an in-depth technology assessment and to provide findings, a summary analysis, and recommendations based on the assessment. The scope of the project included reviewing all data networks, IT systems, and services utilized by the City, including staff interviews with key department leaders. Reeser said the end result was that VC3 was able to provide a technology roadmap that allowed the City to chart a budgetary and technology plan for short, mid, and long-term decisions.

The City's technical environment had many areas for improvement in technology infrastructure and design, according to the assessment summary. Reeser said VC3 felt the City's technology budget would best be spent on a premise-based cloud solution, which would provide increased performance for the end-user, a more robust and reliable infrastructure, and cost savings through reduced hardware capital expenditures as compared to a traditional (non-virtualized) environment. Moving to a premise-based cloud solution would also position the City to easily transition to a hosted cloud in the future.

The key findings included an environment not designed/architected for manageability (prioritization of support and manageability over price; prioritization of consistency over price); not leveraging zero cost features to provide better end user experiences, support the environment more effectively, and reduce staff time to deliver end user functionality; not leveraging mature technology to reduce capital cost; lack of staff/skill set for complexity of current environment; focus on end user hardware made if difficult to get momentum behind solving core foundation issues, a lot of one off disparate applications; and a rating in the bottom 25% of same-size organizations of core infrastructure.

The Recommendation Summary included re-architecting the environment – moving to a private internal cloud (saving approximately $48,000/year), which implemented properly would build out the Active Directory, clean up server issues, facilitate Native Outlook Client Deployment to all users, and centralize all AV and Patch Management. Fixing the staffing/skill set issues would cost more than what was currently spent and would address the CIO role internally or externally. Other recommendations included simplifying and solidifying the backup strategy, cleaning up the networking infrastructure, creating a Steering Committee, and developing a long-range cloud and Disaster Recovery/BC plan.

Wilson continued that staff interview comments included the need for the full Outlook Client; Incode integration with other software, such as connectivity needed between the 21 separate Access databases; more reliable IT infrastructure; faster response to technology issues and projects; IT seen as a bottleneck; need to change to another system to work with the County easier; need to pull reports without contacting IT; manual submission of time cards; no option for self-service by employees or management staff; applications running slow; two different versions of Incode in place; frequent viruses on personal computers; Excel spreadsheets and active databases were manual and duplicated; and need for project management software.

Wilson went over an assessment of workstations and using Thin Clients as a virtual desktop environment rather than PCs, noting that 82% (191) of the City's workstations needed replacement. Dienhart asked for clarification that VC3 recommended using Citrix Systems for that. Wilson said they were very familiar with Citrix and had much success with it. Reeser compared a Thin Client to a lightweight PC at about one-half to one-third the cost of a PC.

Haddix asked about connectivity and bandwidth, saying if either one was lost, then the desktop was lost. Wilson said that was why they had recommended a private cloud, adding that issues were encountered with hosted clouds or the loss of the network connection. As long as the users could still connect to the private cloud, the users would still have access. Wilson and Reeser said the private cloud option also provided the flexibility to move to a public cloud in future, noting that things changed and improvements were made quickly so a public cloud could be the best option in the future. Dienhart asked if there would be any cost savings to moving to a public cloud now. Reeser said there would not be a savings, and the price point for a public cloud was still on the higher end, but they believed the cost would go down over time. Dienhart asked if there would be any off-site backup. Reeser said there were some suggestions in the recommendations for later on, but there were other more pressing issues for the short term. Haddix said that, at this time, he was not comfortable with the security in a public cloud. Wilson also noted that 53% of the City's servers (eight of 15) were at the end of life.

VC3's short-term recommendations included upgrading the existing core network switches, implementing server virtualization, creating a new centralized City domain, implementing a private cloud (thin clients, remote access, virtualized desktops), implementing centralized backup solution and including all servers in backup, implementing centralized AV and patch management, and deploying Outlook client to desktops. The estimated total for Phase 1 projects with fixed costs was $480,204, and included an update of the existing core switching ($8,051), implementing server virtualization ($133,521), centralizing City Domain infrastructure ($88,4860, implementing private cloud ($120,834), premise e-vault backup ($69,564), centralized AV & Windows patch management ($54,126), and deploying Outlook Client to 150 desktops ($5,625).

