

City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 19, 2024
6:30 PM

Call to Order

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in regular session on Thursday, December 19, 2024. Mayor Kim Learnard called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Council members attending: Laura Johnson, Suzanne Brown, Clinton Holland, and Frank Destadio.

Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

A. 2024 Marcom Awards (Vivian Lett)

Platinum - 2024 Quarterly Reports (Qtr 1)

65th Anniversary Challenge Coin

Gold - Navigate PTC App

City Hall Vinyl Walls

Public Communications Manager Vivian Lett announced that Peachtree City had earned several MarCom awards this year. These international awards honor excellence in marketing and communications. Platinum awards were presented in recognition of the City's quarterly reports and the 65th anniversary challenge coin, while the Navigate PTC app and the vinyl wall designs at City Hall earned Gold awards. The Library video "A Talk with Michael Thurmond" received honorable mention.

B. 2024 Tree City USA designation by the Arbor Day Foundation

Peachtree City Urban Forestry Program Manager Bob Werner presented the Mayor with a plaque recognizing the City's designation as a 2024 Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation, demonstrating commitment to preservation of the urban forest.

C. 2024 Georgia Tree Council Outstanding Community Grand Award

Werner then announced that Peachtree City was the 2024 Georgia Tree Council Outstanding Community Grand Award winner, given in recognition of its commitment to urban forestry for environmental purposes and community well-being.

Public Comment

Skip Schafer of Cresswind said he understood Council would be voting at this meeting to re-open Crabapple Lane to golf cart traffic in order to conduct a study to determine the actual flow of traffic into the Kedron Hills neighborhood. He said he hoped cameras would be installed at both ends of Crabapple Lane. He also said he wanted to correct incorrect statements made at the last meeting: most of the speakers during the public comments were from Peachtree City, not Tyrone. He also said many neighborhoods, not just Kedron Hills, did not have sidewalks. Why was safety only a concern there?

Robert Clough of Tyrone mentioned the \$1.7 million in transportation funds the County Commission was withholding from Peachtree City because of the Crabapple Lane closure. Clough said he welcomed an impartial study.

Todd Weinreb of Kedron Hills told Council the citizens wanted dialogue. He said Crabapple Lane was dangerous, with a 15-foot drop into a creek that was a foot off the shoulder on both sides. There were power lines on the ground, and he said the crossing was not legal. Weinreb suggested they should make safety improvements before opening this crossing.

Chip Yerri of Newnan represented the Peachtree City Hockey Association and urged Council to take quick action to correct the condensation problem at the Kedron rink.

Connie Keyhayes of Peachtree City talked about the number of trees that had been removed from the Robinson Road area for construction of a path. She said the County told her the City had agreed to this, and she wanted to know if the agreement had been changed.

Peachtree City resident Joan Brennan asked Council to vote against re-opening Crabapple Lane and called it a ploy to open the road permanently. The County had provided no guarantees to Peachtree City in exchange for this. She said Crabapple Lane was dangerous and not suitable for cart traffic, and the County and Tyrone should work on a proper path to connect Tyrone.

Christine Lewis of Tyrone thanked Council for considering opening Crabapple Lane, but another Peachtree City resident then mentioned safety concerns on Crabapple Lane and said crossing Dogwood Trail was dangerous and would become more so with future development. Kedron Hills resident Amanda Ott also mentioned Crabapple Lane's poor condition and remarked that connections on the south side were along paved paths paid for with Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) money. Tyrone could use its SPLOST to build a path.

Catrina Hitchens of Kedron Hills urged Council to vote against the opening, citing safety issues. She said she wanted connection, but going through a residential area was not the answer. She proposed that a path be built along Dogwood Trail, along with speed bumps and stop signs. Vlodimir Salazar mentioned that he and his family felt safer with the road closed and said the convenience of Tyrone cart drivers should not win out over the safety of Kedron Hills residents.

Safety was also Courtney Maxie's concern. The Kedron Hills resident said drivers often ran stop signs, sped by golf carts, and even drove around the barrier on Crabapple. Maxie also said it was her understanding that the County Administrator wanted Crabapple Lane open to all vehicles, not just golf carts.

Agenda Changes

Minutes

Brown moved to approve the November 21, 2024, City Council meeting minutes, the November 21, 2024, Executive Session minutes, the December 5, 2024, City Council Work Session minutes, and the December 5, 2024, Executive Session minutes. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

- A. November 21, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes**
APPROVED 5-0
- B. November 21, 2024, Executive Session Minutes**
APPROVED 5-0
- C. December 5, 2024, City Council Work Session Minutes**
APPROVED 5-0
- D. December 5, 2024, Executive Session Minutes**
APPROVED 5-0

Consent Agenda

Holland moved to approve Consent Agenda items A-H. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

