

City of Locust Grove
Council Workshop Meeting Minutes
Public Safety Building – 3640 Highway 42 S.
Locust Grove, GA 30248
Monday, December 19, 2022
6:00 PM

Members Present:	Staff Present:
Robert Price – Mayor	Tim Young – City Manager
Rod Shearouse – Councilman	Bert Foster – Assistant City Manager
Keith Boone – Councilman/Pro Tem	Misty Spurling – City Clerk
Vincent Williams – Councilman	Jennifer Adkins – Assistant City Clerk
Willie Taylor – Councilman	Jack Rose – Public Works Director
Rudy Breedlove - Councilman	Daunté Gibbs – Community Development Director
Carlos Greer – Councilman	Colleen Watts – Main Street Manager
	Derrick Austin – Police Chief
	Averiel Jackson – SWWW Attorney

Mayor Price called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Invocation given by Community Development Director Daunté Gibbs

Councilman Greer led the Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF AGENDA –

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Greer made the motion to approve the agenda.

RESULT	APPROVED AGENDA
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN GREER
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN TAYLOR
VOTE	MOTION CARRIED - ALL IN FAVOR

PUBLIC COMMENTS –

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS –

- 1. Preliminary Concept Plan review for 47.49 +/- acres (Parcel ID 113-01021007) in LL 169 of the 2nd district located on Strong Rock Parkway -**

Community Development Director Daunté Gibbs stepped forward. Mr. Gibbs said this is a request from Mill Creek Residential for a proposed PD (Planned Development) for multifamily and commercial uses. Mr. Gibbs said staff recommends approval with the following additions to the preliminary concept plan:

- *Additional details regarding vehicular and pedestrian access control*
- *Pedestrian access from the townhome community to the commercial parcels*
- *Amenity design concepts and better definition of open spaces*
- *Consider the LM248 paved multi-use path as shown in the Henry County Trails Plan (July 2022)*
- *Define uses within the C-2 (general commercial) pod designation*

Mayor Price said this is a public hearing and asked for public comments from anyone in favor of the request.

Mr. Josh Mahoney, the attorney on behalf of Mill Creek Residential stepped forward to comment. Mr. Mahoney said he is accompanied by Jason Wadsworth of Mill Creek Residential. Mr. Mahoney said Mill Creek is a residential developer established in 2011 who prefers to develop and hold onto their developments for at least ten years. Mill Creek Residential purchases the land, develops and manages all their properties. Mr. Mahoney said changes were made to this plan to update roads, but the plan hasn't changed. We have been made aware of Strong Rock Schools interest and met with the school leadership last week. Further, Mr. Mahoney said his team would like to continue to work with the school and council members and discuss what they can do to make this work. We are striving for the January 2, 2023, deadline. Nothing further.

Mayor Price asked for public comments from anyone opposed to the request to come forward.

Mr. Matt McCord stepped forward to comment. Mr. McCord said he is an attorney, dad and member of Strong Rock School Trustees and said he is speaking against this request. Mr. McCord said Strong Rock School has more than one thousand families involved in this community and the school has invested over \$11.5 million dollars in the past 15 years (in Locust Grove). The subject area is comprised of education, medical, and hospitality. This property was sold to a medical facility (Piedmont Healthcare), but had we known their intentions, we would likely not have sold the property to them. The traffic impact this will have on the school and the surrounding area would be a burden to everyone. We also have a football stadium, which would conflict with those surroundings due to the noise and lights. Mr. McCord said the school would have to add a fence and increase security options, which will be an expense that the school would not otherwise have intended. Mr. McCord said he is not anti-growth; however, he is anti [this kind of] growth. Nothing further.

Mr. Cliff Shearouse, resident in proximity of this request, stepped forward to comment. Mr. Shearouse said the infrastructure is strictly not feasible for this type of development. If the infrastructure is not addressed this will not work. Mr. Shearouse said there are over 700 dwellings already approved for Locust Grove, and if this moves forward, that number will increase even more. Mr. Shearouse said, "we as residents are not ready for this fast-paced growth" and requests the Council put a hold on further growth until a better plan is in place. Nothing further.

