



**BOARD OF MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
June 20, 2018
*Immediately Following Special Called Meeting***

MINUTES

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

Members Absent: Adela Yelton, Commissioner

Staff Present: Ken Turner, Interim City Manager/Finance Director
Keri Stevens, City Planner
Lynn Thomas, Police Chief

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 **Proposed 2018 Tax Millage Rate**
The millage rate is a number set each year to calculate property taxes. A millage rate of 9.957 mills is proposed for 2018. Even though that is the current rate, taxes would rise 8.32% because of increased property values. For taxes to remain the same, a millage rate of 9.192 mills would be set.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher says he's undecided on this issue and feels more public input is needed. The BOMC discusses sanitation fees with Interim City Manager Ken Turner. Commissioner Shortell says she'd be in favor of raising the sanitation fees and giving tax relief. Commissioner Laratte agrees but feels it needs more thought. Mr. Turner says there's currently about four months of reserve funds. There is also discussion around the need for more police officers. Mr. Turner noted that the \$28,000 needed to be transferred from the general fund to the sanitation fund to make up the shortfall. It was discussed that reducing the number of trash pickup days would result in layoffs. Mayor Elmore suggests starting at the rollback rate and adding in any unexpected expenses, such as employee health insurance costs and the former city manager's severance.

Item No. 4

North Clarendon/US 278 Area Improvements

The City received a grant from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to improve the North Clarendon Road approach to US 278 and the North Clarendon Road/US 278 intersection. The grant funds cover construction. To receive grant funds and implement the project, the City is responsible for providing the engineering. The City contracted with POND and Company to complete the scope of work which includes planning and engineering. POND representative Brad Jones will present the overall project and identify key components.

Brad Jones explains the main change that the City wants to make is adding pedestrian crossing signals at the intersection of US278 and North Clarendon Road. He went over other details of the project. He said the fact that US278 is a Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) road and Clarendon is a City-owned road makes this project more difficult. Members of the BOMC say they're excited at the prospect of having wider sidewalks and a safer intersection overall.

Next steps: There was discussion of fixing some other issues while the project is underway. City staff is instructed to get the City's engineers in touch with Mr. Jones of POND.

Item No. 5

The Lost Druid Easement Request

DeKalb County is working to meet federal and state standards required by a consent decree agreement between the County, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD). This situation negatively impacts local development by denying access to needed water/sewer infrastructure. For this project, the only option is to construct a holding tank meeting the County's specifications as defined by the use and size of the proposed facility. Because of this, the owner may need an easement at the end of Pine Street, currently unused property. Without the tank, the brewery project will be put on hold indefinitely.

Mayor Elmore recaps a meeting he recently attended led by county watershed management officials. He adds he would like to help the business owner's out. Interim City Manager Ken Turner says he wants to make sure the City will not be liable for removing the tank in the future.

Next steps: The BOMC is in support of granting the easement.

Item No. 6

Ethics Board and Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) Appointments

On the Ethics Board, the seat of Patrick O'Connor expires at the end of this month. He would like a new term. There is one other applicant, Meghan Gurley. Terms are also ending for two members of the PZB – John Pomberg and Keith Melton. They both request new terms. There are two other applicants, Dee Merriam and Vivian Fisher. Both boards will submit recommendations to the Board of Mayor and Commissioners (BOMC) prior to this work session.

Commissioner Shortell said in the future, she would like to see applications and resumes from incumbents as well as new applicants for board seats. Meghan Gurley spoke and was unhappy with the process for appointing a new ethics board member in her place. The BOMC discussed putting together a new, more detailed process map for board seats. Commissioner Laratte agreed to draft a process map. The Board requested to see any other associated documents. Mayor Elmore also said the ethics board only has three members which makes it impossible for them to meet without having a quorum and thus an open meeting.

Item No. 7

Fourth of July Parade Street Painting

Last year, some residents requested the traditional painting of Clarendon Avenue ahead of the July 4th parade be done with washable materials instead of spray paint. This was discussed at the May work session. City staff was asked to explore alternatives and give a report at this meeting.

Next steps: The Board thinks washable materials is a good compromise and the types of things being painted and their locations need to be more controlled. Since the spray paint has already been ordered for this year, changes will be made for the 2019 July 4th celebration.

Item No. 8

Proposed Arts Council Update

The BOMC is forming an Arts Council whose first objective is to create a framework and plan to include the vision, mission, values and strategic objectives for the arts in Avondale Estates. Three residents have applied. The BOMC requests the application window remain open.

Mayor Elmore said it's been suggested they consider applicants outside of the City and he added he'd like to apply for it as well. Commissioner Laratte said he would not be supportive of having the Mayor on the Arts Council. He said he'd be open to having nonresidents on the council but feels priority should go to residents. Commissioner Shortell agrees. She added that if the Mayor wants to be on the council, he should apply. She thinks there could be an advantage to having a BOMC member on the council. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher has no problem with the Mayor serving on the council. He was supportive of having applicants outside of Avondale but would prefer they have some connection to the City.

Next steps: The deadline for applications is extended to August 31st.