Mid-term recommendations included implementing an IT Steering Committee and IT alignment processes, moving to a full service 24X7X365 proactive support model, and upgrading the remaining network switches. Phase 2 projects with fixed costs included upgrading remaining switching infrastructure ($134,000), and Phase 2 projects with recurring costs included the 24X7 proactive service model ($28,614 monthly).

The long-term recommendations included implementing a centralized City wireless infrastructure, implementing a geographically separated Disaster Recovery Solution, and implementing a lifecycle replacement process. The total for Phase 3 projects was $56,867; including a centralized secure City wireless infrastructure ($48,707) and a disaster recovery-bare metal restore ($8,160).

Fleisch asked if the Airport Authority (PCAA) and the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) were included in the assessment. Reeser said they were not.

Reeser said Phase 1 would take approximately 90 days to implement, and training was included in that time and should be minimal as most things were similar. Fleisch asked if software for Human Resources was included. Reeser said it was not. Fleisch asked if it had been evaluated as far as the best program. Financial Services Director Paul Salvatore said there had been a presentation at a past Retreat, noting the funding levels for IT, and there was $417,000 earmarked in the FY 2012 budget. Much of that funding was still there waiting for the evaluation. Salvatore said he and Robinson had discussed the cloud technology, but felt there was no need for an IT strategic plan when there was no money to support it. The basic infrastructure needed to be in place.

Pennington continued that recommended changes would change the entire environment. If the City did not choose to implement Phase 1, there was no point in doing anything else. Phase 1 provided the foundation. Once the core was in place, the City could start utilizing the abilities. Reeser said that, from an environment perspective, it would take quite some time to set up. Once everything was in place, then decisions could be made regarding the applications and the applications could be rolled out 10 times more efficiently.

Dienhart asked if the training during Phase 1 would also be for the on-site IT Department. Reeser said it would. Dienhart asked if the infrastructure would give the City the ability for an Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) for all its databases. Reeser said it would give the foundation, but it was not a decision for a centralized application. Dienhart clarified that all the applications used currently would just be on a new infrastructure. Reeser said with two exceptions, the full Outlook Client and anti-virus software. Wilson added there were some instances where new applications were needed, but in others, it was a matter of training to link the applications. They needed to research it some more.

Haddix said the current IT situation dated back multiple Councils, including members who did not understand technology, could not see beyond the money, and did not understand how much production time was lost. Now was the prime time to make the changes and save money down the road.

Dienhart asked if the costs were based on purchases or leases of equipment. Reeser said there were all kinds of arrangements available. Salvatore said there was a possibility of alternate funding; and one of the first things staff needed to do was to discuss with VC3 how to reallocate that $417,000 for the best use. Dienhart said if money could be saved by leasing rather than buying, the option should be considered. Pennington said he needed to meet with Salvatore and the City's investment counselor, as well as VC3, to determine what would be the best alternative. Salvatore said they needed to look at how much VC3 would charge for its services, as well as the equipment costs. There would also be several budget amendments needed. Pennington said staff wanted to make sure Council had a picture of where the City was. Now it was just a matter of finding the right combination.

Haddix asked Reeser if he had a recommendation on which company to use for the equipment as they were all different. Reeser recommended Dell, which the City had already been considering.

A break was held from 10:10 – 10:30 a.m.

Discussion of Storm Water Utility and future financing
Public Services Director/Stormwater Utility Manager Mark Caspar briefed Council on the Storm Water Utility's previously established goals and what had been achieved. The achieved goals included implementing a new stormwater ordinance, complying with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II permit, implementing a public education and information program, mapping drainage system features, modeling and evaluating the City's watersheds, implementing a long-term water quality monitoring program, and identifying/implementing a long-term funding strategy. Those goals that were ongoing included assessing the Flat Creek dissolved oxygen total maximum daily load (TMDL), evaluating septic system impacts in the City, and addressing the highest priority stormwater flooding projects.

Haddix asked Caspar if staff was working with the Fayette County Health Department on the septic system monitoring. Caspar said there was a big footprint of septic systems along Lake Peachtree, and they just kept an eye on them. There had been failures in the past few years, and the monitoring had help catch the failures. They did work with the Health Department.

Caspar continued that the goals moving forward included ensuring all new construction strictly followed the City's standards, maintaining compliance with the MPDES Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) permit, continuing to monitoring water quality trends in the City's streams and surface waters, rehabilitating several major drainage control facilities in the next few years, implementing a more aggressive MS4 inspection program, beginning the implementation of a proactive capital rehabilitation program, and ensuring long-term maintenance of drainage systems as they were rehabilitated. Caspar noted the City's MS4 permit expired in September 2012, adding he was sure the requirements would be more stringent and there would be more mandates to implement.

