

# Committee of the Whole Minutes - Final MAYOR AND COUNCIL



Derek Norton, Mayor  
Tim Gould, Mayor Pro Tem (Ward 6)  
Glenn Pickens (Ward 1)  
Latonia P. Hines (Ward 2)  
Travis Lindley (Ward 3)  
Charles "Corkey" Welch (Ward 4)  
Susan Wilkinson (Ward 5)  
Rickey N. Oglesby, Jr. (Ward 7)

A. Max Bacon City Hall  
Human Resources Training Room  
2800 King Street SE  
Smyrna, GA 30080

City Attorney Scott Cochran  
Deputy City Administrator Kristin Robinson  
City Clerk Heather K. Peacon-Corn

**May 15, 2025  
6:00 PM**

## 1. Roll Call

**Present:** 8 – Mayor Derek Norton, Councilmember Glenn Pickens, Councilmember Latonia P. Hines, Councilmember Travis Lindley, Councilmember Charles Welch, Councilmember Susan Wilkinson (virtual), Mayor Pro Tem / Councilmember Tim Gould, Councilmember Rickey N. Oglesby, Jr.

**Also Present:** 1 – Scott Cochran

**Staff:** 13 – Olivia Anderson, Jennifer Bennett, Richard Garland, Carson Haynie, Dat Luu, Brian Marcos, Russell Martin, Paul Osburn, Heather Peacon-Corn, Evie Ramsey, Kristin Robinson, Joey Staubes, Andrea Worthy

## Call to Order

Mayor Derek Norton called to order the May 15, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting held at A. Max Bacon City Hall in the HR Training Room at 6:00 PM.

## 2. Staff M&C Agenda Items to Review

## 3. Formal Business and Presentations

### A. COW2025-006 Smyrna Youth Council – End of Year Presentation

The Smyrna Youth Council presented their activities for the year, some of which included:

- Went to Teasley, King Springs, and Smyrna elementary schools
- Worked with ASP students to make Valentine's cards
- Then we dropped off cards to Delmar Gardens for residents to enjoy on Valentines Day!
- January 27<sup>th</sup> - Toured the capitol
- Met with representatives and lobbyists
- Recognized on the senate floor
- Accompanied by Mayor Norton and Council Member Lindley
- Clothing and Canned food drive (green beans, Corn, Mac and Cheese, stuffing)

- Smyrna Public Safety Foundation
- Encouraged teens to donate by providing community service hours
- QR code for online donations
- Greeted guests into the building and provided directions, while even encouraging people who did not know the event was taking place to participate
- Gave information about Smyrna Youth Council to intrigued parents and youth
- Obtained information of different ways to get involved in the community (Jonquil Lions Club, Rotary Club, etc.)

They discussed their recruiting efforts, surveys conducted, and their recommendations for the city moving forward.

The members that presented were:

Aayesha Sharwar  
Abigail Streger  
Ajay Manickaraj  
Ashwind Ramesh  
Augustus Conner  
Aniyah Obannon  
Angelica Roman  
Charles Scott  
Fatou Diop  
Fiona McDermott  
Maxwell Zhiss  
Mirella Haynes  
Prayushi Padhi  
Paige Bauer  
Sudharsan Saravanan

**B. COW2025-017 Update on Downtown Master Plan process – MKSK**

Darren Meyer, Principal, and Luis Calvo, Urban Designer, of MKSK presented the following:

The City of Smyrna is excited to lead the Downtown Smyrna Redevelopment project! Through an extensive engagement process that includes community events, online surveys, and in-person events, we will plan together to accomplish the following outcomes:

- ▶ A fresh vision for downtown that builds on the 2020 B.O.L.D. Downtown Master Plan.
- ▶ Mobility and connectivity improvements to make downtown a safer place to walk, bike, stroll, and drive.
- ▶ A community-centered vision for the City-owned First Baptist Church Site that reimagines this area as an extension of downtown.

Phase 1: Initiate February - May

- ▶ Conducted existing conditions
- ▶ Launched online engagement
- ▶ Met with Advisory Committee
- ▶ Hosted stakeholder roundtables
- ▶ Mobilized Ambassadors
- ▶ Hosted Community Meeting 1

Phase 2: Explore May - August

- ▶ Explore transportation solutions
- ▶ Look at land use mix downtown
- ▶ Establish market strategy
- ▶ Develop site concept alternatives
- ▶ Host Community Meeting 2

Phase 3: Synthesize August - Nov.

