



CITY OF WALNUT GROVE
February 9, 2023 7:00 PM
1021 PARK STREET MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Council Meeting Minutes

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Mayor - Mark Moore
Council Members -
Linda Pilgrim
Stephanie Moncrief
Erica Miles

STAFF PRESENT:

City Clerk - Dawn Lummus
City Attorney - Tony Powell
P & Z Chairman – Don Cannon
Public Works - Brian Pilgrim

OTHERS PRESENT: W. McMullen, K. McMullen, Pam Hobbs, Tina Norrell,
Ellen & Layman Brannon, David Johnson, Leo & Tlozeria Patterson,
Paul Jones, Jon Dial & Christy

I. CALL TO ORDER - Mayor Mark Moore

II. INVOCATION – Tony Powell

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – All Participated

IV. ROLL CALL – All council members, mayor, city clerk, and city attorney were in attendance.

V. AGENDA APPROVAL - Mayor Moore asked that under the consent agenda the animal control ordinance be moved to new business as item #3. Council member Erica Miles made a motion to move the animal control ordinance to new business. Council member Linda Pilgrim seconded. Passed unanimously.

Council member Stephanie Moncrief made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Council member Linda Pilgrim seconded. Passed unanimously.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA - Council member Moncrief stated she wanted to make a motion to move the minutes to the next session, until she has time to look over them, as there are some things missing out of the minutes and she want to make sure they are included. The Mayor asked which one and she stated both of them. Council member Moncrief made the motion to move the January 12th and January 26 minutes to the next council meeting. Council member Miles seconded. Passed unanimously.

Council member Moncrief made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Council member Linda Pilgrim seconded. Passed unanimously.

1. Financials

2. Invoices over \$5000

- A. Azalea Regional Library Systems \$60,000
- B. Southern Sanitation \$6912

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community Involvement Committee – Council member Linda Pilgrim stated that the Park Market will start in May. She has already been in contact with some of the sponsors that are interested in helping this year.

DDA Report – Council member Erica Miles stated that the DDA has a recommendation for a new member and that would come up later in the meeting.

Education Involvement Committee – Council member Stephanie Moncrief reported that the principal from the high school will be at next months council meeting and that she is reaching out to the elementary and middle school principals and offering them same opportunity.

VIII. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – Chairman Don Cannon handed out a copy of his report to the mayor and council. He read the report, from the planning and zoning commission, which follows: We are looking with great anticipation to council's actions later in the meeting that relate to our efforts to development a City Master Plan, the potential rezoning of Forest Glen subdivision to R-3, as well as the appointments to fill the vacant position on the Planning Commission.

At our meeting last week, I expect the Commission to address revisions to the proposed RFP that you might suggest, as well as adopt a new timeline, and framework for the steering committee which will work with the consultant through the Master Plan process.

Our agenda for next week's meeting will include 2 public hearings. One will be to take up the rezone of the "Rutledge property" to C-2 zoning class, and the second hearing will be to address the Application for Variance from David Johnson relating to the property located at 876 Forrester Cemetery Rd.

In addition, we expect to take up the potential rezone of Forest Glen, and a new sign ordinance, should these matters be referred to the Planning Commission by your actions later in this meeting.

IX. LIBRARY REPORT - Librarian Dana Seger commented she spent time at the capital for Library Day to secure funding. Crafting with Friends is every Tuesday from 1-3 pm. Every month there is a teen program, last month was Pizza Night and this month is Desert and Date Night. Wednesday February 15 the library will be closed for staff development. They are hiring a part time library associate and a substitute library associate. Don Cannon thanked the City for supporting the library with funding. Mayor Moore replied by saying that the city is looking to see if they can do better this next year.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS

David Johnson 876 Forrester Cemetery Rd - Mr. Johnson stated that he had a call from the EPD requesting they straw and seed the dam, which

has been completed. He asked if the city received a copy of that report, he would like a copy of it. He also was concerned about the delayed response after they submitted the variance request. He also wanted to know how the house across from him has a driveway into the water treatment road as well a driveway with a concrete apron onto Forrester Cemetery Road. The Mayor explained that the house he was referring to has a driveway off Forrester Cemetery Road which complies with the city ordinance, and because of an easement they can access the water treatment road. As far as the dam, it is an EPD issue. The Mayor apologized for the delayed response.

