City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 21, 2019
6:30 p.m.

The City Council of Peachtree City met in regular session on Thursday, February 21, 2019. Mayor Pro Tem Terry Ernst, presiding in the absence of Mayor Vanessa Fleisch, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Others attending: Mike King, Kevin Madden, and Phil Prebor.

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition
Ernst presented a proclamation to DeMolay members declaring February as DeMolay Month. Shamon Thomas of the Public Works Department was recognized as the City's Employee of the Month.

Minutes
King moved to approve the February 7, 2019, regular meeting minutes as written. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda
1. Consider New Alcohol License – Asian Cook, 1200 SR 74 S, Suite #16
2. Consider Bid for Kedron Pools Resurfacing – United Pool Construction
3. Consider Bids for Kedron Pools Sand Filters (2) Replacement – United Pool Construction
Madden moved to approve Consent Agenda items 1,2, and 3. King seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

New Agenda Items
02-19-04 Public Hearing – Consider Variance to Sign Ordinance, 1119 HWY 74 S
Senior Planner Robin Cailloux explained that the wall sign ordinance limited the sign area for single-tenant industrial buildings to 150 feet. The applicant's company had recently reorganized and needed to add the word "Group" to the building's outside wall. She showed depictions of the current appearance and how the signage with the additional word would look. This would bring the sign area to 170 feet, a 14% increase over what the ordinance allowed. Cailloux said staff had examined the five categories required in consideration of a variance. There were no special circumstances of which staff was aware, but, as to the second criterion, the building's facade was synthetic stucco, and removing the old sign to replace with another that met corporate logo guidelines would damage the finish. There were no other exceptional circumstances. Cailloux noted that staff did not believe granting this variance would be detrimental to the Comprehensive Plan, which encouraged the expansion of existing industries in the City.

The applicant, Sigvaris Inc. Senior Project Manager Jonathan Leonard, said they received the new signage logo requirements from the company's headquarters in Switzerland. Sigvaris, a 150-year-old company with 17 locations worldwide and 1,500 employees, had more than 150 employees in Peachtree City. The Peachtree City site would host the firm's international manager's meetings April 6 – 11, with 80 guests from all 17 locations. This meant they were under a considerable time crunch to get the new logo installed. Leonard explained that addition of the word "Group" to the company name represented continuity in its operations as a manufacturer of medical supplies.

No one else wished to speak either in favor or opposition to this variance, and Ernst closed the public hearing.

King said he had no objection to this request and recalled a similar situation where a variance was granted several years ago for a business at The Overlook shopping center. He remarked that Sigvaris needed to have its correct name visible on the side of its building.

Given the size of the building, Prebor remarked that he had no problem with granting the variance, adding that the new lettering did not look out of place.

Madden commented that this was the kind of manufacturing business Peachtree City wanted, and they had been a good corporate neighbor, keeping their grounds impeccable.

Ernst asked if the word "Group" would be in blue, as shown on the rendering, and Leonard said it would.

Prebor moved to approve New Agenda item 02-19-04, variance to Sign Ordinance, 1119 HWY 74 S. Madden seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

02-19-05 Public Hearing – Consider Variance to Side Setback, 103 Tapestry Place
This was a single-family residential property in the southwest part of the City, Cailloux related, a double-fronted lot with frontage on Brocade Court and Tapestry Place. A depiction of the site showed where the setback requirements were according to the zoning ordinance. The applicant wished to add a shed, and the zoning ordinance allowed encroachment into the rear setback, but not into the side setback. Cailloux presented photos showing the view from the street and pointed out how the shed would be viewed and also how it related to the pool. Staff was not aware of any extenuating circumstances on the property. There were no topographical or size issues, and the applicant had not exhibited any evidence of practical difficulties. She said it appeared the structure could be moved closer to the existing fence without coming into conflict with the ordinance that required a 20-foot separation of a space used for storage of flammables and a dwelling. The variance would not be detrimental to the public safety or general welfare, nor would it create any significant inconsistencies with the Comprehensive Plan, which encouraged re-investment and redevelopment within neighborhoods.