Item No. 9

Receive Feedback on Draft Communications Plan/Public Comment Policy

These were first discussed at the April 18th work session and the BOMC requested more discussion and public input. It was then a topic for discussion at the May work session as well. The City Attorney is currently reviewing the draft. The BOMC hopes to vote on this item at the next regular meeting.

Next steps: Await city attorney comments and consider public comments.

Item No. 10

Update on City Manager Search

The application deadline set by the City's search firm, The Mercer Group, for prospective city managers expired June 15th. City staff continues to collect public input via email. There will be an update on next steps.

The BOMC says there is not much to report on this matter. Commissioner Shortell mentions there is an upcoming executive session with the search firm where they will learn more.

Item No. 11

Policy Regarding Golf Carts Crossing US 278

A resident requested the BOMC consider the possibility of golf carts being able to cross the City's main thoroughfare. This was previously discussed at the April 25th special called work session and May work session. The BOMC has requested input from Police Chief Lynn Thomas.

Police Chief Lynn Thomas says after doing research, his main concerns are about where a cart crossing would be placed and safety. Commissioner Laratte says he had safety concerns as well. Commissioner Shortell said she would like to revisit the issue when planning for the road diet. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher had questions about the difference between a cart crossing and a regular crosswalk. Mayor Elmore says he has always liked the idea of being able to cross US278 in a golf cart but has also had safety concerns. He said it should be shelved for now and possibly discussed with the DDA. Resident Dave Maddox, who initially brought the request before the Board, said this will need to be addressed at some point in the future as the City grows.

Next steps: This proposal is being shelved for now.

Item No. 12

Kensington Road Stormwater Retention Pond Easements

The City purchased property from the First Baptist Church Avondale to build a retention pond in hopes of alleviating flooding in the area of Covington Highway, Kensington Road, and beyond. Easements were required from several residents for underground pipes. City staff needs Board approval before compensating the residents for their easements. These payments will come out of the City's Stormwater Fund.

Mayor Elmore says this should move forward and property owners should be paid. Interim City Manager Ken Turner says there is still one easement that will require more work. He requests authorization to write checks for the other four. The other BOMC members agree City staff should move forward. Several residents that live in that area thanked the BOMC and City staff for making progress.

Next steps: City staff will compensate the four property owners out of stormwater funds for their easements. Mr. Turner will continue to try to secure the fifth easement.

Item No. 13

Laredo Drive Study Contract

“Intersection improvement at Laredo Drive and North Clarendon Avenue” is included in the City’s Downtown Master Plan. To move forward with this project, staff applied for and received a grant from the Atlanta Regional Commission as part of the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) program for a total of \$50,000. The City is responsible for 20% of the total project cost, which is \$10,000. The project will study the intersection and adjacent area to provide options for improving the functionality and aesthetics of this gateway into the City, taking into account projected growth. A demonstration project and report will also be included in the project. The City Manager requires approval to execute the contract.

City Planner Keri Stevens explains the project. She asks approval for the City Manager to sign the contract. The Mayor thanked Ms. Stevens for securing grant money for this project.

Next steps: This item will be voted on at the next regular meeting.

Item No. 14

North Woods Drainage Project Update

This project consists of an engineered rain garden in the woods north of Lake Avondale. The garden will reduce sedimentation deposits at the northwest end of the lake, reduce erosion downstream of the dam, reduce flooding at the intersection of Berkeley and Wiltshire Roads, and enhance water quality. City staff has offered work on a request for proposals (RFP) for the design of the project with the Lake Avondale Advisory Board (LAAB).

Interim City Manager Ken Turner tells the Board that the LAAB can’t find a time to meet. Mayor Elmore asks if they can set a deadline for them to meet. Mr. Turner adds that he discovered an agreement was signed in August of 2017 between the City and Clark Patterson Lee (CPL) to do the work. Signatures on the agreement include Former City Manager Clai Brown’s and City Attorney Stephen Quinn’s. The agreement quotes \$9,995 dollars. The Mayor says that agreement will not be executed. City Planner Keri Stevens says she can do some basic work on the RFP but does not have the expertise to complete it without help from the LAAB. The BOMC agrees this project needs to move forward as soon as possible.

Next Steps: Mayor Pro Tem Brian Fisher will speak with Steve Sanchez, a member of the LAAB to see if he can encourage them to meet or appoint a representative and move the project along. This will be on the next work session agenda.

Item No. 15

Draft Residential & Commercial Tree Ordinance Update

This was last discussed at the May work session with the intention that the topic be on this agenda as well. The BOMC hopes to reach a final version of the drafts at this meeting. Interim City Manager Ken Turner

says he has spoken with Arborguard Tree Specialists about making a proposal to provide the tree specialist for the City if/when the tree ordinances are put into place. There was discussion about that role and fee structure. The conclusion was that price of a tree specialist can be decided later and doesn't need to interfere with voting on the tree ordinances.

Next steps: Board will move forward by having the draft ordinances reviewed by the City Attorney.

Item No. 16 Public Comment

Item No. 17 Adjournment
Commissioner Laratte moves to adjourn. Commissioner Shortell seconds.
All ayes.

APPROVED THIS 23rd DAY OF JULY 2018


Jonathan Elmore, Mayor

ATTEST:


Gina Hill, City Clerk