Bill McMullen 2130 Emerald Drive – Mr. McMullen was inquiring about if there was a date for the repaving of Emerald Cove subdivision. The Mayor explained what was taking place and that the city was waiting to hear back from the engineers for the specs for the RFP. The council has decided to pave the gutters. When the Mayor gets the RFP he will let the representative from the HOA know and they can spread the word.

XI. OLD BUSINESS

- 1. Zoning Administrator** – The Mayor stated that there were two companies that actually responded to the RFP. They were Precision Planning and Bureau Veritas. Council member Moncrief made a motion to accept Precision Planning along with the clarification of duties as the zoning administrator. Council member Miles seconded. The Mayor asked, “if there was any discussion”. Council member Moncrief asked, “if there was something in the wording”. City Attorney Powell stated that there was a suggestion to attach the Professional Service Contract to the RFP. The Mayor asked if he had that form. Attorney Powell stated that it was ready other, but they would edit it once it was passed. Council member Moncrief amended her motion to approve Precision Planning along with the amended/clarifying duties between the city and the engineering company. Council member Miles Seconded. Passed unanimously.
- 2. RFP Master Plan** – Council member Moncrief made a motion to approve the RFP Master Plan with changes the timeline. She rescinded that motion to ask a question. She asked zoning chairman Don Cannon, “are you waiting to hear from us to adjust the schedule. Mr. Cannon indicated yes. Mr. Cannon clarified that the time schedule will go from 14 days to 28 days. Council member Moncrief stated that she would like the council, not the mayor, to appoint the council member that will serve on the steering committee. Council member Moncrief made a motion to send back to P & Z the RFP that was reviewed in the work session with the following changes that was suggested at the work session. A change in the time schedule, the timeline

for the RFP as well as the way the steering committee is set up, with that council member being appointed by council, and making sure it's 28 days for the schedule. Council member Miles seconded. Passed unanimously.

- 3. Special Called Election** – Council member Moncrief made a motion for the called election to be set for November 2023. Council member Pilgrim seconded. Passed unanimously.
- 4. Rezoning Application for Forest Glen** – Council member Moncrief said, “I would like to make a motion that due to the fact we didn’t actually discuss the rezoning, but were enlightened with information from Ms. Miles at the last meeting, I would like to table it and send it back to the work session to discuss the rezoning application and the purpose of it.” The Mayor explained that the rezoning starts the process with a public hearing to P & Z. Once they hear the public, they make a recommendation to council. The council hears it a work session. Then it goes to council for approval or goes back to P & Z. Attorney Powell explained that the action they are being asked to take tonight is to initiate the application process, then there will be a work session to fill in the blanks, then review by planning and a recommendation, then it comes back to council to decide. Council member Miles asked, “if we go ahead and start this process tonight, where does it go next? Do we have to start paying someone to look at this application or anything like that?” The city attorney remarked that Mr. Walter with PPI has already looked at it. The Mayor reminded that there is an advertising process with a minimum of 30 days, so it will not go to P & Z in March for public hearing. Also, before the council holds a public hearing on it, P & Z has to complete their recommendations. Council member Moncrief said, “I understand all that, and I guess what my question and why I asked to table it was, if the council is initiating it, and I have no idea why we are initiating it, why would I ask for it to be initiated? I know that we were given this document saying this is what would have to happen to rezone, but there has not been a discussion, that I remember, as to why we are doing this.”
- 5. Sign Ordinance** – There was discussion by the Mayor that the city code requires 3 readings of an ordinance before it can be considered by council. The sign ordinance has to be advertised because it is a zoning ordinance, but the animal control ordinance does not per the city attorney. Tony Powell, city attorney, explained that most cities do not read the ordinances, so the reading part is just put the citizens on notice that they do exist. He suggested to read the title of the ordinance and that be the first reading, but not on the sign ordinance as it need to

be advertised. He did suggest the reading of the title of the animal control ordinance, and that be the first reading of it. Mr. Powell read the title of the animal control ordinance. Council member Moncrief made a motion to accept the first reading of the animal control ordinance. Seconded by council member Miles. Passed unanimously. The sign ordinance is to be advertised and a public hearing through planning and zoning.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Audit Presentation – CPA Samuel Latimer & Auditor Ken Neil - Mr. Neil presented the audit for the year ending June 30, 2022. All council members and the Mayor received a copy of the audit. He reported that they were able to issue an unmodified report on the financial statement. An unmodified opinion is as good as you can get. Samuel Latimer reported that he and the Mayor will start working on the new budget soon. Council member Moncrief wanted to know if there could be a work session so the council and others could be included in the budget process. The Mayor stated that they could submit to him a wish list of things they would like to have included and things they would like to accomplish.