- A. Budget Amendment FY2024 – Capital Project Grants**
APPROVED 5-0
- B. Lease Agreement for Visitor Center (CVB)**
APPROVED 5-0
- C. Reclassification of Fire Inspector to Deputy Fire Marshal**
APPROVED 5-0
- D. Resolution #12192024-CA-D Workers Compensation Policy Inclusions**
APPROVED 5-0
- E. Resolution #12192024-CA-E Georgia First Responder PTSD Program**
APPROVED 5-0
- F. List of Roadways Approved for Speed Detection Devices Update 2024**
APPROVED 5-0
- G. Approval Gulf State Distributors purchase for operating supplies**
APPROVED 5-0
- H. Purchase Synergistic Software Inc. – Records Management**
APPROVED 5-0
- I. Police Prisoner Transport Vehicle purchase**
APPROVED 5-0

J. 2025 4th of July Fireworks
APPROVED 5-0

K. Purchase a Toro Nurface 470 Fraise Mower
APPROVED 5-0

L. Purchase Toro Infield Drag
APPROVED 5-0

Old Agenda Items

None

New Agenda Items

A. 12-24-01 Unified Development Ordinance proposal

Last month, the Planning Commission presented a proposal that they serve as a steering committee to create a unified development ordinance (UDO), City Manager Justin Strickland said, and Council decided to move forward with that at their December work session.

Holland moved to approve New Agenda item 12-24-01. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

B. 12-24-02 Reopen Crabapple Lane through the summer to obtain traffic counts.

The situation at Crabapple Lane had become unreasonably divisive, the Mayor stated, and it was Council's job to find a way forward. She proposed opening the Crabapple gates for a defined amount of time in order to obtain traffic data.

Destadio moved to open Crabapple Lane to golf carts only through August for the purpose of obtaining traffic counts there and at two other locations beginning January 3. Learnard seconded.

Holland thanked the citizens in the audience for their interest in this matter. He confirmed that he lived on Loring Lane in Kedron Hills, but there was no gain for him in keeping the gate closed. He wanted what was good for Peachtree City. He noted that no one presently on Council was there when the decision was made to close Crabapple Lane, but they had all taken harsh criticism regarding it.

The County had already withheld \$1.7 million in transportation funds from Peachtree City and were now looking at holding back another \$900,000, for a total of \$2.6 million. Holland said it appeared they would get that money if they opened Crabapple Lane. He then suggested they keep the monitoring equipment at the gate for three to five years, long enough to get steady state numbers. That would provide meaningful data to help them make a good decision. He also suggested Council consider building a side path along Loring Lane to exit Kedron Hills.

Holland said he was in favor of re-opening Loring Lane to carts only.

Brown said she had read every email she received and asked questions of the City Attorney and the City Manager. She confirmed this opening would be only for carts. The problem was

they had no traffic data from three years ago when the gate was closed. Some people had mentioned safety issues, she observed, but the section of Crabapple outside of Peachtree City was a Fayette County road, and they should address that with the County Commission.

Brown admitted they needed data, so she supported reopening the gate to obtain it. Once the data was collected, they would have to make other decisions, such as if traffic-calming devices were needed or more signs. Would reducing the speed limit help or maybe they should consider a path along Loring Lane? The study needed to be long enough to gather data through all seasons, possibly longer than the end of August. She said she had tried to find reasons to keep the gate closed but had concluded that opening it for a study was the only way forward.

Johnson said she agreed with what had been said, noting that this had been a longstanding issue. A few months ago, Johnson said she asked staff for a map of all the path access points into Peachtree City, and she and Strickland visited them. She noted that several were through neighborhoods, including Maple Shade and The Gates, and she wanted counts from these areas to compare to Crabapple Lane. She felt it was in the best interest of the community to gather data and make this decision.

Destadio said he received many emails on both sides of this issue, and he needed data to make a decision. He said he was for opening it up for long enough to gather data. Destadio also said he hoped the Police would look at it and decide if they needed speed calming or just more tickets.

Holland asked if they should discuss how to measure the traffic, and Learnard said it would be up to the City Manager, who would bring it to Council.

The Mayor called the vote, and Destadio's motion to reopen passed unanimously.

C. 12-24-03 Award Construction Bid for Lighting Upgrades at City Parks

City Engineer Dave Borkowski explained that this project was for upgraded lighting at various City recreation fields, which included the lacrosse fields at Meade, the Field of Hope, T-ball field, and the upper and lower baseball quads at the Peachtree City Athletic Complex (PAC). He presented maps that showed where work had been done and where more was planned.

He recommended Council award the bid to low bidder Georgia Power in the amount of \$920,000 contingent upon satisfactory review and approval of their lighting plans.

Johnson moved to approve New Agenda item 12-24-03, award construction bid for lighting upgrades at City parks to Georgia Power in the amount of \$920,000. Destadio seconded.

Holland asked about plans for the future at Meade other than pickleball. The lights at the adult softball fields were removed the year before he arrived, Strickland stated, and the current plan was just to replace what was currently there. It would be up to Council as they moved forward with the recreation master plan to decide what to do in the future, he remarked.

Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearings

A. 12-24-04 Sign Variance request for 1209 N Peachtree Parkway, Target

Senior Planner Lora Hooks said this was a request for a sign variance at the Target in the Kedron Shopping Center. The ordinance set the maximum area for wall signage at 150 square feet, and the applicant was requesting a total of 284 square feet for three signs. She showed the existing signage and what was proposed, which was primarily the addition of a “drive up” sign.

