

**BOARD OF MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
March 20, 2019
5:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

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

Staff Present: Patrick Bryant, City Manager
Keri Stevens, Assistant City Manager
Lynn Thomas, Police Chief
Stephen Quinn, City Attorney
Gina Hill, City Clerk

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 **Girl Scout Recycle Bins Request**
Girl Scout Troop 15199, based at The Museum School, proposes adding recycle containers to Willis Park. The Troop will make a presentation to the Board of Mayor and Commissioners (BOMC).

Members of the troop took turns presenting reasons why they would like to see recycle bins at Willis Park. The girls included they had \$2,000 to put towards the effort. They also responded to questions from the BOMC, mostly about how much burden would be placed on the City's public works staff to get recycling to the curb for pickup. There are a couple of questions from members of the audience. The Board is supportive and instructs City staff to do a little more research into the proposal before moving forward.

Item No. 4 **Capital Budget – Davenport Presentation**
Doug Gebhardt from Davenport and Company, the City's financial advisor, will present the BOMC with information detailing the City's capacity to finance and execute a long-range capital program.

City Manager Bryant reminds everyone that Davenport attended a recent meeting to talk about mechanisms that cities use to fund capital projects. He says this presentation will be more detailed about the City's capacity to finance some of the needed capital projects. Mr. Gebhardt explains he is not recommending any particular capital project at this point. He says their goal was taking information provided by City staff and determining debt capacity, debt affordability, and funding strategies. He observes that historically, the City has spent money on large capital projects as it's become available and the goal would be to not have those fluctuations in the coffers. There was discussion about the minimum amount of fund balance to maintain. Mr. Bryant adds that staff is doing an analysis that should help the BOMC decide a dollar amount to maintain should they decide to do so. As the DDA takes on more debt, explains Mr. Gebhardt, that could impact the City's ability to borrow money and their debt was not factored into any of Davenport's analyses. He then compares debt capacity to a person's credit card limit – just because you can borrow a certain amount doesn't necessarily mean you should. When using a AA credit rating, the City could borrow \$9.3 million, Mr. Gebhardt concludes. The conversation turns to debt payments. Mr. Gebhardt offers that ways the City can make debt payments, including raising the millage rate (i.e. taxes), reduce expenses, reallocate revenue, or identify other ways to increase revenue. Payments could be in excess of \$600,000. The group reviewed the list of capital projects, including storm water, transportation (including \$17 million for street grid design and construction), and City buildings and properties: The estimated total for these projects is around \$40 million when the City has about \$8.4 million of debt capacity. The BOMC discussed which of the capital project estimates were the most ironclad. There is more detailed discussion about storm water needs and a potential storm water master plan once the Kensington and North Woods projects are done. Mr. Bryant points out the storm water infrastructure has aged to the point that it is no longer considered an asset for the City. It was brought up that raising storm water fees could be an option and Mr. Bryant commented that SPLOST funds from the County were much lower than expected and he was trying to find out why that's the case. Mr. Gebhardt says he thinks the City will need to spend about \$250,000 per year on pay-as-you-go projects, such as police vehicles, equipment, and road paving. Mr. Bryant concludes that questions they need to ask themselves are can some of these costs be defrayed through development agreements or impact fees for future development, or could there be collaboration with the DDA, for example. Commissioner Laratte asks if Mr. Gebhardt recommends borrowing all the money at once or little by little. He responded that it depends but there is little harm in borrowing some now for a more immediate project and more later. Mayor Elmore comments that he likes this comprehensive approach and paying as you go will not continue to work. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher adds he's encouraged on many levels and voices some potential alternative ways to increase income for the City. Mr. Bryant says the goal is to financially impact residents as little as possible. He adds the next step is to present the Board with a recommended plan and

he feels that can be done by the next work session. Resident Joe Anziano is supportive of Davenport's work and believes a redeveloped downtown could generate revenue for the City. Lyda Steadman asks if the presentation will be posted on the City website. She also notes that Avondale Estates already has one of the highest storm water fees in the state. Kathy Kingsbury feels there should be a plan to communicate these decisions being made to the residents.

