City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2017
7:00 p.m.

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in regular session on Thursday, September 21, 2017. Mayor Vanessa Fleisch called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Others attending: Terry Ernst, Mike King, Kim Learnard, and Phil Prebor.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Minutes

September 7, 2017, Regular Meeting Minutes

King moved to approve the September 7, 2017, regular meeting minutes as written. Learnard seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

1. Consider Elimination/Replacement of Position in Recreation & Special Events Department

2. Consider FY 2017 Budget Amendment – Police Auxiliary Donation

Ernst moved to approve Consent Agenda items 1 and 2. Learnard seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Police Chief Janet Moon explained the circumstances of the Police Auxiliary donation, saying that in 2012 there was a home invasion in which a person was shot. Mike Medici, owner of Premier Trucking, donated $10,000 to the Police Auxiliary to serve as a reward fund. Moon noted that an arrest was made, and the reward was not used, but Medici told the auxiliary to keep the money for a future need. Moon said the Police Department would use the $10,000, plus some additional funds, to purchase body cameras for officers. Moon also noted that Medici loaned the City two tractor-trailers used to collect supplies for hurricane relief. She commended Medici as a community partner and said his help was truly appreciated. Mayor and Council also voiced gratitude for Medici's donation and assistance.

Old Agenda Items

09-17-01 Consider Amendment to Sec. 908 of Zoning Ordinance, Creation of Special Events Permit

Senior Planner Robin Cailloux reviewed the goals of creating a special events permit, which were to codify practice, provide guidance to City staff, and ensure ordinance consistency. She noted that the amendment as originally proposed defined a special event as an event occurring outside normal daily business operations, but Council asked at its September 17 meeting for a more specific definition. Cailloux said the Planning Department and City Attorney had created a definition that stated a special event was on private property with a non-residential zoning that impacted government services along rights-of-way, or impacted the health, safety, or welfare of the general public. Cailloux explained how this definition included some bigger events and excluded smaller events that previously required permits, but could be considered normal business, such as distribution of free samples, a movie night, or Christmas tree lighting. She clarified that this amendment did not change how events on public property were reviewed, kept the maximum number of permits issued to a property per year at four, did not change signage requirements, and made no changes to alcohol license requirements. Cailloux reported that the amendment provided guidance to staff in reviewing issues including public safety, parking, amplified sound, waste, and restrooms. She said staff recommended approval.

Learnard moved to approve the amendment to Sec. 908 of the Zoning Ordinance. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

New Agenda Items

09-17-04 Discuss Sanitation Franchise Fees

City Manager Jon Rorie pointed out the link between discussion of the proposed changes in sanitation franchise fees and the following new agenda item, the fiscal year (FY) 2018 budget for Keep Peachtree City Beautiful (KPTCB). He said Council would discuss the proposed franchise fee changes without consideration, followed by consideration of the KPTCB budget proposal, which assumed those changes. He noted there was a preview session at the September 7 Council meeting, which allowed for feedback, and said Public Information Officer/City Clerk Betsy Tyler had revised her presentation to answer those questions. After Tyler's presentation, Rorie said, he would follow up with his recommendations to Council.

Tyler reviewed the services KPTCB provided to the City, outlining that litter removal along roadways and trash and dumped yard waste removal from the cart paths were paid for through separate contracts in the City's general fund. She said operation of the Recycling Center/ recycling stations and the providing of recycling bins at City facilities and special events were covered through franchise fees. Tyler noted that KPTCB's operations included providing personnel to supervise court-mandated community service workers. In last year's budget consideration, she said, Council discussed a $9,360 shortfall relating to recycling operations. Tyler explained that the deficit could be traced to an increase in the use of the recycling containers, which meant having to pay more often to have them emptied, combined with a decrease in the value of recyclable materials. She said the deficit increased each year as the use of the center increased and values of recyclables remained stagnant. To cover the shortfall, Tyler said, KPTCB Executive Director Al Yougel recommended the City increase residential franchise fees and institute a commercial fee because dumpsters were often a source of roadside litter. Last year, she noted, the City made up the deficit by adding $9,360 to the cart path litter/trash agreement.

