



**CITY OF WALNUT GROVE**  
**March 9, 2023 7:00 PM**  
**1021 PARK STREET MUNICIPAL BUILDING**  
**MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

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**Council Meeting Minutes**

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**ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

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

**STAFF PRESENT:**

City Clerk - Dawn Lummus  
City Attorney - Tony Powell  
Asst. City Attorney - Jay Crowley  
P & Z Chairman - Don Cannon  
P & Z Administrator - Joe Walter

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Evan Keller, Tom & Shea Gibson, Maxine McClanahan,  
Karen Reagin, Lindsey Allen, Chris McCrary, Pam Hobbs, Tina Norrell,  
Billy & Karen McMullen, Rachel Davis, Ashley Johnson, Bill Coleman,  
Gina Cowart

- I. CALL TO ORDER** - Mayor Mark Moore
- II. INVOCATION** - Tony Powell
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** - All Participated
- IV. ROLL CALL** - Everyone Present
- V. AGENDA APPROVAL** - Mayor Moore called for a motion to approve the agenda, Linda Pilgrim made the motion, Erica Miles seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.
- VI. CONSENT AGENDA** - Council member Stephanie Moncrief asked for the Financials to be moved to the agenda. Council member Linda Pilgrim made a motion to move the financials to number 2 under New Business. Council member Stephanie Moncrief seconded. Passed unanimously. Council member Moncrief made a motion to approve the amended consent agenda. Council member Pilgrim seconded. Passed unanimously.
  - 1. Minutes**
    - A. January 12, 2023, Council Meeting Minutes
    - B. January 26, 2023, Council Work Session Minutes
    - C. February 9, 2023, Council Meeting Minutes
  - 2. Financials**
  - 3. Invoices over \$5000**
    - A. Precision Planning, Inc. \$6843.75
    - B. Southern Sanitation \$6912.00
- VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS**
  - 1. Community Involvement Committee** - Linda Pilgrim Council member Pilgrim reported the Easter Bunny will be at the library on

member Pilgrim reported the Easter Bunny will be at the library on March 18, 2023 from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm for pictures. The park market will start back up in May, there are already some vendors signed up.

2. **DDA Report** - Erica Miles Council member Miles reported the next DDA meeting will be March 27th.
3. **Education Involvement Committee** - Stephanie Moncrief Council member Moncrief reported she attended the Walton County Boys and Girls Club facility. She volunteered with the Walton Chamber doing their Reality Check with the 8th graders at Youth Middle School. This summer the football team is putting on their 4th annual golf tournament on June the 16th. Tonight at the High School is the 9th grade welcome and that is where the principal is, but he will be here shortly to give his annual presentation. The Walnut Grove High School PTO just purchased two new sets of swing sets. She publicly welcomed a high school student that was at the council meeting.

**VIII. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION** - Chairman Don Cannon reported the commission has been busy. On 2/23/23 the RFP's for the master plan were mailed out to 7 or 8 consultants. Next weeks agenda includes two public hearings, one for 876 Forrester Cemetery Road and one for the city's proposed new sign ordinance. April and May will be active as they address the rezoning of Forest Glen, other rezoning request and the discussion of the Town Center Master Plan and potential changes to the "Table of Permitted and Special Uses."

**IX. LIBRARY REPORT** - Dana Segers reported that next month kicks off their busy season. The crafting with friends on Tuesdays from 1-3 pm has been amazing. Story time is over the top amazing as well. They have at least 20-25 attending. She will be doing interviews tomorrow to hire two additional staff. Ms. Segers will be attending training for 5 days next month.

**X. PUBLIC COMMENT** - Maxine McClanahan, 4081 Habersham Circle objected to the council taking any action regarding the Rutledge rezoning application other than a postponement. She commented that the city and council need to have the assurance that all paperwork, and each step is complete and in compliance. She believes that putting the vote in the hands of only two people is very unfair and the vote need to wait until there is a full council and mayor in place.

