

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Sam Couvillon, Barbara Brooks, Zack Thompson, Juli Clay, Danny Dunagan, George Wangemann

STAFF PRESENT: Bryan Lackey, Angela Sheppard, Abb Hayes, Denise Jordan

Mayor Couvillon called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and served as the presiding officer.

COMMUNITY ISSUE:

Presentation: Redbud Project Model for Green Space Preservation

Executive Director Margaret Rasmussen expressed passion for keeping Gainesville green. The following was noted from the presentation.

- Linwood Ecology Center parking needs at the Spring View entrance
- Improvements to a defective detention pond at the Linwood Ecology Center
- Recommended passage of a stormwater ordinance
- Projects
 - Supports development of the Gainesville 85 Business Park as an eco-industrial complex and shared the importance of maintaining tree canopy and for identifying rescue plants to restore the natural ecosystem after developments are completed.
 - Drive-Thru Air Quality Control Landscape Project at McDonalds on Thompson Bridge Road.
 - Longstreet 1875 Heritage Landscape Project at the Piedmont Hotel off the midtown greenway.
 - Homegrown National Park received a donation of 4,000+ native plants from the Redbud Project to connect 429 square miles in Hall County.

Mrs. Rasmussen envisioned a green Gainesville. She requested protective ordinances and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to share her passion.

Council Member Dunagan extended words of appreciation for her labor of love.

Bob Swoskowski, owner of 12 McDonald's restaurants in northeast Georgia, stated he endorses and supports the Redbud Project. He asked the Council to consider encouraging and/or requiring air quality improvements and confirmed plans to ask corporate McDonald's Corporation to require ecologically improved plants for all landscaping projects.

DEPARTMENT ISSUES:

Resolution: Georgia Public Safety Officials and First Responders Supplement Grant

Chief Financial Officer Jeremy Perry stated the Governor announced a grant for all eligible sworn law enforcement officers and first responders serving during August 2021. The grant is for \$194,784. The proposed resolution authorizes acceptance of the funds.

Placed on the March 1, 2022 Council Meeting Consent Agenda

Resolution: GFSTC Fireworks Tax Grant

Fire Chief Brandon Ellis commented on a grant that provides an opportunity for the Fire Department. The proposed resolution authorized the acceptance and administration of a \$13,000

grant with a 10% match to purchase fire safety education training materials. He described the purchase and how it would improve efficiency in the department.

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Athens Street / Hwy 129-South Corridor Plan Presentation

Leigh Elkins, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, introduced the project area and displayed the evolution of the area before presenting the following information:

- The process involved a steering committee, focus groups, interviews and a site inventory
- The key issues were pedestrian infrastructure, traffic, beautification, community facilities/greenspace and housing
- Recommendations
 - Sidewalks on both sides with buffers to offer a safe pedestrian area and beautification
 - Engineering Traffic Study at EE Butler/MLK/Athens Street
 - Train on the track notice to help drivers
 - Add gateway signage along this corridor
 - Add median plantings
 - Add a mural on the Cargill fence
 - Ask Cargill to reposition their parking lot
 - Connect to facilities and greenspace by securing property from CSX and extending the greenway to Athens Street to offer public/private space for concerts, reunions and other community events
 - Special Projects
 - Enter into a code enforcement agreement with Hall County
 - Annex the Beulah Rucker Museum property into the City
 - Develop a Black History Walk
 - Gateway property redevelopment
 - Pursue a state opportunity zone designation to spur additional investment
 - Create access to healthy food by encouraging a grocery store redevelopment along this corridor
 - Next steps
 - Complete the report
 - Connect implementation steps with workplans
 - Community presentation
 - Pursue funding for implementation

Council Member Brooks expressed gratitude for acceptance of Athens Street as a gateway and asked for support. She felt businesses will do a better job managing their property when they realize the city supports them.

Mayor Couvillon felt this was a road map for developing other areas. He agreed the City has a responsibility and was hopeful about making progress.

Council Member Clay expressed appreciation for the project noting it compliments the Redbud Project. This will make the community feel safer and make the area feel more inviting. People have more pride and want to give back when they see others doing the same.

Council Member Wangemann expressed appreciation for the emphasis on beautification.

Public Hearing Item: Request from McKinley Homes US, LLC for a special use on a 7.74± acres tract located on the west side of Florence Drive, across from its intersection with Bentley Park Circle (a/k/a 2920 Florence Drive, SW), having a zoning of Office and Institutional (O-I). Ward Number: Four. Tax Parcel Number(s): 08-015-005-029. Request: Residential townhomes.