Tyler reported that staff discussed several options prior to the September 21 meeting to make up the annual shortfall, which could vary from $10,000 to $40,000, depending on the use of recycling services. The options included supplementing through the General Fund, creating commercial franchise fees, creating a solid waste management fee in the occupational tax, closing recycling stations, and increasing the residential franchise fee. She said each posed its own challenges, but noted that funding through the General Fund included about $9,000, adding a management fee to businesses could generate between $17,000 to $25,000, closing the recycling stations would eliminate the deficit, and increasing the quarterly residential fee to $1.50 would garner $20,000, while raising it to $2 would net $40,000. Tyler pointed out they could not estimate the impact of a commercial franchise fee because it was hard to determine the number of dumpsters in the City and the number of service providers. At the last Council meeting, she reported, staff recommended that the residential fee be raised to $2 per quarter, with the stipulation that $10,000 be earmarked for trash and canister replacement at City facilities. She noted that the residential franchise fee had not increased since 2009. Tyler also pointed out that residents were the primary beneficiaries of KPTCB services, and commercial fees would be passed on to residents in any case. She said the residential fee structure was already in place, so there would be no additional administrative costs. This option did not address litter from commercial dumpsters or include apartment residents or residents who did not pay directly for garbage service, Tyler added.

Tyler continued that Council had specifically asked about apartment residents, who did not pay the recycling fee and had no access to on-site recycling like residential customers did Tyler said the City's requirement that dumpsters be enclosed meant there was no room for recycling bins. She said she worked with Planning and Code Enforcement staff to identify 23 multi-family neighborhoods that potentially had dumpsters and determined that 16 did. The 23 neighborhoods included an estimated 2,991 units, while the 16 with dumpsters were estimated to total 2,710 units, Tyler reported. At $4 per year, the commercial fee would total $10,864, Tyler said, but that did not account for vacancies or the administrative challenge to identify, bill, and collect the fees.

Tyler summarized that the basic issue seemed to be the value of recycling to the residents of Peachtree City versus the cost of providing recycling services. About 75% of residents had access to curbside recycling at no extra cost, Tyler noted, while 25% lived in communities that utilized commercial dumpsters with no recycling facilities on site.

Rorie remarked that this was a public policy question that asked Council to decide how much value they and the citizens placed on recycling. He said he believed the increased cost of the bin pulls was evidence of the value of the Recycling Center. Rorie told Council they should discuss whether it would be more in line with those values to reduce services or increase funding. He clarified that he placed the item on the agenda only as a discussion topic and wanted Council to hear Yougel's budget proposal for KPTCB FY 2018 before making a decision. Rorie said he would bring back the sanitation franchise fee discussion as part of the budget consideration process.

Prebor asked to clarify the number of households that could contract for residential curbside garbage pickup in the City, and Tyler noted it was about 10,500 single-family households. Their base fee was required to include both garbage pick-up and recycling. She said this was about 75% of the total households in the City.

09-17-05 Consider FY 2018 Budget for Keep Peachtree City Beautiful

Yougel went over some statistics from KPTCB's activities over the past year. He noted KPTCB maintained 68 trash containers along the City's paths and provided trash and recycling containers for special events. Last year, KPTCB collected more than 1.2 million pounds of recyclables, excluding glass, at the station, bringing in around $22,700. He pointed out that glass could not be recycled curbside, and the Recycling Center took in about 200,000 pounds of glass last year. He noted that some visitors recycled only glass at the center, while other residents, who might not have access to curbside recycling, visited many of the stations, to recycle cardboard, newspapers, used books, etc. Businesses bringing in cardboard made up a high percentage of users, too, Yougel reported. He said the visits to the Center were how many residents first became acquainted with KPTCB, and he felt that recycling opportunities were probably one of the top questions posed by new residents.

Volunteers spent 3,299 hours walking the streets and paths to collect trash, Yougel commented. Court-mandated community service workers put in 16,800 hours of free work for KPTCB last year, Yougel reported. He said the mulching site on Rockaway Road was open almost 600 hours annually, with about 17,800 visits; the daily high being 468 visits on the Saturday after Tropical Storm Irma. The annual Spring Clean-up had yielded 228,000 pounds of things residents wanted to get rid of. KPTCB maintained recycling programs at nine schools and had recycling bins at eight City locations and special events. Yougel also noted 85 truckloads and 27 trailer loads of plant debris were removed from cart paths. He pointed out that none of this existed eight years ago. Ongoing concerns he mentioned included the pull cost versus recycling values, the residential recycling rate at multi-family neighborhoods, and the litter generated from commercial operations.

Yougel broke down the proposed budget of $188,400 for FY 2018, which included revenue from the waste hauler franchise fee at the proposed $2 per customer per quarter, which accommodated the fee increase discussed earlier. That fee would be $10,900 for the first quarter, and $21,800 for each quarter thereafter, for a total of $76,300. Recyclables and Earth Day fees would net $15,992, and the litter/compost contract with the City amounted to $50,388, while the cart path litter/trash pick-up contract was $45,720. Yougel noted that $60,900 would be spent on bin pulls, while maintenance and repairs totaled $2,800, and insurance on vehicles was $6,000 a year. Contract labor costs were budgeted for $81,600. The budget also included $6,000 in capital reserves.

