

City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 21, 2021
6:30 p.m.

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in regular session on Thursday, January 21, 2021. Mayor Vanessa Fleisch called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Others attending: Terry Ernst, Mike King, and Phil Prebor. Kevin Madden was absent.

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

Fleisch recognized Police Lt. James McDowell as Supervisor of the 4th Quarter.

2021 State of the City Address

Fleisch presented her annual State of the City address:

We, as a city, as a community, and as a country have been through a lot this past year. We are living in volatile times with many issues, trials, and travails, and yet we as a City got through the year very well, all things considered.

Our finances are the strongest they have been in 20 years! That information comes from our Finance Director, who has been here for 20 years. In light of COVID, in March we made budget adjustments that were prudent and strategic that can help our overall financial position for years to come. We have spent literally years rebuilding departments and putting in place management to better serve our citizens. As a results of re-investing in our community, we have once again restored the City to be a place where people want to be on the south side of Atlanta.

This is a huge accomplishment, given where we started. The turnaround has been due in part to all of the Council and staff working together to better serve the community in which we live. Yes, this Council works together!

It has always been a goal, to be sure, that the people of our community are informed. We meet every first and third Thursday at 6:30, and if you cannot be there in person, we have been live streaming our meetings for over 10 years. We have social media pages for the City government, the Police and Fire departments and Recreation and our Visit Peachtree City page. Please subscribe to those pages for accurate information.

Our City continued to be hard at work throughout the pandemic. Both our Police and Fire departments have been actively serving you. Some additional duties this year included providing services for protests that were held in the city. The Mayor and Council both respect and support the Public Safety officials in our city and will continue to do so.

Our Recreation staff adapted to the constraints due to COVID. As you know, many events around the world were canceled due to the pandemic. Our facilities throughout the city remained open as much as possible during the year.

We continue to do public works projects with the SPLOST allocation and with general funds. The Public Works Department was busy paving parking lots that, believe it or not, had never been paved in the 60-plus year history of our City. Both the field at Braelinn and the girls softball facility at Meade Field are now paved for our families using those facilities.

As well, we have continued to make headway in our quest to improve the quality of our roads. This year we paved just over 15 miles of our approximately 200 miles of road. The funding from SPLOST, which passed resoundingly by our community in 2017, continues to make a positive impact on the state of the infrastructure in our city.

We continue to make improvements to the infrastructure that you can see and what you cannot see. To underestimate that achievement would be a mistake that could take us backwards into the future.

We also continue to correct projects that were done poorly and, quite frankly, cheaply, in the past. The golf cart bridge beside City Hall is an example of such a project that was completed this year. The Gateway Bridge was a project that was identified decades ago and yet it is just being done now. I am grateful that we have a Council that works together to make positive things happen and improve the quality of life for our community.

During the recession, many complained about empty store fronts and the lack of industry being attracted to our City. However, due to the policy of reinvesting in our community, that is no longer the case, though the true economic impact of COVID on our local businesses is yet to be seen. Here are our approximate vacancy rates:

Retail 6.7%

Office 9.6%

Industrial 2.8%

The pre-COVID upswing in the economy as well as the positive impact of improvements we have made in our City led the Council to seek advice regarding possible redevelopment plans. We did a market study of over 400 acres in order to have a better understanding of the potential demands of private property owners.

A detailed market study of this nature had NEVER been done before in Peachtree City. We pride ourselves on being a planned community and yet we have never had certain data to guide us in the decision-making process.

Did you know that years ago, we did not know how many road miles we had or how many subdivision entrances we needed to maintain or have procedures in place for groups to rent our facilities?

Happily, I can report that we have that kind of data now so that we can do repair and replacement schedules for much of the infrastructure throughout the City. If a developer wants to redevelop or develop a property, we have standards that need to be met. Those enhanced standards are over and above what most municipalities require, and it costs more to develop here. That is good as we are looking out for the taxpayers that take on the responsibility of maintaining that infrastructure after the developer has left and families are enjoying living here in our great city.