Mayor Price closed the public hearing and asked for comments from the Council.

Councilman Greer asked Mr. McCord if the \$11.5 million is just for the Strong Rock School (facility) that has been invested. Mr. McCord said that is for the two campuses we have right now. Councilman Greer asked how much financially contributes to the City of Locust Grove? Mr. McCord said he would have to research because he is not sure. Councilman Greer asked Mr. McCord what he would propose this land be developed as? Mr. McCord said he is not specifically saying a hospital, but a medical nonresidential (doctor office). Councilman Greer asked Mr. McCord if Strong Rock School would be interested in repurchasing the property? Mr. McCord said he is not able to answer on their behalf.

Councilman Greer made a comment to Mr. Shearouse that he agrees with infrastructure concerns.

Councilman Williams asked Mr. Mahoney if his discussions were with the board members? Mr. Jason Wadsworth with Mill Creek Residential said they met with the school (leadership) last Thursday morning to discuss concerns. One of their concerns is the main entrance of the school would be across from the main entrance of the development. Mr. Wadsworth said they would extend Strong Rock Parkway to avoid that conflict and Strong Rock also requested the community be gated and our team agreed to do so.

Councilman Williams asked what age of residents will this attract? Mr. Wadsworth said the product is two- and three-bedroom units. These will not be age restricted, but likely the two bedrooms will appeal to younger age groups and three bedrooms would attract families most likely. Councilman Williams asked what would prevent residents from trying to use the school facilities being that close in proximity? Mr. Wadsworth said they can't guarantee anyone's security; however, the site plan shows we will have amenities including a fitness center, pool, and multi-purpose field where residents will have areas to play and exercise.

Councilman Shearouse asked if Mill Creek Residential will manage the property? Mr. Wadsworth said yes, we build and manage for at least ten years. Mr. Shearouse made a comment he noticed this was apartments but now condos? Mr. Wadsworth said the plan was for townhomes originally, but we are calling them condos and Mill Creek will own every unit. Mr. Mahoney said R-3 is meant for condos, but we are working towards the PD zoning and propose the layout and use and discussion took place. Mr. Wadsworth said this plan does not have one-bedrooms and there will be an equal number of two and three bedrooms (107 two-bedrooms and 108 three-bedrooms).

Discussion took place about the commercial intentions and Mr. Mahoney reviewed the intended location of the commercial use on the plan. Mr. Mahoney said we don't have a commercial customer secured to date. Councilman Shearouse asked what type of commercial do you want to attract? Mr. Wadsworth said a strip type center with various clients.

Councilman Shearouse asked Mr. Wadsworth if he is in agreeance with Mr. McCord and his concerns? Discussion took place and Mr. Wadsworth said he sent confirmation to the school leadership that he has agreed to what the school is requesting.

Councilman Greer said there is a lot of uncertainty on the request and asked Mr. Gibbs to clarify.

Mr. Gibbs said it is very unclear now if the applicant is requesting RM-2 or RM-3. Mr. Gibbs said this request is for RM-3 and if they are shifting to RM-2, Mr. Gibbs said he would suggest the council table the request.

Councilman Greer asked Mr. Mahoney what they are requesting. Mr. Mahoney said they are requesting pod designations be changed to R-3 pod to allow for townhomes. Mr. Gibbs said RM-3 represents condos and RM-2 is townhomes and told Mr. Mahoney that they are not on the same page with staff. Mr. Mahoney said this is the direction they were told to go.

Councilman Boone said the review says this is for 215 condo units; however, evaluation report says 211 townhomes. Mr. Mahoney said condos are a form of ownership but owned with some common space and is just a layout (so to speak); however, the form factor will be townhomes.

Mr. Young told Mr. Mahoney he should meet with our staff so that we can understand the request. Mr. Young said PD is a floating zone, there is flexibility in terms of setbacks but not uses.