Learnard mentioned that eight years ago, the goal was to get to a 25% reduction in the amount of waste sent to the County landfill. She said at that time, the diversion rate was about 4%, and inquired where the City was now. Yougel said there was now a 23% or 24% reduction.

Ernst asked about the possibility of educating the public and then eliminating the collection of aluminum cans for recycling. Yougel said this might eliminate one pull a month and noted that aluminum cans were comingled with steel cans and plastic bottles, which were the lowest revenue producers, so eliminating their collection would save money. He explained that paper and cardboard were the most profitable recyclables because they did not have to be sorted. Plastics and cans had to be sorted by type, so the recycling companies paid less because they required more work, Yougel noted.

Fleisch noted that about 52% of the residents who paid for curbside recycling with their garbage pickup did not utilize the service. She asked Yougel how the City could help KPTCB increase this participation rate. Yougel said it was posted on their website, and there were notices at the Recycling Station. Learnard proclaimed this program the best bargain in the southeast, with its free labor and focus on keeping the City attractive. King remarked that any effort to curtail recycling in the City would cause an uproar.

Rorie, asked by Fleisch for his viewpoint, noted there had been three discussions over the past year about this topic. He said it was a public policy question, not just a budgeting issue. He called it money well spent and said the City should continue to encourage recycling. Yougel presented a budget with a roughly $30,000 increase in franchise fees, but the debate was who would pay those fees, Rorie noted. Rorie related that because it was a public policy matter, he would have no problem adjusting the City budget to make this additional amount part of the General Fund, rather than increase the residential franchise fee. Everyone contributed to the General Fund, he noted, through property taxes and sales taxes. Rorie said it was not critical that the KPTCB budget be adopted at that evening. He noted that the total cost for the recycling bin pulls was about $52,650, which resulted in an expense of about $30,000 to the City after refunds for the recyclables were considered. Rorie recommended that Council continue the matter to its October 5 meeting when he would present a budget with a line item for a revenue source to KPTCB. He said the money would come from the City's General Fund. The franchise fee would remain at $1 per quarter, Rorie noted. Rorie challenged Yougel to evaluate existing programs, such as can collection, for cost effectiveness.

Learnard asked for a year by year look at how the City was trending on percentages of waste hauled to the County landfill. Prebor expressed concern about the appearance of garbage cans around the City on paths and at facilities, and Rorie offered reassurances that some of the reserve fund would be used to replace cans in parks. Tyler said garbage cans cost between $70 and $94, but Rorie said KPTCB might get a discount for buying in bulk.

Rorie also brought up the issue of having a single waste hauler for the City, which had been discussed several times in the past. A survey of residents a few years ago showed that 62% of residents approved the idea of a single hauler at a lower cost and increased services, he reported. He said he asked Fayetteville, which contracted with a single hauler to provide services, what its residents were charged. It was $10.45 per month for curbside roll carts once a week and every other week recycling. Rorie noted that in Peachtree City, he paid his company $16 per month for the same services. In addition to cost, Rorie pointed out, another consideration was the amount of damage caused by all the trucks from different companies on residential streets. Prebor remarked that residents were paying in two ways – once in higher fees and again for road damage. Rorie noted that he had researched the pros and cons of contracting with a waste collection company, but said that was not a discussion to be had at this time.

Rorie also asked Council to consider a related topic. He pointed out that so far in FY 2017, the City had spent roughly $64,000 for grinding at the mulch yard on Rockaway Road. The cost for tree removal was about $187,000 for the same period this year. Rorie reminded Council there were 3,700 acres of green space in the City, and trees were suffering from pine beetle infestation, in addition to issues with leaning trees. Tropical Storm Irma felled many limbs and trees, he noted, going back to Yougel's report that over 400 vehicles brought yard debris to the mulching facility on the Saturday following Irma. Rorie said none of the waste haulers currently serving the City provided pick up of yard debris. He noted that the City contracted with KPTCB to clean up the paths, and limbs dumped by residents who had no way to dispose of them made up much of what they collected.

Rorie said he mentioned all these considerations to show that going to a system with a single contracted waste hauler involved many factors. He added that he would be glad to research the issue, looking at minutes of previous meetings in which it was discussed, but asked Council to postpone the topic until the FY 2019 budget. Ernst asked how citizens could be guaranteed that rates would remain stable if the City contracted with a waste collection company for residential service. Rorie explained that rates, and limits for potential increases, would be stated in the contracts. Fleisch brought up the issue of monopolies and said that had been a concern when Council discussed this topic previously. Rorie said that would certainly be a consideration. Prebor asked about a discount for seniors, and Rorie said Fayetteville's seniors paid $8.95 per month as opposed to $10.45. Rorie also brought up the fact that many residents, if they didn't dump their yard debris in the greenbelts, resorted to burning it, which posed a hazard. Rorie summarized the discussion by telling Council he would present a KPTCB FY 2018 budget with a General Fund subsidy for recycling programs at its October 5 meeting.