We have done so many things to improve the city that the prices for homes and land here have increased. The average age of a home is roughly 30 years old. One of the goals of reinvesting in our community has been to give homeowners the confidence to reinvest in their own homes.

Per the MLS, the average sale price of a home in 2020 was \$458,846; the median sale price was \$400,000.

80 percent of the land in Peachtree City is residential real estate. We have worked when possible to change that ratio so that we are not as dependent upon homes for our tax base and insure our future ability to pay for our high quality services.

Yet we must learn from history and be cautious about placing industries in close proximity to residential homes. We cannot correct the past; we can only learn from it.

Our quality of life has attracted people to our community. The area along the West Village, which was approved in 2007 and was not started until 2017, is thriving. The Cresswind development is starting its final phase. Ironically, a lot of the residents who purchased in Cresswind were Peachtree City residents who sold their older homes in favor of new. The important thing is that they want to stay in our community, and this was an opportunity for them to do so.

Last year at this time we all envisioned a much differed 2020 than the one that we received. Here we are again at the start of a new year, and things have not started out as smoothly as we all would have hoped.

You should be very proud of how your city has weathered many of the storms and curve balls that we have been thrown. Our goal has been simple: to continue to be here providing services for our community. Period.

2021 is an election year here in Peachtree City. Three positions will be up in November—two Council seats and the Mayor. This is my last time addressing you as term limits prevent me from running again.

When I ran almost 12 years ago for Council, I did so out of gratitude for the community that was a safe place place to raise my family, and I saw the cracks in the veneer of our city that I thought I could help fill. I continue to be grateful that we have such a wonderful community, and I encourage all of you to take the time and become involved and learn more about your community for yourselves.

In the information age there is also much misinformation. Please take the time to learn and rely upon you own understanding.

As we move forward in uncertain times, please keep the faith and remain optimistic. Let us all take the time to be kind to one another as we embark upon another historical year for our community and the world.

Public Comment

There was none.

Minutes

King moved to approve the January 7, 2021, regular meeting minutes as written. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

- 1. FY2021 Budget Amendment**
- 2. Resolution #01212021-CA2 Fayette County Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020-2025**
- 3. Generator Replacement at Station #81**
- 4. Appointment of City Clerk/Administrative Coordinator**
- 5. Reduction in Fees**
- 6. Traffic Calming Policy Update**
- 7. Proclamation Policy Update**

Ernst moved to approve Consent Agenda items 1-7. King seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

New Agenda Items

01-21-03 Public Hearing - Variance to Sign Ordinance for McAlister's Deli on Commerce Drive

The Mayor opened the public hearing.

The applicant was the new McAlister's Deli at 2025 North Commerce Drive. Staff made a site visit and noticed a sign on the side of the building that was not included in the permit application, explained Planning and Development Director Robin Cailloux. Code Enforcement issued a notice of violation, and the applicant had submitted a variance request in order to keep the sign.

They were requesting two variances, Cailloux continued. One regarded the interpretation of a wall sign as one that was fastened directly to an exterior wall and not extending more than 15 inches. She recalled there had been another recent variance request regarding a painted sign. The McAlister's sign was not painted; it was a vinyl sticker that gave the appearance of paint. Unlike the other request, McAlister's was not in a planned commercial development, but on a stand-alone lot directly on a State route. The other variance was a request to increase the square footage. The ordinance allowed for wall signs of up to 100 square feet. The applicant was asking for an additional 20 square feet for a total of 120 square feet that would allow them to keep this wall sign.

The criteria for sign variance was very different than for other variances, Cailloux noted. Hardship was considered in relation to visibility of the sign. The criteria looked at whether the spacing requirements

between signs could not be met because of the configuration of the property. That did not apply here because it was aimed at monument signs that were too close together. Another criterion asked if existing trees or structures impaired the visibility of a sign at where they wanted to put it or within 50 feet of where they wanted to put it. That visual impediment could not be created by the applicant; it had to be because of an adjacent property owner's layout or their trees. This variance request did not meet that standard. The final criterion asked if the variance would create a safety hazard to vehicles or pedestrians. It did meet that criterion.