- ▶ Design a preferred site concept
- ▶ Develop an implementation strategy
- ▶ Host Community Meeting 3
- ▶ Create a final document
- ▶ Adopt the plan!

#### Six Project Goals to Guide the Process

The six project goals below were developed by the planning team using key take-aways from conversations with City Staff and project stakeholders. The goals were shared with the community at the Community Visioning Meeting and refined per their feedback.

- Preserve and enhance downtown's small town charm
- Expand downtown's walkable core
- Connect downtown with Smyrna's Neighborhoods
- Create great public spaces in downtown
- Attract new residents, businesses, and activity to downtown
- Strengthen Smyrna's fiscal health and economic competitiveness

#### Existing Conditions Overview

##### Land Use and Built Environment

The planning team has started an existing conditions analysis looking at current land use patterns, regulatory tools, and downtown's built environment. Key Findings include:

- ▶ The Central Business District Zoning covers only 23% of Downtown (21 acres of 92 total acres)
- ▶ 43% of Downtown's area has a future land use of 'Mixed Use'
- ▶ Of the 92 acres that make up the downtown boundary, 5.7 acres is park space (6%)
- ▶ One-third of the downtown boundary is dedicated to surface parking lots.

##### Transportation: Parking Utilization

Parking Utilization for public (or publicly used) parking lots varies between peak lunch and dinner times:

- ▶ Parking is generally available southwest of activity centers, behind City Hall.
- ▶ Parking utilization is highest in the core of the Market Village.

Transportation: Bike & Pedestrian Connectivity – The community indicated a desire to improve safety along Spring Street.

##### Market Scan: Housing

- ▶ Strong sales prices for last 8 quarters, at a consistent pace
- ▶ Newer multifamily properties nearby are leasing consistently, while older stock is at a healthy 4% vacancy rate.
- ▶ Housing is critical for the support of complementary uses, like shopping, dining, and entertainment.

##### Market Scan: Office

- ▶ Dated office complexes with larger floorplates have higher vacancies.

- ▶ Newer boutique-style buildings have smaller spaces and are in higher demand for today's professional office-seeker.
- ▶ This type of office product could be appropriate for downtown and has been successful in nearby areas.

#### Market Scan: Retail

Develop strategies to encourage locally-owned businesses that complement existing offerings and strengthen the downtown retail environment.

##### 1-Mile Radius

- ▶ Population: 11,300
- ▶ Total Annual Retail Purchases: \$232 million

##### 2-Mile Radius

- ▶ Population: 40,800
- ▶ Total Annual Retail Purchases: \$833 million

##### 3-Mile Radius

- ▶ Population: 109,700
- ▶ Total Annual Retail Purchases: \$1.75 billion

#### 2,600 Smyrna Voices Engaged (So Far)

- 250+ Attendees – Community Meeting 1
- 200+ Booth Visitors – Jonquil Festival
- 4,400+ Website Visitors – Project Website
- 20 Ambassadors – Project Ambassadors
- 70 Stakeholders – Stakeholder Roundtable
- 2,082 Responses – Online Survey

#### 7 Stakeholder Roundtables with 70 Stakeholders

Seven stakeholder sessions over two days with Smyrna's business and community leaders

- Session 1: Downtown Businesses
- Session 2: Property Representatives
- Session 3: City of Smyrna Staff
- Session 4: Developers/ Real Estate
- Session 5: Plan Ambassadors
- Session 6: Boards & Commissions
- Session 7: General Stakeholders

#### Stakeholder Roundtables: Key Takeaways

- Attract more dining, entertainment, and retail to help make downtown a destination.
- Preserve Smyrna's Small town charm while embracing growth.
- Strengthen connectivity within downtown and to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Incorporate well-designed and thoughtful design into new public spaces.
- Balance growth with concerns about parking and traffic.
- Invest in place management and maintenance.
- Redevelop the First Baptist Church Site so it feels like a continuation of downtown, so it complements what is there now.
- Focus on improving pedestrian safety around Market Village and on Atlanta Road.