The major drainage control issues were the 67 City-maintained detention ponds, the drainage system assessment, an evaluation system, and addressing known issues.

Common detention pond needs included removing trees and vegetation growing on the dams, failing or inadequate outlet structures, non-existent or failing emergency spillways, not meeting the City standards for free board during the 100-year design storm, downstream homes that were located within the breach zone of a dam, and the need to provide significant flood protection to downstream homes. Common goals for detention pond rehabilitation including removing trees from the dams, installing new or repairing outlet control structures, installing a plunge pool at the discharge point of outlet pipes, flattening slopes on downstream faces of dams as needed, installing emergency spillways as needed, and maintaining flood protection to downstream homes during construction. Areas of concern included the Rockspray Pond and dam, Kedron West detention pond, Kedron East detention pond, and the Bradford Estates/Creekside Crossing/Southside Church (BCS) pond.

Fleisch asked if the reason for the problems with the dams was the lack of maintenance. Caspar said the history of the detention ponds was the developer put them in, and everyone else forgot about them. The utility had been making way with the crews cleaning the smaller ponds out and fixing them. They had not been given the priority they should have.

Caspar said much of the system was quickly aging to its useful life and much of it was made of corrugated metal pipe. Prior to 2006, minimal routine maintenance items were completed. Several systems were/might be undersized. Approximately 96% of the infrastructure was corrugated metal pipe, and there were areas where gas lines and other utilities went through the storm drains, as well as many places where the bottoms (inverts) of the pipes were gone. Metal pipes had a 25-year average useful life. Caspar said 42% (1,780 locations) of the metal pipe was 25 years old or older. Twenty six miles of metal pipe would need maintenance or replacement soon.

Proposed improvements included implementing a formal maintenance prioritization program that would use criticality to establish a pipe class, inspection of the system in order of class, prioritization of maintenance based on inspection, and using the maintenance need to determine funding. In addition, staff proposed inspecting the drainage system once every five years and utilizing *in-situ* rehabilitation methods to the maximum extent practicable and cost effective. The prioritization program included Class 1 System Components (pipes under roads with limited access, pipes that passed within approximately 10 feet of a structure), Class 2 System Components (pipes under collector roads such as Peachtree Parkway and Robinson Road, pipes that passed within approximately 25 feet of a structure, detention ponds), Class 3 System Components (all other pipes except those under cart paths), and Class 4 System Components (cart path pipes).

The inspection priority goals included inspecting all Class 1 pipes this year, completing the inspection of the remaining system over the next five years, including re-inspections as needed each year for more critical observations, using inspections to determine pipe replacement and maintenance priority, catching failures before they occurred, and utilizing *in-situ* rehabilitation methods to the maximum extent practicable and cost effective.

Caspar said staff was considering using centrifugally-cast concrete pipes, noting that cast-in-place concrete pipes and pre-cast concrete pipes had a 75-year average useful life. Caspar said rates would need to be adjusted to do some of the work needed, and a new bond would be needed. Haddix asked what the total bill was. Caspar said it depended on how much they wanted to accomplish each year. Currently, staff had budget $500,000 annually for the concrete linings or *in-situ* work, so the bond amount would be in the $8 million range. Several million was needed without the lining component just for the projects that had to be done.

Learnard said the work had to be done to stay compliant and legal, and the citizens sometimes just wanted to know the money was going for what needed to be done. Haddix noted the funds could not roll over into the General Fund. Dienhart said there would also be a 75-year system instead of a 25-year system, so the money would go a lot further than it had in the past. Fleisch asked if the work would be contracted. Caspar said the lining work would be put out for bid and brought to Council for approval. Fleisch asked how many linear feet could be done with the money in the bond. Caspar said less than 1% of the total system, and 42% of the system was at or near the end of its useful life. Haddix stated it was a no-option issue.