Hooks reminded Council that the criteria for granting a sign variance was different than for a zoning variance and required that a hardship be found if the sign ordinance was followed. The hardship involved impairments of visibility for the proposed signs that were not caused by the applicant.

Devon O’Geary represented the applicant and said the addition of the drive up sign would facilitate wayfinding for customers and mitigate traffic around the front of the store.

The Mayor opened the public hearing. No one wished to speak in favor of the variance, and two citizens said they wanted to voice opposition.

Jennifer Faulkner asked if the Target bullseye would be replaced with a larger one. She also said there currently was no space for drive up customers. Faulkner said she did not think the signage size needed to change and addition of a drive up would change the whole traffic flow.

Keith Larson said he opposed this variance because it was not needed. Most people already recognized the Target brand; a size increase was not necessary. They had the village standards to assure a uniform appearance. Larson pointed out that recent requests for sign variances had been turned down.

No one else wished to speak, and the Mayor closed the public hearing.

Learnard asked O’Geary to explain what they were requesting. She said the Target sign would be removed and replaced with a new sign. A new drive up sign would be installed, she said, and Learnard asked if there was a drive up on the side of the building. Hooks explained that the drive up sign was for spaces in the parking lot designated for people who had ordered ahead. Employees would bring their orders to their vehicle.

O’Geary then clarified that the new bullseye would be the same size as the current one, only in white, not red. Hooks noted that the current signage was in violation of the size requirements, but they did not know the exact square footage.

The bullseye would be the same size as the one it was replacing, Holland clarified. Hooks said the reason for the variance was because they had to have a new sign permit for the drive up sign. Target would either have to come into compliance or get a variance for 284 square feet of signage in order to be issued the permit. Hooks said the proposed bullseye was 169 square feet, and Holland noted that alone was over the maximum allowed. City Clerk Yasmin Julio said the CVS sign that would remain was 37 square feet, and the new drive up sign was 78 square feet.

Johnson asked if there had been a previous variance request for the Target sign, and Hooks said there was not. Johnson said she wanted to support Target in replacing signs to the extent they had now, but she felt that might be a little gracious since they currently did not meet the criteria for a hardship. She would be okay with letting them have as much square footage as they had now.

Holland said he could agree with that, even though it violated the ordinance.

Brown said when you started renovating, you had to comply with the ordinances that were in place, and she was not in favor of this. Destadio also noted that it did not meet the criteria for a variance.

Holland told O'Geary they should go back to the drawing board and bring it back another time. Learnard asked if she wanted to withdraw the request and work with staff on a new request. O'Geary said she did.

B. 12-24-05 New Alcohol License - Wilshire Liquor, Beer & Wine, 1200 Highway 74 South, Suite 8

Julio said this address was the former location of the Peachtree Bottle Shop, which had closed and reopened down the street. Per O.C.G.A. 3-4-47(a), this location held an alcohol license within the 12 months immediately preceding this application and was exempt from the 500-yard distance requirement from another retail package store of distilled spirits. All other requirements were met.

The applicant, Ashwin Pattni, had experience operating liquor stores and was a Peachtree City resident, the attorney representing him told Council.

The Mayor opened the public hearing. Keith Larson said he had no objections to the being another package store in the Wilshire Village. It was not a disproportionate number, he stated.

No one else wished to speak, and the Mayor closed the public hearing.

Holland asked Julio about the location, and Julio again explained it was the same location as the Peachtree City Bottle Shop, which had moved less than 500 yards down the road. State law allowed an exemption because there had been an alcohol

license granted at this location within the past 12 months.

Brown moved to approve the new alcohol license for Wilshire Liquor, Beer & Wine, located at 1200 Highway 74 South, Suite 8. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Council/Staff Topics

Brown recalled that two citizens had come to Council with issues involving the overpopulation of deer and that Council had asked to City Manager to look into this. A representative of the Department of Natural Resources gave a presentation on urban archery.

Strickland said they were working on the component of hunting on public property, but that would probably have to wait until next deer season. Peachtree City's ordinance said bows and firearms could not be discharged in the City limits, but State law superseded this on the discharging of bows, saying they could be used for hunting on private property with the permission of the property owner. Hunters would have to have a State hunting license.

Brown said they would eventually need to amend the ordinance to match State law and perhaps add language regarding hunting on public property. However, hunting on private property could be done before the deer hunting season ended on January 31. If not on their own property, hunters would need to carry permission from the property owner with them. Police and Code Enforcement had been notified.

She said licenses were available online, as was information on how many deer could be taken by each hunter. She suggested hunters and those seeking hunters post on social media. Brown also said there were several deer processing facilities nearby.

Holland wished everyone a merry Christmas.

Executive Session

Destadio moved to adjourn to executive session at 8:23 p.m. to discuss pending or threatened litigation. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Holland moved to reconvene in regular session at 8:42 p.m. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Brown moved to adjourn the meeting. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary

Kim Learnard, Mayor