

**WALNUT GROVE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY APRIL 13, 2017
MINUTES**

Present at Meeting:

Mayor Lamar Lee
Kathy Dimsdale
Wayne Dimsdale
Kevin Shultz
Carol Witcher
Joe Reitman, City Attorney
Katherine Glass, City Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Mayor Lamar Lee

II. INVOCATION

Invocation given

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

IV. AGENDA APPROVAL

Wayne Dimsdale made a motion to approve the Agenda; Kevin Shultz seconded the motion, opportunity for discussion, motion passed, unanimous.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Megan Ragan a Park Street resident addressed the Council with her concerns over speed on Park Street. She stated safety for children living on Park Street as a primary concern. There was discussion about speed humps, rumble strips and the pros and cons to each method of slowing down traffic. She asked the City Council assist residents and law enforcement in finding a solution to this issue. Joe Reitman stated it is a cost issue and perhaps the Council could look into the different speed humps and tables to see what we might be able to afford. Without a property tax as a means of revenue it is hard for the City to afford any expensive means to slow down traffic. The Council recognized Jenny Moss another resident of Park St. She stated her mailbox had been knocked down several times this year. She asked if the homeowners association of Magnolia Springs Subdivision could raise money for speed humps for Park St. Councilman Kevin Shultz stated Magnolia Springs is where he lives. He stated they attempted to have a home owners association but it never was established through the developers and builders so unfortunately the only subdivision in the City that has a homeowners association is Emerald Cove. Again the different speed humps, rumble strips and speed tables were discussed.

VI. MINUTES APPROVAL: March 9, 2016 City Council Meeting

Kevin Shultz made a motion to approve the Minutes for March 9, 2017 as presented; Carol Witcher seconded the motion, opportunity for discussion, motion passed, unanimous.

VII. PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Presented by Alan Barton, Public Works Director

Mayor Lee and I rode around and measured the streets in Magnolia and Cambridge and other residential areas. We came up with about 1500 feet of road that needs paving. These are the worse areas. This is just spots averaging around 300 – 400 feet. Something is going to have to be done to repair these. We have also done some follow up on the sewer system. I have asked the engineers about it and some say we can't do it because we would have problems. But I haven't had anyone tell me the problems we would have couldn't be fixed. We are continuing to look into how we can get the septic tank trucks to start dumping at our sewer plant until we get further along. We have to keep good records on who is dumping and what they are dumping. This way if we every do have a problem we can take care of it. It will not be maintenance free. We need to start making our system pay for itself. Wayne asked Alan when he would have everything lined up to start. Alan replied by the first of June. Carol asked if we had anyone certified to do this. Alan replied Bill Jones knew someone. Carol asked how much it would cost to have someone monitor the water at the plant. Alan – This person we will have to pay but the guys and I would be checking in the trucks and monitoring the emptying them. There was more discussion on details about dumping septic trucks at the sewer plant. I know it is time to start working on the budget. We have a few items getting a little age on them. We have lawn mowers, one with 2,000 hours and one with 1,000 hours. We will need a weed eater by next year if not sooner. The transmission on the old truck is not getting any better. We just keep adding transmission fluid. Carol Witcher suggested working through GMA to purchase with a grant from them. Joe Reitman said they do a lease purchase financing. Alan Barton suggested a lot of companies do a zero percent interest on financing for five years. They discussed other ways to purchase equipment. Maybe while we are looking at speed humps we need to work on the crosswalk on Park Street at the park. Mayor Lee said he had talked to John Alman and he told him what to get and what to use. There was discussion about equipment that needs to be surplusd.

X. FINANCIAL REPORT

Given by Katherine A. Glass, City Clerk

Motion made by Wayne Dimsdale to accept the financials as presented, Seconded by Kevin Shultz, opportunity for discussion, motion passed, unanimous.

XI. CLERK'S REPORT

Activity report given on all business licenses, citations, other permits and park reservations given by Katherine A. Glass, City Clerk.

XII. CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT

Given by Code Enforcement Officer, Craig Ellington

I issued five notice of ordinance violations. Of those five, four of them have already been resolved. When I issue one of these they have a 15 day window before I have to revisit and give them a second notice. I

have one that I am working on that has some brush that needs to be removed. I worked with a couple of businesses on sign permits. When they got their permits and I worked with them through the process up to the point of getting the signs inspected. At the House at 138 and Old Hwy 138 I met with the new owners of this property. They plan to remodel it and have water and power hooked up to it. There were questions about an abandoned property on Thompson Lane. There was also discussion about the options to cleaning up this property or how to make the property owner clean up their property.