Discussion of Public Facilities ~~and Recreation Improvements~~ and budget impacts
Community Services Director Jon Rorie briefed Council on the Facilities Authority bond, noting that $3 million was authorized and approximately $1 million had been encumbered to date. The initial identified projects for Public Services included bulk oil storage repair and relocation ($50,000), an addition to the Baseball Soccer Complex (BSC) building maintenance facility addition ($75,000), and break room and restroom renovation ($40,000). The identified projects for Community Services totaled $1,544,255 and included the Kedron bubble replacement ($454,000), Tennis Center covered court roof ($150,000), Amphitheater building improvements ($100,000), Library exterior sealing ($100,000), Kedron large pool resurfacing ($40,000), All Children's Playground resurfacing ($50,000), Battery Way boat dock replacement ($150,000), and the BSC parking expansion ($500,000). Rorie said he already knew the $50,000 budgeted for the All Children's Playground resurfacing was a low figure, and the actual cost could be closer to $100,000.

Public Safety's identified projects included Station 81 driveway and parking lot ($100,000), Station 82 exterior wall sealing ($55,000), Station 82 roof remodel ($175,000), Station 81 exterior wall sealing ($75,000), and parking lot resurfacing ($75,000). The projects totaled $480,000.

Unidentified projects included $810,745 for projects that were to be determined. Uses for those funds included $243,000 in Kedron bubble change orders, $19,000 for the Kedron pool fence, $60,000 for The Gathering Place remodel, and $214,000 for the Library roof. The administrative total was $555,000, which left $255,000 in available bond funds.

Rorie gave Council a seven-page list of projects that included the cost, funding source, status, project type, and priority for each project. He noted some of the projects had been completed, adding that as many as 50 items had been identified for use of the remaining funds in the Facilities Authority bond. Rorie said Recreation's top three projects were the Glenloch remodel, tennis court replacement, and repairs and upgrades for the Braelinn Recreation Complex. There were items that were not on the list, including the HVAC system at the Tennis Center, which had had two recent failures.

Rorie continued that staff had looked at how to determine the funding priorities based on objective facts, reasons, and principles. The ranking criteria for the projects were core, essential, and discretionary. The analysis included facility assessments, the "second right answer" considerations, price vs. cost, and utilitarianism. A core designation was critical to remedying or preventing a major health or safety hazard. Examples included sewer line problems and sinkholes in roadways. They were legally mandated and had to be done. Essential projects included those that generated positive fiscal impact that could feed back into further repairs, maintenance, or funding other projects.

Rorie referred to the project for Amphitheater repairs, adding that the engineering consulting company was to assess the Amphitheater the next week. They would look at the entry of the facility. Staff already knew the roof leaked badly. The assessment would help determine the best use of the bond proceeds.

As an example of the "second right answer" considerations, Rorie referred to the Battery Way Boat Dock, which had $150,000 designated in the initial Facilities Authority bond. It was listed as a core project due to health and safety issues. The options included doing nothing (possibility vs. probability), removing the risk/eliminating the exposure, controlling the risk/reducing the exposure, and replacement (possibility vs. probability). He said the assessment revealed a very low risk of failure under normal conditions and use. The dock was fine, provided 100 – 200 people did not try to crowd on to it as they did on July 4th. He pointed out that the dock had been closed during the 2011 festivities, recommending that continue to be done. The risk could be controlled. Rorie said the money designated for the dock could then be used for other projects.

Rorie referred to the $100,000 designated for the storage building for the Kedron bubble. For as long as anyone remembered, the bubble had been stored in the Recreation Admin Building basement when not in use. The bubble was stored on pallets that were picked up by a forklift, and the bubble had been damaged when it was moved. The proposed project included a metal building shell with a green metal roof, gray split-faced block, and a maintenance free arbor. The 10-year cost was $130,000. Staff had looked a price vs. cost and found another option. For an initial investment of $9,000, six steel storage containers could be used to house the bubble and moved anywhere in the City. The annual moving cost would be $1,000. The 10-year cost would be $19,000, leaving $110,000 for other core and essential needs.

The next example was the Baseball Soccer Complex (BSC) parking lot, and $500,000 was earmarked in the Facilities Bond for paving, which was probably a rough estimate. Staff had looked at potential sites, where grass was located and people were already parking. Rorie pointed out the facility had 342 spots, and at times, the lot was full. There was a plan to add another 68 spots. Staff looked at areas already used for parking, trying to tie them into the existing stormwater issues. The additional 68 spots still might not be enough. There was a tournament planned in June with over 1,200 participants. Rorie said a second option was to use a grass pave system. The turnkey price was approximately $210,000 per acre or 100 spots. The system included rock placed into a form that was grassed over. The advantage was an acre of greenspace that could also be used as a field if needed as well as overflow parking. Rorie continued that the area would not be used every week, but for overflow parking. There were still maintenance issues, and the area had to be kept under an acre. Staff was evaluating the option, so it might not be the final recommendation, but for now, it appeared to be the best alternative for a long-term investment.

