

City of Peachtree City
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE WORKSHOP
Minutes of Meeting
November 7, 2006
6:00 p.m.

The City Council of Peachtree City met in a workshop session on Tuesday, November 7, 2006, at 6:10 p.m. Council Members attending were: Mayor Harold Logsdon, Steve Boone, Stuart Kourajian, Cyndi Plunkett, and Judi Rutherford.

Staff members attending were: City Manager Bernard McMullen, Assistant City Manager/Developmental Services Director Colin Halterman, City Planner David Rast, and City Clerk Jane Miller.

Members of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board attending were: Patrick Staples, Elizabeth Keysar, and Phyllis Aguayo. Chuck Micallef and Karen Dembsky attended a portion of the meeting.

(Copies of the PowerPoint presentations on the Comprehensive Plan and the preliminary results of the citizen surveys are included in the official meeting file.) Rast told Council that the members wanted to bring Council up-to-date where the process was. There had been some discussions with Fayette County, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), and the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) that everyone needed to be aware of.

Rast gave an overview of the work to date. The Community Assessment and Community Participation Program were complete. On June 15, Council authorized the transmission of the documents to the ARC and DCA for review. Staff received the review comments on September 22. For the most part, the comments were very favorable, but they did have questions on some areas. Rast said they would be able to use the comments to enhance the documents.

In early September, Rast said there was a rumor that the DCA was revising the submittal requirements and deadlines. Staff met with the ARC, DCA, and the Fayette County planning staff on September 26 to discuss the plan submittal. Representatives from Fayetteville and Tyrone also attended. The schedule had changed. Instead of having the complete plan due by February 28, 2007, the submittal date was changed to 2013. He continued that the DCA and ARC had talked about submitting a partial plan prior to 2013. Rast said he still was not sure what the City was supposed to do. He had spoken with Pete Frisina, the County planner, who relayed that the County was equally confused. Fayetteville and Tyrone were using consultants to do their plans. Because of budgeting, they were moving forward with a full update. However, DCA had informed everyone that they might have to revise the full updates to meet the new schedule, even if they proceeded with a full update now.

Logsdon noted that the new deadlines had been staggered. Rast said the dates were staggered across the state, and DCA said they had not realized what they had done. All of the Comprehensive Plans from throughout the state were submitted to the DCA. The

DCA had to review each plan, send comments, approve all the plans, then authorize each jurisdiction to adopt their plan. The regional planning commissions assisted with the review of the plans; however, the DCA worked with all the areas not covered by a regional commission. They had tried to simplify the process, but had been inundated with plans and were unable to give them the necessary review. Logsdon asked if everyone in the County had the 2013 deadline. Rast said yes to the best of his knowledge. Rast continued that the change in the schedule would not affect the City's Qualified Local Government status as long as the City continued to turn in the impact fee reports and Short Term Work Program (STWP) updates.

Rutherford asked what the change in the deadlines meant to the intergovernmental service agreements, since the Comprehensive Plan was the trigger for any proposed changes. McMullen said the city managers met with County Administrator Chris Venice a few weeks ago. Tyrone City Manager Barry Amos and Fayetteville City Manager Joe Morton were under the impression that when they submitted their plans that it would start the clock ticking on the service delivery agreements.

Rutherford asked if there was legislation that required things be done this way. Rast said it was covered under the Georgia Planning Act. Rutherford asked if the Georgia Planning Act set the date, and the DCA was not able to meet it. Rast said the DCA had the authority to enforce the Georgia Planning Act. Rutherford asked if the legislation itself required comprehensive plans to be updated at 10 years, 15 years, and 20 years. Rast said the legislation established the length of time for plans to be adopted. She clarified that the DCA had the authority to adjust the time frame. Rast said he had been pleased with the DCA comments because they showed they had read the plan, and the comments had been constructive.

Aguayo said the City had a very good plan in place. Unlike most municipalities, the City had always had a plan. She felt the changes in the deadlines were probably more directed at the towns that did not have effective plans. Rutherford said that, without legislation, there were communities that would put a plan in place, and then never look at it again without being forced to do so. She said they should look at the Comprehensive Plan on a regular basis whether it changed or not. It helped the people in place at any time understand the plan. Aguayo agreed. Rutherford said her concern was not so much the plan, but the fact that the update triggered the service delivery agreements. Logsdon said that was the key to whole thing.