King moved to continue the FY 2018 KPTCB budget discussion to the October 5 meeting. Learnard seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

<u>Council/Staff Topics</u>

Preview – Landscape Ordinance (Tree Requirements)

Cailloux explained that her department was reviewing ordinances to get them in line with goals stated in the City's Comprehensive Plan. She said the landscape ordinance allowed property owners to claim credit that could be applied toward their required tree replacement. Economic goals, she explained, included maximizing the use of land, allowing the use of lots that might be considered difficult to develop, and reducing tax base dependence on residential taxes. The goals must be balanced with maintaining the City's aesthetic standards and protecting the natural environment and water quality, she noted.

Cailloux said staff conducted a peer review of Alpharetta, Dunwoody, Marietta, Milton, Newnan, Roswell, and Sandy Springs, all designated as Tree Cities by the National Arbor Day Foundation. She said these cities used a different standard of measurement than Peachtree City, but after normalizing them their average "tree replacement" equivalency factor was 21 units; Peachtree City required 46 units. All the other jurisdictions allowed undisturbed trees to count towards the tree replacement requirements, but Peachtree City only counted undisturbed trees in the developable area of the lot, Cailloux stated. For instance, she explained, trees in wetlands or in required setbacks could not be counted towards the total tree replacement requirement. She said she would present to Council at a future meeting an amendment that included trees in those areas, except for required buffers on major thoroughfares. She said the maximum 25% cap for the credit would be maintained.

Discussion of Tropical Storm Irma Response

Rorie then asked Fire-Rescue Chief Joe O'Conor to discuss the City's recovery efforts after Tropical Storm Irma. Rorie noted that there had been about 100 tree removal orders in the storm's aftermath. Rorie said priority order for tree removal was primary roads, secondary roads, cart paths, and then parks. He said the storm cost time and energy, with additional costs to come from grinding at the mulching yard. He had authorized some changes in the fund balance to accommodate these needs, including overtime for public works crews to expedite the clean-up. He said he hoped the storm damage recovery operations could be complete in two to four weeks, but City crews had to blend this work with their normal routines because those regular tasks could not be deferred.

O'Conor said there was significant damage from Irma, but the storm was limited in duration, and there were no injuries. He said they activated the City's Emergency Operations Plan, which was updated every other year. The plan brought together the Emergency Operations Center, which allowed Public Works, Police, and Fire departments to coordinate their efforts. During an eight-hour period, O'Conor related, they responded to about 100 incidents. He called it a true cooperative effort, with Police and Fire personnel helping to clear the roads. He said the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers, trained by the Police Department, were instrumental in keeping the roads open, as well. Another help came from the lack of traffic, due to schools and many businesses being closed, and citizens staying off the roads in general, O'Conor noted.

O'Conor explained that the City's Emergency Operations Plan defined the roles of all departments and was designed to maintain a continuity of government in the event of a man-made or natural disaster. He said this incident did not require implementing many parts of the plan, including sheltering or preparation of meals for the public. He noted that sheltering was a huge undertaking. If needed, sheltering would be coordinated on a countywide basis with support from the American Red Cross and other not-for-profit organizations. Under the emergency operations plan, O'Conor outlined, the Recreation Department would oversee sheltering, and several Recreation workers were trained in managing a shelter.

O'Conor added that Irma gave all departments the opportunity to work together as a government. Department representatives held an after-action meeting to discuss their functioning during the storm, and O'Conor said there were ways the plan could be improved, but he felt the response was a strong example of teamwork, both volunteer and paid, to promote the restoration of normalcy as quickly as possible.

Rorie mentioned that the City had options other than opening shelters, including opening information centers or dry areas, or cooling stations in hot weather and warming stations during cold weather. The terminology was important as the word "shelter" generated specific duties and obligations. Rorie said he talked with County personnel about moving in that direction during Irma, if it was needed, but it had not been necessary. He noted there were always lessons learned after these events or through simulated events. Problems during Irma included a shortage of chain saws and spare radio batteries. Another need that became apparent, he reported, was a City-owned bucket truck. Right now, workers had to use 16-foot pole saws to cut limbs. Rorie acknowledged that a bucket truck was expensive, but said the City must consider the purchase in the future. O'Conor added that the City intended to seek Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds to recuperate some of the clean-up costs.

There being no executive session, Learnard moved to adjourn. King seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary

Vanessa Fleisch, Mayor