

# MINUTES

## WALNUT GROVE CITY COUNCIL MEETING

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2019

Present:

Carol Witcher, Mayor Pro Tem

Kevin Shultz

Linda Pilgrim

Mark Moore

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order by Carol Witcher, Mayor Pro Tem

**II. INVOCATION**

Given by Carol Witcher

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

**IV. AGENDA APPROVAL**

Mark Moore made a motion to amend the agenda to include Mulching and Clearing the Underbrush at City Hall as item A under New Business, Kevin Shultz seconded the motion, opportunity for discussion, motion passed. Mark Moore made a motion to approve the Agenda with the amendment, Kevin Shultz seconded the motion, opportunity for discussion, motion passed.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

N/A

**VI. MINUTES APPROVAL: JANUARY 10, 2019**

Kevin Shultz made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Linda Pilgrim seconded the motion, opportunity for discussion, motion passed.

**VII. PUBLIC WORKS REPORT**

Given by Alan Barton, Director of Public Works

He stated he had to have the transmission fixed in the service truck and the dump truck needed to be repaired too. He said he would have to get a wrecker to take the dump truck to be repaired. He had to buy new tires for both the lawnmowers. The roof on the precinct has been painted with some copper paint and looks good. The Sheriff's Office has been renovating the inside of the building at the precinct since the fire department moved out. They have put in new flooring, tore out the old cabinets and put in new ones and painted. It will be a place for meetings and training and Georgia State Patrol will be using part of it as a sub station for them. Councilman Shultz asked if the County was funding all the renovations at the precinct and Mr. Barton confirmed they are. He said there is a spot in the concrete that is cracked where the fire trucks came in and out and he thinks he can fix it for about one hundred bucks. He talked with E. R. Snell about a man hole cover that was cracked when they were back patching in Cambridge Subdivision. They will fix it as soon as the weather permits. There was discussion about the bid process on the Cambridge resurface project. Alan stated he thought the bids would be opened on the 19<sup>th</sup> of this month. Mr. Moore said in Magnolia Springs when a water leak was repaired the road was damaged. Mr. Barton said he is keeping an eye on it to make sure it doesn't cave in. Mr. Barton stated it

was done by the Walton County Water Department. He said it looked like instead of going under the road it looked like they pulled a whole new service line on the road.

#### **VIII. FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Clerk directed the Council members to the report in their books. Councilman Moore stated there are items that are needing or exceeding the budgeted amount. He wanted to set a work session to look at these and see if there are adjustments that need to be done. Maybe 6:00 p.m. before the next Council Meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Witcher asked which items he was referring to. He stated Code Red, Dues and Subscriptions and Legal Funding. The legal funding line item only has \$300.00 left in it. There was discussion and it was decided they would meet at 6:00 p.m. on March 14, 2019 for a work session prior to the Council Meeting. Mark Moore made a motion to approve the financials as presented, Linda Pilgrim seconded the motion, opportunity for discussion, motion passed.

#### **IX. CLERK'S REPORT**

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

#### **X. CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT**

Given by Grant Satterfield, Code Enforcement Officer

Officer Satterfield gave a report on the green house on Old 138 and Hwy138. The owner has a permit and he has a tenant for when it is completed. It will be an insurance office. This has been going on for a year and a half. Councilman Shultz asked if it was going to be a commercial business there because at one time it was rezoned back residential. So, he will have to make an application to re-zone that back to commercial. He needs to be notified so he can start that process before he gets a tenant in there. Officer Satterfield said it looked like it would be several months. Mayor Pro Tem Witcher asked him how many citations he had written. He stated he hadn't written any new citations, but he is working on one that he had written previously. He explained the process for the benefit of the audience.

Councilman Shultz asked for a more detailed report on activity done by Code Enforcement Officer from now on on the Clerk's Report. Right now, looking at the Clerk's Report it looks like he isn't doing anything. Councilman Moore congratulated Officer Satterfield on the job he is doing. He stated he saw a big difference since he has been working. They discussed the small signs that used to be posted all over the City and how this is being handled now.

#### **XI. MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Pro Tem read from Mayor Lee's notes he had prepared for this meeting.