Homeowner Emmanuel Bashakes explained that said the home was totally handicap accessible, and the pool was used for therapy. He showed the ramp from the gate to the pool that provided wheelchair access. If the shed was pushed toward the house about three feet in order to meet the side setback requirements, Bashakes pointed out, the ramp would be compromised. The storage unit would be built by Timberline, which remodeled the home in 1998, and the materials used would match the house. A significant item for him, he said, was the storage of flammables in that unit away from the home, as well as not compromising the ramp. The existing landscaping would be continued around the shed. He said his neighbors had been informed of his plans and were supportive. Bashakes reported that because of the way his house was set with two fronts, his neighbor's house faced the rear of his house. If the shed was placed on the left side of his property, it would be in front of that neighbor's house. The whole idea was to be neighbor-friendly and not stand out.

No one else wished to speak in favor or in opposition, and Ernst closed the public hearing.

King said he had visited the property and agreed wholeheartedly with the applicant. The first thing he looked at in these cases, he remarked, was correspondence with the neighbors and noted that Bashakes seemed to have gone beyond what was normally required in making the shed look like his home.

Madden and Prebor both concurred with King.

Ernst said maintaining the handicap ramp was important, so the shed seemed to be in the best place.

King moved to approve New Agenda item 02-19-05, variance for the side setback at 103 Tapestry Place. Madden seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Council/Staff Topics

City Manager Jon Rorie stated that he wanted to rearrange the order of the Council/Staff Topics as they appeared on the agenda for the purpose of thoughtful flow. He recommended that Fire Chief Joe O'Conor begin with an update on the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant. City Clerk Betsy Tyler would follow with an update on the solid waste exclusive franchise request for proposals (RFP), and he would conclude with an update on the 2019 Georgia General Assembly session and a discussion of the Multi-Use Path Master Plan and related issues.

SAFER Grant Application

In January 2018, O'Conor recalled, he told Council the Fire Department was applying for a SAFER grant. These grants allocated $350 million nationwide to pay for 75% of the salary and benefits for additional firefighters. Peachtree City did not get the grant, which O'Conor said was not surprising considering that last year fewer than 300 grants were given nationwide. However, he said, they intended to apply for the grant again this year, O'Conor noted, explaining that it would enable them to hire three new firefighters, one per shift. The SAFER grant covered 75% of their salaries and benefits for the first two years of employment, and 35% of those costs in the third year.

Update on Solid Waste Exclusive Franchise Request for Proposals

Tyler remarked there had been discussions of the City's trash franchise services last year during the Retreat process, budget adoption meetings, and again at a September Council meeting. The existing service and possible changes were explored, along with economies of scale, particularly as related to the investment the City was making in repaving its streets. She said staff, at Council's request, had almost completed a Request for Proposal (RFP). It would include a single provider for residential curbside service, with the contractor billing the customers. Service would be mandatory and would include weekly garbage collection, co-mingled recycling, and yard waste. Extra carts would be available for an extra fee, and yard waste would not have to be bagged or bundled. There would be a clause requiring that back door service be provided at no extra charge if the customer had a note from a doctor saying the customer was physically unable to roll carts to the curb. The RFP also stipulated a monthly bulk waste collection service that residents could call to confirm. Tyler said City facility garbage and recycling service would be included at no charge.

The RFP also included options for additional service, such as servicing the bins at the City's recycling stations, removal of excess mulch at the Mulch Center on Rockaway Road, and additional service in the event of a storm that caused a lot of damage. Built into the proposal were allowances for rate increases based on the consumer price index (CPI) and fuel costs. A fuel surcharge would be allowed.

The plan was to bring a final version of the RFP to Council for review at the March 7 meeting, and it would be sent out in late March with a 30-day deadline. Council would then review the proposals during the May workshop and potentially approve a contract at one of the May meetings. The target date for implementation, Tyler stated, was October 1 because all current haulers bill quarterly. This date would also give the hauler that was chosen time to prepare for the expanded service.

Council laughed at the idea of removing the Rockaway Road mulch "mountain." Rorie noted that he received many emails asking them to prohibit burning in the City, but the flip side of that was that people would then dump yard debris in the greenspaces near their homes. He said they discussed doing controlled burns of some of the larger areas to get rid of the debris. Rorie said there was a project underway where the City hauled limbs and logs to the Fayette County Transfer Station and to a pulp plant in order to keep it out of the mulch yard.