**XI. OLD BUSINESS**

1. **Emerald Cove Paving** - Council member Moncrief made a motion to postpone the Emerald Cove paving project. Council

member Miles seconded. Ms. Moncrief said, "we have reviewed the documents, we have spoke with everybody from all of the different companies. We have met with Chad from Allied Paving, along with the HOA President, neighbors, myself and Erica, and we have gotten different information and we're looking at going in a different direction." The Mayor asked were there any further discussion. Council member Pilgrim asked, "you're looking at going a different direction, how?" Ms. Moncrief replied, "not just paving the gutters. We've gotten recent information that is not going to be a good result based on the RFQ that's been created. The RFQ needs to be adjusted and the committee or the group of people that got together today, discussed that just paving the gutters or just doing a quick fix is not acceptable. So we're looking at doing the whole job over." Council member Pilgrim asked if one of these companies was at this meeting. Council member Moncrief replied, "Yes, actually not one of these companies. The representative, his name was Chad, he's from Allied Paving. He also met with the mayor after the road was done. And upon hearing his recommendations and asking a number of questions and going back and forth and taking into consideration the cost of redoing to the city versus doing a quick fix and things that could happen from that and that's what we came up with." There was no further discussion with council member Pilgrim voting no.

2. **Sign Ordinance** - City Attorney Tony Powell stated, "Mayor I think we're waiting on the recommendation of the Planning Commission. I think it's on the agenda tonight to function as a read, is what I would guess, and I think we were looking to make an extension to the sign moratorium with the main part of the purpose for this agenda item. I don't think we can satisfy the reading requirements until after the planning commission sends it to us." Per assistant attorney Jay Crowley, sign moratorium ends on March 31, 2023, so he recommends extending it until June 30, 2023. Council member Miles made a motion to extend the sign moratorium to June 30, 2023. Council member Pilgrim seconded. Passed unanimously.
3. **Dog Ordinance** - City attorney Powell stated that the dog ordinance is ready for the council's action. Walton County ask that the city adopt the ordinance that has been published. The Mayor ask, "So you're telling us that we have complied with section 1-106 of amending our code of ordinance?" Mr. Powell replied, "the requirement that we have two readings has been accomplished." The Mayor replied, "we are in compliance?" Mr. Powell stated yes. Council member Moncrief made a motion to accept the amended dog ordinance. Council member Pilgrim seconded. Passed unanimously.

4. **Planning & Zoning Appointment** - Council member Moncrief made a motion to appoint Bobby Moncrief to the planning and zoning commission. Council member Miles seconded. Passed unanimously.

## **XII. New Business**

1. **Planning & Zoning Applicant** - Matt Rutledge; 11.929 acres parcel #'s WG 10026 & WG 10027 rezone from AG to C-2 with conditional use for outdoor storage - Planning & zoning administrator Joe Walter explained that the rezone application has went before the planning and zoning commission, has been through a public hearing, and at the end of the meeting the Planning Commission recommended approval to the Mayor and council with the conditions proposed by staff (zoning administrator). Mr. Walter said, "The site should be developed in general conformance for the site plan submitted with the rezoning request. Which means that as they develop it, if you will choose to prove it, should be a general performance of what they've already submitted and it's not something completely different. No development activities will be permitted till all approvals for the city Walnut Grove have been obtained. In other words, they can't start working until they've gotten all the necessary permits. Permitted uses, service oriented commercial and office and warehouse uses will be permitted, no retail commercial businesses or uses listed in the industrial manufacturing uses portions of the table permitted and conditional uses from section 900, will be permitted. That essential they're proposed use was to do commercial and commercial office type uses. If you all recall when the application came back to you last year, that had proposed the M1 zoning and there was a lot of differences between that application and this application including frontage road entering on the Highway 81 the current application you have before you, they took that out of consideration. It's going to be accessed off of Walnut Grove Parkway, and they also have changed their style of uses to something a little bit more low intensity than manufacturing and industrial. Our biggest concern is that from staff is that if it's approved for commercial and office type uses, then you would not permit types of commercial uses which could be considered industrial. Just sort of things like noise and dust and order and processes that would not really fit in with that location. I understand they want to request a modification for limited retail. Any outdoor storage that's on the side is limited to areas not visible from Hwy. 81, in other words, the rear of the office warehouse building. So if you can't see it, you don't know what's there. But you have to have a conditional use because C2 doesn't normally allow outdoor storage. Hours of operation, Planning Commission recommended hours of operation for the proposed development to be limited to 8 AM and 8:00 PM. I understand that they want to request modification of that, and buffers and landscaping. The applicant should provide a 50 foot undisturbed buffer adjacent to the R1 properties to the west

