



**BOARD OF MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
February 14, 2018
*Immediately Following Special Called Meeting***

MINUTES

Members Present: Jonathan Elmore, Mayor
Brian Fisher, Mayor Pro Tem
Adela Yelton, Commissioner
Lionel Laratte, Commissioner
Lisa Shortell, Commissioner

Staff Present: Gina Hill, City Clerk
Keri Stevens, City Planner

Item No. 1 Meeting Called to Order

Item No. 2 Adoption of Agenda
Commissioner Laratte moves to adopt. Commissioner Shortell seconds. All ayes.

Item No. 3 **Conditional Use Permit Application for Accessory Dwelling at 57 Wiltshire Drive**

Jenny Fidler and Ward Kirlin of 57 Wiltshire propose an accessory dwelling unit. The unit will be part of a new two car garage. The unit is proposed as an in-law suite and will not be rented. Article 8, Section 801 III. states that "Accessory dwellings shall only be permitted if approved as a conditional use pursuant to Section 1401."

Jenny Fidler/57 Wiltshire Dr: We want to tear down our one-car garage and replace it with a two-car garage with an in-law suite.

City Planner Stevens: You have to approve the conditional use of having an in-law suite.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: It doesn't seem like they should have to come before us first.

Commissioner Shortell: I'm ok with it as long as there is no renting.

Commissioner Yelton: Overall I'm ok with it. I do think we should review the process. How do we enforce whether or not someone is renting their unit?

City Planner Stevens: We don't currently have a process for that.

Commissioner Yelton: I approve it.

Commissioner Laratte: I approve it.

Jenny Fidler/57 Wiltshire Dr: My husband plans to use it as an office and we'll use it for family to stay in during the holidays.

Mayor Elmore: I'm fine with it.

Kathy Kingsbury/817 Stratford Rd: Just make sure you meet all the setbacks and variances.

Jenny Fidler/57 Wiltshire Dr: We've already had it surveyed and the architect knows that.

Item No. 4

Georgia State University Graduate Student Project-Interpretive History Plan

Kate Wilson, Avondale Estates resident and GSU History Professor, leads a group of graduate students who have catalogued the City's historic documents and items.

Kate Wilson: I'd like to thank City staff and the Board for making this project possible for the students. It was a great experience. Because of time, we didn't get to do everything we wanted. Students surveyed the archival holdings upstairs at City Hall. They also looked at other resources like the DeKalb Historical Society. We came up with five areas for future research. It's preliminary. They are: from farm to farmer's market, our architectural heritage, preserving our past while planning for the future, community life and collective memory, and finally about how Avondale has changed over time, especially demographically. I love the story behind Carl's Corner. We gathered all this information from historical records and beginning to reach out to residents to see what they're interested in. We did put out a survey to learn what people wanted to know more about. They were most interested in past people and places, race relations, architecture, green spaces. People would like access to archives or exhibits. We asked people to say three words that describe Avondale. There was: community, family, tight-knit, small, artistic, peaceful, neighborly, diverse, sleepy, quaint, quirky, etc. We need to continue to gather more research. The students put together a process plan for the archives. They need to be stabilized. The City needs a better records management policy. You could pay a Georgia State graduate student to finish archiving. The \$2,000 goes toward their tuition. There is interest in training citizens to do this as well. This should be community driven. There is talk about reviving the Avondale Historical Society. There are a lot of fun things that can be done such as walking tours, scavenger hunts, pop up exhibits, etc. I encourage everyone to embrace complexity.

Commissioner Yelton: It would be good if we could find grants to help us with the next steps.

Kate Wilson: I'm happy to help out with that any way I can. It will be hard to move the materials to a new place without a big investment. Getting them processed is a good first step. You could consider putting the city archives in an archive repository.

Commissioner Shortell: I think starting a historic society is a great idea. I think there is a lot of interest. Oral histories should happen sooner rather than later.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: I would love for there to someday be a museum in downtown Avondale.

Carolyn Chandler/2996 Majestic Cir: A group of us has been already meeting about this so there is community involvement already.

Lyda Steadman/3118 Majestic Cir: I'm happy to help.

Andy LaRocco/41 Wiltshire Dr: The City has a lot of history with Poland and their participation in the 1996 Olympics held in Atlanta.

Commissioner Shortell: While we work on grants maybe some of the citizen groups can work with Ms. Wilson and City staff.