John Harris of Design Team Sign Company, which supplied and manufactured the sign, represented the applicant, although he said another company applied for the sign permit. It had been his experience, he remarked, that a sign of this nature was not considered a sign within the square footage because it did not have the McAlister's logo on the sign. It was directional. The sign was now part of their brand considering the current restrictions due to COVID-19. The pickup window was a new concept for McAlister's Deli. Harris said reducing the size would greatly reduce the visibility. He said could see it going south on SR 74, but was not sure he could have if it were smaller.

No one wished to speak in favor or in opposition to the request, so the Mayor closed the public hearing.

King wanted to know if the sign's purpose was to attract patrons or direct them to the drive-thru? Harris responded that it was to direct them. Harris went on to explain that the size of the arrow was 30 inches by 144 inches. It would be difficult to see if it was reduced to what the ordinance required. He again stated it was a reminder that they had a pickup window, which was a new concept for the chain. Were there arrows on the pavement? King asked, and Harris said there were directional arrows visible on the lot.

Prebor noted that this aimed at people who had already ordered food and were coming to pick it up. Harris told him that it had been his experience that directional signs without the brand logo were not considered signs in other cities. Prebor wanted to know what it was made of, and Harris replied that it was a vinyl that was heated and rolled onto the brick.

Prebor asked Cailloux about the requirements for extending from the building. That hearkened back to the previous discussion, she replied. There was no specific prohibition or permission for a painted wall sign. Staff was having to work with the language of the ordinance, and it said a sign had to be fastened and could not extend more than 15 inches. This was a new trend, and their ordinance did not allow them to permit it. Under an abundance of caution, staff was bringing them to Council when they were proposed. This one also included the area, not just the type of sign.

So this was a new style of sign? Prebor inquired. It was a new "old" style, Cailloux replied. Prebor said the type did not bother him as much as the size. Harris said it could be removed and replaced with a smaller one, but it would greatly reduce the visibility.

Ernst pointed out that above and beside the arrow were much larger letters that spelled out "pick-up." It seemed to him that the arrow was unnecessary. It was not ugly, but it was bigger than what was allowed.

King asked if the size and the type of sign were together as one variance? and Cailloux said it was.

City Manager Jon Rorie wondered how well the vinyl decal would hold up over time? Harris said it would start to fade after five years.

The idea was to appear as if it were painted, Fleisch noted.

Prebor said the type did not bother him; the size did. If it said "McAlister's" he might not have a problem, but this was an unnecessary sign. Anyone who saw it had already made up their mind and was going there to get their food.

Cailloux said the ordinance defined the maximum amount of wall signage and the maximum amount of directional signage, and this sign exceeded the limit for both types. That was why the variance was very specific about what criteria to apply.

King recalled that they approved a variance for The Overlook because, if they had adhered to the ordinance, the name of the business would have not been readable. Did that set a precedent?

Ernst noted this had nothing to do with the name of the restaurant.

Fleisch noted that they would soon have another request before them for a similar style sign. Cailloux said it was becoming more common. This was a gray area, and she asked if she was correct in understanding that Council was not objecting to the fact that the sign was paint or vinyl, but to the size? They told her that was correct. That gave her and staff direction, she commented.

King said it could be removed easily. Harris said it would need to be heated, then removed.

Rorie said ordinances defining signs might be outdated. Maybe it was time to address this. There were signs just outside the city limits that were not allowed inside. He wondered if Council would be willing to look at the ordinance rather than issuing a variance?

Fleisch said the understated signs were one of the things that attracted people to Peachtree City, but noted that when the ordinance was written, neon was what they were trying to prohibit. Now there were applications like this, or paint, which were worth looking at, versus digital or neon.

Cailloux said they could look at size if they reviewed the ordinance. Rorie pointed out that they issued yard sale signs. This would evolve, he noted.

They could not make this applicant wait while they deliberated the sign ordinance, Fleisch remarked, but they did want to look at it in the future. How did that change their thinking regarding this sign?

