

**City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 2, 2022
6:30 p.m.**

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in regular session on Thursday, June 2, 2022. Mayor Kim Learnard called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Council members attending: Gretchen Caola, Frank Destadio, Mike King, and Phil Prebor.

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

None

Public Comment

Dan Smith mentioned the recent discussions of "party house" ordinance, saying he thought those types of establishments should be kept out of neighborhoods. He suggested the vacant Steinmart and Kmart buildings as suitable sites for event facilities.

Smith also recalled the last Council meeting when Tyrone Mayor Eric Dial appealed to Council to delay the closing of Crabapple Lane to golf cart traffic through Kedron Hills. Smith told Prebor he thought Peachtree City was too lenient. Smith said they should have told Tyrone they wanted three plans by June 30 and a budget by July 31.

Suzanne Brown reported 37 new single-family home permits were issued in May 2022, and 400 had been issued over the last 12 months and 464 over the last 14 months. She stated there was no wonder traffic problems continued to worsen, and there was no end in sight. Brown said she did not support changing areas zoned as General Commercial to Limited Use Commercial, which allowed for condos and townhomes. Peachtree City needed industry, not unbridled residential growth, she concluded. She urged citizens to attend the June 16 public hearing to take a stand.

Brown related how more than 2,000 votes in DeKalb County were not counted and were discovered during a hand recount, changing the election night results. This was something they needed to think about, and all counties should have hand recounts.

Agenda Changes

None

Minutes

1. May 17, 2022, Special Called Meeting Minutes

2. May 17, 2022, Executive Session Minutes

King moved to approve the May 17, 2022, Special Called Meeting Minutes and the May 17, 2022, Executive Session Minutes. Prebor seconded. Caola asked the protocol for amending the minutes, and King rescinded the motion.

Caola wanted to correct a figure from her report on parking at Battery Way. The minutes stated that she had said there were 486 police calls to Battery Park in the last three years, but she had said it was over the last two years, three months.

King moved to approve the May 17, 2022, Special Called Meeting Minutes and the May 17, 2022, Executive Session Minutes with the correction as noted. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

1. **FY2022 Budget Amendment & Reclassification of Code Enforcement Officer (P/T) to Code Enforcement Officer (F/T)**
 2. **Reclassification of One (1) Police Officer Position to Police Sergeant**
 3. **FY2022 Budget Amendment and Intent to Finance – Police Car Replacement**
 4. **FY2022 Budget Amendment and Intent to Finance – Three (3) Code Enforcement Vehicles**
 5. **FY2022 Budget Amendment – Public Works – F750 Dump Truck Replacement and a Tractor Truck**
- Destadio moved to accept Consent Agenda items 1-5. King seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Agenda items

None

New Agenda items

None

Public Hearing

06-22-01 Alcohol License- New - Sweet Tea Lounge 2705 Hwy 54W Ste 5

Deputy City Clerk Stacey Collins said both the applicant and the location met the requirements. The applicant was present but did not wish to speak.

The Mayor opened the public hearing. No one wished to speak in favor or in opposition, and she closed the public hearing.

Prebor moved to approve Public Hearing item 06-22-01, Alcohol License- New - Sweet Tea Lounge 2705 Hwy 54W Ste 5. King seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

06-22-02 Alcohol License – New – Urban Exotic Warehouse 500 Northlake Dr, Ste 202

Collins said both the applicant and the location met the requirements. The applicant was present but did not wish to speak.

The Mayor opened the public hearing. No one wished to speak in favor or in opposition, and she closed the public hearing.

Destadio moved to approve Public Hearing item 06-22-02, Alcohol License- New - Urban Exotic Warehouse 500 Northlake Dr, Ste 202. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

06-22-03 Alcohol License – New – TAKKO 316 City Circle

Collins said both the applicant and the location met the requirements. The applicant was not present.

The Mayor opened the public hearing. No one wished to speak in favor or in opposition, and she closed the public hearing.