Councilman Boone asked what the rental rate will be. Mr. Wadsworth said according to a recent market study, the average is \$2300 month [\$2,100 two bedroom and \$2,300-\$2,400 for a three bedroom]. Councilman Boone asked if Mill Creek has made changes to the entrance based on Strong Rock staff concerns? Mr. Wadsworth said we haven't had time to prepare the plan of intent on the entrance. Discussion took place about the on-site garages and their intended use and on-street parking.

Mr. Young said this is a plan concept review and with the feedback and concerns staff will review and change as needed.

Mr. David Mann, President at Strong Rock school stepped forward to comment. Mr. Mann said this is the 16th year for Strong Rock as a school and attracts lots of families and students in this community. Mr. Mann thanked Councilman Greer and Councilman Williams for their comments and concerns about the security of the property. Mr. Mann said if the development is approved, we would require gated entrance and fencing around the school. Mr. Mann said he is opposed to this type of development for this location but not growth in general. There are concerns about traffic and the noise and lights from our facilities would have an impact on surrounding residents. Further, Mr. Mann said part of the \$250 million dollar investment is an amphitheater and a discussion took place. Mr. Mann said he did meet last Thursday with Mill Creek staff and although it was a pleasant meeting, Mr. Mann said he is opposed to this kind of growth.

Mr. Gibbs said the ordinance allows 30 days to provide feedback and staff will not accept anything further until the council gives feedback.

2. Ordinance to amend the City Code to expand the definition of a commercial vehicle and to provide regulations for their parking and/or storage –

Assistant City Manager Bert Foster stepped forward. Mr. Foster said this was discussed at the retreat in October 2022 and amendments were made accordingly. Mr. Foster reviewed the amendments as indicated in red on the item discussion sheet.

Mayor Price said this is a public hearing and asked for comments from anyone in favor of the request. There were no comments.

Mayor Price asked for comments from anyone opposed to the request. There were no comments and Mayor Price closed the public hearing.

Mayor Price asked for comments from Council.

Councilman Breedlove made a comment about Church property and only their vehicles [church buses] can be allowed for parking.

Councilman Greer referenced page 2 (Parking and Storage of Commercial Vehicles): "properties five (5) acres or greater in size" and asked for clarity. Mr. Foster said yes, RA (residential-agricultural) properties or we could include the option for three (3) acres if needed. Mr. Foster said we borrowed some of the language from Henry County's ordinance.

Mr. Young said most are written and geared to subdivision developments.

Councilman Greer said the HOA of the subdivision could deal with some of these issues but trying to eliminate tractor-trailer parking is another issue. We need to be very mindful of the language as written to make sure nothing can be interpreted incorrectly.

Councilman Williams asked if this ordinance would eliminate tractor-trailer parking in Walmart parking lots. Mr. Foster said yes. Councilman Greer asked if staff has talked to anyone at Walmart or Ingles? Mr. Foster said they are not objective to tractor-trailer parking. Nothing further.

3. Ordinance to amend Title 15, adding Chapter 15.46, Parking Standards, including provisions for gravel parking for “Tractor-Trailer Truck and Oversized Vehicle Parking Lots” –

Community Development Director Daunté Gibbs stepped forward. Mr. Gibbs said this is a proposed city-initiated ordinance amendment to allow gravel parking surfaces for tractor-trailer trucks. These standards will come from the old code and reformatted.

Mayor Price said this is a public hearing and asked for comments from anyone in favor of the request. There were no comments.

Mayor Price asked for comments from anyone opposed to the request. There were no comments and Mayor Price closed the public hearing.

Mayor Price asked for comments from Council.

Councilman Boone asked if we should require that an on-site maintenance to ensure the upkeep. Mr. Gibbs said we can include language to require it to be maintained properly. Mr. Young said it should be an automatic condition of conditional use.