XIII. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Lee introduced Mr. Roger Singleton owner of Silt Saver, Inc. Mr. Singleton explained he and his wife own a business in Conyers. They have outgrown their business there. They have lived off Ellington Rd for 38 years, about 5 miles from Walnut Grove. The business is an environmental product company, primarily the green dome devices you see on construction sites. Mr. Singleton used to be a building contractor and then a developer. He invented the product back in 1999 and started this business. They would like to move their business closer to home on Mr. Jon Dial's property off Forrester Cemetery Rd. There is 30 acres there. On this particular piece of land there is a lot of rock so he is doing some tests to find a level area to place his building. He would like the opinion of the Council about having this business come into the city. He gave all the details of where this business would be on the property and what it would look like. When I come back to ask for a rezone I will give the Council a sketch of where the building will be on the property and details of the development. The Council gave a verbal support of this development.

We have already given the linear square feet of roadway that needs paving. Wayne Dimsdale asked how much it would cost per square foot to pave. Mayor Lee answered, he doesn't have that figure at the present time but that he has a meeting on Monday to discuss all of this with John Alman.

XIV. OLD BUSINESS

None

XV. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Sheriff Joe Chapman – Report on Activity in City of Walnut Grove
Sheriff Joe Chapman is away at the GA Sheriff's Association Conference. Captain Ty Vance with Walton County Sheriff's Office gave the following report: On March 15, 2017 there was a concentrated patrol here in Walnut Grove which involved GSP and some members of the District Attorney Office. From 6:00 p.m. until midnight there were 102 traffic stops, there were 8 people arrested. There were 26 citations written by Walton County Sheriff's Office and 26 citations written by GA State Patrol. We arrested some for possession of methamphetamine, marijuana, some warrants out of Walton County and suspended license. The big thing in that is we did not get one call for service from anyone in Walnut Grove. That is with the exception of Pizza Hut next door to the precinct. They put in the wrong code on their alarm system and set it off accidentally. We just walked next door and handled it. It was a great success and we plan to do this again. There is a serious drug problem here which was our main focus that night. Sgt Kervin is here with me tonight. We had a scare before we got here at Williams Gas

Pipe Line. They had a valve go bad. We almost had a catastrophe in the NE side of the county. We are glad to be at your meeting. At the precinct we are doing what we are supposed to do. Providing a service to the citizens so they don't have to go to Monroe to the Sheriff's Office to run a criminal history, pick up copies of reports or to ask us any questions. We don't dispatch calls out of that precinct. We have an administrative assistant there to run the criminal histories and print out reports. She is there every day from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. I am there in and out during the day. He further explained how many officers are on duty and their duties. Sgt. Kervin further explained how their equipment works and the benefits they get from having this equipment. There was further discussion about the duties of deputies and their salaries here in Walton County.

b. Uncle Remus for the Walnut Grove Library – Ben Carter & Amy Hicks

Mayor recognized Mr. Ben Carter and Amy Hicks. They handed out materials to the Council. Amy Hicks directed the Council to their budget requests and some statistics from the library. Average attendance is 2,000 people a month with going over 4,000 some months in the summer. There were over 35,000 items circulated last year. They offer free activities to the public. Through grant monies the library has added more books to the library. Mr. Carter explained they are asking for more money this year. Uncle Remus, the whole library system, operates under the State Code of Georgia. They fall under a lot of State benefits, the State Health Plan and Teacher's retirement plan of Georgia. For the first time in several years they have increased their employer contribution rates to almost 3 percent. New employer contribution which is the share of retirement that the library system pays on behalf of Amy Hicks and myself is going up to just over 16 percent of the employees annual salary. The rates had not gone up for three years so this year was a shock and especially that it is so much. We also increased the amount to build in an increase in the staff pay. They have not had an increase in 4 years. Amy reported within the last four months we have received close to \$7,000 for books and programming. Carol Witcher asked about the Library Board having a member of the City Council at each of their meetings. It was reported the City Council appoints the Board members of the Library but the Council doesn't have a representative at their meetings. Amy invited anyone who would like to come to their meetings and will send the meeting information to the City Clerk. The total of the increase the library has asked for is an additional \$3,000.00. There was discussion about the pay for the part time workers and the full time employees at the library.

XVI. DISCUSSION ITEM

Arbor Day – Carol Witcher discussed the upcoming Arbor Day program. It will be held on Friday April 28, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. Bud Buhrl will be there. There will be hands on crafts for the children. With the Council and Mayor's approval we will provide the materials for the children to take a paper roll and glue green tissue on them to make their own leaves. The older children will learn about the different kinds of leaves. Hopefully the members of the Council will come and help out with the crafts. I would also like to have ice cream colored green to give the children at the end of the program. We will discuss the Crepe Myrtle trees that have been planted on the Walnut Grove Parkway. I would like to invite everyone to come out on the 28th to celebrate Arbor Day. This

Arbor Day celebration is one of the stipulations for becoming a "Tree City". The Council approved verbally of the program as laid out by Carol Witcher.

Kevin Shultz made a motion, Wayne Dimsdale seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Approved by the Mayor and Council this _____ day of May, 2017.

Mayor Lamar Lee

Katherine A. Glass