Madden asked if there had been a good response from the three carriers who currently worked in Peachtree City. Tyler responded that nothing had been sent out yet, and Council must approve the RFP first. Rorie said they had ideas of what was charged in other cities, but nothing had gone out yet.

King noted that the goal of this was to keep three different carriers from going through all the neighborhoods at different times, creating wear on the road system. He said he hoped there would be time limits so carriers would not be collecting garbage at 3 a.m.

Pam Kemp asked if yard debris would be picked up curbside if it was bagged. Rorie said that was included in service now. However, many people were not willing to bag their clippings for collection, opting instead to burn them. The RFP they were working on would ask carriers to pick up unbagged yard waste at curbside. Rorie also mentioned that Public Works had retrofitted a dump truck so it could vacuum up leaves, and carriers had the same type of equipment.

Martine Yancey asked if the City used mulch from the mulch pile or purchased mulch. Rorie said they did both. They did use some mulch from the yard at subdivision entrances and at some facilities, but also purchased mulch for use around other facilities. Yancey also mentioned that a Waste Industries employee had told a friend of hers that Waste Industries had obtained the contract to provide City services. Rorie said nothing had been decided yet. Tyler pointed out that Waste Industries was one of three companies providing residential garbage service in the City.

Al Yougel, director of Keep Peachtree City Beautiful (KPTCB) said he loved the idea of mandatory collection, noting that he spent much time taking household waste out of the cart path trash cans. He also noted that the industry was split into companies that did curbside and those who did roll-offs. Few companies did both, although they might find a company that would take the contract and sublet it. Yougel noted that commercial haulers sent in big trucks that lifted the dumpsters overhead, then went off down the roads, streaming trash all the way. He said he would like to see this aspect controlled as well. Ideally, garbage should be bagged before placement in these containers.

Prebor remarked that was a slippery slope, and Rorie agreed, saying it was a nuanced decision and if it was easy, it would have been done years ago. All the consequences must be considered. Yougel recalled that there were three residential waste haulers doing business in the City, but more than 10 companies that picked up commercial waste. If they were not loading near homeowners, they were out in the early morning when few people were around to observe them.

Prebor said it would be interesting to see what other cities did on the commercial side.

Rorie remarked that there were a lot of things to look at. He mentioned the magnitude of a company having to roll out service for 12,000 customers. If the cost of a 95-gallon container was $100, then think of the cost of 12,000 containers, he noted. It would be a significant investment. Rorie wondered how the doors to the dumpster areas were opened and closed for the haulers, speculating that few of those doors were closed. Some businesses, built before the ordinance required them, did not have those surrounds. It was not a simple issue, he concluded.

2019 Georgia General Assembly Legislative Update

Staff tracked legislation introduced in the Georgia House each year, Rorie reported. He wanted to begin with a discussion they had last year regarding short-term rentals, or Air BnB-type situations. He said he often received emails from residents concerned that a home in their neighborhood was being used for short-tern rentals or even as a party house, which brought in additional traffic and other problems. Last year there was a House Bill that would have prohibited any city from passing a law prohibiting these rentals, and Rorie said he favored that. That legislation died in committee, but could be revived, Rorie pointed out.

This came about on the tail end of the Super Bowl in Atlanta. Rorie said Kym Hughes, director of the Peachtree City Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) had provided him with figures that said the Super Bowl generated, in and around Atlanta, about $3.3 million in short-term rental revenue. In general, fewer than 10% of the homeowners voluntarily paid their share of taxes. A local business would build a hotel, and, through a legislative act, the rooms were taxed at 8%, he explained, but with a short-term rental of a home, the homeowner would probably never pay that tax. Rorie said it should be fair, and this was not. Thoughtful cities, including Savannah, required that only permanent residents could lease out homes as short-term rentals. Signs were banned. Noise ordinances must be posted inside the homes, and adequate trash collection bins must be provided. Rorie noted that citation revenue related to enforcing Air BnBs in Santa Monica, California, was $31,000. The cost of the enforcement program was $400,000. The nuances of this decision included private property rights and the power of government, Rorie stated, adding this issue could come up again.

Continuing the discussion of 2019 legislation, Rorie noted that the City had spent a lot of time working on a right-of-way ordinance in anticipation of the rollout of small cell technology. Regulations were being driven by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), then passed on to the state, and finally trickled down to the local level.