Councilman Greer asked could existing businesses change over to gravel parking and Mr. Gibbs said the business could request a conditional use if they wanted to change from asphalt to gravel parking.

Councilman Shearouse asked if staff was approached about the need for a parking lot. Mr. Gibbs said yes, about two years ago; however, we had no provisions in place. Councilman Shearouse asked is their advantage to the city by doing this and why is concrete parking an issue. Mr. Gibbs said the wear and tear on the concrete/asphalt, and it is very expensive to repair. Gravel is easier to maintain. Nothing further.

4. Ordinance to amend the Principal Land Use Table 17.04.041 to add “Tractor-Trailer Truck and Oversized Vehicle Parking Lots” as a Conditional Use under the M-1 (light-manufacturing) and M-2 (general industrial) –

Mr. Gibbs said this is a city-initiated ordinance amendment to add tractor-trailer parking lot to M-1 zoning district. This would require an approved conditional use granted by Council. Nothing further.

Mayor Price asked for any comments from anyone in favor of the request. There were no comments.

Mayor Price asked for any comments from anyone opposed to the request. There were no comments and Mayor Price closed the public hearing.

Mayor Price asked for comments from Council and no comments.

Mr. Gibbs said this is NAICS code #812930. Nothing further.

5. Ordinance to declare and certify abandoned a portion of public right-of-way known as Price Drive located between Bill Gardner Parkway and Price Drive –

Mr. Foster stepped forward. Mr. Foster said this an ordinance to abandon a portion of the public right-of-way of Price Drive. Mr. Foster said Price Drive was relocated to align with Strong Rock Parkway as part of Phase I of the Clayco/CRG industrial development.

Mayor Price asked for any comments from anyone in favor of the request and there were no comments.

Mayor Price asked for any comments from anyone opposed to the request. There were no comments and Mayor Price closed the public hearing.

Mayor Price asked for comments from Council.

Councilman Shearouse asked what the process of closing that portion would be. Mr. Foster said we would follow state law procedures including [surveying, appraising, and putting out for bid]. Mr. Young said we would ensure that is no longer connected to a road system and maintain an easement for the water tower and discussion took place.

OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS –

6. Ordinance to approve the Final Plat for Pine Valley (Locust Grove Station Pod C), single-family subdivision on Tanger Blvd. (Parcel #130-01002011) –

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Shearouse made the motion to approve the request by approving ordinance #22-12-079.

RESULT	APPROVED ORDINANCE # 22-12-079
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN SHEAROUSE
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN BOONE
VOTE	MOTION CARRIED - ALL IN FAVOR

Councilman Breedlove asked if this is the last development for Locust Grove Station? Mr. Gibbs said, no, there are several more to develop. Mr. Young said that was approved as part of 2016-2018 when we changed to R-3 when Locust Grove Station was done in 2004.

7. Resolution to authorize the installation of traffic calming devices along Jackson Street –

Mr. Foster said at the December 5, 2022, meeting, the Council instructed staff to identify locations for placement of the traffic calming devices. The attached vicinity map shows the three recommended locations for placement. Chief Austin said the devices would be 1,060 ft. apart. Mr. Foster said Public Works has three devices on hand (photo provided) for Council review. Mr. Foster said the ones we have on hand are different from what the Council approved; however, this would save costs. Discussion took place, and the general agreement was to use what was previously approved by Council (Speed Bump over the shown humps currently in inventory).

