



CITY OF WALNUT GROVE
September 8th, 2022 7:00 PM
1021 PARK STREET MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Council Meeting Minutes

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Mayor - Mark Moore
Mayor Pro Tem - Jon Dial
Council Members -
Linda Pilgrim
Stephanie Moncrief
Erica Miles

STAFF PRESENT:

Deputy City Clerk - Sonya Cox
City Attorney - Tony Powell
Assistant Attorney - Jay Crowley
P & Z Chairman - Don Cannon
Public Works - Brian Pilgrim

OTHERS PRESENT: Dana Seger, Chishe Thomas, Gina Cowart

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** - Mayor Mark Moore
- II. **INVOCATION** - Tony Powell
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** - All Participated
- IV. **AGENDA APPROVAL** - Council member Stephanie Moncrief made motion to approve. Council member Jon Dial seconded. Passed unanimously.
- V. **CONSENT AGENDA** - Council member Stephanie Moncrief made motion to approve. Council member Jon Dial seconded. Passed unanimously.
 1. Financials
 2. Invoices over \$5000
 - a. Southern Sanitation
- VI. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**
 1. Community Involvement Committee – Council member Linda Pilgrim gave an update on the Park Market coming up on September 10th, 2022 in which Elsa from Frozen would be there. She also stated that Elsa is sponsored by Hydraco. In October they will be partnering with Faith and Blue group to honor our first responders. The Community Involvement meets the second Tuesday of every month @ 7:00 and are always looking for new ideas and new members.
 2. Parks and Recreation/Public Works – Council member Jon Dial stated that they had received some letters from the Girl Scouts asking for the city to have a dog park. One of the Girl Scouts asked for a toddler park. They have had several requests for a dog park before so maybe now is the time to look into it. Council member Jon Dial made a motion to begin the process of getting a dog park. Stephanie Moncrief seconded. Passed unanimously.
 3. DDA Report – Council member Erica Miles reported the DDA has not met in a

few months. They are waiting on the Master Plan to be created before they start moving forward with anything.

4. Education Involvement Committee – Council member Stephanie Moncrief reported that she is continuing to work on a program where they support the staff at all three schools in our cluster as well as student groups who would like to come to council and possibly match funds with their fund raising. She still has some research to do will bring that to the next work session. There's a lot of stuff coming down the pipes, some stuff she can't share quite yet. Football season is in full force at the schools. The High school is 2 for 2 which is the best they have had in many many years. Come on out to a game, it is way more fun than what you would think.

VII. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – Chairman Don Cannon spoke about their last meeting on August 8th, 2022. A public hearing had been called to hear a variance request on a piece of property on the northeast corner of Guthrie Cemetery and Industrial Parkway. The applicant and/or anyone representing the applicant failed to appear so that was closed without any action taken. They have been working with City Attorney Tony Powell to determine how and where the proposed planning commission by-laws would be placed in the zoning ordinance and in doing so Mr. Powell has found some areas that need some tweaking. He has provided some information and they will be taking that up at the meeting on the September 15th, 2022 and then pass on to Mayor and Council for consideration. Don commented they certainly regret Brenda Ramsey's resignation from the commission. He stated they appreciate the time and service she provided while as a member and her presence will certainly be missed. With that they will be looking for a replacement to serve on the committee.

VIII. LIBRARY REPORT - Librarian Dana Seger reported that August had been a great month for them. They were expecting it to be slow with the Covington Library shut down for the month, but they were extra busy. September is library card sign up month, so everybody who comes to the library will get a brand-new library card and a free book. The adult books are through donations and the children's books are through the grant received from Dollar General for \$3000.00. The Bookmark contest winners are posted on Facebook with a great video and music of all the winners. The tentative schedule for September is out. They have a new event every month and are having a home school family meet and greet on September 28th, 2022. Council member Jon Dial asked about a program for reading to the dogs. She explained that the Saturday before Halloween they will be having a Halloweener story time. There will be two wiener dogs dressed up as hot dogs for Halloween and there will be a story shared. Dana also thanked Council member Stephanie Moncrief for helping plan the upcoming 10-year anniversary. Council member Linda Pilgrim commented that she really enjoyed the local author talk, the book club really enjoyed it, and it was a really good event.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

X. OLD BUSINESS - None

XI. NEW BUSINESS

1. City Island Properties - City Attorney Tony Powell commented that he has an updated list numbers that is right and you got the acting clerk designation in there so if you decided to approve the resolution it just starts the process of finalizing the outer boundary of the city so that everything within the corporate limits are inside the city limits. They are correcting a few

things which are record keeping issues and then there are some islands that need to be annexed in. Council member Jon Dial made a motion to bring in the islands into the city. Council member Stephanie Moncrief seconded. Motion passed with 3 yes votes and Erica Miles abstaining.

2. Variance Request - Serfio Quesada - Parcel #WG010069 - Mayor Mark Moore stated that they were to have a public hearing tonight on a Variance for Sergio Quesada concerning Parcel # WG010069. Mr. Quesada was not in attendance. The mayor asked if there is anybody who wanted to speak in favor or opposing this matter. No one replied. With that being said the council has the choice with this one. Council member Stephanie Moncrief made a motion to deny the request. Council member Jon Dial seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

XII. REPORTS

1. Public Works Report - Public Works Director Brian Pilgrim reported that they are busy keeping the grass cut, doing their daily chores, and keeping the bathrooms clean at the park. They are down one employee and looking for another at this moment. They really have their hands full with all of that.

2. Clerk's Report - Deputy City Clerk Sonya Cox reported there were 14 tickets this month, 8 from the Georgia State Patrol and 6 from Walton County.