Prebor commented that he did not see them going to bigger signs in the future.

Rorie noted that they would be approving a variance that would travel with the property. Anyone who wanted to have a larger sign than the ordinance allowed would have to return to Council for a variance. The sign McAlister's wanted was 20 square feet over the maximum allowed by ordinance, Cailloux confirmed.

Ernst moved that New Agenda item 01-21-03, variance to sign ordinance for McAlister's Deli on Commerce Drive, be disapproved. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**01-21-02 Public Hearing - Rezoning Request to Add Multi-Family Use to Laurel Brooke
Development on Petrol Point, Zoned LUC-32**

The Mayor opened the public hearing.

Cailloux told Council she wanted to take a few minutes to go over some semantics regarding zoning

actions. The Georgia Zoning Procedures Act (GZPA) lumped rezonings, special use permits, text amendments, and so on all in one group and called them "zoning actions." They were all treated similarly; they had to have at least one public hearing, be advertised in the legal organ, and have a sign put up on the property within a certain time of the public hearing.

What added complexity in Peachtree City was that the Limited Use Commercial (LUC) ordinance was not a regular zoning district, such as General Commercial (GC), in which every property had identical criteria. Every LUC was an ordinance written specifically for that property. That was often called a "site-specific zoning." There were some basic characteristics that had to be met. LUC had to have some type of commercial in it. In this one, there were also some conditional uses, such as residential.

There had been some confusion at the Planning Commission meeting and in emails from the public about why they were sometimes calling this a text amendment, and at other times calling it a rezoning when the ordinance itself said you had to have a rezoning action to make changes. They were identical procedures, Cailloux stated. She said they would be more consistent with the language in the future.

The applicant was requesting an amendment to the LUC-32 zoning ordinance. Cailloux showed the property on a zoning map as being on Petrol Point and Tivoli Gardens and pointed out the specific area where the change was being requested on the approved site plan. They wanted to change from the 10 narrow single-family detached homes shown on the site plan to two condominium buildings, each with 10 residential units and two ground level live-work units that would have a residential component to them but could also have a small office with a separate entrance. She showed a rendering of what the buildings would look like. The applicant had met with nearby property owners, both residential and commercial, and revised the plans to meet some of their requests.

Staff had reviewed the proposal based on the criteria established in the City's Zoning Ordinance. The first asked if the zoning proposal conformed with the policy and intent of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Cailloux reminded Council that there was not a mixed use category in the Land Use Plan. However, staff had identified three Comprehensive Plan policies that were met. One called for providing a broad range of housing types regarding size, type, price, and location. Another required developers to provide infrastructure, while the third called for creating a sense of neighborhood by creating separate and identifiable subdivisions surrounded by open space and landscape buffers. Cailloux noted that the current approved master plan had three different housing types; the new plan would introduce two new types, the owner-occupied condominium and the live-work units. The requirement on the developer to provide infrastructure was relevant because, instead of doing a surface-level stormwater detention pond, they were going to install an underground detention area with green space on top of it. That park would help create a sense of neighborhood, as well.

Criteria Nos. 2 and 3 dealt with the impacts from and on surrounding uses. The proposed multi-family residential use and park were compatible with the surrounding greenbelt, commercial uses, and private school, and the residential uses were compatible with the surrounding residential uses.

The fourth criterion asked if the property had reasonable use as currently zoned? It did have reasonable economic use today, Cailloux pointed out, so it did not meet this criterion.

Next, the ordinance required them to consider if the zoning proposal would result in a use which would or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities,

utilities, or schools. As it was currently zoned, up to 10 single-family units could be built. For at least 40 years, Cailloux remarked, the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) had been gathering data from all over the United States regarding how much traffic came and went from different types of land uses. It showed that the currently approved single-family lot would produce about 9.9 daily trips per unit over the course of 24 hours. The proposed multi-family units with ground-level live/work units would generate about 3.36 daily trips per unit. Cailloux said she originally questioned these figures, but found there had been a great deal of recent research that backed up these numbers. The people living in those units could have smaller families or no children; maybe they walked more. There were lots of reasons, but the empirical data confirmed the numbers. Therefore, the proposal would reduce the impact on the surrounding street network.