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Greer made the motion to approve the request by approving resolution # 22-12-080

RESULT	APPROVED RESOLUTION # 22-12-080
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN GREER
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN BREEDLOVE
VOTE	MOTION CARRIED - ALL IN FAVOR

NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS – NONE

CITY OPERATION REPORTS / WORKSHOP DISCUSSION ITEMS -

MAIN STREET OPERATIONS – COLLEEN COOK

Ms. Cook gave an update we have two billboards on I-75 for advertising and focusing on tourism. Christmas in the Grove went very well, and the downtown businesses had positive feedback. Mrs. Cook said thank you to the volunteers for helping with this event. Main Street, Inc. has the 2023 calendar done for events with a few more events added including [Vintage Picking Day, 5-K run, and Locust Grove night in mid-summer]. Groovin' in the Grove will return as well. DDA had their meeting and Mr. Otis Hammock resigned via email on December 14, 2022. We will have three seats available on DDA. Mrs. Cook said we have the following reappointments coming up in January for HPC and DDA:

- 2023 HPC reappointment – Betty Shearouse
- 2023 DDA reappointment(s) – Sherry Moon and Stephanie Epps

PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATIONS – CHIEF AUSTIN

Chief Austin reviewed the monthly report and gave an update total collected in November 2022 was \$39,825.00. The department completed 19 training hours in November. We had 34 new cases for investigation and cleared 30 of those cases. Chief Austin said there was a murder in 2021 (on Loblolly Dr.) and the suspect pleaded guilty today. Several of our staff will go to Wal-Mart tomorrow for our annual Shop with a Cop and we are looking forward to making it very special and making a big deal of it. Chief Austin reviewed what happened with regards to a crime spree at the QT and added that after a scuffle with our officers the guy is now in custody.

Councilman Greer told Chief Austin thank you to him and his staff for all they do. Councilman Greer said the Shop with a Cop program is awesome; however, we partnered with Henry County but said he would like this to be stay in Locust Grove and not Henry County. Discussion took place. Nothing further.

PUBLIC WORKS – JACK ROSE

Public Works Director Jack Rose said all operations are running smoothly. We are in the process of doing SCADA repairs and preparing for the freezing weather ahead. Nothing further.

ADMINISTRATION –BERT FOSTER

Mr. Foster gave an update on ongoing projects including the Peeksville Road Extension, which was let-out on November 29, 2022, and will begin sometime in January for completion in July 2024. The signal at Market Place and Highway 42 is now operational. Phase I of the city-wide repaving project with [C.W. Matthews] is now complete. Phase II will resume when the weather warms up. We are looking at five options for the downtown corridor study to get the best option with the least impact to the community. The RFP is on the website for the City Hall (façade) repairs. Mr. Foster gave an update on the MMIP (Commercial Vehicle Lane) project, and the plans are complete for the signal at Bethlehem Road and Highway 42. GDOT is going to partner with the city and Norfolk Southern and once the funding is secure, the project is expected to move along quickly.

Councilman Boone asked for clarity about Norfolk Southern participation in the Bethlehem Road signal. Mr. Young said we had a condition added to the zoning that GDOT would contribute up to \$100,000 to the project. Nothing further.

Discussion took place about the Frances Ward (Peeksville Road Connector) and Mr. Foster said the plan is to go from Peeksville Road and Highway 42 all the way across to Frances Ward to the city property. Nothing further.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONS –DAUNTÉ GIBBS

Mr. Gibbs gave an update the department has issued a total of 1,482 permits (including 203 new house permits) for 2022. We have issued 362 COs [266 residential / 96 commercial] with 428 business licenses issued so far for 2022. Mr. Gibbs said we have staff out with Covid and will also have a staff member out soon for surgery.

Councilman Greer asked for an update on the (additional) Code Enforcement position. Mr. Gibbs said we paused on advertising the position the remainder of the year to review where we are economically to make sure position is needed. Discussion took place about shopping centers looking trashy and Mr. Gibbs said we can step up the citations; however, there is no easy solution. Mr. Gibbs said we can proceed with the Code Enforcement vacancy. Nothing further.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD (ARB) –

8. Resolution approving the architectural plans submitted for proposed CarMax buildings to be located on Price Dr. –

Mr. Gibbs said this is a request from CenterPoint Integrated Solutions of Alpharetta on behalf of CarMax for three structures to be located on Price Dr. Staff recommends approval.