Item No. 5

House Bill 302 Update

The bill itself is dead for this year. It would prohibit local governments from adopting design standards for one and two-family residences unless the property is historic (local district, national district, and/or historic landmark). At the direction of the BOMC, City staff wrote a letter to each legislator in opposition to the bill.

City Manager Bryant recounted what City staff did to voice concern about this proposal.

Item No. 6

Lake Avondale Path Maintenance

The Avondale Community Club (ACC) approached the City with a proposal to correct the standing water along the lake path in front of the Club. They provided an estimate and plan to correct the problem which includes raising the walkway (\$6,714.02) and providing additional drainage (\$6,782.99). City staff met with Clark Patterson Lee (CPL) on site. CPL made recommendations to amend the scope and suggested the City pursue additional quotes. The Community Club proposal is included along with pictures.

City Manager Patrick Bryant thanks ACC president Joe Anziano for his work in researching this matter. Mr. Bryant is awaiting written recommendations from CPL and will circulate them once complete. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher asks if that property belongs to the ACC. Mr. Bryant responds that CPL will also help determine where public money should be used versus private funds. An ACC member asks how long the project will take. He adds it's been an ongoing problem and should be fixed as soon as possible. Mr. Bryant responds that if the estimate exceeds a certain threshold then it will need BOMC approval. He adds that the project is of high priority. Resident John Mizell also notes the spring fed pool just north of the path is filled with silt and that's something that should be looked at as a possible cause of flooding. Lake Avondale Advisory Board member was involved in the path design and asks if the sprinklers there have been checked for leaks. However, he believes the cause is probably a natural spring. There is more discussion about what the City should pay for versus the ACC's cost. Elizabeth Goodstein says other areas of the lake path need maintenance. Mr. Bryant says more path projects will be forthcoming.

Item No. 7

North Woods Affidavit for Land and Water Conservation Grant

The City is pursuing this grant for the North Woods area of Lake Avondale Park. As part of the application, the City must sign an affidavit

agreeing that this area will remain park land in perpetuity. The City Attorney has reviewed the affidavit.

Assistant City Manager Keri Stevens explains why this affidavit is needed. Joe Anziano asks when we will find out if we received the grant and Ms. Stevens says she was told April.

Item No. 8

State of the City Preview

This year, the event is being held at Avondale Elementary School on Monday, April 8th at 6:30 p.m. More details to come.

City Manager Bryant informs the group this will be a standalone event this year instead of part of a regular meeting. Members of the Board thank Avondale Elementary for hosting the event.

Item No. 9

Resolution to Authorize Investments

The City has maintained Local Government Investment Pool accounts – specifically, Georgia Fund 1 – for many years. However, the authorization to deposit and withdraw funds from these accounts has not been updated to reflect current City staff. This resolution is required by Georgia Fund 1 in order to update its records. This may also be an opportunity for the BOMC to discuss investment policy.

City Manager Bryant explains how this fund works. It's a place to park and invest money while still have easy access to it. The City needs to update the authorizations to be in line with current staff. Commissioner Yelton asks about the in-house checks and balances used for this account. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher and Finance Director Hanebuth discussed some of the specifics of the account. There was also talk about how the BOMC would be kept informed about account activity.

Item No. 10

Fidelity Bank Cash Management Agreement

Fidelity Bank has asked to enroll the City, at no charge, in a fraud prevention tool called Positive Pay. Enrollment requires a resolution to designate a contact person and City staff recommends that Finance Director Paul Hanebuth fulfill this role.

This program is explained by City Manager Bryant. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher says it's better to sign up for a program like this before fraud happens.

Item No. 11

Proposed Arboretum

The Avondale Estates Garden Club (AEGC) approached City staff with a proposal to start an arboretum in the City by labelling existing trees. The AEGC indicated that they have funding for 22 markers to start the project. Staff will explain the proposed project.