The new SPLOST was voted in at our last election. We are working with Walton County and are preparing to start receiving these funds. The Mayor and our Clerk went to a meeting today and I understand there are a lot of things coming from this SPLOST. She continued reading from Mayor Lee's notes. Alan Barton, Jimmy Parker and I have been working for a long time planning where to put in new sidewalks and where we need repairs to existing sidewalks. We will be looking at these now that Lawrenceville Gas has run their new lines. They did Walnut Grove a favor because where they broke through sidewalks they had to come back and repair/replace sidewalks. If we can get Walton County Water Department to come and repair what they damaged, we will be doing good. Alan Barton was asked how long he and Mayor Lee have been talking about sidewalks on Park St. Mr. Barton replied for a long time, at least the five years they had been here. There was discussion about the pros and cons of getting grant money to pay for sidewalks down Park St to the high school.

Mayor Pro Tem Witcher read the list of sidewalk measurements for repair and new sidewalks which Jimmy Parker with Precision Planning helped give a quote on. They were Repair/patch sidewalks: Hwy 138 W 94' long X 4'

wide, Hwy 138E 231' long X 4' wide; New Sidewalks: Hwy 138 E – from existing sidewalk back to the sidewalk in front of the Walnut Grove Wine & Spirits 204' long X 4' wide, Hwy 138 W – Dollar General to sidewalk at Day Care at Old Hwy 138 591' long X 4' Wide, Hwy 81 N from the Baptist Church to the Walnut Grove Parkway 611' long X 4' wide, East on Parkway from 81 to the Walnut Grove Library 200' long X 4' wide

Linda Pilgrim asked if the repair and new sidewalks was to be done with all SPLOST money or if we would be looking at a grant too. Mayor Pro Tem Witcher replied we should be looking at grants for every single thing. She said there is money out there just sitting and we should apply for it. That would be something I would want to bring to Council. If any of us finds a grant we should bring it to the Council. That is a good idea.

**XII. OLD BUSINESS**

None

**XIII. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Clearing Underbrush and Mulch around City Hall and the Library**

Alan will describe that to you because he has already spoke to two different companies that do that kind of work. Before he speaks to that I would like to say what the premise is, is to get all that underbrush cleared out at City Hall. Mayor Pro Tem Witcher described the area involved in this project. She then turned it over to Alan Barton. Alan Barton – Well all that underbrush beside City Hall we are trying to keep things in the City clean. It is hard to make everybody else clean something up when we have got underbrush and everything around City Hall too and I thought it looked bad. In the spring we have little kids come to the Library and they have all kind of programs out there once or twice a week. It is just too thick for foxes and coons and stuff like that. They could have rabies and come out there and bite some little kid. We don't want that. Last year we went in and cleaned up some of that with the bush hog, but it got to rough for that. So, I took it upon myself to call some of these mulching companies, and I could only find two. The machines are expensive. What they will do is go in and mulch all the undergrowth and leave the big trees. It leaves everything, no stumps, but everything with just mulch. I thought it would look good and add to safety for the kids at the library. I got one estimate from Lead Foot Mulching and Grading. Their estimate is \$1,500.00. That is to come in all the way down from 81 Hwy to the new church. I got another estimate from North Creek Construction Group and they gave two different options, one at \$3,750.00 and the other they would bring in an extra man to cut limbs, pile them up and mulch them to for \$5,000.00. I think once we get everything mulched my helper and I can come in and trim and take our chipper and chip up everything else. Mr. Moore asked why there was such a price difference in the two quotes. Mr. Shultz suggested the higher bid was so they wouldn't get the job. It was too small for them. He said he knows Lead Foot Mulching and Grading and knows they are a good company. Mark Moore made a motion the City go with the Quote from Lead Foot Mulching and Grading for \$1,500, Kevin Shultz seconded the motion, there was opportunity for discussion, Motion passed.

**b. Sidewalk Repair/New Sidewalks**

**Alan Barton** – on the sidewalks, me and the Mayor talked about these sidewalks and decided to wait until Lawrenceville Gas finished and repaired all the sidewalks they tore up. I measured and marked everything on Hwy 138. Mayor Lee and I then looked at where we might put in new sidewalks. He described the new sidewalk on Hwy 138. There are two sections one near the Walnut Grove Wine and Spirits and below the Waffle House and Old Hwy 138. Also, a section on Hwy 81 down to the Walnut Grove Parkway and then down to where the Walnut Grove Library is. We could put a crosswalk in there to cross the street to the Library. Councilman Moore asked if we could do all this for \$45,000? Alan Barton replied, that is what Jimmy said. I measured everything and sent it to him, and this is what he came back with \$44,760 and rounded it up