Rorie said utilitarianism meant the greatest amount of good for the greatest number, which was the toughest element to calculate. Staff hoped to complete the facilities assessment in 30 – 45 days, and then would bring the assessments to Council on the core facilities with cost estimates.

Dienhart thanked Rorie for making sure the City was using taxpayer money to the best possible extent. Pennington said it was a real team effort with Rorie, Casper, City Engineer Dave Borkowski, and Salvatore. There was a possibility there might be another bond needed.

Fleisch asked Caspar if the sewer at Shakerag had been evaluated and if there was a cost estimate. Caspar said the evaluation was underway. There were issues with the line, including identifying where everything was located. An estimate would be done when the assessment was completed.

The Retreat broke for lunch.

Discussion of ~~Public Facilities and~~ Recreation Improvements and budget impacts
The Retreat resumed at 1:15 p.m.

Rorie continued that the facility assessments had identified routine maintenance items that would not be included in the facilities bond (weather stripping, painting doors, etc.). Recreation had worked with Buildings & Grounds and utilized community service workers to complete many of the routine maintenance issues. There were many other items not on the list dealing with parks and facilities.

Rorie noted the City had 32 recreation facilities and 416 acres of recreation land. Some of the parks were smaller and difficult to find. The facilities included 15 baseball, seven softball, 10 soccer, and two lacrosse fields, as well as 12 tennis courts, 22 playground/tot lots, and eight concession stands/restrooms.

The Recreation Master Plan covered 2007 to 2011, but was not fully implemented. Some of the elements needed to be reviewed before moving forward. Rorie said the goal was to provide a high level of recreation, but the focus now needed to be on maintenance.

Rorie said the City had a lot of volunteer support, but there were some pockets of opportunity to fill in gaps. The report also assumed recreation acreage would remain the same but would require more financial support from higher user fees and grants/sponsorships. The plan was also based on a 2008 population of 37,500, which had not been achieved yet.

The plan's objectives included assessing the adequacy of existing maintenance of the facilities and periodically reviewing maintenance operations for the most economical providers. Financing objectives included revenue from impact fees and implementing a three-tier fee structure for Peachtree City, Fayette County, and out-of-county users. This latter item had been implemented, but that did not mean it was an equitable approach.

Rorie noted that the fields at Braelinn had not been appropriately maintained by the City and needed work and that maintaining fields was more than mowing. True turf management also addressed the volume of field use. He said user fees and impact fees needed to tie into the maintenance of these facilities to be equitable.

The sports leagues (adult and youth) served about 11,000 participants, 70% of which were Peachtree City residents. Adult Softball was the single largest sport, followed by Youth Soccer. Little League Baseball and Youth Soccer were seeing slight but steady declines in participation, as were the other youth sports. Rorie said it should not be a surprise due to the gradual aging of the City's residents. The 2010 Census revealed minor drops in the children's age groups and minor increases in the 55 and older brackets, similar to the demographic changes happening to the country at large. That might mean the City needed to look at the focus of the Recreation Master Plan in the coming years to meet the programming needs of the community.

Rorie said, in contrast to the decreases in participation, the costs to maintain these facilities continued to increase. There was a growing gap between the user fees and the costs to maintain the facilities.

The Facilities Bond list identified several projects, including public tennis court resurfacing/replacement. The BSC projects included restroom renovations, parking lot expansion, fencing, netting, concessions roof, entrance signs, field resodding, storage, and irrigation system replacement. The Braelinn complex also needed field resodding. Some of these were more appropriately categorized as routine maintenance. Haddix asked about the option of extending the use of re-use water for the irrigation system, and Rorie said that was also under consideration.

Rorie noted the public tennis courts needed maintenance, via either crack-fill resurfacing or requiring a complete rebuild. The Bluesmoke courts had a sinkhole and had been closed for a year. Glenloch, despite volunteer assistance in maintaining, had structural problems that required serious remedies. Staff bid out tennis court resurfacing for 2012, with $36,000 in the budget. Six courts were put in the bid, two of which were optional. Four courts came in at the $36,000 limit. Fleisch asked if the problem with Bluesmoke courts was related to a stormwater issue. Haddix asked staff to assess court usage and to look at all the options, noting that contracting out use of two of the pools had been very beneficial.