Last year, legislation was introduced that would have prohibited local governments from regulating cell phone towers and small cell rollout sites, but it was not passed. The Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) began negotiating with cell service providers such as Verizon and Sprint. Critical for small cell legislation was the ability to roll out 5G, Rorie commented, adding he found it interesting that GMA sought compromise legislation to allow local governments some regulatory power. He showed photos from San Francisco, which regulated small cell towers, and from Oakland, which did not. Rorie noted that he supported small cell technology because of the enhanced coverage and possible economic benefits, but he also wanted the City to have some control. He also showed a photo of a small cell installation co-located on a light pole and another that was strapped to a tree, saying that was not how Peachtree City, with its thousands of trees, wanted to proceed.

The compromise legislation would allow local governments to incentivize co-location through fee systems and the permit process. It also protected historic districts and residential areas. Another provision called for reasonable right-of-way fees and incentives for co-location. In some cases, however, new poles might be needed. The compromise allowed expanded grounds for permit denials, such as planned roadwork. It also would let local governments set timeframes for removing small cell equipment if other utilities were being moved. Rorie noted that projects were often held up by delays in relocating utilities.

Rorie told Council they might see some small cell legislation in the remaining days of the General Assembly, but noted that Peachtree City already had its ordinances in place related to small cell siting in the rights-of-way. That was why they often recommended denial of other right-of-way uses. The right-of-way belonged to the public, not to any particular carrier or individual.

Last year, Rorie related, many people told him he misstepped when he introduced the issue of house paint colors, but he said that was not a misstep. Peachtree City faced a stark reality as it approached its 60th anniversary. While many subdivisions had homeowners' associations (HOAs), others did not. Restrictive covenants either had expired or would soon expire. The City faced problems such as homeowners dividing larger lots into two smaller lots, but there was nothing it could do. He reminded Council that Cailloux had proposed the City revise the zoning code and create a Unified Development Ordinance. This discussion was spurred by a variance request for a fence that did not meet zoning requirements, but was suitable for the situation. These types of issues meant the City should examine how it wanted to proceed over the next 50 years.

Rorie showed two photos of a home that had several tarps over the roofs and debris on the outside, asking if tarps were appropriate covers for porches. Another photo showed a house that had several different colors and types of siding. Currently, Rorie noted, the City could not require that it be painted. The State Attorney General had said paint colors could not be dictated, even in historic districts. What a city could do, Rorie said, led to local legislation.

This year, legislation was introduced to prohibit local governments from dictating building design elements in single- or double-family dwellings. Specifically, it regulated exterior building color, type or style of exterior cladding, style or materials of roof structure or porches, exterior nonstructural architectural ornamentation, doors and garage doors, number and types of rooms, interior layout of rooms, and types of foundation structures approved under state minimum standard codes. The legislation would not apply to state or federal historic districts, mobile homes, and homes governed by an HOA or a covenant. HOAs and covenants were the key, Rorie said, noting that the local government would not be able to set these standards. The bill had been assigned to the Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee, but it could die a slow death there. However, six of the bill's co-sponsors sat on that committee.

Rorie said he wanted Council to be informed and watch the bills about these three topics, all of which they had discussed previously. King asked if they could regulate or make mandatory HOAs and their covenants. City Attorney Ted Meeker said there would need to be 100% participation among the property owners and the lenders. Rorie said cities across the state were lining up in opposition to this bill, and it might never come out of committee. It might be premature for the cities to move in opposition, but it was worth watching.

Prebor asked how to best keep an eye on pending legislation. Rorie said he read the *House Daily* every two or three days. The process was not too fast, so there would be plenty of advance notice if a public hearing was scheduled.

Madden commented that, in his experience, these types of bills did not just come up out of thin air and wondered who might be the money or power behind it. None of the municipalities supported this. Somebody would benefit, he noted.

King likened it to the legislation a few years ago that allowed firecrackers to be shot off until 2 a.m. on holidays, even though the City had an existing ordinance regulating it. Madden said the firecracker manufacturers benefited in that case, but in this topic, he wondered where the money was. They could respond with a boycott, if it was a commercial interest.

