

**City of Locust Grove**  
**Council Workshop Meeting Minutes**  
**Public Safety Building – 3640 Highway 42 S.**  
**Locust Grove, GA 30248**  
**Monday, April 17, 2023**  
**6:00 PM**

<b>Members Present:</b>	<b>Staff Present:</b>
Robert Price – Mayor	Tim Young – City Manager
Keith Boone – Councilman/Pro Tem	Bert Foster – Assistant City Manager
Vincent Williams – Councilman	Misty Spurling – City Clerk
Willie Taylor – Councilman	Jennifer Adkins – Assistant City Clerk
Rod Shearouse - 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
	Andy Welch –Attorney

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

Invocation given by Community Development Director Daunté Gibbs

Councilman Boone led the Pledge of Allegiance

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA** –

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Breedlove made the motion to approve the agenda as amended.

RESULT	APPROVED AGENDA
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN BREEDLOVE
2 <sup>ND</sup> MOTION	COUNCILMAN GREER
VOTE	MOTION CARRIED - ALL IN FAVOR

**PUBLIC COMMENTS** – NONE

**PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS** –

- 1. Ordinance to amend the city’s Future Land Use Map designation from Office and Medium Density Residential to Community Commercial for multiple tracts located on Highway 42 and Tanger Boulevard** –

Community Development Director Daunté Gibbs stepped forward. Daunté said this is for multiple tracts for the purpose of developing a grocery store with a pharmacy and drive-thru. This will employ 120-150 people and staff recommends approval.

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

Mr. Evan Conder with Venture South Investments stepped forward to comment. Evan said with the council’s affirmative action, this development will be called the Shops at Indian Creek. Evan said

this is approximately 30 acres and said in due time will be able to announce the name of the store. This will increase the economy and tax base and will meet all city code requirements.

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

Ms. Delikah Carter, resident in Elmstone Commons subdivision, stepped forward to comment. Delikah said she is neither for nor against this request; however, would like to speak on behalf of the community. This is a residential area, and this development will bring more traffic, crime, trash, noise, and who knows what else. Delikah said she chose to live in this area for the peace and quiet and is asking the council to consider the community prior to deciding [on this development].

Evelyn Roberts stepped forward to comment. Ms. Roberts asked how far on Highway 42 this development will be.

Delikah said her back yard will be facing the store and asked how the lighting will affect her home. Also, why is the name of the store a secret; this should be public information.

Daunté said there is a required 50-foot buffer by ordinance, and the developer is required to meet the requirements with a landscape plan. Daunté said legally there is a nondisclosure agreement the applicant is under and as a courtesy the applicant asked staff to not announce the store name. Tim said there is nothing written in the plans so staff cannot formerly disclose the information and we are bound to not say the name.

Andy said it is not unusual for these type entities to not disclose that type information. The name is not in the application; therefore, staff cannot speculate.

Daunté asked the applicant to come forward to answer additional questions.

Mr. Conder stepped forward to address the questions previously asked. Evan said a request to get a curb cut must be presented to GDOT. Evan said they also have a proposed traffic signal which also includes accel/decel lanes which will help with traffic control. The city has a lighting ordinance, and any light pollution will not leave the site. We contract with a local trash company and an onsite sweeper to clean the parking lot daily. Daunté confirmed the lighting is required to be downcast.

Ms. Catherine Butcher stepped forward to comment. Catherine asked how this will affect the property taxes.

Andy said there is a lot of tax revenue; however, it should not affect individual tax value because this is commercial not residential. The city doesn't set the property tax rate, which is set by the county. The advantage is the proximity of the development may be desirable and may make the property values increase as well. If this project is approved and developed, Andy stated that the tax revenue will increase for the county and city. The council will take into consideration all concerns.

Ms. Butcher asked what percentage of Locust Grove will be employed at this store. Andy said the applicant will have to answer this question.

Ms. Roberts asked if the three lanes will be removed. Tim said yes [along this frontage] and we are requesting that GDOT reduce the passing lane section to a two lane with a center turn lane along with a reduced speed limit.

Judy Welch stepped forward to comment. Judy asked what community commercial is. Tim said everything is commercial [neighborhood, community, and regional]. Tim reviewed each type and

Judy asked if [Community Commercial] opens for larger commercial development. Andy said only the areas highlighted will be changed to [Community Commercial].