#### Online Survey with 2,082 Responses

What is your primary connection to Downtown?

Live in Downtown 28.5%

Visit Downtown 62%  
Other 6%  
Own Property or a Business Downtown 2.5%  
Work in Downtown 1.7%

2,082 Total responses to the online survey!  
94.4% live in the 30080 (66.4%) or 30082 (28%) ZIP Codes  
89% of respondents are City of Smyrna residents

#### Online Survey Results: Assets

What are the main reasons you visit Downtown Smyrna, aside from living or working in the downtown area?

Restaurant/Dining 86%  
Recreation 66%  
Special Events or Festivals 65%

What part of Downtown Smyrna do you find the most enjoyable and comfortable?

1 Village Green  
2 Market Village  
3 Restaurants  
4 Library and Community Center  
5 Downtown's walkable area

#### Online Survey Results: Opportunities

How satisfied are you with Downtown Smyrna? Average Responses = 3.5/5

What are the 3 most important things you would change or improve about Downtown Smyrna?

Downtown needs...

- ▶ More restaurants, and a greater diversity of restaurants.
- ▶ More local shops and boutiques unique to downtown
- ▶ More parks and green spaces.
- ▶ An improved parking experience.
- ▶ More things to do downtown, like breweries, coffee shops, activities, and spaces for kids.

What part of Downtown Smyrna do you find the most unsafe and uncomfortable to walk in?

1 Improve Market Village  
2 Redevelop the Baptist Church site  
3 Make Village green even better  
4 Address large Parking lots  
5 Work on Downtown walkability.

#### Online Survey Results: Site Redevelopment

How supportive are you of redeveloping the City-owned First Baptist Church Site as an extension of Downtown Smyrna?

Very Supportive: 68%  
Supportive: 18%  
Neutral: 10%  
No at all: 3%  
Not so supportive: 3%

Explain your level of support (Top 5 things we heard)

1. The site redevelopment will strengthen downtown as a whole and help continue its strong momentum.
2. This is an opportunity to create new parks, plazas, or community gathering spaces for the community.
3. The site should feel seamlessly connected to downtown and the rest of the city, with a key focus on walkability
4. The redevelopment should feel uniquely Smyrna, reflecting the charm and character of downtown.
5. The site is a tremendous opportunity to bring new life and economic activity to downtown.

#### Online Survey Results: Community Aspirations

What types of development would you like to see happen on the site?

Restaurants 85%

Retail/Shopping 71%

Entertainment 59%

Pocket Park/Plazas 51%

Public Art 33%

Mixed Use 25%

Public Parking 22%

Other 10%

Hotels + Hospitality 5%

Town homes 4%

Condos 3%

Apartments 2%

How do you see this site in 5 years' time? (Top 5 things we heard)

In 5 years, the First Baptist Church site...

...will be home to new restaurants, shops, and cafes.

...will be home to new Smyrna residents in an appropriate amount of new housing

...will host events and festivals in new gathering spaces

...will welcome visitors with an adequate amount of parking

...will be a vibrant mixed use development

There is support for housing, but...

Support for housing on this site is mixed. Of the approximately 103 total comments related to housing in this question...

▷ 57 were supportive of housing of the site, with most expressing a desire for mixed use.

▷ 46 were hesitant or not supportive of new housing on the site, especially apartments or townhomes.

#### Community Meeting Results: Land Uses

Living Downtown – Important

Shopping and Dining Downtown – Very Important

Working Downtown – Less Important

Enjoying Downtown – Very Important

#### Community Meeting Results: Mobility

What improvements should we focus on to create a safer and more walkable downtown?

Re-thinking/pedestrianizing key streets through downtown 28%

Beautifying streets and sidewalks 23%

Creating more pedestrian connections through downtown 18%

Connecting downtown to nearby neighborhoods 17%

Making parking more convenient and intuitive 10%

Improving signage 2%

Where do you feel...

...safe and comfortable walking?

"Feel safe walking in the market village and the green but not crossing Atlanta Road with lots of young kids it would be better to have safer crossings for all the roads.."

...unsafe or uncomfortable walking?

"All Atlanta Rd. crossings especially Flemings and spring are dangerous for those on foot or bike."

"Need to create restaurants with green spaces to allow for safe play and outdoor eating."