to \$45,000. We have \$70,000 in SPLOST money. The Clerk interrupted and said the \$70,000 is in a line item in the budget from tax dollars. This money is designated for sidewalks and street repair. We also have SPLOST money that can be used for sidewalks. Kevin Shultz said this is only a projection and it will have to be put out for bid. Alan said there would be a good bit of work to prepare for sidewalks on below the Dollar General toward the day care and also up on the stretch near the Grove Wine and Spirits. Jimmy already put some money in his cost toward this, but I think it will take a little more. Mark Moore- the way I look at it we have two priorities fix the ones that are broken and do this but also make sure we have enough SPLOST money to take care of the paving in our subdivision Magnolia Springs because it won't last another year. Alan Barton – Well it will take a lot of money to do that. You have \$70,000 here if we do these sidewalks it won't leave but \$25,000 if it doesn't take more for getting the ground ready for these sidewalks. And we are already going to spend money resurfacing Cambridge and next year, me and the Mayor talked, we are probably looking to do something to Magnolia. If nothing drastic happens we can patch it between now and then. There was discussion about where grant money could be used to put in sidewalks. Along Park St pipe would have to be laid in the ditch and curbing installed. It would probably cost half a million dollars to do a sidewalk down Park St. There was also discussion about these projects being put out for bid and what all could be included. They discussed the foot traffic on the side of the road along Hwy 138 and Hwy 81 where there are currently no sidewalks. Mark Moore – I would like to make a motion we get at least an estimate on doing this sidewalk. Alan Barton – We have the estimate, we just need to put it out for bid. Mark Moore – So we can find out exactly what, also after we get this bid going if we can get the second one (Park St), I'm all for like if there is a way, we can combine the two whether we can save money or not. We may not have the finances to support it. But we definitely need to move on this. Especially getting the portions of the sidewalk that are buckled before somebody gets hurt and the City may be liable for that. Alan Barton - on this Park St sidewalk it wouldn't surprise me if it didn't cost a half a million dollars for that and I'm not stretching it a bit especially when you get down to this curve where the creeks is at. Carol Witcher – It seems to me Alan we need to go ahead, as Mark has said, and put it out for bid at least on the first part and see what we can get in the way of bids. Alan – I have figured up here for the re-patching and add the four sections and I think we are good on that. Carol Witcher – in the mean time we will search for grants and other means. Kathy Glass explained she had reached out to Joe Walter and he is checking to see if there are any grant monies available for these projects. Mark Moore – I know a half a million dollars is a lot of money, but a life is worth a lot more. Alan Barton – I agree with you a 100% but you have to have the money to do it. Mayor Pro Tem Witcher – Ok Alan so you are going to get the bids on that and return. Mike Malcom – We have got a motion. Kevin Shultz – I have a second but with some reservations and a slight discussion. I have concerns about new sidewalks on Hwy 138 because sometime whether it be in the next year or two, they are going to widen Hwy 138 all the way to Monroe. I can't see spending a lot of money on sidewalks on Hwy 138 when they are going to come in and tear them up and redo sidewalks anyway and the State is going to pay for it. So, I have some reservations about new sidewalks anywhere on Hwy 138. I don't mind repairs if we have some repairs that need to be fixed. I think the repairs I've seen is about \$3,800.00 that is not a terrible expense. I'm not opposed to repair on 138 but anything new on 138 we really need to get with Precision Planning and for them to reach out to DOT and see when their projects are scheduled. I know a few years ago it was within 10 years. It depends on with DOT I know they have projects they do and they say 10 years but then all of a sudden two years later they are moving their equipment in and making it happen. The construction economy in GA is doing a lot of road work and repair. So, there is a lot of funding. So, it might not be far off the horizon. So, we need to be cautious about putting in new sidewalks that are going to be torn up anyway. I don't want to say waste grant money because it is coming from the State anyway, but it is still all of our tax payer money whether it is grant money or City funded money. Mark Moore – The question I have on that is do they put in sidewalks if they are not there already? And that is the question I have. Because if they tear it up like the gas company then they have to replace it but if it is not there in the first place do they still put it

in? Alan Barton – When they come in and do a road, they fix it like it should be. They don't do it half way just because there isn't one there. If there is a business there they will put sidewalks. Carol Witcher – Mark can you amend your motion following what Kevin just spoke? Mark Moore – Let me.... Carol Witcher – to include it? Mark Moore – Let's do it this way. Let's amend my motion to include everything including the sidewalk going down toward the pre school on Old Hwy 138 and going down Hwy 81 and also repairing whatever is existing on Hwy. 138 and then we will come back and look at adding new sidewalk at a later date. Kevin Shultz – along areas of Hwy 138. Alan Barton – so you don't want to look at doing the sidewalk at the Waffle House? Mark Moore – I do want to do the sidewalk at the Waffle House. Alan Barton – well that is on Hwy 138. Mark Moore – well that sidewalk goes from the Waffle House on Hwy 138 down to Old Hwy 138 to Cambridge Chase and will hook into the existing sidewalk. I'm not talking about adding anything past that Old Hwy 138 Rd. But leave out the new section near Walnut Grove Wine and Spirits. Seconded by Kevin Shultz, Motion Passed.