Prebor moved to approve Public Hearing item 06-22-03, Alcohol License- New - TAKKO 316 City Circle. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Council/Staff Topics

1. **Peachtree Parkway/Crosstown Drive Intersection Improvements**

Interim City Manager Bernie McMullen recalled this had been discussed at the previous Council meeting, and there were some questions, so he had put together an update on the project. The project first showed up in the 2003 Fayette County Transportation Plan but was not funded. Between 2006 and 2010, the City procured Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) funding for preliminary engineering and coordinated with the County on design and funding options. An intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between Peachtree City and Fayette County for \$25,000 was signed, McMullen stated, but in 2011, the City decided not to fund improvements at the intersection, although it did remain in the County Transportation Plan.

It was identified as Project 3 in the 2017 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), calling for the addition of turn lanes eastbound and westbound. The project was funded at \$550,000 in the SPLOST, he stated. Another IGA with the County provided \$1.5 million from excess 2004 SPLOST 321 funds for right of way acquisition, design, and construction of a roundabout.

Between 2018 and 2021, McMullen continued, a number of design options were considered based on input from the City Manager. These options were a roundabout, a signal, and turn lanes. A traffic study was conducted in September 2021 analyzing a roundabout and also a traffic signal with turn lanes.

The first question was "why?" McMullen remarked, and he displayed a chart that showed the distance traffic would back up at the intersection if no improvements were done. In 2024, they were looking at a backup of 1,300 linear feet in the evening going eastbound. Northbound, doing a left turn, there was a backup for 350 feet in the evening and 618 in the morning. Those would be people headed to the Industrial Park or to SR 74. Conditions would worsen by 2044, he reported. In the morning, the eastbound backup would be 398 feet and 2,155 in the evening. In the morning, the backup for a left turn would be 1,138 feet and 643 feet in the evening. These numbers, McMullen concluded, were why work was needed at this intersection.

A drawing of how the intersection would be configured with a traffic signal and turn lanes basically showed a lot of asphalt, McMullen remarked. There were additional through lanes; two lanes to take care of the morning traffic and two more for the evening traffic. There was a double left turn lane northbound to handle morning traffic, along with two lanes going through and a right turn lane. The drawing showed the additional right-of-way that would be required.

Next, he showed a drawing of a double-lane roundabout with turn lanes eastbound and westbound. This would have the biggest impact in terms of right-of-way that was needed because a stormwater line had to be installed. A lot of trees would need to be removed and a bank lowered. They would berm it, though, and do landscaping, McMullen added.

A traffic light with turn lanes could handle the situation, McMullen stated, with grades of C in 2024 and 2044 in both the mornings and afternoons. With the roundabout, numbers remained mostly unchanged at A and B, except for growth in westbound traffic that went to a D.

Currently, the design of the roundabout by Integrated Science & Engineering was about 40% complete. The roundabout would require additional right-of-way for the stormwater line, primarily in the City greenbelt. The roundabout also provided a better level of service (LOS) than the traffic light. The turn lane option without a light was not analyzed in the traffic study. If they did only turn lanes, the \$1.5 million IGA would have to be renegotiated with the County because it was specifically for a

roundabout, McMullen stated. The ongoing costs of a roundabout were lower than a traffic light, which would be about \$4,500 a year. Roundabouts were safer and quieter than traffic lights. You went into them at lower speeds and did not have the stop and go traffic of a light. McMullen mentioned the amount of asphalt required for that intersection with a traffic light and said it almost reminded him of SR 54/74 with the number of lanes. Roundabouts also had a more "rural feel" and generated less pollution.

A photo of the northeast corner of the intersection showed where they would need the most right-of-way. McMullen said he and City Engineer Dave Borkowski met with the president of the homeowners association (HOA) and two board members. They walked the area and explained how they would berm and landscape when the project was finished. All three indicated they were in favor of a roundabout over a light, he reported.

The estimated cost was \$2.7 million. They had \$550,000 from the 2017 SPLOST, \$1.5 million from the IGA, and additional funding could come from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and SPLOST money could fund the resurfacing that would be necessary, according to County Engineer Phil Mallon. At this point, McMullen said, he felt they could cover the \$2.7 million expense.

Staff's recommendation was to finish the design of the roundabout, approve the balance of funds needed from ARPA and SPLOST, and to construct the roundabout, McMullen concluded.

How long would it take to construct the roundabout? King wondered, McMullen said it would take some time to relocate the utilities, and Borkowski said that was correct and that the consultants from Integrated Science & Engineering were present to answer questions. If they started that day on utility relocations, Borkowski said he estimated they would not be able to break ground on the actual project until sometime next year.

