City of Peachtree City
Minutes of Meeting
January 2, 2003
7:00 p.m.

The City Council of Peachtree City met Thursday, January 2, 2003, 7:00 p.m., in the City Hall Council Chambers. Council Members attending were: Mayor Steve Brown, Annie McMenamin, Steve Rapson, and Dan Tennant. Murray Weed was absent.

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

Mayor Brown recognized Linda Morton as the Employee of the Year. Brown recognized outgoing Recreation Commissioners Jan Shannon, who served as chairman, and Beth Andrews and outgoing Airport Authority Member H.E. Buffington.

Minutes

Tennant moved to approve the November 21, 2002, Regular Meeting Minutes as written. McMenamin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

McMenamin moved to approve the December 10, 2002, Special Called Meeting Minutes as written. Tennant seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Election of Oath of Office of Mayor Pro-tem

Brown moved to appoint Dan Tennant as mayor pro-tem. Rapson seconded.

McMenamin said she had been privileged to serve as mayor pro-tem. She continued that this was her last year on Council and she would continue to work as hard in her last year as she had in her first year.

The motion carried 3-0-1 (Tennant).

Consent Agenda

1. **Consider Annual Indemnification Resolution**
2. **Consider Appointment of City Attorney**
3. **Consider Appointment of City Solicitor**
4. **Consider Appointment of City's Legal Organ**
5. **Consider Design Contract for Highway 54 Bridge Enhancements**

Tennant moved to withdraw Items #3 and #5 from the Consent Agenda. McMenamin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Rapson moved to approve Consent Agenda Items #1, #2, and #4. McMenamin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Tennant discussed Item #3 (Appointment of City Solicitor). He noted that Council had changed the Charter recently to break the City Attorney/City Solicitor position into two separate positions. Tennant continued that the City would save around $78,000 a year by appointing the positions separately. He wanted to bring that to the public's attention. He also thanked the previous appointees for their service to the City. Tennant moved to approve Consent Agenda Item #3. McMenamin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

McMenamin asked if any of the costs associated with Consent Agenda Item #5 could be deferred until next year. Rapson noted the funding was part of the last budget amendment. City Engineer Troy Besseche said the design work must be completed before DOT began work on Highway 54 this summer.

Tennant moved to approve Consent Agenda Item #5 as it related to the LCI project and the Highway 54 widening. McMenamin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

New Agenda Items

01-03-01 Alcoholic Beverage License – NEW – Buckner Petroleum, Inc.

Robert Buckner, applicant, addressed Council. McMenamin asked Buckner if he had had any problems with his alcohol license in Fayetteville. Buckner said he had the license at another convenience store he owned for two years and had had no problems.

McMenamin moved to approve the appointment of Robert Buckner as the alcoholic beverage licensee for Buckner Petroleum, Inc. Tennant seconded. McMenamin amended her motion to appoint Buckner as the license representative also. Tennant seconded the amendment. The motion carried unanimously.

01-03-02 Senator Mitch Seabaugh/Discussion of Transportation Issues

State Senator Mitch Seabaugh addressed Council regarding transportation issues. Seabaugh said he listened to his constituents when he devised his vision for transportation. His vision included widening Highways 34/54 from Thomas Crossroads to Peachtree City, widening Highway 74 from Highway 54 to Highway 85, working on access issues from Highway 16 to Interstate 75 for Industrial Park members, re-directing Rockaway Road on Highway 74, and putting up a traffic light at Highway 74 and Dividend Drive. Seabaugh said something also needed to be done regarding the Coweta-Fayette Connector, also known as TDK Boulevard extension.

Seabaugh continued there had been a lot of discussion regarding the Highways 34/54 corridor recently. He said the corridor was one of the first things he started to work on after he was elected in 2000, and the efforts of Bob Lenox and Greg Dunn were very clear. Seabaugh said he had just added his concerns to theirs. Construction would start soon.

Seabaugh continued that, after listening to the constituency in the Industrial Park, he had gone to DOT to try and move up the widening of Highway 74, and the first step in that process was accomplished when $5 million was earmarked for right-of-way acquisition. Seabaugh reported that funding for a traffic signal at Highway 74 and Dividend Drive had been secured from DOT, but DOT was still waiting to hear from Peachtree City before making the light a reality. Brown clarified that DOT would fund the signal, but the City had to fund the lane improvements. Seabaugh noted that he had received another letter from Panasonic expressing concern and urgency for the safety of the company's employees.