Community Meeting Results: Downtown's Future

Use the signs to complete the statement "In 5 to 10 years, Downtown Smyrna will be..."

In 5 to 10 years, Downtown Smyrna will be...

...home to new local shops and restaurants.

...more walkable and better connected.

...a destination like Downtown Woodstock, Marietta, or Roswell.

...greener and beautiful, with places to gather.

...charming and uniquely Smyrna!

Key Direction from the Community

The plan's engagement so far has resulted in thousands of comments, ideas, and visions for downtown. While we have received a wide range of feedback, the six statements below illustrate common themes we heard from the community:

- Create a neighborhood: Where restaurants, shops, businesses, and homes are mingled together.
- Develop a nucleus of energy: Attract a critical mass of business activity & pedestrian activity
- Capture the local market: Make downtown a regional destination for both residents and metro visitors
- Make downtown comfortable and enjoyable to walk around: Design streets and spaces with a focus on safety.
- Create a great experience between buildings: Incorporate well-designed streets, plazas, courtyards, and greens.
- Make it happen: Create a vision for the site that is both supported by the community and feasible with market conditions

Phase 2: Explore May – August

- ▶ Craft a market strategy
- ▶ Assess land uses
- ▶ Explore transportation solutions
- ▶ Develop site concepts alternatives
- ▶ Share with the Advisory Committee at Meeting 3
- ▶ Host a second community meeting.

## C. **COW2025-018** Croy – Quarterly Update – Greg Teague / Zach Strickland

Greg Teague from Crow Engineering presented the following:

Project Highlights – Windy Hill Road Improvements

- Baldwin's latest schedule continues to reflect they will be substantially complete in July 2025
- The contractor is beginning the final paving process in mid-May which includes paving the express lanes in mid-May as the first phase. There will be a break in



the paving before the second phase begins paving the final course on the local access roads.

- All lanes on the express lanes will be open after the paving is completed on the express lanes.
- The contractor is continuing to install the multi use trails and driveways along the eastbound and westbound local access roads.

#### Project Highlights – Downtown Improvements

##### The Restroom and Playground Project:

- Scope includes construction of restroom facilities, playground installation, and water feature upgrades.
- Anticipated Completion Early Summer 2025
- Existing facility removal has begun; Site Improvements to begin in the coming weeks Contractor: Couch Group; Designer: Foresite Group

Project Budget: Approx. \$1.4 Million

Construction Began: February 2025

#### Project Highlights – South Cobb Drive Improvements

- Concept Development and Environmental Assessments & Screening will be completed in 2025.
- Revised Traffic Eng, Report and Concept Report have been submitted to GDOT and Cobb DOT for review.
- Preliminary Engineering is underway and progressing through the GDOT process.
- The City has secured \$16,876,279 in Federal funding for the project through ARC and Community Project Funding and continues to explore additional sources to meet the project's anticipated budget.
- FY26 CDS & CPF applications have been submitted to the offices of Senators Ossoff & Warnock, as well as Congresswoman McBath.

#### Project Highlights – Downtown Parking Deck (Atlanta Road Surface Lot)

- Contractor: SCA Construction
- Pre-Construction meeting was held on-site 05/06/2025.
- Current Contract Amount: \$454,516.7

#### Project Highlights – Resurfacing

- Current Resurfacing Contract: \$1,422,000\*

\*Budget comprised of FY 2024 SPLOST, FY 2024 LMIG, FY 2024 Supplemental LMIG, FY 2025 SPLOST, and FY 2025 LMIG.

• Bids came in significantly lower than anticipated per lane mile. To capitalize on this market anomaly, Smyrna is putting together an additional Resurfacing package to hit the streets this Summer.

- Anticipated Budget: \$3,300,000 to include the FY 2025 Supplemental LRA Funds

22 Roads in current contract Include: • Bourne Drive • Pasadena Place • Ask Kay Drive • Berkley Drive • Fleming Street • Dogwood Circle • Oakley Trace • Highview Drive • Spring Leaf Circle • Evergreen trail • Argo Drive • Spring Drive • Barbara Lane • Brenda Drive • Carolyn Drive • Rolling View Drive • United Drive • Church Road • Nichols Drive • Riverview Road • Church Street (Soil Cement)\*

#### Project Highlights – Aquatics Center

- Conceptual site layout, water feature amenities, and Aquatics programming has been approved by Mayor and Council.