Destadio said he had questions about the analysis presented in September and asked if Dan Davis from Integrated Science wanted to answer them? He recalled having questions previously about why they were continuing with the design work and said he had talked with former City Manager Jon Rorie about the legality of using the \$1.5 million for utility work instead of the roundabout. This was when they were talking about adding turn lanes instead of the roundabout. He said there was another discussion with McMullen, who said he would talk about it with County Administrator Steve Rapson. But now, Destadio continued, here they were again.

He referred to the section on existing conditions on page 15 of the analysis in table 7 which showed the traffic movement at Peachtree Parkway and Crosstown Road at peak hours and the level of service listed was "B" in three travel lanes and "C" in another, which was not bad. Below that, Destadio went on, the description said "capacity analysis results indicate the northbound left lane was operating at a LOS of F during both peak hours" Destadio said he did not see an "F," just "B's" and "C's." He went on to read from the analysis that the eastbound, westbound, and southbound through right movements were operating at a LOS of "E" at worst during the peak hours. He asked how they got this F and E when the charts did not show that?

Borkowski introduced the engineer who compiled the analysis. He said the table showed an "F" for the northbound left turn lane. Destadio said he did not see an "F" and asked him to point it out. It turned out some of the numbers were printed in yellow and were not easily visible on the copy.

Prebor asked if he could ask questions while Destadio gathered his thoughts? Caola asked if the 2044 figures included any possible road extensions or just the existing roads? The engineer said it took into account any planned improvements. Caola confirmed that it did not include an expansion of TDK over the next 20 years.

Prebor said he was very familiar with that intersection. It backed up in the mornings and afternoons but was fine at other times. He would support a fix if it could be done for a lot less than \$2.7 million. Added traffic would not be from Peachtree City, and any improvements would benefit people who lived outside the city. In essence, he continued, they would be encouraging people to cut through Peachtree City. He did not like the idea of taking out trees. This was an unnecessary project, he felt; if northbound traffic backed up, there were other streets to take.

Destadio said he had looked at the more legible copy and saw where the "D's" and "E's" and "F's" came from. He stated that Rorie was convinced they could use the \$1.5 million for utility work. They would do the right turn lanes to alleviate the problem now and use the \$1.5 million for utility relocation so that when they finally did the roundabout, that would be complete. That would not cost the City any money, he remarked, but this plan would cost the City \$650,000, and that money would come out of ARPA dollars and SPLOST dollars. Destadio said he had asked McMullen and Finance Director Paul Salvatore if there was any other use for ARPA dollars? He was aware they had to be allocated by 2024 and spent by 2026. He was told there was. Why were they spending \$650,000 of this money when they could just put right turn lanes in with the money they had? They could do the improvements, would not have to cut the trees down, and do the utility work that was needed, then propose a SPLOST project or something down the road to do the roundabout. Why were they so bent on getting it done now? Destadio asked. There was backup, but there were ways to get the backup improved. His concern was why spend the \$650,000 now when it could be used for other projects?

McMullen said he did not know what conversations were before, but he had asked Rapson about the \$1.5 million, and he said they would have to renegotiate with the County. Destadio said that was what he had been told. He was told it was probably a guarantee, but they did have to go back and ask. McMullen remarked that he did not get a guarantee from Rapson, who said there were other demands for those dollars.

Did he ask? Destadio inquired, and McMullen said he did ask Rapson that question. Could they use it? Destadio continued. McMullen said the IGA would have to be renegotiated.

Why do it now? McMullen said growth in the city would continue, as would growth in Fayette County. That growth would transit the city. Destadio commented that he was not saying to not do anything; he proposed doing the right turn lanes. Prebor said McMullen was addressing his comments.

McMullen responded that he did not have a cost estimate for the right turn lanes. Mallon indicated that they would not be able to just use the \$1.5 million to relocate the utilities. They would start with the \$550,000 and try to get the rest of the money from the County. He said he did not know how long that intersection would last with a good level of service, though.

Destadio said he understood and did not disagree with McMullen. They had a problem and did not want to do stop lights. But, he elaborated, they had talked about this for three months or more and still

had not come out and said how they should renegotiate this to get the \$1.5 million. Destadio said it seemed to him that McMullen and City Staff wanted the roundabout and would not talk about doing anything else, and he told the Mayor he was done talking.