Seabaugh continued that the TDK extension would provide alternative routing, which would be critical when construction began on Highways 54 and 74, especially when the bridgework began on Highway 54. He pointed out that he could have used an alternative route 14 times since Thanksgiving. Seabaugh said he understood the TDK extension might not be critical to Council, but it was to Coweta County and to the workforce in the Industrial Park, and the workers from Troup and Meriwether Counties. He added that truck traffic would flow better. Seabaugh said Coweta County was ready to do their part.

Seabaugh acknowledged it was not his vision that counted, but Council's, and that it appeared they did not share the same vision. He said he wanted Council to understand his position, and the question from DOT was "Are you sure they want it?" He asked Council to communicate its priorities and said politicians were elected to turn problems into opportunities. Seabaugh said he had to work with the DOT chairman, whether the current one or a new one, on assessing his district's priorities. The City had been his greatest effort and highest priority for transportation. Council had seen what had happened to the industrial park in the last two years, and Seabaugh said he wanted to turn it around into the best industrial park in the state. Seabaugh said he and Council had to work together to make things happen.

McMenamin told Seabaugh she knew he had worked diligently to make the road improvements move faster. She said she had made no commitment as a Council Member regarding the turn lanes at Panasonic and did not know anything about a commitment made regarding turn lanes. When McMenamin received the letter from Panasonic, she called John Newman of Panasonic to express her concern about not being informed of the turn lanes. Newman told her some commitments had been made and Panasonic had been asked to bear some of the expense for the turn lanes. McMenamin read the letter, which is included in the official meeting file. McMenamin recalled talk about the TDK extension started about nine years ago, but Coweta County had no interest in the project at that time. She continued that Council earmarked $350,000 for a design plan, which was about 90% (ninety percent) complete. The municipalities that belonged to the Association of Fayette County Governments signed a resolution of support and the resolution would be given to County Commission Chairman Greg Dunn. In the resolution, the municipalities agreed the TDK extension was a priority for the County. She noted that the extension had been included in the County transportation plan for three-five years. McMenamin continued that one thing that had not happened was to have the City, the County, Coweta County, and Seabaugh meet to discuss funding. She said they were seven years behind the curve on getting TDK extension built and said she would set the meeting.

Tennant agreed with McMenamin and said there was nothing like good communication to get things done. He noted they were all passionate about protecting citizens. Due to the difficult financial situation, they needed to be as creative as possible, and he pointed out there were many expenditures the City had no control over, such as the rising cost of insurance.

Seabaugh stressed that team effort was needed and he needed to communicate the team plan. He said all issues, not just transportation, needed to be prioritized. The first little hiccup of disagreement could pull the road project. Seabaugh added he had talked to more than one industry that wanted to come here, but did not because of the transportation issues.

Tennant said Council wanted to be a good neighbor to Coweta, and wanted to be responsive to the constituents in the Industrial Park. They were important to the tax base.

Rapson agreed all the projects were very important and needed funding. He clarified that the only money for TDK that existed in the budget was $350,000 for the design work. He continued that the City was the only one to sign a check this far. This Council inherited a lot of traffic problems, and Rapson said it was a misconception that this Council was not proactive on traffic. Council had done all it could think of for Highway 54/74, but obviously the model was flawed. Rapson said he had always been in favor of TDK, but Highways 54 and 74 took precedence. No funds were committed to TDK extension until this Council approved the 2003 budget, which included capital funding for FY 2004 (October 2003), bringing the total to $825,000 on the table.

Seabaugh said Highways 54 and 74 were basically the state's responsibility, but TDK had to be done locally. He said he was at their mercy and reiterated the road would be critical to traffic flow when 54 and 74 were under construction.

Brown said the south side had always been neglected, but was making progress. There was a County transportation plan and the modeling was flawed on Highway 54. Priorities were essential and the Council had made serious prioritizations. The City had spent enough on recreation projects to pay for TDK and 54 West. He continued that the land on the Coweta side was the most heavily speculated land in the region. Highway 54 would be in good shape when it was widened, but Highway 74 was weak.

Brown continued that if TDK were built before Highway 74 was widened it would create a collector road to a weak arterial. He said the road would not withstand the choke-off. Council made a commitment to Panasonic to work on the signal at Highway 74 and Dividend Drive. There was also a problem to consider at Crosstown and Peachtree Parkway. New volume from new development in Coweta County was a concern and TDK would no longer be a relief valve. Brown said they were ignoring long-term traffic infrastructure in exchange for a short-term pay-off. The City needed a reasonable expectation for the Highway 74 widening.