- Design team working closely with staff on revised Tolleson Park facility. Schematic Design submittal to Staff scheduled for May 29, 2025.
- Supplemental design is underway for an early-release demolition and site preparation package to bring the current site to a “pad ready” condition.

#### Project Highlights – Splashpad/Sprayground

- Contractor: Integrated Construction & Nobility Construction began 03/24/2025. Current Contract Amount: \$2,378,638
- The project has been awarded. The Contractor has constructed the retaining wall and brought the site to grade.
- Anticipated completion has been forecast for January 2026.

#### Project Highlights – Sidewalks/Trails/Greenways/Beautification

• 30% Of proposed budget spent to Date • Additional 5% Estimated to be spent on: • Decorative Tree Fencing in Market Village – Complete • Phase 2 Landscaping – Fire Station 1-5, Police Station and Back Side of Library/City Hall, Park Area at West Spring Street Intersection across from Moe’s near the Railroad Tracks – 100% Complete • Up lighting around Trees – Market Village and City Hall – 100% Complete • Currently no new projects underway.

#### Upcoming Projects

##### Cobb Parkway Pedestrian Bridge to the Battery

- Status: Projected 2026 – County has begun concept development.
- Project has received Community Project Funding of \$1,000,000; ARC TIP Project No. CO-496
- Current Budget: \$280,000; \*Budget to be amended.

##### Camp Highland – Complete Bridge Replacement

- Status: Staff has worked with Cobb DOT to nail down the restorative scope following initial bid.
- Council voted to increase the project budget by \$94,200.00 on February 17, 2025 to meet the cost share agreement with the County.
- Current Budget: \$1,594,200

#### Additional Projects

Facility Improvements • Status: 72% of Budget Obligated Environmental Improvements • Status: 100% of Budget Obligated for GA Power Contract Curb and Gutter • Status: 1% of Budget Obligated Sidewalks/Trails/Greenways /Beautification • Status: 30% of Budget Obligated Traffic Calming • Status: 36% of Budget Obligated Public Safety – 800 MHz Radio Replacement • Status: 83% of Budget Obligated Fire Department – Small Equipment • Status: 100% of Budget Obligated

#### Joint Projects with County

##### East West Connector Roadway Safety Improvements

- Status: The County’s design is continuing into the next stages.
- Based on the EW Connector Needs Assessment that was completed by Cobb DOT in 2024, improvements to the intersections at Fontaine Road and at Cooper Lake Road have been identified.
- Presentation to Smyrna City Council was December 5, 2024. A Framework Agreement has already been approved and executed by both the City and County to facilitate execution of the construction contract.

#### Windy Hill Parkway Improvements

- Status: Projected 2025

Conversion of Sports Lighting to LED on sports fields/courts

- Partially obligated for the Conversion of LED Lighting component on River Line & Jonquil Parks turf field Contract (FY 2024)
- Project awarded to Musco Sports Lighting (\$1,285,986.00); Installation to begin early 2025; to include Ward, Brinkley, River Line, Jonquil, and Cobb Parks; Ward Park, Brinkley, & River Line have been completed; Cobb Park is underway with Jonquil to follow.

**D. COW2025-059 Community Relations Discussion – Jennifer Bennett**

Jennifer Bennett, Community Relations Director, discussed the following:

- The current website is two years and nine months old
- It is presented as council approved it

Council members expressed that there is some difficulty navigating the homepage. Councilmember Lindley asked that project updates be easy to find.

- She discussed staffing in her department
- There is no dedicated person to the website – Jennifer and Enoch share that role as needed
- Attempts have been made to bring in interns, but the workload is not relieved
- Suggestions came from council that utilizing Smyrna Youth Council

Mayor Norton suggested discussing immediate issues (train derailment, storm water issues, street closures). Ms. Bennett stated:

- Much of the information does not get to her or her department
- Internal communications need work
- Signage around the city was brought up – because of the new branding, an RFP was issued in conjunction with a larger project
- Community Relations is building capital with media – Smyrna is now seen as a leader of economic development

Councilmember Hines commended Andrea Worthy, Economic Development Director, for her interview with media.