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

Councilman Greer asked if all justification items for this request (page 11) have been met. Daunté said yes, staff cannot bring a request to the council until all items have been met.

Councilman Boone asked if we could control the buffer with evergreens. Daunté said yes, we can include specific types of evergreens in the landscape plan. Discussion about right-of-way and Daunté said the applicant would have to coordinate with GDOT.

Discussion took place about the location of the traffic light and crime analysis at Ingles. Chief Austin said there is very little crime at Ingles. Tim said Flock cameras can be installed to assist our network in the area.

**2. Rezoning request from OI (office/institutional), RM (residential multi-family) and PD (planned development) to C-2 (general commercial) for 29.62 +/- acres (Parcel IDs: 129-01004000, 129-01002000, 129-01003000, and 130-01002006) in LL 166 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> district on Highway 42 and Tanger Boulevard –**

Daunté said this is a request for rezoning for the same property as related to the FLUM amendment. Staff recommends approval with conditions (read aloud) and the applicant has now provided a traffic study which is condition number two requirement.

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 to come forward.

Delikah Carter stepped forward to comment. Delikah requested a copy of the map and asked what would happen to the existing trees. Tim said yes, the map is online; however, we can provide a paper copy. Daunté said they will keep and maintain the (healthy) trees if possible. Delikah asked why the need for other stores and why this location? This town and the people love Ingles and are asking for their concerns to be considered before moving forward. She said she wants to enjoy peace and wildlife, and this will disturb those qualities. Nothing further.

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

Councilman Greer said he would like at least a six-to-eight-foot fence. Also, Greer asked even with the daily sweeping, how this can guarantee cleanliness of the grounds and compared to the issues he's seen at Walmart and Dollar General in particular. Mr. Conder said the retail tenants (Wal-Mart and Dollar General) are not in the same genre as this type of grocery store. We are required to sweep the lot daily, and this retail center is Georgia owned; the quality is much different from competitors. There was further discussion on the recruitment of labor for the businesses. Mr. Conder said he does not work for his client; however, based on a demographic study the average commute is 30-minutes, so definitely want to hire local (Locust Grove). Locust Grove and this property was chosen because this type of retailer follows households and likes to be at the front door of the customers.

A discussion took place about sidewalks and Mr. Conder confirmed the design includes sidewalks.

Councilman Greer asked whose expense would the flock cameras be, and Mr. Conder said they are paying for the light, but not sure about the cameras. A discussion took place about the cameras and Chief Austin said the cameras are about \$2,000 each. Mr. Conder said he will work with the Chief to accommodate the cameras.

Discussion took place about the longevity of the store (ownership) and Mr. Conder said they work to hold onto many of their developments as long as they can from the time of development.

Councilman Taylor asked if the traffic light will be operational prior to the opening of the store. Mr. Conder said yes, preferably.

Councilman Greer asked about right-of-way procedures and Daunté said the applicant submits a request to GDOT and corresponds to them. Andy said any right-of-way that is needed is determined by GDOT. Discussion took place and Daunté said staff will look for the indicator on the plan and have a courtesy review regarding right-of-way and will provide recommended improvements by the May 1 council meeting. Councilman Breedlove asked if the traffic light can be included as a condition (at their expense). Daunté said it can be added as part of rezoning and further discussion took place on the proximity of the lights. Nothing further.

**3. Variance request to allow for a master sign plan located on the west side of the intersection of Tanger Boulevard and Highway 42 (Parcel IDs: 129-01004000, 129-01002000, and 130-01002006) –**

Daunté said this is a request for a variance from development regulations specific to signage to allow for a master sign plan. Staff recommends approval with three conditions (read aloud).

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 and there were no comments.

Mayor Price closed the public hearing.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the council.

Discussion took place about the proposed signs and clarity on the reason for the variance request. Tim said the proposed signage is over 800 sq. ft. but doing in a controlled or master sign plan, which is typical with large shopping centers. A typical development is limited to 500 square feet. In this case, each store has individual budgets (depending on location), and the out parcels will only be 8ft. tall.

Andy clarified Tim's comment about individual (budgets) meaning each would have the right to max signage to zoning and they can negotiate down to reduce the overall signage than what would otherwise be allowed.