Carolyn Chandler/2996 Majestic Cir: The credit union could be a good museum or place for displays.

Item No. 5

Hobbs Street Cul-de-sac Abandonment and Disposal Proposal

Developer Icon Residential is requesting a road abandonment and disposal of a portion of the cul-de-sac at the end of Hobbs Street.

Icon Rep: The site is triangle in shape that was used by Marta for storage. We would like to situate the townhomes to face the trail. We realized Hobbs is kind of a strange cul-de-sac. The right of way isn't even and we propose to make it straight. The zoning and our hearing before the Architectural Review Board (ARB) is in March. We would add back some green space for the City in exchange. We just want to make Hobbs a complete street.

Commissioner Shortell: Will the property be gated?

Commissioner Laratte: How many units are you talking about?

Icon Rep: About 35.

Commissioner Shortell: I like your sensitivity to the surrounding area.

Commissioner Yelton: Is it typical to ask for abandonment before submitting plans?

Icon Rep: We were told that was the process.

City Planner Stevens: We can do it at any time but there are things we can't do until this is resolved.

Icon Rep: We're open to however you want to do it.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: I like what I see so far.

Mayor Elmore: I would be in favor of abandonment. I just want to make sure the project is going to happen first. We need to check with our attorney to make sure it's all done correctly. I like the proposal.

Commissioner Laratte: I would like to hear what the neighbors think about this. There will probably be an increase of traffic. Otherwise I like the plan.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: I like that you're connecting streets and giving access to the bike path.

Carolyn Chandler/2996 Majestic Cir: How big is the property again and how many units?

Icon Rep: It's just over two acres with around 35 townhomes. That number hasn't been confirmed.

Kathy Kingsbury/817 Stratford Rd: Will you have sidewalks? Private streets?

Icon Rep: Yes. And we're not sure about the streets yet but they'll be open to the public either way.

Sheri Locke: I like the townhomes. I prefer a streets that are not private.

Lyda Steadman/3118 Majestic Cir: Do you have designs and materials?

Icon Rep: We'll have that for the ARB meeting next month.

Dee Merriam/8 Lakeview Pl: The green space committee should give their input.

Candace Jones/9 Fairfield Dr: I like the idea of townhouses.

City Planner Stevens: I need to check with the city attorney.

Developer Trammel Crowe will present their proposed four-acre development roughly bound by US 278, Hillyer Avenue, Maple Street and the CSX/MARTA tracks. The development includes 290 residential units and approximately 5,000 SF of ground floor commercial space. The firm intends to request CBD-PD (Central Business District Planned Development) zoning.

TC Rep: We have not submitted. This is more for feedback. We're proposing up to five levels of mixed use development. It would be about 290 units and 5,000 square feet of retail on College Avenue. We've gotten initial feedback from the Architectural Review Board (ARB) and have made changes since.

Mayor Elmore: I appreciate your responsiveness to comments you've already received. One of my biggest concerns is connectivity. I think it's a good looking building and you've done a good job.

TC Rep: We're interested in having a pedestrian/bicycle path. The County will be running a water line behind the building so now we have a shrunken site.

Commissioner Laratte: I'm glad you're interested in building in the City. My concerns are aesthetic. I would think the closer we get to the Tudor Village, the more the architecture should reflect that. I think it looks a bit like other places. We're not other places.

Commissioner Yelton: Thank you for making adjustments after the initial feedback. I don't think it has to look like the Tudor Village but maybe inspired by it. What about absorption rates?

TC Rep: I think this number of units would be absorbed pretty quickly. Our research supports that.

Commissioner Shortell: What is the height at the four story level?

TC Rep: About 48 feet.

Commissioner Shortell: I think you're moving in the right direction. I have concerns though. Zoning and the master plan would call for more retail on the front. I think there needs to be more connectivity. Your building is like a dam. I think the pathway is an improvement.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: I thank you for making those adjustments. I agree with many of the other comments.

TC Rep: Thank you for the comments. We'll continue to work on it. We want it to fit into the community without looking like a cheap imitation of architecture from another time.

Lyda Steadman/3118 Majestic Cir: I'm concerned about the trend of more high density mixed use developments. Some of them become crime infested. What we build must stand the test of time and be the highest standards. Higher quality will mean more money for the developer too. It looks better with the changes but could use more work.