**4. Review of Current M&C Agenda**

**A. COW2025-057 Review of the May 19, 2025 Mayor and Council Meeting Notice and Agenda**

Mayor Norton reviewed the May 19, 2025 Mayor and Council Meeting agenda.

**Z25-004:** Russell Martin, Community Development Director, presented the following:

The applicant is requesting a rezoning from R-15 to RMC-8-Conditional for the development of seven (7) single-family detached units at a density of 7.0 units per acre. A land use change from Regional Activity Center is not required for this rezoning. The existing two (2) single-family homes will be demolished to allow the construction of the proposed development. Three (3) of the homes will face Bell Drive, and four (4) of the

homes will face Woodland Terrace. All of the homes will have front-entry garages. The proposed lots will have a minimum lot size of 5,353 sq. ft. and an average lot area of 5,419 sq. ft. The applicant proposes to use elements such as brick, stone, and siding for the façade materials for each home.

**ATH2025-087:** Paul Osburn, Deputy Public Works Director, stated this request is based off discrepancy's found during the survey and engineering phases for the proposed redevelopment for the old IGO Church site. These discrepancy's need to be addressed as part of the project.

**ORD2025-005:** Scott Cochran, City Attorney, stated that at the request of the Cobb-Marietta Coliseum and Exhibit Hall Authority the city previously approved an Amended and Restated Funding and Operating Agreement. As the Cobb-Marietta Coliseum and Exhibit Hall Authority prepares its financing, the city needs to update its ordinance dealing with the imposition and rate of Hotel Motel tax so as to update the ordinance consistent with state law and allows the levy through the term of the previously approved contract. This amendment extends the authorization of the levy from December 31, 2028, to December 31, 2053 as allowed by state law.

## 5. Other Business / Staff Comment

Mayor Norton asked Mike Jones to introduce himself:

- First home was in Smyrna
- US Air Force – 4 years active/4 years inactive
- Bachelors from Southern Poly and Masters from Univ. of TN
- Became Public Works Director for Paulding County
- County Administrator for Paulding County
- Came to Smyrna as City Administrator
- Left in 2017 to pursue consulting (engineering)

Councilmember Hines stated there are many projects in Smyrna. She asked if he has the knowledge and expertise to manage all of the projects.

- His job was project management for multiple clients
- Smyrna would be his internal client
- Understands engineering, change orders and minimizing them, timelines, etc.
- Will look to Mayor and Council for direction

### Updates

Kristin Robinson, Deputy City Administrator:

- Mableton has to negotiate with Cobb County by May 31, 2025
- If they do not reach an agreement, the county and all cities will incur sanctions
- There will need to be a special called meeting the week of Memorial Day
- DCA needs all cities to meet the May 31, 2025 deadline
- Another special called meeting will be held on June 2, 2025 to approve the budget

Richard Garland, Community Services Administrator:

- Sending out RFP for interior design services for the GA Power building and the first floor of City Hall
- It will be a 30-day process
- Will do interviews and narrow it down to 3-4 vendors

Mayor Norton:

- Has heard that some of the youth sports organizations are moving non-Smyrna groups to Smyrna's turf fields
- Wants to have a discussion with those organizations
- Closing Spring St and leaving fountain area open – would like to move forward with what needs to be done to begin closing the streets

Councilmember Oglesby:

- Juneteenth Festival
- VIP tables will be available
- Adding another entertainer
- Fire hydrants will be painted when weather permits

Councilmember Pickens:

- Had a good community meeting about the recent shooting
- PD did a great job answering questions and concerns

Councilmember Hines:

- Congratulations to IT for their award
- Rose Garden is having a Spring Festival on June 7

## 6. Executive Session (As Needed)

## 7. Adjournment

Mayor Derek Norton adjourned the May 15, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting at 8:34 PM.

Facilities are provided throughout City Hall for the convenience of persons with disabilities.

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THIS MEETING WAS PROPERLY NOTICED AND POSTED AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NOTICING STANDARDS AS OUTLINED IN O.C.G.A. 50-14-3:  
The City of Smyrna website – [www.smyrnaga.gov](http://www.smyrnaga.gov)  
City Hall, 2800 King Street SE, Notice Boards