

City Council of Peachtree City
Minutes of Meeting
February 17, 2000
7:00 p.m.

The City Council of Peachtree City met in a regular session, Thursday, February 17, 2000, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. Mayor Robert L. Lenox led those attending in the pledge of allegiance. Other Council members present were: Carol Fritz, Annie McMenamin, and Dan Tennant. Bob Brooks was absent.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, AWARDS, SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Mayor Lenox presented the Employee of the Month award to Police Officer Donald Speights.

Chief Murray recognized Andrew Debonis, a local youth. Debonis found \$50 and turned it in the Police Department. Since the money was never claimed, Chief Murray presented it to him as a reward. Murray commended Debonis for his honesty and integrity.

Tate Godfrey presented an award to Joe Morton for past service with the Chamber of Commerce.

MINUTES

McMenamin made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 3rd meeting. Fritz seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

OLD AGENDA ITEMS

There were no old agenda items.

CONSENT AGENDA

There were no consent agenda items.

NEW AGENDA ITEMS

02-00-07 Crabapple Lane Residents – Georgia Power Transmission Power Lines

Rita Cole addressed Council on behalf of the Crabapple Lane residents regarding Georgia Power's plans to construct high voltage transmission lines and a substation in their neighborhood. Ms. Cole felt Georgia Power's plans would adversely affect their quality of life and would place their health at risk. She realized the Law of Imminent Domain prohibited Council from stopping Georgia Power's project. However, asked Council to show their support for the residents by writing letters to the Georgia Public Safety Commission and various elected officials.

Cole said she and her neighbors had met with the Georgia Public Safety Commission. They asked the Commission to stop the project, have the lines moved to another location, or to grant additional time for the residents to hire a private consultant to investigate many unanswered questions. She said Jim Hunt from the Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs, contacted them and offered to help mediate their situation.

Cole said there many unanswered questions. She pointed out that currently in Peachtree City all of Georgia Power's substations were located in areas zoned for industrial use. She questioned whether the City's zoning laws permitted high voltage transmission lines and a substation a residential area. She asked why Georgia Power did not include this project in a five-year plan and she questioned their urgent need to move forward with the project. She said Georgia Power was claiming that it did not have adequate capacity to provide service to residents without the new substation. However, she said had extensive conversations with representatives from Cowetta Fayette EMC who had assured her that they had adequate capacity to provide electricity to Georgia Power if needed. She also pointed out that the substation was being built in EMC's territory. Since Georgia Power could not service EMC customers, she questioned whether Georgia Power was merely positioning itself for future competition in the event of future deregulation. She also questioned who would pay to have the lines buried under Highway 74 as currently planned.

She said Crabapple Road was one of the oldest and most beautiful roads in the City. She requested Council consider designating it as an official scenic road.

Bonnie Beerbower addressed Council and described what the transmission lines and substation would look like. She pointed out that the substation would be located directly behind the Kedron Fire Station and visible at the main entrance to Peachtree City. She was also very concerned about the health hazards that could be attributed to high voltage power lines. She referenced the book "Power over People". She said, while it had not been proven that high voltage power lines caused cancer there was much evidence to suggest the power lines were dangerous. She asked if the City had given Georgia Power approval for their project.

Another resident, who did not state her name, addressed Council and said she was a cancer survivor. She said they had bought their home only a couple of months ago and did not know of Georgia Power's plans. She said the threat of cancer being caused by the power lines was a very serious issue and she could not put her family at risk.

Mayor Lenox said he had recently met with Georgia Power and asked many of the same questions being raised that night. He said he concluded there was nothing the City could do to stop the project and that Georgia Power would not consider an alternative location. He said Georgia Power would choose the most expeditious and inexpensive way to erect the power lines and construct the substation. Lenox said the City Attorney had advised Council that they had no legal right or authority to stop Georgia Power from erecting the transmission lines or from building the substation. He said the Public Service Commission was the only body that could control Georgia Power. Lenox also pointed out that one third of the power generated from the substation would be used by Cowetta Fayette EMC.

Dan Tennant commended the citizens for their efforts. He suggested Council adopt a Resolution of Support for their efforts.

Annie McMenamin asked what the outcome was from the citizens' meeting with the Public Service Commission. Ms. Cole said the issue of zoning was raised many times by members of the Commission, but they had not yet made a decision. McMenamin asked Jim Williams if the current zoning would allow the construction of high voltage transmission lines in a residential area. Williams said the proposed area was zoned AR, which was a holding category. However, he said transmission lines and substations were permitted uses in all zoning districts.

Rick Lindsey, City Attorney, addressed the issue. He said the City did not have any legal authority to stop Georgia Power. He suggested they could contact their state representatives and ask for assistance. He felt the citizens would not win a case in court because it has not been proven that high voltage power lines caused cancer.

McMenamin said the City had worked with the Public Service Commission the past to change zip code and area code boundaries. She felt this was a similar situation. She said citizens were simply asking their local elected representatives for legitimate help.

McMenamin made a motion to send letters to the Public Service Commission with copies to Georgia Power, Jim Hunt of the Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs, and State/Federal Representatives supporting Crabapple Lane residents in their request for additional time to hire a professional consultant to answer questions concerning Georgia Power's plan to condemn property and construct transmission power lines and a sub-station in their neighborhood and to possibly negotiate an alternative location. Fritz seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Lenox pointed out that if Georgia Power's predictions held true, there could be large power outages in Peachtree City. He felt it was important to ensure that the Public Service Commission was looking out for the best interest of all citizens in Peachtree City.

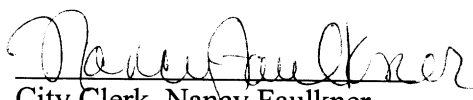
COUNCIL/STAFF TOPICS

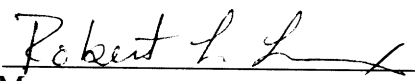
There were no Council/Staff topics for discussion.

Lenox made a motion to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss a legal matter. McMenamin seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No action was taken in executive session. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.


City Clerk, Nancy Faulkner

Attest: 
Mayor