Rast continued that the comments from the ARC and DCA focused on issues and opportunities established by DCA criteria and looking at character areas. He noted that the DCA and ARC did not seem to understand the process for the stakeholders. Most communities were doing the community assessment and community participation program at a staff level without citizen input. The City had wanted citizen input. The comments included some ideas about public participation. The City must respond to the DCA's comments prior to moving forward with the Community Agenda. A total re-write was not required, just some additional information.

Rast said 1,100 surveys were sent out, and approximately 50% had been returned. Some were still coming in. Keysar went over the preliminary results of the Citizen Survey. She said they should have set up the database first, then design the questions so they would fit. All of the data that had been collected had to be converted into a numerical format for statistical analysis, which was a large task. There was still a lot of work to be done, so she went over what had been completed so far.

Keysar discussed the sample representativeness, which should be representative of all the residents. The classic problem with online surveys was that only educated people filled them out, which was a sub sample of the real population. The population was any person living in the City, not specifically property owners or business owners. The Community Assessment should show what the population should look like. The survey results were underrepresented in the age groups 18-25 and 26-40 and overrepresented in age groups 56-65 and 66+. Keysar said that, as a social scientist, she felt they should have aggressively sought residents in the underrepresented groups and have them fill out the surveys. They knew that renters comprised 18% of population, so 18% of the surveys were sent to renters. She said they probably should have sent 50% of the surveys to renters, so there would be a more representative sample. Logsdon noted that a large percentage of the 18-21 year olds would be in college. Keysar said the surveys were sent to the head of the household, but she felt those results were not as important as the Household Income question.

Keysar noted that the population was underrepresented on the lower income levels (less than \$19,000 and \$20,000-\$49,000) and overrepresented on the higher end (\$100,000-\$149,000 and over \$150,000). She continued that she was not surprised that most of those who filled out the survey were white, but she was worried about the "Tenure" question. She said that the survey results were very underrepresented by renters. They were expecting one in five of the surveys would come from renters, but the ratio was much less than that. She explained that they had hoped there would be some correlation between the renters, the lower income bracket, and the people who used the cart path as a means of transportation to work inside the City, but not enough renters responded to see if there was one. In general, those who filled out the survey were the head of the house, in the senior citizen age group, and on the higher end of the salary spectrum.

Keysar continued that the three things people liked the most about living in the City were the small community atmosphere, multi-use path system, and the preserved greenbelts. She said there were problems with the question on rating the list of planning issues from very important to not important. The numbers reported were the means. Keysar felt people interpreted the answers on whether they agreed or not, which was not what they were asking. They wanted to know which issues people considered important to the planning process. She noted "expansion of city limits by annexation." She said if it was interpreted strictly by how it was phrased, people did not think it was an important issue. However, it was an important issue based on the answers to other questions.

Keysar noted that the next question, "Over the next 20 years, how would you like to the Peachtree City's population grow?" showed how people felt about annexation. Fifty-four percent said they did not want the population to grow at all. Thirty-nine percent chose the answer, "Continue Residential Growth Until Buildout," and seven percent answered, "Annexation."

Keysar said they also struggled with the wording for the next question – What is your opinion of growth in Fayette and Coweta Counties surrounding Peachtree City? People were either concerned or very concerned and felt more coordination was needed.

Keysar continued that people felt there was enough rental housing, but there were not many responses from renters. Eighty-nine percent felt it was either abundant or adequate. She noted that if there were not enough rental housing, then it became more expensive. The next question addressed whether there were adequate housing opportunities for those in the low-income bracket. Eighty-three percent said it was adequate.

Emergency services were also addressed. Only seven percent felt crime was a major problem; 70% felt crime was problem, but not a major problem. Rutherford noted crime might be considered a major problem now by people who had lived here a long time. Stories about crime were in the paper now. Boone agreed that there was more exposure about crime now. He added that senior citizens felt there was more crime. Rutherford added that there was a large senior population who did not feel as safe on the cart paths as before. Eighty-nine percent felt emergency services were adequate. Keysar continued that, in general, no one wanted alternate transportation.

Residents were asked to answer a series of statements on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questions and the averages included:

1. *Market forces should be allowed to dictate residential development trends within the City, 2.32*
2. *Guidelines are needed to control redevelopment of residential areas to maintain the character, 4.3*
3. *More retail development was needed within the City, 2.18*
4. *Existing industrial areas must remain zoned for industrial uses, 4.00*
5. *Access to higher education opportunities should be provided within the City, 3.45*
6. *Additional recreation opportunities are needed within the City that are not dedicated to organized sports, such as passive parks and nature trails, 3.69*
7. *Opportunities for the visual and performing arts should be expanded within the City, 3.60*

Staples asked if any variances were available. Keysar said all they had now was just the raw data. Once the variances were available, they would know if people really agreed or disagreed, and the mean came out in the middle, or if they were neutral.