Rorie pointed out there was always the option to email your representative or committee members. He did not know who was behind the legislation and would not care to speculate, but said his standard response of 30-30-30 applied: 30% were for it, 30% against it, and 30% did not care or did not know. He pledged to keep an eye on the legislation and keep Council updated.

Rorie said Madden could look it up and see where the money was. Madden suggested the press might want to look into it.

Multi-use Path Master Plan

Rorie remarked that he knew this was deceiving when he put this item on the agenda using this wording. He viewed discussion of this item as a prelude to the March 5 workshop. The agenda for that session included "safeguarding our community." He said he intended to use the Master Plan as a vehicle to lead into the workshops in March, April, and May. The tagline for his work had been "a little well done was better than a lot just done," Rorie noted, and the City needed now to look ahead to the next 50 years. They needed to know where the City was and verify what they were safeguarding the City from.

Rorie stated that a budget was a spending plan, not a saving plan. The Finance Department Budget Policy stated "the baseline should be set and served as an agreed upon point of departure for subsequent budget discussions." It went on to say "such ongoing funding sources must either be new or increased revenues or clearly identified expense reductions." This meant the City must avoid deficit spending by balancing expenses and revenues.

Rorie remarked that was easier said than done because of the public policy gap between what was politically acceptable and what was administratively sustainable. For example, it would be acceptable to add a recreation program that benefitted only a portion of the community. He said he had to figure out how to pay for something before it was implemented. He did not want to start a program, then have to back away due to lack of funding. In looking forward and evaluating the current status, they should constantly assess the programs provided and produced, as well as the funding streams and revenues.

Using the multi-use path system as a vehicle, Rorie listed a few items in the public policy gap, including leashes. They spent a good deal of time discussing leashes on the path system and the impact they had. Horns vs. bells on golf carts had been another time-consuming topic. Signs had been an issue. Rorie recalled they put clearance signs on the tunnels, but people moved them. Striping the path system had been discussed.

As a signature amenity for the community, the multi-use path system was cherished by residents. Rorie noted that many residents took advantage of the trails for cycling, running, or walking, and the paths offered the opportunity to convert automobile trips into short pleasurable trips by carting on the vegetated greenways. The path system had developed into an expansive network throughout the City and was certainly worthy of continued investment by the City. Rorie said he would consider each of the previous points politically acceptable, but now they needed to consider how to make that spending sustainable.

The path network was a $20 million asset to the City. There were 100-plus miles of paths, and Rorie said he would never give an exact figure because the number of miles fluctuated. There were 177 at-grade crossings. The 2010 Master Plan identified 24.75 miles of new paths, 59 new path projects, five new multi-use bridges/tunnels, and 10 new tunnels to replace existing corrugated metal tunnels. Nowhere in that plan was a mention of how this construction would be funded, the City Manager remarked. He added that paths were prioritized using an evaluation matrix including connectivity, design, and construction, safety, and funding. The 59 new path projects should be rolled out to enhance connectivity. The goal, Rorie stated, should be to enhance connectivity, not simply to enlarge the path system.

Currently, 16 Master Plan paths and bridges were listed as Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) projects. They were selected and evaluated by a group that thought about connectivity and cost, and made conscious decisions. Talking about costs, Rorie noted that the transportation network in the City was a $200 million asset, consisting of about 180 miles of roadway of differing widths.

In the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 budget, approximately $1.40 per square foot was allotted to mill and pave, which called for milling the roadway down, grinding, and adding two inches of asphalt. That equated to roughly $162,000 per mile for a simple mill project on the roadway network. Several years ago, it was decided that City staff would no longer patch or try to pave the roadways. Rorie described the process as "clunky," saying the City did not specialize in paving and did not have the resources. That service delivery was outsourced to companies that did do that work. Rorie said the term "absolute advantage" was key when comparing costs on the roadway and path networks. For many years, gravel base and asphalt for the paths was budgeted at $1.45 per square foot, which came to $76,000 a mile. Labor added $97,000 per mile. That equaled $174,000 per mile to rebuild a path. The budget called for paving nine miles a year, plus there was an additional SPLOST target. Rorie said many people asked him why they did not outsource the path paving like they did the roadway, since roadways were done at a lesser cost per mile. He pointed out that there were no specialists in paving paths. Peachtree City had an absolute advantage because they specialized in path paving. At least three times they had tried to get quotes on path paving, but each time, the prices came back at several times the rate it could be done internally.