**4. Conditional Use request to allow gravel-surfaced truck/tractor-trailer parking on Bethlehem Road west of Highway 42 (Parcel IDs: 111-01013015, 111-0103016, 111-0103020) –**

The applicant Zack Hinton, Jr., is requesting conditional use for the purpose of developing a gravel truck parking lot. Staff recommends approval with conditions (read aloud).

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.

Clayton Carte, of Locust Grove stepped forward to comment. Clayton said he is not in opposition; however, the property is overwhelmingly in the path where GDOT will be for the Bethlehem Road improvements and is asking the council to consider their decision due to the location and had concerns with that affecting land acquisition costs for the R/W needed. Nothing further.

Mayor Price asked for comments from the council.

Daunté said objectively, staff's recommendation remains the same. We don't know for sure and it's contingent to change; however, the council can add a condition to require right-of-way. Andy said we can't conditionalize any right-of-way because that would conflict with federal standards. With Andy's clarification, Daunté said the staff's recommendation remains the same and discussion took place. Tim said this is already zoned for use and the applicant could wait to see where GDOT stands. Andy said if you grant a conditional use, GDOT, through the appraisal process would have to consider any business impacts. Daunté said the developer is not present tonight.

Discussion took place about the Bethlehem Interchange project. Andy said Locust Grove contributed \$1 million dollars for the concept design. Councilman Shearouse asked if the council can conditionalize the dust control, thickness of gravel, etc. and Daunté said yes.

Councilman Greer asked if this would potentially turn into overnight stay(s). Daunté said if it is dust free and paved there will be stormwater requirements. Greer asked if we could require a restroom facility on site. Andy said staff can conditionalize as a requirement; however, as facilities are added, you would be encouraging longer stays. Greer asked how often the gravel would be scraped and Daunté said we can't require or determine how often. Daunté asked if the council wanted to add a condition for annual inspection on gravel replacement (by code enforcement) and Greer said yes. Boone also wants to add a condition for keeping the property neat and clean. Daunté said he would add as a condition.

#### **OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS – NONE**

#### **NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS –**

##### **5. Resolution to accept the proposal from Ross & Associates for assistance in updating the city's Development Impact Fee program –**

Assistant City Manager Bert Foster stepped forward. Bert said the city implemented this ordinance in 2005 for measuring growth and the impact of that growth on the city's public safety, parks, and roads. The full process will take about eight months and cost the city \$79,500. Staff recommends approval. Tim said the funds will come from our program and that account has about \$80,000.

Councilman Boone asked how often this needs to be updated and Bert said about every ten years. Andy said Bert is correct, and depending on what the capital plan is, staff may want to do it sooner.

Councilman Williams asked if we have spent close to the \$50 million that is referenced in the report from 2005 for public safety, parks, and roads. Tim said taking into consideration the factors of the original study, it showed the city should have 43,000 people by now; however, by this time, our growth is only ¼ of that, and our needs are less but cost a lot more.

Councilman Shearouse asked if the water/sewer fees are included in this update, and Bert said the city has a separate impact fee program for water/sewer (tap fees). Shearouse asked if the fees are up to date, and Tim said those need to be updated but are ok for now.

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Shearouse made the motion to approve the request by approving resolution **#23-04-037**.

RESULT	APPROVED RESOLUTION # 23-04-037
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN SHEAROUSE
2 <sup>ND</sup> MOTION	COUNCILMAN BREEDLOVE
VOTE	MOTION CARRIED - ALL IN FAVOR

**CITY OPERATION REPORTS / WORKSHOP DISCUSSION ITEMS -**

**MAIN STREET OPERATIONS – COLLEEN COOK**

Ms. Cook gave an update HPC met and two COAs were approved for Looks Hair Salon and Eagles Landing Family Practice (now Aylo). HPC members attended online training for preservation planning. The Main Street, Inc. did not meet but two people are being interviewed for the board. DDA is continuing with planning and Black Rose Café’ was purchased and the new ownership is in process. After the re-opening the business will be open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Locust Grove Day was a success, and Colleen said thank you to everyone who made this event a success. Nothing further.

**PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATIONS – CHIEF AUSTIN**

Chief Austin reviewed the monthly report and gave an update total collected in March 2023 was \$73,040.00. The department completed 344 training hours in March. We had 33 new cases for investigation and cleared 30 of those cases. The murder case is still ongoing, and the suspect is still incarcerated. Nothing further.