The applicant provided a letter from the utilities showing that adequate capacity for water and sewer was available. The Fayette County Board of Education provided Peachtree City with student generation data from new multi-family developments across the county. The typical student-generation rate of multi-family units was lower than the rate of single-family homes. Therefore, the proposed revision would generate nearly identical number of students: 3.8 for the proposed condominiums compared to 3.4 for the existing approved single-family homes. Therefore, the proposal met all three of these criteria.

Criterion No. 6 asked if there were other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which would support either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal. Staff said there were no identified changing conditions.

Staff was of the opinion that the proposed rezoning met a majority of the criteria for text amendment and recommended approval of the request with the following conditions in addition to the existing LUC-32 ordinance conditions:

- The property should develop in conformance with the proposed master plan. Any substantive change to this plan or any of the conditions of the rezoning should require a new rezoning action.
- The two multi-family condominium buildings should be architecturally similar to the elevations proposed by the applicant, and should include at least 25% brick or stone along every facade. Paint colors for the building should be limited to neutral colors with the intent of complimenting and blending with the natural environment.
- Parking should be provided at a minimum ratio of 1.5 spaces per unit, and two spaces per live/work unit. This should be a combination of covered parking and surface-level parking, with a minimum of 80% of the required parking provided as covered parking.
- Landscaping should be provided between the multi-family portion of the development and the adjacent greenbelt to create a visual buffer. At least three types of mature evergreen species at the time of planting should be provided within this buffer.
- Landscaping should be provided along the edges and slopes of the park space to both stabilize slopes and provide a visually appealing setting for the park. A landscape plan should be submitted and approved by the City prior to installation of plant materials.
- Maintenance of all landscaping and parks should be the responsibility of the development's home owners' association (HOA) or property owners' association (POA).

City Clerk Yasmin Julio said they had received seven letters of support for this request from neighboring property owners. Those letters would be inserted into the official record.

Attorney Rick Lindsey represented the developer, who was not present because he had been exposed to COVID-19. Lindsey said he was available via telephone if they had any questions. Lindsey recalled that the property was rezoned for this mixed use in 2019 with 10 three-story townhomes in this

area. They wanted to take those out and replace them with two condominium buildings with a total of 20 residential units and four live-work units. There would be 36 parking spaces below the buildings, enough for the residents, with the remaining parking in an interior space. There would be no parking in the back as there would be with the townhomes. They were also excited about the plan to take the surface-level detention pond, covering it with cement and creating a park on top. They intended to install 625 trees, shrubs, and bushes to buffer the property from existing neighbors. There would be 100 arbovitae, which were tall, thin evergreens, planted about four feet apart, along the border with Robinson Woods Estates. They would be eight feet tall at minimum. They also intended to plant 12- to 14-foot Leyland cypress trees, as well as various other shrubs and bushes. This was in addition to all the other landscaping that would go into the rest of the development.

The developer had met with all the owners who would be impacted by this project. Lindsey noted that no property directly abutted this area because of the City greenbelt, but they had talked with those who could see this area from their homes and with the commercial owners on the other side. All agreed that this was an improvement and submitted letters to the City in support.

The condominiums would be owner-occupied and deed-restricted as part of the covenants, Lindsey pointed out. The starting price would be \$440,000. There would be elevators in both buildings from the parking area to the residential units. This was a new housing option for Peachtree City.

For all of these reasons, Lindsey summarized, this would be a positive step for this development. The garbage cans and parking from behind the buildings would be gone. He noted that the outside would be at least 25% hardside, with brick, stucco, or rock.

David Ruth said he lived in Robinson Woods Estates, about 25 feet from this development. He could see it from his study. He noted that this proposal was much more attractive than what was originally approved. If this were not approved, he would be looking at an alleyway at the rear of the townhouses. The detention pond would require a 13-foot concrete wall, which would probably get graffiti on it. Detention ponds were ugly and would decrease the property values in the area. He noted that he would prefer the woods, but since he couldn't get that back, this proposal would be a much better alternative. He wouldn't see any cars, and trees would block the view of much of the buildings.