Rorie said Project 57 on the Master Plan called for buildout of a path along MacDuff Parkway, crossing Senoia Road and tying into Kedron North. That project was completed. It was required as a condition for the development of MacDuff Parkway, built by the road builder. Project 52 was complete, but was re-routed to avoid removal of many trees. Project 53 was complete, but had no asphalt, only Graded Aggregate Base (GAB) because it connected to the Line Creek Nature Area, which had only gravel parking lots. Projects 54 and 55 were underway. Project 56 had been completed by the Everton developer. Project 40 was basically done, with only a little more work, depending on the weather.

Rorie introduced a new term – marginal utility – and showed a subdivision map with a home marked in red. That resident was upset because they had to drive a half mile to connect to a cart path in one direction and a full mile to connect in another direction. All the driving was done on subdivision streets. The layout of lots in the area meant that a path connection would have to cut through private property. Rorie said this was an example of a marginal utility because it just did not make sense to have a path in that immediate location. Another example of marginal utility was in the Center Green neighborhood. Within the subdivision, the path crossed a road, then ran parallel to that road to cross it again for the path user to use the road way to a cul-de-sac exit from the neighborhood. This showed two parallel assets: one (the path) was 10 feet wide, while the other (the street) was 27 feet wide. The choice was to pave the road or pave the path; both could not be done.

Ten locations had been identified for replacement of corrugated metal pipe (CMP) multi-use tunnels throughout town. Windgate Road was on the road paving plan for FY 2019, and the CMP tunnel under Windgate was one of those 10 tunnels. Rorie asked whether the replacement should be done now with today's dollars, or delayed until later. Problems with the tunnel included the fact that it was CMP, and it was very narrow for carts to navigate. Should they replace the tunnel with longer-lasting concrete at $500,000? Would it make sense to eliminate it if there were a grade crossing nearby? There were a host of these tunnels that were too narrow and could not accommodate some of the taller or lifted carts. He asked if those tunnels should be replaced when the roads were paved or, if the tunnel would last another 10 years, be replaced at a later date. They had to consider the time value/money calculations to see if it would be better to do it in today's dollars or wait and do it in "10 years' from now" dollars. There were no easy answers. There was a financial component to safeguarding the community, and they had to look at it as a total, not just in terms of individual projects.

Rorie showed a listing of the multi-use path projects in the SPLOST, with color coding for projects that were complete and those that were underway. He said there were a lot of projects going on. Attorneys and engineers were working on easement acquisitions.

Rorie presented a photo of a crew doing edge dressing, which was the process of smoothing off the edges of the path so there wouldn't be a sharp drop-off. Edge dressing was done with mulch from the mulch yard that decomposed into dirt. Rorie said this illustrated the four M's – men, money, machines, and materials – and anything was possible. Rorie noted that asphalt jumped 13% in price from October 2018 to April 2019, and the aggregate base (GAB) went up 46% per ton for the same period. The CPI set labor costs at about 2.5 percent more than last year. The cost of adding, expanding or maintaining a path went up based on just those three elements, Rorie remarked, adding that he did not include other increases, such as the cost of fuel or even a shovel.

The cost difference between GAB and asphalt in the budget and now was $76,000 and $96,000 for one mile, a 26% increase. Labor would go up 2.5%, from $97,000 to $99,400 per mile. Now, they were looking at what would have been $1.74 million to pave 10 miles of road becoming $1.95 million. That was a 12% overall increase, without considering cost increases for milling and paving. Rorie told Council they should count on an increase for road paving.

Rorie asked City Engineer David Borkowski if the RFP was out for 2019 paving. Borkowski replied that the bids were due in next week, so Rorie said the City would find out what the costs would be then.

In the annual budget, $665,000 in materials costs was earmarked for paving nine miles of path. If they assumed the 26% increase in materials, they could do only 6.5 miles for the same money or increase the budgeted amount to $837,900 to pave the nine miles. Rorie said any discussion of safeguarding the community would have to take into account how all these pieces worked together. He said he was sure he would get an email telling him that in the City Manager's recommended budget, he should reduce the millage rate. Rorie explained that he understood, but the budget was a spending plan, not a saving plan. They could save a whole lot of money just by doing nothing, but the goal was to do nine miles. The graphic he displayed showed the impact of the rise in the cost of rock, and that was just a single line item in a $38 million budget for 25 departments across the City. Rorie said he had not even addressed the shovels used by the crews.