Having a plan for a roundabout was not a bad idea, King remarked, but he agreed with Prebor; they had a problem there for 10 hours a week—mornings and evening commute times. What concerned him about starting the project there in the next few years was that traffic would start bypassing that intersection and using Robinson Road to get around it. Taking Robinson to SR 54 would put more vehicles in the area of traffic for the new Booth Middle School. King said he would like to see this solved for now with turn lanes. Put the roundabout on the books so they could initiate it later, he advised, and renegotiate the \$1.5 million and settle for what they could get, King stated. The utilities could be moved now, but they should move forward with the turn lanes to ease the traffic for those 10 hours. Right now, starting construction on a project that would cause additional traffic in the area of Robinson and 54 was a really bad idea, he stated.

Learnard stated that the numbers for right turns only showed that was not an effective solution. She noted they had hired and paid five engineers to use their expertise to analyze the situation, looking at current traffic, future growth, the cost, the funding. She said they had done an amazing job looking at the entire situation, and this was their recommendation. It made perfect sense, the Mayor continued: they had a problem; they could solve it; they even had the money. She said she did not know why they would do anything but the staff recommendation.

Prebor again commented that this would not improve things for Peachtree City residents. He recalled a conversation with a man who lived in the County near Whitewater and worked in Newnan who said this would help him cut distance from his commute. The added traffic in the future would not be Peachtree City residents. There was no room for more houses south of there. Why did they want to pay for non-residents to cut through town faster?

Destadio noted that he was a civil engineer, and this was an excellent report, but engineers did not always agree. He did not say they would not build a roundabout. What he said, he continued, was that they should get the right turn lanes done and down the road consider a roundabout. He thought they should use the ARPA money differently right now, for the citizens. It was an excellent report, he summarized, but he would like a copy with red type in it that he could read.

Did he support the right turn lanes even given the numbers they had seen? Learned asked Destadio. The lanes would be an improvement over the existing situation, he replied, and it would allow them to put utilities in for the future.

Why not go ahead and do the full monty now, Learnard wondered, considering they had the funding? Because they were spending \$650,000 of ARPA dollars that could be better used somewhere else. Maybe not, Learnard countered.

Learnard said she was in strong favor of going with the Staff recommendation, asking if there was there anyone on the dais who believed that would be the way to go? Caola said she had no preference but noted that it would be more expensive in the future. She would go with the staff recommendation because they were the experts. Destadio agreed that it would be more costly if they did it in a few years.

Davis said they could look at the effect adding only turn lanes would have and come back to Council to two or four weeks. They would see if there would be an improvement and how long that improvement would last. This would give Council more information on which to base their decision.

That was not one of the options they saw data on, Destadio noted, and Davis agreed. They could do that, Learnard said. McMullen stated they could get information on the impact of turn lanes both southbound and northbound.

Destadio also requested a more definitive answer from Rapson. Learnard said she thought they heard that quite clearly. Destadio replied that he did not think they did, but he would take her opinion.

McMullen clarified that Destadio wanted to know if they could take that SPLOST money to buy the right-of-way so that at some point in the future they could build a roundabout. Destadio said he wanted McMullen to ask Rapson specifically if they moved to the right turns north and south, could they use the SPLOST money? Destadio said he thought that money was for traffic improvements until McMullen said what he did in quotes. Destadio said that was how it had been referred to in previous meetings. McMullen told him he looked at what was in print, not what was said. Destadio said he was not arguing; that is why McMullen put it in quotes, but at prior meetings, it was called "traffic improvements." He wanted McMullen to ask Rapson if this money could be used for utilities. If he said they needed to negotiate an IGA, he should ask Rapson if the County would do that.

He just wanted to know "yes" or "no." If Rapson would not do it, it was not worth doing, Destadio remarked. McMullen said he would ask those questions.

King moved to adjourn to executive session at 7:20 p.m. to discuss pending or threatened litigation and personnel. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Caola moved to reconvene in regular session at 7:59 p.m. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

McMullen mentioned to the Council that the design architect will be here on June 16th, at 2:00 p.m., to discuss the façade at city hall and the library. Learnard and Destadio both said that they would be there for the meeting.

There being no further business, King moved to adjourn the meeting. Caola seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.


Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary


Kim Learnard, Mayor