3. Mayor Report - Mayor Mark Moore reported that the city met with Georgia DOT concerning the round-about, purchasing the property and what they have planned. It is still moving forward in the construction of the summer of 2024. They will be contacting the landowners with offers somewhere in January and February, they will come up with a game plan on that. They discussed a few things that need to be fixed. One of which is looking at shifting the road on Hwy 81 over slightly to accommodate for a sidewalk in front of the Methodist Church without interfering with the Cemetery. They can put a sidewalk all the way down to Park St. The other thing is the water problem coming off Hwy 138 going down Thompson Lane. They are going to try address that with this construction. They also had the opportunity to ask for a light on Guthrie Cemetery and Highway 81 at the new firehouse and they are looking into that. Concerning the master plan, he has met with over four different designers over the last couple of weeks. They are coming up with a concept for an idea about how much it would cost and working with the Atlanta Regional Commission to get a grant to pay for 80% of the cost. Sewer was discussed with the engineers about alternatives to our sewer plant. There is more demand than the current plant will allow. As the figures come in, he will let that be known to the council. The city is in the process of looking for a new city clerk.

XIII. TOWN HALL DISCUSSION - Home owners Clishe Thomas and Gina Cowart spoke to the council about the problems with the paving in Emerald Cove Subdivision. Mayor Moore explained the point of order to Ms. Thomas and Ms. Cowart. This should have been presented at the time of Public Comments normally the town hall is not brought into the record. It is usually a light discussion but, in this situation, he wanted to ask that this be brought into record. Mayor Moore asks them a couple of questions concerning if they had contacted City Hall, a council member, or Public Works on this before now? Ms. Cowart said that she had contacted City Hall during the process. Then she heard all their neighbors concerns and decided, as the HOA,

to get everybody together and get this petition started. They did not want 80 people calling. They wanted to bring it together because the city is the one who made this decision to use this company. They wanted to bring it to show that it is effecting their community as well as some of your community. Mayor Moore said that he already has the City Engineer working on it and he has contacted Walton County since they did the paving. The city subbed out the milling and he is working John Alman who is head of the Walton County Public Works, to see a solution can be found. Mayor Moore asked that if you all will make him a list of the properties that are severe and email the pictures, so he can make it park of the record. Ms. Cowart informed Mayor Moore that the packet that she handed out had pictures and it was throughout the whole neighborhood. City Council member Stephanie Moncrief addressed Mayor Moore letting him know that she was aware of the problem and she serves on the board. They have tried to come up with the best way to represent the city, and since the city Council made the decision to pave the road, it was decided by the board and the neighborhood that they wanted to come to the council. Mayor Moore asked council member Stephanie Moncrief if she was aware of this. She stated that she was. Mayor Moore stated to Council Member Stephanie Moncrief that she did not bring it up to the city and she did not contact him. Council Member Stephanie Moncrief answered no she did not. Mayor Moore said that he finds that odd, that as soon as the problem is done, their equipment is out there, and there is an issue. If she would have reached out to him at that time he could have addressed this issue a lot quicker. Council Member Stephanie Moncrief said she does not find it odd. She was working with her neighborhood, and it had been brought to City Council, somebody made a phone call. Mayor Moore stated that he was going to find out about that and that he is going to address this. He wishes he would have been updated sooner so he could have moved on this quicker. He does find it unusual that it was this amount of time before someone said hey we've got a problem. If he don't know it is broken he can't fix it. Mayor Moore said that he was going to investigate and that this is not something that is going to get pushed to the side. Walton County did do Magnolia Springs and he hasn't had any complaints. His understanding is that they put the same thickness, a inch and a half, down in Emerald Cove as they did Magnolia Springs. Several residents of Emerald Cove spoke on the matter. The mayor said that this has caught him by surprise, but he will get it fixed.

XIII. COUNCIL COMMENTS - Jon Dial stated he was glad to see everybody here and wished they would come every month. There is a lot going on in the city and it may not seem like much to some but it is important to the people of Emerald Cove. There are other neighborhoods that need to hear what is going on and so it helps to have everyone in the community out. Tell people if they cannot get here, they can get online. They have no excuse not to be able to see the meeting or hear what is going on. The three people that are online I appreciate you being here as well.

Erica Miles - Appreciates everyone coming out tonight and voicing your concerns. Hopefully this is taken care of quickly, as there have been a lot of citizens come out recently and voicing concerns. She is just thankful that we live in a city who cares how aesthetically pleasing the city looks.

Linda Pilgrim - Agrees that voicing concerns is very important and they can't fix what they don't know about. You might know your little corner, they might know another little corner but, they don't know everything going on. So it is good to speak up and let the city now. She said "We appreciate it. Thank you so much."

Stephanie Moncrief - Wanted to thank everyone for coming out. She is very happy to be a part of a neighborhood who cares so much about each other, bringing your concerns together as a group, and try to get something fixed. So thank you guys for coming out tonight.

Mayor Moore - Commented that like he said, he is going to address this. There are a lot of things in the city that has gone too long unaddressed like Thompson Lane. This is a road that has been forgotten. There has been a lot of clean up, and it is really impressive. The council is working on the whole city to get it a lot better place to live. He commented that we are going into an executive session. We will be in there a few minutes but you can hang around or you can leave.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION - Employee Matter - Council member Stephanie Moncrief made the motion to go into executive session. Council member Jon Dial seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Council member Stephanie Moncrief made the motion to adjourn from Executive Session. Council member Jon Dial seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

XVI. ADJOURN - Council member Stephanie Moncrief made motion to adjourn. Council member Erica Miles seconded. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted

Sonya Cox,
Deputy City Clerk

Approved

Mark Moore,
Mayor