Rorie then reviewed photographs of the maintenance problems at the City recreation facilities. He said problems ranged from major issues to minor issues that needed to be addressed before they became major issues.

Haddix asked if the security at the BSC now allowed the Little League access to the aAutomatic external defibrillator (AED) units. Dienhart added that a citizen had talked to him earlier in the week about the location of the AEDs, saying Little League needed to notify the coaches of the location of the units. Recreation Administrator Cajen Rhodes noted the units were accessible in the restroom areas and were no longer locked in the concession areas.

Fleisch asked about the French drain the association had proposed for one of the lower field areas at the BSC. Rorie said that project was underway as a joint effort with the association and staff, and they were working on other solutions to avoid the French drain, if possible.

Fleisch asked if the reconstruction required at the Braelinn tennis courts was related to stormwater. Rorie said he did not think so due to the elevated location of the courts. He said most of these facilities were reaching the end of their typical life span.

Rorie noted the exterior restrooms at Glenloch were in bad shape. The heaters did not work, so users were plugging portable heaters into an external outlet to heat the bathrooms. The City had removed those due to the potential liability. Rorie continued the greatest concern at Glenloch was electrical issues, and that needed to be researched before any other improvements or maintenance was undertaken at the facility.

Staff was recommending completing the facility assessments, followed by a Council workshop at which the fees and facility maintenance requirements could be reviewed and discussed. This would include youth sports, programming, and pool usage and membership. Dienhart asked how the City's fees compared to other cities, and Rorie said staff was gathering comparison data from similar cities on user fees at that time.

Haddix said staff needed hard data to present regarding the number of users, the total costs, and the claims that the amenities added value to homes whether used or not. Rorie felt maintaining the existing facilities was an important consideration because allowing them to decline would lead to declines in other areas. Dienhart agreed, but was concerned that the fees were too low and should be thoroughly reviewed. Rorie said he wanted to make sure the fee discussions included all the users. Fleisch said it was important to note that a parent with a child in football paid $100, but only $5 came to the City. Rorie said there were many equity issues that needed to be addressed and included in an overall analysis.

Rorie noted staff was also looking at short-term actions to address some of the issues. At the end of the day, the issue needed to be addressed. Haddix asked them to seek an equitable formula that did not put the burden on the back of Peachtree City property owners. Dienhart agreed, especially for participants who lived outside the City. Haddix said a rational, fact-based analysis would help to explain the issues to the citizens. Rorie said there were no sacred cows, and the issue would not be reviewed from an individual perspective or interest. Pennington said staff was about two thirds of the way through the analysis, and the issues of equitability were the hardest questions.

Learnard noted that comparing the state of the City's facilities, fields, and parking in comparisons to other cities was disheartening. She said she was glad they were addressing the issue. Haddix said Peachtree City was certainly not alone in struggling to address these types of issues, but had to find an answer right for this community. Pennington said Recreation was one of the City's hallmarks. The facilities were aging, and economic downturns always affected recreation first. Rorie had developed a team concept to address some of these issues, and Pennington would present that to Council in Executive Session the following week. He was going to introduce another program that had been successful in other areas for revitalizing these areas.

Relevant Issues
City Image
Pennington said there were areas of the City that needed to be revitalized. The City needed to be cognizant of the issue and develop programs to address it. Civic engagement and identification of the areas that were starting to degrade were the first steps.

Pennington said the NEAT (Neighborhood Enhancement and Appearance Team) approach had worked in other communities, with a team representing all key departments, as well as water and sewer providers, to go into a neighborhood for an assessment.

Dienhart said the City also needed to know if the community was living up to resident expectations, and he did not think it currently was. Pennington said he also had several emails from newer residents asking why the City did not have certain stores or amenities, for a city this size. It would ultimately be up to Council to set the course for the type of community Peachtree City would be in the future. Pennington noted that he had also had more positive comments about Peachtree City than about any city where he had served before. He added the residents felt, overall, that Peachtree City still looked pretty good.

Pennington asked if Council had any input on the City's image. Dienhart said he felt the City was on a slippery slope and was not heading in the right direction. He noted that the landscape maintenance had improved greatly this year, and he was pleased to see the focus on maintenance of public spaces. However, the signage needed to be addressed and the areas of disrepair needed to be maintained.