A presentation about arboretums is given by Assistant City Manager Stevens. Members of the BOMC are supportive. Commissioner Shortell asks if the Tree Board had been consulted about the project. Garden

Club member Christi Granger offers that the City will be required to form an Arboretum Board that should probably be separate from the Tree Board. Steve Sanchez says an arboretum is ideal for the City because of the wide variety of trees within its borders. Ms. Granger would like the unveiling of the arboretum to kick off the Garden Club's next tree walk. Tree Board Present Stephany Cross believes the Arboretum Board should be separate from the Tree Board. Mr. Sanchez adds the makeup and structure of an Arboretum Board is already specified by the national organization.

Item No. 12

Property Donation Request from DeKalb County for Signal Upgrade Project

DeKalb County has requested a property donation at 37 South Avondale Road (see attached highlighted survey) for the installation of equipment associated with an upgrade project impacting eight signals along US 278 within the City. Through a resolution, the BOMC is can authorize the City Manager to execute documents associated with the donation.

Assistant City Manager Stevens provides more details about this request from the County. City Manager Bryant says that City staff recommends donating the property. Mayor Elmore asks about the possibility of doing an easement. City Attorney Quinn says the likely explanation is that the County wants to install something permanent on the property. Commissioner Shortell asks what they plan to put there. Ms. Stevens says it's her impression that it's underground optic equipment. She says she'll try to get more detail. There was consensus that improvements to the signals along US 278 would be motivation to cooperate. Members of the audience share concern about what will be placed there. Mr. Bryant says the City is asking for park space from the County so as a good steward it could be wise to donate the land. But he feels the City has no choice in the matter.

Item No. 13

Floodplain Management Ordinances

The City's ordinance needs to be updated, per FEMA requirements.

Assistant City Manager Stevens clarifies that this is essentially a date change from the previous ordinance.

Item No. 14

Temporary Closure of Center Street from Potter Avenue south to North Avondale Road

City staff and the DDA Executive Director propose closing this portion of road for a gathering space on a temporary basis. The intersection of Potter Avenue and Center Street will remain open to vehicles. A temporary closure will allow the City to see the impact on surrounding businesses and how this space functions as a gathering space.

City Manager Bryant gives a brief introduction then turns it over to DDA Executive Director Sam Collier for more details. There is discussion about the dangers of the intersection. Mr. Collier says the business owners he

has spoken with have been in favor of the trial change. Mayor Elmore asks if there will be a report or safety assessments at the end of the trial period. There is some discussion about how the street would be blocked if it was decided to do so permanently. Commissioner Shortell is supportive of the idea. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher asks about business involvement. Mr. Collier says he's in the process of reaching out. There will also be a time period for input after a sign is put up to notify of the change. Mr. Fisher thinks it's a good idea as long as it doesn't negatively impact the businesses. Assistant City Manager Keri Stevens says the owner of property #15 on the screen was not in favor of the change and relays that he was concerned about truck traffic. Commissioner Yelton asks about getting notice of this change out to the public and asks if all the legal precautions had been taken.

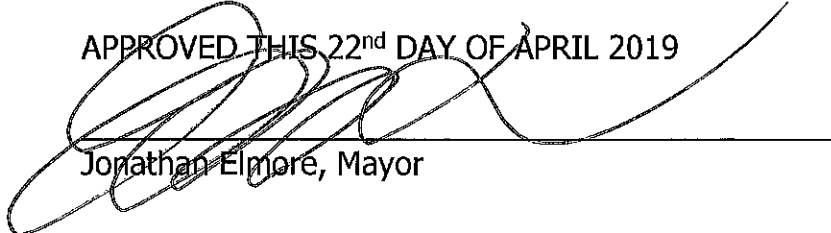
Item No. 15 Public Comment

Steve Sanchez asks about a fund for tree maintenance. He is told the City does have one.

Item No. 16 Adjournment

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

APPROVED THIS 22nd DAY OF APRIL 2019



Jonathan Elmore, Mayor

ATTEST:


Gina Hill, City Clerk