**PUBLIC WORKS – JACK ROSE**

Public Works Director Jack Rose said Price Drive is now closed (with a gate) and staff also relocated the city limit sign. Jack said regular street maintenance, grass cutting, and day-to-day operations were ongoing. Nothing further.

Councilman Breedlove asked Jack to check on the stop sign at Market Place where the signal is currently operating. Nothing further.

**ADMINISTRATION – BERT FOSTER**

Mr. Foster gave an update for the Peeksville Road Extension and the water line installation for the extra lane on Highway 42 which is 99% complete. The retaining wall under the bridge for the Bill Gardner Parkway modifications is wrapping up and advised contractor to delay until 9AM to avoid future traffic backups. The contractor should be preparing for paving in Leesburg Plantation next then followed by Walker Crossing. Bert said he is contacting the grading contractor tomorrow for final estimates on the scatter garden/veteran’s memorial project. GDOT confirmed bids were received for the signal at Bethlehem Road and Highway 42 and being reviewed by GDOT Atlanta. The PIOH for the Bethlehem Road Interchange was last Thursday and any comments or concerns need to be submitted to him by Wednesday. We are facing challenges with relocating the server from the water department to the Public Safety Building and will be relocating the water department staff to the administrative department during the City Hall repairs. Bert said he attended training in Philadelphia for the National Planning Conference and retained very good information. Nothing further.

Councilman Greer said he thought we discussed public works staff doing the grading for the scatter garden. Bert said he can discuss with staff; however, the same grader (Roberts Hauling and Pipeline) may be able to do the grading. Tim said this would take the load off staff. Andy said the council asked for utilization of new staff (heavy equipment operator) to do the grading and Andy said Councilman Greer is asking why this has not been done. Greer asked if the staff was unable to do the work. Jack said his staff can do it, but

the contractor has their equipment on site already. Councilman Breedlove said Jack confirmed at the last meeting his staff could do it. Councilman Williams asked what the hold up is for the scatter garden. Bert said the specialty stone mason for the block work [stone mason from Jackson]. Discussion took place with Jack about the grading and Tim said staff will coordinate with Jack and update the council next week. Mayor Price said he requested Roberts Hauling provide a bid for grading. Nothing further.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONS –DAUNTÉ GIBBS**

Mr. Gibbs gave an update that the department has issued a total of eight 350 permits (including 59 new house permits) for 2023. We have issued 46 COs [24 residential, and 22 commercial] and 250 business licenses issued so far for 2023. Daunté continued with items that will be forthcoming for action in May.

**6. Ordinance to approve the final plat for Bridle Creek Phase 2A subdivision located on Highway 42 in Parcel #147-01009016 –**

Daunté reviewed this request and said it is proposed for six single-family residential lots. Staff recommends approval.

**7. Ordinance to approve the final plat for Collinswood Phase II (LG Griffin Pod D) located on Kirkland Dr. in Parcel # 130-01002012 –**

Daunté reviewed this request and said the general concept is eleven single-family residential lots. Staff recommends approval.

**8. Ordinance to approve a final plat for Cedar Ridge (Pod D Phase I) located on Tanger Boulevard, Parcel ID# 130-01005000 –**

Daunté reviewed and said this is for 127 lots on 43.5 acres zoned PR-4. Staff recommends approval.

**9. Review of proposed landscape plan for CarMax to be located on Price Drive –**

Daunté said the applicant submitted a request for a waiver to reduce landscape buffering (from 50 ft. to 30ft.) and tree replanting. The applicant agreed to install a privacy fence and staff recommends the council approve or deny staff proceeding with approving the proposed landscape plan and Daunté read the conditions aloud that are recommended.

Councilman Breedlove asked Daunté what he recommends and why no approval or denial by staff. Daunté said this request goes beyond staff's ability to recommend approval/denial. The applicant has diligently strived to meet the city's code requirements due to the natural landscape that exists; therefore, Daunté said he would approve what has been submitted. They are not requesting a variance only verbiage.

Councilman Shearouse asked what is considered an opaque fence. Daunté said a wood or vinyl fence and if the council wants an 8-foot vs. 6-foot tall fence as a condition can be added. Discussion took place about the fence around the entire development and clarity on the west side of the area in terms of landscaping.

Michael Boseman and Steve Hudak stepped forward to comment.

