

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)
Kathy Young (Ward 7)

Smyrna Community Center
Dogwood Room
1250 Powder Springs Street
Smyrna, GA 30080

City Attorney Scott Cochran
City Administrator Joseph Bennett
City Clerk Heather K. Peacon-Corn

**November 01, 2023
6:00 PM**

1. Roll Call

Present: 7 – Mayor Derek Norton, Councilmember Glenn Pickens, Councilmember Travis Lindley (virtual), Councilmember Charles Welch, Mayor Pro Tem / Councilmember Tim Gould, Councilmember Susan Wilkinson, and Councilmember Kathy Young

Also Present: 1 – Scott Cochran

Absent: 1 – Councilmember Latonia P. Hines

Staff: 6 – Joe Bennett, Dat Luu, Russell Martin, Paul Osburn, Heather Peacon-Corn, and Kristin Robinson

Call to Order

Mayor Derek Norton called to order the November 1, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting held at the Smyrna Community Center in the Dogwood Room at 6:08 PM.

2. Staff M&C Agenda Items to Review

3. Formal Business and Presentations

4. Review of Current M&C Agenda

A. COW2023-060 Review of the November 6, 2023 Mayor and Council Meeting Agenda

Mayor Derek Norton reviewed the November 6, 2023 preliminary Mayor and Council agenda.

Russell Martin, Community Development Director, discussed RFP-008, an online subscription service to assist City Marshals with enforcement of the Short-Term Rental ordinance. This helps identify short-term rentals, compliance, etc. It can be integrated with OpenGov and GIS software. Councilmember Welch asked if it is not permitted to park on grass at a short-term rental, and who would need to be called if a violation occurs. Mr. Martin stated that it is never allowed for people to park on the grass for a rental, and it is

best to take a picture of the violation and send it to the City so it can be documented and cited.

No further discussion took place.

5. Other Business / Staff Comment

Joe Bennett, City Administrator, updated the Mayor and Council on the following:

- Christmas Lights are being hung very quickly and almost complete.
- Another 489 meeting with Cobb County took place last week. The agreement should be discussed at the next COW meeting. The county has a consultant saying they do not owe the cities anything. The cities have said they are willing to leave the agreement as it is even though they are probably not getting what they are owed, but the county will not agree to that. If no agreement is in place before the expiration (October 2024), both county and cities will lose a lot.
- New city park playground is on track to be completed around Thanksgiving.
- Still awaiting numbers for Ward 7 splash pad.
- City Hall sheetrock is hung, and they began mudding it today.
- Awaiting delivery of the acoustic panels for Council Chambers. They are 4-6 weeks out.
- Parker Young is saying Administration wing should be completed around Thanksgiving.
- GA Power came back with prices for power to restroom for North Cooper Lake Park. Also would like to add street lights to the park.

Mayor Pro Tem/Councilmember Tim Gould entered the meeting at 6:19 PM.

Mayor Norton discussed squatter occurrences in multiple neighborhoods that were all connected. The police were able to remove the squatters in a matter of days rather than months because of other violations. Mayor Norton commended the police for the quick resolution.

Councilmember Glenn Pickens asked if there was any communication about the polling change in Ward 1. He stated that it was moved from its usual place. This will be looked into.

Councilmember Kathy Young stated that the Spooky Halloween festival was well-attended, and she heard many compliments about it. She thanked Parks & Recreation staff for their activities. At a recent HOA meeting, there was lots of discussion about the East-West Connector and racing noises, but otherwise a good meeting. The Chattahoochee River Keeper will be holding a ribbon cutting on Saturday from 2-4. Congratulations to the Lady Raiders team winning for the third year in a row.

Councilmember Charles Welch asked about an issue with a voter in Ward 4 being told they had to vote in Ward 3. Heather Peacon-Corn, City Clerk, stated that when she went to Cobb County Elections to speak with someone about the issue, she was told that it was the state's Jarvis system that was incorrect for that street. Unfortunately, the person in question has cast her vote in Ward 3 so will not be able to recast a vote. Ms. Peacon-Corn has been reassured that that particular road has been corrected, that they have verified all the other votes have been cast correctly, and that going forward, those from that area should not encounter this same issue. Mr. Welch also mentioned that he received a call from a resident who said she had a very difficult time voting because wheelchair access was not easy. He asked that something be done to assist people. Mr. Welch asked about sidewalk connections on Cooper Lake and King Springs. Paul Osburn said the county wants the city to acquire the right-of-way.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson asked if there is a new exotic dance club on S. Cobb Drive and stated that there have been complaints about noise later at night. Mr. Bennett stated there is a dance studio there that teaches dance and has been there for years, but he will have someone check it out. Ms. Wilkinson also asked about backyard waste and complaints. Mr. Bennett said that the city cannot access backyards without a warrant.

Heather Peacon-Corn, City Clerk, stated that Krissa Blue who has come before the Mayor and Council about a community garden project has contacted several people in the City about being placed on the next agenda. Mayor Norton stated that Councilmember Lindley has already expressed he has no interest in pursuing that project because it is not a space that would be feasible. Any further communication needs to go through Councilmember Lindley because it is in his ward.

Kristin Robinson, Assistant City Administrator/Finance Director, stated that the City is currently in the middle of the annual audit of financial statements. The auditors are going to be sending a standard letter out to Mayor and Council. Any questions or concerns can be addressed to the partner in charge. She also announced that the City got the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 11th or 12th year in a row from the Government Finance and Auditors Association.

Mayor Derek Norton exited the meeting at 6:39 PM.

Megan and Brandon Gamble, 6015 Bordeau Walk, came forward to discuss an ongoing stormwater issue they have. They live in Ward 5. They have lived at this address for nearly nine years. The drain that runs through their backyard always floods. They are currently finished repairs to their home for the third time because of the overflow of waters. The City has tried to remediate the situation, but it continues to happen. Fecal matter from the overflow from the trailer park in Cobb County is entering their property. They are hoping the City will consider to assist with procuring funding to update and fix the storm drain. The home is not considered to be in a flood plain and their house is on a slab. Ultimately, they would like to be compensated for everything they have had to come out of pocket for and to make sure that this does not continue to happen. Paul Osburn stated that they have been working with an engineering firm, the Gambles, and neighbors to see if they can acquire a permanent easement in designing an overflow ditch to convey the water between the two houses and out to the roadways rather than behind the homes. Mayor Pro Tem Gould suggested that Cobb County be made aware of this as well since there is no infrastructure in the trailer park.

Councilmember Travis Lindley exited the meeting at 6:43 PM.

6. Executive Session (As Needed)

7. Adjournment

Mayor Pro Tem Tim Gould adjourned the November 1, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting at 6:49 PM.

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

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
City Hall, 2800 King Street SE, Notice Boards