Keysar went over the cart path data that was available. She noted that the questions had multiple sections, and it was taking a lot of time to compile the answers. There had also been trouble reconciling the surveys with the data, getting the percentages right, and being clear about what was said. Some people marked that they did not use the paths, but later on checked that they used the paths for exercise. There was some confusion regarding trips and use. Those responding to the survey said 25% of their trips in the City were on the cart path. Sixty-three percent said the multi-use path system was important in their decision either to move here or to stay here.

Keysar continued that people were asked how many vehicles and bicycles they had. The mean per household was Cars/Trucks/SUVs, 2.27; Motorcycles/Scooters, 0.09; Golf Carts, 0.75; and Bicycles, 2.12. Ninety-five percent of those who filled out the survey said someone in their household used the path system. Seventeen percent said someone in the household used the path system to get to work. Keysar said the path usage data was still being correlated. There were questions regarding destinations, but she did not have the data.

Keysar said 64% planned to live in the City more than 10 years. As for employment location, 29% worked in the City. McMullen said he was surprised that 50% of the people were either retired or worked in the City.

Keysar said she wanted to ensure the data was good. They had to test the relationship between the demographics and how people responded on the questions before they could adjust the data to be more representative. If it was found that the missing people would have responded very differently in general, then the conclusion could be made that people felt differently based on their tenure. The data was very raw. There were also many written comments that had not been analyzed. Keysar said Cinnamon Mack had entered all the data, and a colleague at Georgia State was helping convert the answers to the numbers needed for analysis.

Staples asked Keysar what the typical response rate was for surveys. Keysar said the typical response rate was 25%. Staples said they should be pleased with that response. Keysar added that there were also the surveys that came in from citizens not in the sample group. She said those should also be analyzed, but she would not have the time to do it. Aguayo said disregarding those surveys would not be fair to those who took the time to fill them out and bring them in. There was a brief discussion regarding that being a possible project for an intern.

Rast went over the Plan Update schedule. He said Fayetteville had completed the full plan and submitted it for review. He was not sure if they had received any comments yet. The County was writing a letter to DCA requesting that the submittal date be changed

from February to June 30, which would give everyone time to figure out what was to be done. Partial updates had to be adopted by June 30. The full updates were due in 2013. The latest information only addressed the partial updates. The deadline for local jurisdictions to adopt the Impact Fee Reports was February 28, 2007. Rast said he was working with Assistant Finance Officer Janet Camburn on the report, which should be on the Council agenda on November 16 or December 7 for submittal approval. The Solid Waste Management Plan must still be prepared, and it was something worked on with the County.

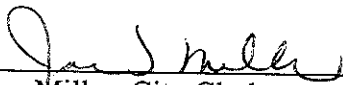
Rast said staff would continue to work with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board to incorporate recommendations into the plan. They would continue to coordinate with the ARC and DCA to determine what exactly had to be submitted and when. They would continue to work with other Fayette County jurisdictions on intergovernmental cooperation, the Solid Waste Management Plan, the Service Delivery Strategy, and other areas. They would also continue to prepare the Short Term Work Program and submit it to the ARC and DCA for review.

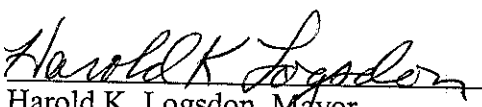
Rast said he hated that so many things were up in the air. After the first of the year, they would probably request that the Planning Commission go back to its regular schedule of two meetings per month. This would allow the Advisory Board to meet with the Planning Commission when needed so that when it was time to make the recommendations the Planning Commission would be aware of them.

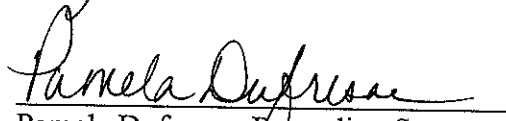
Kourajian asked if there was anything needed from Council. Rast said not at this point, but if it got to the point where they were not getting any answers from DCA on the new schedule then he might need Council's assistance.

McMullen asked Rast when he envisioned an update to the Land Use Map. Rast said they could continue to work on that, and it could be done separately from the Comprehensive Plan. There were some areas that had been identified to consider for a change in the land use designation. McMullen said he felt that was important.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.


Jane Miller, City Clerk


Harold K. Logsdon, Mayor


Pamela Dufresne, Recording Secretary