Sheri Locke: I don't mind the design or density. I'm concerned about walkability. Maybe you could reduce parking since it's close to Marta.

Pat Maddox/34 Kensington Rd: Our founding father intended to build the Tudor Village all the way down to Sams Crossing. I would prefer it be more in keeping with what we have.

Jen Singh/108 Clarendon Ave: I like the materials and the way it steps down. I don't have a problem with density. I like the idea of walking/biking path in the back. All the way along the tracks would be great.

Brad Jones/10 Kingstone Rd: Maybe it could be a shared area back there. There are two Hillyer Streets. That one should be removed. Will the billboard be removed?

Mayor Elmore: Yes.

Bonnie Chaffin/31 Berkeley Rd: I don't think our streets can handle the traffic that these developments will create.

Dee Merriam/8 Lakeview Pl: I think the street grid is important. It's about more than just east/west movement. Please make sure the sidewalks on the front are wide enough.

Liz Goodstein/3243 Wiltshire Dr: I like the idea of a path in the back. I have concerns about the density. Good questions have been asked. I'm concerned about using PDs.

Candace Jones/9 Fairfield Dr: I appreciate you listening to the comments. I don't think you're there yet. I'm concerned that we'll give up our street grid. I think it's too dense.

Bill Clark/11 S. Avondale Plz: I appreciate the improvements. Maybe you could do live/work units or the building could tie in to the rail arts district behind it.

Carolyn Chandler/2996 Majestic Cir: Do you own that land right now?

TC Rep: No, it's under contract.

Larry Minnix/99 Berkeley Rd: Who will lie here?

TC Rep: Millennials, those with first or second jobs out of college, professional couples, older people who have downsized.

Larry Minnix/99 Berkeley Rd: I don't think we want the stock development trees. We have people in the neighborhood that are looking into this and you should talk to them.

Dianne Pomberg/3288 Kensington Rd: What will rents be?

TC Rep: They would start about \$1,200 and about 700 square feet.

Jen Singh/108 Clarendon Ave: With those rents, you will be good quality tenants.

Mayor Elmore: I am concerned about the housing stock and sustainability in Avondale. I think we need a big range.

Item No. 7

Stantec's Phase One Cost Proposal for US 278 Redesign

In January, City staff reviewed AECOM's cost proposal with the BOMC. The cost exceeded the current grant funds. The BOMC instructed City staff to request a cost proposal from the second most responsive firm (Stantec). The project is a reduction from five lanes to three lanes from Sams Crossing to Ashton Place.

City Planner Stevens: Stantec's quote is \$463,000 which is under budget. We stressed that public engagement was important.

Mayor Elmore: This is great news. Thank you.

Commissioner Yelton: We need to make sure to keep communicating with the Atlanta Regional Commissioner (ARC).

City Planner Stevens: We're keeping them in the look. We'll work on a contract.

John Pomberg/3288 Kensington Rd: Are there any plans for any type of cut through traffic control on Kensington or Nottingham?

Mayor Elmore: There is nothing in the works but we are listening. Maybe the police should start writing more tickets.

Commissioner Shortell: I think before the road diet we should have some town hall meetings about traffic issues and come up with some ideas. It's getting worse but can't be decided up here tonight.

Commissioner Yelton: We talked about having town halls at our strategic planning session regarding big topics like this one. Traffic is going to happen. We just need ways to calm and control it.

Commissioner Laratte: I know this can be solved. It will just take some work. We should look at other cities that have successfully solved the same problem.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: Could the side streets be looked at in conjunction with the studies for the road diet?

City Planner Stevens: I could ask if we could extend the study area just a little bit.

Brad Jones/10 Kingstone Rd: Does the scope of the project take it all the way through final design and right of way acquisition?

City Planner Stevens: This goes through preliminary design. Right of way acquisition is phase two and final plan and construction is phase three.

Kathy Kingsbury/817 Stratford Rd: Do we have a limit as far as how much this will slow down traffic before we call off the project?

City Planner Stevens: We've been given approval to move forward and explore the road diet. There could be a threshold that GDOT has but I don't know what it is. They are thinking more holistically but at the end of the day they will not bottleneck this entire area. Those traffic numbers will be indicative of what we'll be able to do with the road. We'll be doing a concept report that will include a traffic analysis. We need traffic counts done before school gets out.