No one else wished to speak in support. Fleisch asked if anyone was opposed?

Cary Cook said he was opposed to this because it would bring more traffic to SR 54. He said he was troubled by developments that were higher density than what Peachtree City previously currently had and was worried this would become a trend. He did not see how increasing the number of dwellings would lessen traffic.

There were no further comments, and the Mayor closed the public hearing.

Fleisch asked Cailloux to go over changes they had considered regarding density in the General Residential (GR) zoning category. On the zoning map of this general area, Cailloux pointed out the areas zoned GR, which allowed all different types of housing, including multi-family up to 25 units per acre. Staff had presented a proposal to lower that maximum density, but had not moved forward with the process, given the pandemic.

The Mayor said the goal was to lessen the allowable density in GC, noting that the density had been established for more than 60 years.

Cailloux and Rorie said they had proposed lowering it to 14 units per acre, which was consistent with

apartment complexes in the City. Cailloux noted that podium construction, which was very expensive, was required for ground-level retail, so those developments would be allowed 20 units per acre.

Fleisch remarked that this showed they had been proactive in trying to lessen the density. She noted that the condos being proposed here were different than what most people thought of when they thought of condos. The price would start at \$440,000, while the average price of a single-family home was \$458,000. This would help the people in Robinson Woods Estates, where most of the homes were built in the 1970s and '80s, Fleisch commented. It was good to hear of support from that neighborhood because they would be the ones most impacted, the Mayor stated, adding that the business owners in the area were on board, as well.

Prebor said he met people every day who were aging and wanted to stay in Peachtree City, but they needed a home that was more accessible. This development, with its elevator from the underground parking area to the units, fit that need. He said he liked this idea. The price point was "on up there" and the condos would be owner-occupied. It was a place empty nesters could go. He had several friends who had to buy in Atlanta to get housing to meet their needs.

Ernst agreed, adding he was glad they eliminated the trash cans and cars from the back of the buildings. He liked the idea of underground parking and the detention pond being hidden with a park on top. In his opinion, he commented, it pushed all the right buttons.

There was a lot of support for this type of development in the community, King said, noting that seven close area residents were in favor of it. He asked when they had ever had a project before them with that much support?

Ernst said he wanted to make sure the person who spoke against this understood there were originally 20 units planned, so they would be going from 20 single-family dwellings to 24 units in the condo buildings, but Cailloux said that was not correct. There were only 10 townhomes in the original master plan.

King moved to approve New Agenda item 01-21-02, rezoning request to add multi-family use to Laurel Brooke development on Petrol Point, zoned LUC-32, with the conditions recommended by staff. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Lindsey noted that the Staff recommendations stated that the buffer evergreens should be 10 feet tall, but, as they discussed at the Planning Commission meeting, it was not possible to get arborvitae that size, and he proposed an eight-foot height. Cailloux said that would be fine, and they were using the term "mature" instead of specifying a size. The ordinance said to create a visual buffer.

Council/Staff Topics

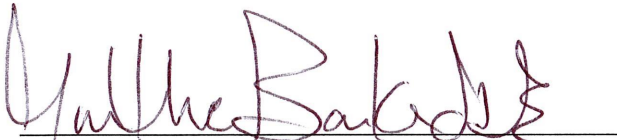
Finance Director Paul Salvatore wanted to introduce the draft budget calendar for fiscal year 2022. There would be three budget workshop meetings for Council, on Tuesdays, March 2, April 6, and May 11, with the City Manager's proposed budget presented on June 22.

Fleisch said she wanted the public to be aware that they were removing the flowering cherry trees in front of City Hall because they were dead. The trees would be replaced through the Tree Bank, which was funded by developers.

King moved to adjourn to executive session for threatened or pending litigation. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

King moved to reconvene in regular session at 8:06 p.m. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, King moved to adjourn the meeting. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.


Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary
Vanessa Fleisch, Mayor