Councilman Boone asked if this would interfere with the plans coming on Price Dr? Mr. Gibbs said he is limited in knowledge and cannot comment. Discussion took place about the entrance location and façade material being majority brick with earth tones. Also, a representative from CarMax confirmed this is not a retail site; therefore, not open to the public. Nothing further.

9. Resolution approving the architectural plans submitted for proposed warehouse buildings to be located on Highway 42 –

Mr. Gibbs said this is a request on behalf of Stonemont Financial for three warehouses facilities to be located on Highway 42 near Pine Grove.

Councilman Greer said there is so much going on and so much we need to do [infrastructure, water, etc.] and the economy is slowing down. The property being developed now is from years ago and Councilman Greer said we don't need to keep approving these requests with a slowdown in the economy.

Mr. Gibbs said it is difficult to build a response to something over 30 years behind. We have done moratoriums which pause the process, but only effective for so long. We cannot prolong due to infrastructure and discussion took place. Mr. Gibbs said there is not a simple answer.

Mr. Young said over the last two years, Council voted to spend \$1 million dollars out of the General Fund for the new interchange and T-SPLOST was successful and bonded. We are repaving roads and adding signals for more flow of traffic, and we are almost complete with building up development.

Councilman Greer said paving roads is not improving our infrastructure. We have so many subdivisions under contract for development. Development is the main problem, and we must decide what we can do for the future of the city.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS –TIM YOUNG

10. Memorial Garden and Veteran’s Memorial progress – next steps -

Mr. Young said we discussed this at the retreat and the choices in materials to get out for bid. We are divided by features [Memorial Garden/red brick and Veteran’s Memorial/grey brick]. Mr. Young said lighting and irrigation are the next items to review because those were not incorporated as part of the design. Mr. Young said our idea is the city act as general contractor on this project and sub-contract out other work. The council agreed with material choices. Nothing further.

11. Transportation Special Service District/Bonding in Calendar Year 2023 –

Mr. Young said the Homestead Exemption was passed and will take effect next year. We must get the bonding set up and propose a special service district for transportation. We are proposing a CID to expand and relocate Price Drive. They would be setting up their own self-taxing (we get the road but don’t have to spend money on it).

12. FY 2022 Budget – 4th Quarter update –

Mr. Young said we received a substantial increase in Insurance Premium Tax than what was expected [\$798,000 versus \$400,000]. We have a growing tax base and may be able to talk about an upcoming project next year.

Mr. Young said we need to add an item to the agenda for LMIG.

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Greer made the motion to add item number 13 to the agenda.

ADD ITEM –

13. Resolution for LMIG for 2023 Application –

Mr. Young said this is for the 2023 LMIG program application for the expenditure of certain funds awarded by GDOT in the Local Maintenance Improvement Grants Program. We would like to accumulate [the revenue] from this for 2-3 years for a more robust project. We are hoping to do Kings Cove and Unity Cove in Grove Park subdivision and adding in surface treatment at Beersheba and Sims Road. We are getting \$140,000; however, we want to put it in reserve for a couple of years until we accumulate enough money to get those projects done.

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Shearouse made the motion to approve the request by approving resolution # 22-12-081.

RESULT	APPROVED RESOLUTION # 22-12-081
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN SHEAROUSE
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN BREEDLOVE
VOTE	MOTION CARRIED - ALL IN FAVOR

MAYOR’S COMMENTS – NONE

EXECUTIVE SESSION – PERSONNEL

Motion to go into executive session by Councilman Breedlove and seconded by Williams for personnel. Motion Carried All in favor 8:23 PM.

At 9:28 PM, motion to come back into regular session made by Councilman Greer and seconded by Councilman Breedlove.

ADJOURNMENT-

Mayor Price asked for a motion to adjourn. Councilman Williams made the motion to adjourn.

RESULT	ADOPTED
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN WILLIAMS
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN GREER
VOTE	MOTION CARRIED - ALL IN-FAVOR MEETING ADJOURNED @ 9:28PM.

Notes taken by:

Misty Spurling, City Clerk