Kathy Kingsbury/817 Stratford Rd: We should compare the new numbers to old traffic study results.

Commissioner Laratte: We should consider the impact on businesses as well.

Liz Goodstein/3243 Wiltshire Dr: Thank you for doing this. Do you think it's a good idea to extend the traffic study area? I think it would be valuable.

City Planner Stevens: I can investigate that if the Board wishes. There will be certain parameters we need to work within. I'll see what our options are.

Item No. 8

Review Fund Balance Policy

To maintain the financial integrity of the City, staff has drafted a fund balance policy. The policy establishes a minimum amount deemed appropriate to have in fund balance, or reserves. Also included is a plan for replenishing those funds should they below that amount.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: I'm in favor of this as presented.

Commissioner Shortell: I'm good with this. I would prefer to go higher with the amount of reserves we have.

Commissioner Yelton: I'm ok with the policy as is. We also have capital reserves.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: Our reserves do go down at certain times of year. I would like to provide citizens with a monthly update on finances. I also like this policy because it forces us to put more in reserves over time because the budgets will naturally increase with inflation.

Commissioner Laratte: I'm good with it as written.

Mayor Elmore: I would be more in favor of the four month/three month like Commissioner Shortell said.

Candace Jones/9 Fairfield Dr: I'm in favor of more reserves as well.

Liz Goldstein/3243 Wiltshire Dr: I agree. Maybe there is a compromise in the middle.

Kathy Kingsbury/817 Stratford Rd: I agree that we could test it out for a year and change it if need be.

Candace Jones/9 Fairfield Dr: Since certain months do dip low, you could exclude those in the policy.

Commissioner Laratte: That's a good idea.

Item No. 9

Draft Residential and Commercial Tree Ordinances

Consultant Gary Cornell completed Division 1 (residential) and Division 2 (commercial) of the Tree Ordinance and presented both to the BOMC. BOMC members and the Ad Hoc Committee for Green Space were to bring back their comments to share.

Brad Jones/Green Space Committee: In the commercial ordinance, we suggested some changes in the required planting areas around trees. I can get those numbers to you. There were some other suggestions we had and a couple of things that needed to be changed.

Mayor Elmore: Could you write your changes up and send them to us?

Brad Jones/Green Space Committee: There are still streetscape standards that need to be decided on.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: I'm fine with it as long as the residential side is triggered by a building permit.

Commissioner Shortell: What about boundary trees?

Brad Jones/Green Space Committee: It's really between you and your neighbor. That's something we can always revisit.

Commissioner Shortell: It puts the burden on the innocent and they end up having to spend a lot of money.

Commissioner Yelton: Thanks for your work. It looks good.

Commissioner Laratte: Good work. It's very specialized.

Liz Goodstein/3243 Wiltshire Dr: Part of the reason we moved from Decatur was because of all the trees being taken down by builders.

Candace Jones/9 Fairfield Dr: I'm disappointed this is only tied to building permits. And I think the fines should be greater.

Dee Merriam/Green Space Committee: One way to mitigate the boundary tree issue is to change setbacks on land disturbance.

Brad Jones/Green Space Committee: The zoning code is probably the best place to do that.

Liz Goodstein/3243 Wiltshire Dr: Please get to the zoning code audit.

Item No. 10

Public Comment

Kathy Kingsbury/817 Stratford Rd: When will Ken Bleakly's report be ready?

Mayor Elmore: He will give a presentation to some members of the BOMC and DDA soon. Then an open meeting will probably be in March or April.

Dee Merriam/Green Space Committee: Are you going to have the Committee look at the Hobbs Street property that would be given to the City? I'm not sure what that process is to officially assign it to us.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: I would like to have their opinion.

Brad Jones/Green Space Committee: They can submit a plan when they submit all their plans and we can take a look at them then.

Candace Jones/9 Fairfield Dr: I request that US 278 be moved into the central business district so it would be in the DDA's territory.

Dee Merriam/Green Space Committee: The Bleakly report seems to solely focus on the City-owned four acres and that seems like a missed opportunity.

Mayor Elmore: He's looking at scenarios.

Item No. 11

Adjournment

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher moves to adjourn. Commissioner Laratte seconds.
All ayes.

APPROVED THIS 23rd DAY OF APRIL 2018



Jonathan Elmore, Mayor

ATTEST:



Gina Hill, City Clerk