and supplement the buffer with plantings where sparsely vegetated. Buffer may be reduced to 40 feet with the construction of a decorative fence or wall adjacent to the R1 properties and fence/wall details to be approved prior to the issuance of any permits and that reduction is permitted within the zoning ordinance as we discussed at the work session. Provide a 50 foot wide buffer adjacent to the AG property along the southern and southeastern property lines, that would be what backs up to the church property. Buffer may be reduced to 40 feet with construction of a decorative fence or wall adjacent to the AG properties fence wall, details to be approved prior to issuance of any permits. The developer is to comply with the Cornish Creek overlay requirements for buffers and setbacks along the creek, and that tree replacement, and planting should follow your own your guidelines. So if they have to put in trees at all, this is done in accordance with your requirements. We recommended Planning Commission agreed to provide a 20 foot wide no access easement along the property frontage on Hwy. 81. If you all remember it's got a 60 foot wide frontage on Hwy. 81, and if you know the property it's where the tall trees are right on 81. They're request was to not access that and placing this condition on it if Council chooses to act then would not allow them to get a dot driveway permit, which I think is a big consideration from the neighbors with the last application. And can access item B prior to issuance of any site development, building permits and subject properties owner. Shall provide to the city evidence of a permanent access easement to the property from Walnut Grove Parkway because they're proposing to use a driveway to access it from the parkway. This is making sure that they have the right to have approval to access it before they get going. Utilities and storm-water, the city engineer will approve all water and sewer designs prior to issuance of any permits and all their storm-water ponds, will meet the requirements of the storm-water or the Land Development Ordinance. Architectural lighting and decorative elements, the Mayor and Council approved the proposed exterior architectural designs for all proposed uses prior to any building permits. Proposed architectural design should incorporate the downtown overlay district guidelines where possible. Essentially that says that before they want to come and get at building permit, besides the other normal stuff you have to do to get a building permit that can show you exterior elevation to get your approval. And then to try to get it look close, these are different style buildings. There's a lot of things you can do with the building to make it look more attractive than just the normal range of structure. The last condition is all lights to be cut off type luminaries, so as not to shine on adjacent residential properties. Those are the conditions that the Planning Commission agreed to. Staff recommended approval based upon the land use plan has changed and the proposed use is a lot less intense than what was previously presented. So that is the staff report and proposed conditions and recommendation from Planning Commission." Mr. Chris McCurry, representing Mr. Rutledge, presented the rezoning proposal and answered some question. City

Attorney Powell said "this is a first reading and what you do is vote to accept the first read, and then you can take it up for a second read. This is because zoning actions are actually amendments to your zoning ordinance, so it falls under the same two reading requirement." Council member Moncrief made a motion to accept the first read. Council member Pilgrim seconded. Passed unanimously.

- 2. Financials** - Council member Moncrief asked, "Looking at the financials on the budget versus actuals. I noticed that some of the taxes, and franchise taxes specifically, have gone down from last month to this month. Is there a reason for that or was it just being like put in the wrong account? Or are we going backwards? Or are we in good shape?" The Mayor replied, "We're actually doing quite well. I'm trying to look at where you're actually going." Ms. Moncrief stated she was talking about franchise gas. The Mayor commented that he could check with the CPA about that. Council member Moncrief made a motion to table the financials until the next meeting for the CPA to take a look at it. Council member Miles seconded. Passed unanimously.

## **XII. REPORTS**

- 1. Public Works** - Director Brian Pilgrim reported that speed bumps have been installed, no parking signs at the exits of Cambridge Chase, Magnolia, and Emerald Cove. The grass cutting season is starting up, bathrooms at the park are opening up.
- 2. Clerk's Report** - Dawn Lummus reported there were 11 citations from Walton County and 9 from the GSP. The park rentals are picking up.
- 3. Mayor's Report** - The Mayor reported, "I want to compliment my guys, the city workers on the painting of the deck and the railings at City Hall. It made a huge difference. It looks beautiful, parks are looking great. We're going to start researching to add a dog park. I do notice that we do have some people walking their dogs on leashes. I like the way that's heading. I think it's great for the citizens. Other than that, I've had quite a few meetings on the sewer plant and hopefully to have a final report to the Council soon, and that's pretty well it for now.

## **IXV. TOWN HALL**

- XV. COUNCIL COMMENTS** - Council members Miles and Pilgrim had no comments. Council member Moncrief stated she went and got training online for the Georgia First Amendment Foundation with the open government and social media essentials class.

**XVI. Executive Session - None.**

**IV. ADJOURN** - Council member Stephanie Moncrief made a motion to adjourn. Linda Pilgrim seconded. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dawn Lummus,  
City Clerk

Approved

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Mark Moore,  
Mayor