2. Appointments

A. Planning & Zoning – Mayor more said it was his understanding that Rachel Davis was being considered for P & Z and was also being considered for the DDA. Council member Moncrief expressed that she did not believe Ms. Davis was being presented as a recommendation for the P & Z and she had not appeared in front of the P & Z board. She was under the understanding that she was going to be recommended by the DDA for the DDA. The Mayor stated that after hearing her qualifications, she would be qualified for either position. Planning chairman, Don Cannon spoke up that he had not hear mention the name Bobby Moncrief as a candidate for P & Z. The Mayor raised the question if Mr. Moncrief's appointment would violate the nepotism laws for the state of Georgia. The Mayor said, "it's kind of a gray area but the council can choose whatever they want to do. It's just a concern for me." City Attorney Powell said, "I did not know the issue was going to come up, so I don't know the full answer. I've looked at the state nepotism rules before and didn't see any, however there is some case law, but I am not familiar with them." Council member Moncrief asked if they could hear from Mr. Moncrief regarding his qualifications. Mr. Moncrief discussed his qualifications. Council member Miles asked, "Mr. Powell is there a reason we should be concerned if we appoint Mr. Moncrief to Planning and Zoning." He said, "if Mr. Moncrief is your recommendation and choice I would like to look at that. I would like to just clear those issues that were raised, just so we don't have an issue at all in the process and get the process right."

That would be my request, if he is the one you want to choose, just let me look at that procedure, so it's done correctly and cleanly, since there is some sensitivity as you can see. I just don't want us to one thing that is not exactly. Council member Miles made a motion to table the appointment till the next meeting. Council member Moncrief seconded. Passed unanimously.

B. DDA – Council member Miles made a motion to appoint Rachael Davis to the DDA. Council member Moncrief seconded. Council member Pilgrim opposed.

C. Animal Control Ordinance – This was discussed during the sign ordinance. Council member Moncrief made a motion to accept the first read of the animal control ordinance. Seconded by council member Miles. Passed unanimously.

XIII. REPORTS

- 1. Public Works Report** – Public works director Brian Pilgrim reported that a few spray heads were replaced at the sewer plant it is running like it should. Two Japanese Maples have been planted in the roundabouts. They have been doing general maintenance on the equipment and are in the process of painting the front and back porches at City Hall.
- 2. Clerk 's Report** - City Clerk Dawn Lummus stated that Municipal Court Clerk Sonya Cox reported there were 3 tickets from the Georgia State Patrol and 6 from Walton County. There are 3 signed up for the Park Market which starts in May. LMIG application has been submitted and approved. She reported she has been to the clerk's training and was learning more about records retention and needed to start going through all the old records at city hall.
- 3. Mayor's Report** - Mayor Mark Moore reported that with the clerk's attendance at the training she is now a GMA Certified City Clerk. Due to a council member not being able to attend the February work session it will need to be moved. Also, a council member asked to move the work session from the morning to the evening. So, the work session for February 23, 2023 at 10:00 am has been moved to March 2, 2023 at 7:00 pm. The sewer plant expansion is still in process with Chris Thomas and Jimmy Parker working on that. The RFP was advertised in the Walton Tribune and on the city's website to renovate the 1121 Park Street public works building. As of now, there are only two proposals that came in before the ad. There was some vandalism at the city park. A young

man was cutting doughnuts in the grass. He was caught and will appear in the Municipal Court. The city is working on getting the curb fixed. There are 2 engineers looking at it and getting an RFP ready for that.

XIV. TOWN HALL – There was discussion from citizens.

XV. COUNCIL COMMENTS –

Council member Erica Miles had no comment.

Council member Linda Pilgrim had no comment.

Council member Stephanie Moncrief had no comment.

XVI. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

XVII. ADJOURN – Council member Stephanie Moncrief made motion to adjourn.

Council member Erica Miles seconded. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Lummus,
City Clerk

Approved,

Mark Moore,
Mayor