**c. Action Committee**

Mark Moore – I'm asking for the creation of an Action Committee focusing on citizen involvement into the City. I would like to get volunteers. I've already talked to several people to get a committee going to get more people involved in our operation of the City and in the future creation of committees. I've got about four people in line who are citizens of Walnut Grove and I'm asking for anybody else who would like to be a part of this to market our City and get more involved in the operation. That's what this action committee is all about, to focus on the citizens involved. We have about 1,800 in population and I'd like to see a lot of that population come out and get involved in the budget and financing of the City. I would like to see more involved in the planning of the City. To get our citizens to give us information of what they would like to see this City go on in the future. Right now, we just don't have a group to do that so I would like to create that committee. Carol Witcher – Do I have a motion? Linda Pilgrim – I make a motion to create an action committee for the City. Carol Witcher – the way I interpret it is more than one action committee. Mark Moore – Right now it is just one. The first step. The definition of an action committee is they take a hold of a particular agenda and work on that after that agenda is done, they can work on the next one from that point. The first part of that agenda will be citizen involvement. We talked about with Mayor Lee about maybe doing a news letter and adding it to our quarterly sanitation bills so it wouldn't cost us any more money. So, we like to have people who are involved and could create such a newsletter. Just to say what is going on during the month and what went on with City Council and any special things like what is going on with the car show and so forth. Get more people involved so when we have a Heritage Festival, we can get more volunteers. Kathy Glass – so you are saying this committee would come up with a newsletter? Mark Moore – Yes, but I am being vague for a reason because I want them to come up with the ideas to get more citizens involved. Carol Witcher – Who will chair this committee. Mark Moore – Right now I'll take care of it. But I will turn it over to once we get the volunteers, I would like to turn it over to one of them and let them lead it. Kevin Shultz – Carol, it is just to present ideas and for them to do the leg work and then to present obviously to the Council ideas for projects. It is not a voting committee they would just present ideas and things for the City for consideration and it could be just about anything, so I would second it. Carol Witcher – the issue I see is, I'm looking in this room and we are two thirds empty. Mark Moore – Exactly. That is exactly what this committee is all about and what I would like to fix. Carol Witcher – and is it a non-partisan committee? Mark Moore – Oh yes because I want that exactly, I'd like to see this room full. I would like to see public comments coming up here saying what they like and what they don't like. And why isn't that and I don't have the answer for that. That is why I would like to create this committee so they can come up with solutions for that. Carol Witcher – so you are going to be a chair? Mark Moore – I'm going to be a temporary chair until we can get the committee together and let them vote for their own chair. Carol Witcher – Ok and how many committees are we talking about? Mark Moore – Just one to start off with. Carol and it is cart blanch, it does

everything. Mark Moore – For right now the action committee is only going to focus on citizen involvement. Getting people involved in this city as it grows it will be presented to the council and say they would like to branch off. And I am hoping these citizens as they get together, they say we would like to have a public safety committee. As far as looking at the issues that we have had with public comments with the speeding in our subdivisions and down Park Street. I don't have the solutions, but I think like the more minds involved in this the better off the City will be. Carol Witcher- I tell you what I would like to see, I am not saying it is a bad deal at all but, what I would like to see is like a blue print of what you are wanting like what kind of committees you want and how you think they should function and bring it back to us so we can have something to look at, hold on to. So, could we table that until you can do that kind of research. Mark Moore- Well we already have a first and a second. I guess it is out there for a vote. Mike Malcom- You could table it if you want but there is a motion and a second, so it needs to be voted on. Carol Witcher- Ok all in favor of the action committee with a yay, opposed- none. So that carries. Action Committee carries. You heard the speech so you're setting out in the crowd and if you are interested in any particular thing bring it to the counsel and we will sit down and discuss it and put the various committees that need to be in effect into effect. Mark Moore- And if ya'll would like to get involved, on the Walnut Grove website is my email and so please email me, when is it going to be held, it is going to be up to the members of that committee so I am going to leave it up to our citizens to come up with a date and a time that will be more convenient for everybody. So, like I said I am going to chair it to get it started but then I would like to move it over to our citizens.