The question became what was administratively sustainable. The workshop in March, which would begin the discussion of safeguarding the community, would include the topic of public investment in infrastructure, such as the $20 million in the path system and the $200 million in roadways. It would even cover wear and tear on the roads caused by trash trucks. The Master Plan called for adding 24.5 miles of paths. If that was done today, Rorie calculated, the cost would exceed $2 billion.

Rorie also acknowledged there were competing interests for funds between the 25 departments. His job was fascinating because it was a challenge to figure out what would be the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

Madden asked if the roads built by developers in Everton and Cresswind, for instance, were given to the City to maintain. Rorie said the roadway was dedicated to the City, but they must have a maintenance bond for two years, then the road maintenance was turned over the City. Rorie explained that this worked to the City's advantage because the total mileage of roads was used to compute the amount of money the state paid to help with road improvement. The more miles they had, the more money they could get. The path network was not included. The developer built the path, and every homeowner paid about $4,000 in impact fees, with the bulk of that going to the expansion of the path network. Impact fees could not be used for maintenance.

Madden said that was kind of like the $3 million bridge being built over SR 54. Mathematically, the buildout along MacDuff Parkway at Cresswind and Everton would generate more than $5 million in impact fees, Rorie replied, so every one of those houses was paying for that bridge. The City was just moving that project along through the use of SPLOST dollars. Instead of saving the impact fees until there was enough money to pay for the bridge, they were building the bridge with today's dollars and perhaps could use the impact fees to build another bridge or path elsewhere.

Madden said he was familiar with the Windgate tunnel and was astonished to hear the $500,000 cost. Prebor noted that, if the tunnel was not broken, they should not be fixing it.

Rorie said the tunnel would be paved over when Windgate Road was paved. He asked Borkowski about the engineered evaluation of the City's tunnels, and Borkowski said the results were expected the next day.

Prebor mentioned that he thought a coating had been applied to the tunnels, but was told it had not. He asked if that could be done on cart path tunnels to prolong their life, but Rorie said it had not been done. Rorie said the engineered study would help them weigh their options. He likened it to the Redwine bridge, saying he did not want to spend $50,000 on a Band-Aid for something that needed stitches. Rorie stated that he was in the process of proposing to the County a cost-share, with the City and the County each paying $200,000 to get it right and have a sound bridge for another 25 years.

Rorie said there were 29 tunnels, and King said he would like to see if some of them could be bypassed. Rorie noted that closings could be done strategically, with an eye towards the network and connectivity. There might be a choice between spending $500,000 on a path tunnel or $500,000 on a road that everyone would wind up driving on anyway. He noted there were a lot of decisions to be make and some might not be easy.

Prebor pointed out that the budget should take maintenance into account. He said it should not just be for roads and cart paths, but for City buildings as well, so the City did not have to borrow money for upkeep. Rorie said one percent of the total budget was assigned for capital improvements, about $350,000.

Rorie told Council he also intended to recommend that the City increase its cash reserves. There was a cyclical battle. People would say the cash reserves were too large and should be spent down. They should have learned their lesson by now, though, he went on, recalling that until 2008, the City did very little in terms of maintenance. Then the Great Recession hit, and ad valorem taxes, the City's number one source of money, tanked, along with the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST). The only thing to do was to raise tax or reduce expenditures. The reduction in expenditures meant that these projects cost more than they would have if they had been done on time. He said he and Finance Director Paul Salvatore looked at LOST revenue and discovered it took the City 11 years to reach pre-recession levels. He said it was not good financial management to know that and not put money away so that when the next recession hit, the service levels could be maintained.

The workshops on safeguarding the community would not only look at paths or road paving, but also at the City as a whole. They should make decisions at a macro level. Rorie concluded by saying his goal for every city he had ever worked for was to leave it better than he found it.

Ernst thanked Rorie and his staff for the work they did. He said Council had to make decisions, but the information Rorie gave them made the process easier. Prebor agreed.

There being no further business, King moved to adjourn at 8:17 p.m. Madden seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary

Terry Ernst, Mayor Pro Tem