Fleisch agreed, saying that replacing the Kedron bubble played into that philosophy. The City could not say they would not maintain what was here. She noted that Peachtree City homes were maintaining their value in the economy, even though the average home age was 21 years. This was due to the parks and amenities the City offered. People who bought homes here also bought the intangible elements of the community, and that was what held Peachtree City above other locations. That was why maintaining what was in place was so important. She did not support adding new infrastructure, but felt they had to maintain what was in place.

Haddix noted that recreation was not a factor in his family's decision to move here 25 years ago, and he was not seeing that emphasis. The highest reason he saw for people moving to Peachtree City was the sign ordinance. Fleisch asked if it was not the schools, and Haddix said no because many of them did not have children.

Haddix said the safety was the second factor he heard, and the path system. The schools were only important to those with children. Haddix said that the recreational amenities were nice, but they were not what brought residents to the community.

Dienhart said that might be the case, but when signage and parks became rundown, people began complaining and influenced potential residents to move elsewhere. Haddix agreed, noting that they had to maintain the City to support the appeal of the motivating factors.

Pennington said that there was one key element in selling the City, and that was Council. Everyone had to have selling the City as the primary focus and put the City's image first. Haddix agreed, saying that when the Fireball Run participants had voted Peachtree City as their best stop, they cited the presentation and involvement of the elected officials in hosting their stop.

Learnard said she moved to Peachtree City from Alpharetta specifically for recreation. She came for a road race and, driving back, told her husband how beautiful the City was. Her second influence was the City's green spaces. While she had heard from a citizen about the need for maintenance of the green spaces, and she had toured the City with Caspar; however, this was not Hilton Head, and the green spaces were kept in a natural, preserved state. She felt that was very important. Her third influence was the path system. She echoed Dienhart's comments about the need for new and upgraded signage to give the community a facelift.

Learnard said, regarding another element of image, was that she thought there was a negative perception that Peachtree City was a difficult location to establish a business. She said they needed to better understand the challenges faced by local businesses. Fleisch said she felt this was something the new Fayette County Development Authority employee could address and help to streamline. Haddix said it was not as bad as it used to be, but could still be improved. Learnard said there needed to be a single location on the web site and people needed to know the City would help.

Fleisch added that, in her experience dealing with relocating families, the first component they looked at was the school system. Peachtree City's amenities were then the cherry on top, the thing that brought people to the community.

Annexation

Pennington said he wanted Council to discuss their position on annexation. To him, it reflected control of environment, and said there were two or three areas that needed to be controlled. He said east, west, and south of the City were huge developmental issues that would impact Peachtree City. Pennington clarified that he was specifically talking about areas to which Public

Safety already responded. He said he would like to see Council take a close look at those areas.

Learnard agreed. Haddix said there was a definite area to the south that needed review. The area to the east only moved the line out and could lead to additional issues. Pennington clarified that he was speaking of areas that were not in the City but Peachtree City was, to some extent, taking care of. Pennington said he was hoping Council would support bringing discussions of these areas forward. Dienhart agreed that it was better to prepare for possibilities than to wait until a request was made.

Pennington noted that some states considered a three-mile area beyond municipal borders as an "extra territorial jurisdiction," with zoning control or input within those areas to ensure that, if an area was annexed, it was already in conformance with the rest of the City. Development on the immediate borders of a City did not occur without that city's input.

Learnard agreed that they should proceed with a review of these areas.

Budget Schedule

Salvatore reviewed the schedule for the preparation of the FY 2013 Budget. There would be two workshops in June, public hearings in July, and adoption of the budget scheduled for the end of July. Learnard noted she would be out of town the last week of July. Salvatore noted that staff level budget work would begin in March.

Pennington said his final item was that many operational changes had been implemented in the preceding year. He was continuing forward with those and would he would continue bringing improvement proposals forward to Council to help streamline the operations.

Learnard said the City needed to play up the things Peachtree City did better than other communities did. She also said that the City had a number of veterans programs, and they had been nervous about some of the changes over the past year. Learnard thanked staff for working with the veterans groups to allay their concerns and keep the special events on track.

Retreat adjourned at 3:03 p.m., with attendees touring the new Community Room on the lower level of City Hall. City Planner David Rast gave a brief overview of the upcoming "ONE Peachtree City" program for updating the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Pam Dufresne
Deputy City Clerk

Don Haddix
Mayor

Betsy Tyler
City Clerk