d. **Monroe Walton Center for the Arts –**

Hope Reese director and Carlene Jackson thanked the Council for inviting them to the Walnut Grove City Council Meeting. They were previously known as the Monroe Art Guild. We changed our name to the Monroe Walton Center for the Arts with the intention of displaying our new purpose to serve not just Monroe but all of Walton County and the surrounding communities with the beauty and inspiration and healing power of art. We are located in downtown Monroe just right down from the historic courthouse near the visitor's center. We consider ourselves Walton County's best kept secret. We are Walton County's as far as I know only non-profit art center. We have a new addition we call healing arts. She explained these are used for children in time of trauma and are supplied to Walton Piedmont Hospital. She explained the benefit of art to someone who has experienced trauma. She praised the art teachers here in Walton County and reviewed the art shows coming up and going on now at their facility. She introduced Jessica Hutchins. She is a writer and a published poet and has a degree in poetry from Johns Hopkins. Ms. Hutchins is hosting writer workshops and even working with students at our local schools. Mayor Pro Tem Witcher- So in essence what you are asking is for us to come together and as a city, as a city council to become a member and you have got all the businesses who support you listed here. Hope Reese- As much as we need money and support our biggest need is publicity, marketing and outreach to our communities. Ms. Reese asked if the City has a website, social media special printing or anything they could do. We just want to reach the people of Walton County and it's not just Monroe and it is not just artists. A lot of the people who are members are not artists they just love us and love what we are doing. Carol Witcher- Could you give us some time to really brainstorm this and see how we as a council and a community can really come together and do partnerships of some kind with you. Hope Reese also talked about having classes here in Walnut Grove. Carol Witcher- Well thank you so much for coming, any questions? Mark Moore- Have you partnered with the High Schools in the area? Hope Reese explained how they place posters in the schools and around the cities to let people know about events. Mayor Pro Tem Witcher thanked Ms. Reese for her presentation.

Mark Moore addressed the litter problem and suggested a multi-tiered fine system.

XIV. **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

**Kevin Schultz**- I really don't have much other than thanking everybody coming out tonight and thank the Monroe Walton Art Center for coming out and making the presentation tonight. I looked over some of your sponsorship packages and what goes along with that and we have always supported sponsoring sports programs at the High School and other sports programs around Walnut Grove and in keeping with that good spirit I would certainly support a sponsorship once discussion has taken place with city to see what we can afford. I see that it is a yearly sponsorship that would benefit you center as well as Walnut Grove and thank you for coming out and thank everyone else for coming out.

**Linda Pilgrim**- I just want to say I appreciate you ladies for coming out, it was a good presentation. I, like Mr. Schultz, am certain we can come up with something to partner with you guys and do some things to benefit each other and I am excited about the opportunity. Thank you.

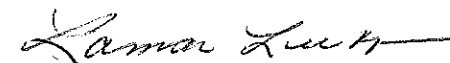
**Mark Moore**- I also appreciate you coming out. I would like to take a look at whether or not we can add it to our website, our face book page, it needs to be updated and I would like to add that as well and get that advertisement out. Also, the citizens of Walnut Grove please consider getting involved in this committee. I think that it is important and please contact me I am here if you need me call City Hall and they can give the number to you or ask me.

**Carol Witcher**- I would like to say that I do appreciate you being here tonight and just your presence here tonight opens the hidden artist and hidden writer in this room. And now that they know that there is a place that they can, too often people don't know what is going on in Monroe and any of the other cities. So, your presentation was excellent and thank you for bringing that to us. And as the two councilmen have spoken and the young lady it would behoove us in a lot of ways to find ways to be partners with you. And we do have some wonderful artist in town, and people who like to write, I am a writer. It gives our citizens another concept of what art is. It is not just throwing paint on a wall and walking away. It is what you internally feel and how you see something. You can have five lilies and five different people, and they all see it in a different aspect. I am an educator and that allows us to open an educational process in our town. Thank our partners here for that and thank the two of you for your work with us tonight.

**Kevin Schutz** – Made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mark Moore.

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Approved by the Mayor and Council this 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2019.



Mayor Lamar Lee



Katherine A. Glass, City Clerk