Seabaugh emphasized that he had gone to DOT and gotten funds for right-of-way acquisition for Highway 74. They had to have alternate routes to move traffic east to west. If an alternate route were provided, everyone would not be jammed onto one road. Seabaugh said the ground was not as solid as he would like to fight for something in the City.

Brown said there was not a person on Council against TDK. He just did not want to create a problem that might be diverted with proper planning. He noted the City was heavily dependent on the vacant parcels in the Industrial Park. Brown said the City had to generate a revenue source and the MOST (Municipal Option Sales Tax) the Legislature was to consider was one. He agreed solving the transportation issues would bring in the industrial tax base. He emphasized the City had to have a viable revenue source to generate dollars in a hurry.

Tennant asked Seabaugh what his time frame was. Seabaugh said he had not seen the state budget for next year and no decision had been made on the DOT chairmanship. Opposition might also present itself in two to three years, and if the roads were not in the plan they would not be able to move forward.

Rapson said price tags needed to be put on the projects. It was not a matter of support, but funding. There needed to be a priority list even if the City could not afford it all.

Former Mayor and industry owner Bob Lenox addressed Council, saying that much of what Seabaugh addressed was crucial. He noted he was a major taxpayer in the City. Council was responsible to provide infrastructure. He was willing to pay more taxes if he saw a viable plan. He told Council everybody could take the blame for the problems, but it was their job to solve it.

McMenamin noted that now the County was providing assistance on the City's road improvement projects. She asked Halterman to look at the figures and get an idea of how much money that would save the City.

Salvatore noted that there was close to $6.5 million in the five-year PIP for road and transportation improvements. He pointed out that there were funds appropriated for Highway 54, but the funds had to be re-appropriated because the state moved the project up. Highway 54 was funded, but had been underfunded for this year.

01-03-03 Discuss Gerald Reed Memorial Park Proposal

Brown noted that Vern Darley of FC&A had asked that this agenda item be tabled to give FC&A representatives and City staff time to meet and work out some issues. Rapson moved to table the Gerald Reed Memorial Park proposal. McMenamin seconded.

McMenamin said she had been under the impression that the park design had gone out for bid when Council originally approved the project. She continued that the City had numerous requests to purchase the property and the City had maintained that the property was not for sale. McMenamin said she did not mind looking at the design, but she was very concerned about the process. She would like to see the property go out for bid, then have the design go through the Planning Department and Planning Commission.

Rapson agreed with McMenamin and said the proposal should go back to staff. Brown said the proposal would go to the Planning Commission and there would be a workshop.

Frances Meaders asked Council when they decided to sell the property and why. Rapson said there had been no decision to sell the property. He continued that FC&A had submitted a proposal for the park and the property. He added Council had not decided if they even wanted to sell it and that a decision as a Council had not been made.

The motion to table was approved 3-0-1 (Brown). Brown noted that he abstained because of contributions to his campaign by a principal in FC&A.

Council/Staff Topics
Brown appointed a City Manager Selection Committee composed of himself, Rapson, Paul Massey, Interim City Manager Colin Halterman, and Terry Garlock.

McMenamin said all of Council should have input on this matter since it was such an important position. She suggested each Council Member review the applications and use the grid she suggested for City Attorney to record their top 10 choices. She continued that she had already looked at the applications and collated them into priorities. McMenamin said Human Resources could collate the information and come up with a short list. Human Resources might also have some suggestions regarding things Council might have overlooked. She felt it was very important that all of Council participate in the process. Brown said the committee would narrow down the applicants.

Tennant said a panel interview, such as the process used when a Council Member was selected to fulfill an unexpired term in 2001, would be a good idea.

Brown said the committee would just be a culling process and narrow down the numbers. He added that some candidates would be excluded almost immediately because they were not qualified.

Rapson suggested Council come up with some methodology the members could use to narrow down the candidates. He said he liked Tennant's idea for the final three candidates. Rapson felt McMenamin's suggestion had some merit. McMenamin said, while each Council Member might have different priorities, they might be surprised when some names turned up on everyone's list. Tennant noted the City Manager was the most vital City employee and he preferred to err on the side of more input. Miller said she would have copies of all the applications made the next day and placed in the Council Members' boxes.

There being no further business to discuss, Tennant moved to adjourn the meeting. Rapson seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Jane Miller, City Clerk

Stephen D. Brown, Mayor

Pamela Dufresne, Recording Secretary