City Attorney Abb Hayes summarized this item.

Public Hearing Item: Request from the City of Gainesville to amend the Unified Land Development Code for the City of Gainesville, Georgia to amend Table 9-5-1 of Article 9-5 entitled “Permitted and Special Uses for Residential Zoning Districts”; to amend Table 9-6-1 of Article 9-6 entitled “Permitted and Special Uses for Nonresidential Zoning Districts”; to amend Section 9-10-2-5 entitled “Single-Family Attached Dwelling (Fee-Simple Townhouse); to amend Section 9-10-3-5 entitled “Private Swimming Pools”; to amend subsection (b) of Section 9-18-6-6 entitled “Changeable Copy”; to amend subsection (c) of Section 9-21-1-12 entitled “Powers and Duties”; to amend subsection (d) of Section 9-22-2-18 entitled “Action by Governing Body”.

Community and Economic Development Director Rusty Ligon distributed information to clarify details about short-term rentals with the following statements:

- Currently, the Code classified short-term rental as a “Lodging Service” which is not allowed in Residential zoning districts. It is allowed in Commercial zoning districts.
- Lodging Service is defined as a facility offering shelter accommodations, or place for such shelter, to the public for a fee for 15 days or less in one or more rooms within the same facility, with provisions for living, sanitation, and sleeping. This definition includes hotels and motels.
- The proposed changes were reported as follows:
 - Allow short-term rentals in Residential and Office (R-O) districts.
 - Define short-term rentals as the occupancy of all or a portion of a residential structure, rented to the public for a fee for the purpose of overnight lodging for a period not more than 15 days. This definition includes Airbnb, Vrbo and the like.

City Attorney Abb Hayes shared the reason for the clarification regarding short term rentals and stressed this is not a change in policy.

City Manager Bryan Lackey stated this is a trend that needs to be examined to determine the right options for the Gainesville community.

Council Member Clay felt it was important to spend the time to research and find the right fit for Gainesville.

Both public hearing items scheduled for the March 1, 2022 Council Meeting

CITY MANAGER ISSUES:

Resolution: Authorization to Execute Acceptance Letter Regarding GA Power Funding for Electronic Charging System Infrastructure At Main Street Parking Deck

Assistant City Manager Angela Sheppard stated the proposed resolution authorized acceptance of funds through Georgia Power’s Make Ready Program which will invest in infrastructure to install electric vehicle charging stations. The City was approached by Georgia Power, Renaissance and Carroll Daniel expressing interest. The design provides a starting point with room to grow. There’s a need to accept this option to reserve the funds (infrastructure valued at \$158,000). The City will

not be required to maintain the stations. The parking deck is currently under the Redevelopment Authority which requires them to act for easements and other necessary documents.

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MAYOR/COUNCIL ISSUES:

Council Member Wangemann

1. Announced the Georgia Mountains Food Bank expansion.
2. Presented a Georgia Mountains Regional Commission ex-officio report.
3. Announced an upcoming Keep Hall Beautiful event at Longwood Park.

Council Member Clay

1. Expressed appreciation for the Retreat.
2. Presented the Parks & Recreation and Airport Advisory Committee ex-officio reports.

Council Member Brooks

1. Presented the Gainesville Non-Profit Development Foundation and the Board of Health ex-officio reports.
2. Commented on March 8 being International Day of Women.

Council Member Dunagan

Commented on the Main Street Advisory Committee retreat occurring later in the day.

CITY CLERK ISSUES:

City Clerk Denise Jordan presented information about the American Values Dinner noting an RSVP is required.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

City Manager Lackey requested an Executive Session to discuss real estate matters.

Motion to close the Work Session at 10:20 AM to enter an Executive Session to discuss real estate matters.

Motion made by Council Member Wangemann

Motion seconded by Council Member Dunagan

Votes favoring the motion: Brooks, Thompson, Clay, Dunagan, Wangemann

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Motion to close the Executive Session at 10:45 AM.

Motion made by Council Member Wangemann

Motion seconded by Council Member Dunagan

Votes favoring the motion: Brooks, Thompson, Clay, Dunagan, Wangemann

ADJOURNMENT: 10:45 AM

/dj

W. Samuel Couvillon, Mayor

Denise O. Jordan, City Clerk