Michael said the request is for a reduction to 30 feet on two areas [east side and north side] at the retention wall. The majority is pastureland, and a lot of earth is being disturbed in the pasture. Steve said the original plan was for industrial use, and we can avoid a heap of dirt being hauled off with this reduction. A discussion took place and review of the plan displayed on the overhead screen.

Councilman Shearouse said his concern is the parking lot of this development will be close to his backyard. Steve said a 6-foot wall is proposed around the perimeter of the property. Discussion took place about landscaping around the base of the hill at the wall. Michael asked how thick the tree line is on the Shearouse's property. Clifford Shearouse (from the public) said his back yard is fifty feet from the creek. Discussion took place. Councilman Greer asked if the concerns/questions by Councilman Shearouse are on behalf of city concern or individual (Shearouse) because he doesn't want any negative feedback (from anyone) regarding the development.

Steve said the property hasn't been purchased, it is still under contract. This is a learning process for them, but they would have to evaluate how to achieve what the council is asking. Tim said you are grading into a 50-foot buffer, and the buffer will remain stripped of vegetation. Discussion took place about the need for fencing on top of the hill with potential planting. Michael said the challenge is the 2:1 slope in terms of trees that could grow on such a hillside. The intent would be to meet the density and the points that are required. The code says only a certain percentage of pines can be used.

Discussion took place about the condition of the existing trees. Daunté suggested the applicant submit a proposal for staff review and said if he can verify if the use of loblolly pines will suffice; he has no problem with approval. Daunté said the plans need to be revised to show the southern slope push back (5 feet) and have appropriate vegetation that will provide growth. The buffer requirement is 50 feet, and the stream buffer requirement is different. Daunté said because of the sensitivity of this request, staff decided it was prudent to involve the council before approving. We will bring it back to the council at the May 15, 2023, meeting. Andy said the [stream buffer] ordinance is not based on what EPD says.

#### **ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD (ARB) –**

##### **10. Resolution approving the architectural plans submitted for The Shops at Indian Creek –**

Daunté said the most recent renderings do comply and staff recommends approval with conditions. Daunté said the conditions have been met. Nothing further.

##### **11. Resolution approving the architectural plans submitted for the remodel of an existing structure located at 4971 Bill Gardner Parkway –**

Daunté said this is a request to remodel the existing IHOP building to Chase Bank. Staff recommends approval. Nothing further.

#### **CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS –TIM YOUNG**

##### **12. FY 2023 Budget – 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter update –**

Tim said we added new accounts for property tax and amendments in Hotel/Motel. Overall looking good in revenue and expenditures and did clean up from importing the budget after year-end closeout.

Councilman Shearouse asked why the highlighted items? Tim said he highlighted as internal reminders for either adjusting out or making changes.

##### **13. Ordinance to update the Storm Water Management – Chapter 15.36 –**

Tim said this is to bring the city's current and post development Stormwater Management regulations into full compliance. We are working on an ordinance to amend the Stormwater Utility ordinance to increase rates for development to be equal to Henry County and surrounding areas.



Further, Tim said he provided a handout as part of Leadership Henry, and the city is sponsoring a rocking chair. If the council is interested, we will make an amendment to add the item. We are preparing to submit comments related to the PIOH [Bethlehem Road Interchange]. Tim said he sent out information regarding tentative dates for a retreat. I have received a few responses; however, need the rest so that we can finalize.

Finally, we are in the process of requesting to reduce the speed limit from 55 MPH to 45 MPH on the northside past Bill Gardner and the south side below Grove Road. We are reviewing funds to determine if we can begin work at Davis Road and Highway 42 for traffic signals. Tim said we are also in the process of looking at paperwork required for the CID [discussed previously], and if successful, the city will be the first in Henry County to have a CID. Nothing further.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS - NONE**

**MAYOR’S COMMENTS – NONE**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION – PERSONNEL**

Motion to go into executive session to discuss personnel items by Councilman Breedlove and seconded by Councilman Shearouse. Motion Carried All in favor 9:22 PM.

At 10:10 PM, motion to come back into regular session made by Councilman Shearouse and seconded by Councilman Breedlove.

**ADJOURNMENT-**

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

RESULT	ADOPTED
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN BREEDLOVE
2 <sup>ND</sup> MOTION	COUNCILMAN SHEAROUSE
VOTE	MOTION CARRIED - ALL IN-FAVOR MEETING ADJOURNED @ 10:10PM.

Notes taken by:

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Misty Spurling, City Clerk