

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

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

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

Invocation given by City Manager Tim Young

Councilman Williams led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA –

Mayor Price asked for a motion to amend the agenda to remove item six. Councilman Greer made the motion to remove item six until further notice.

RESULT	REMOVED ITEM SIX
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN GREER
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN TAYLOR
VOTE	MOTION CARRIED - ALL IN FAVOR

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

RESULT	APPROVED AS AMENDED
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN GREER
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN WILLIAMS
VOTE	MOTION CARRIED - ALL IN FAVOR

PUBLIC COMMENTS –

- **Henry County Board of Education – Strategic Plan update –**

Mary Davis, Superintendent with the Henry County Board of Education stepped forward to comment. Ms. Davis said this is an annual update on ways we can serve together as a community. Ms. Davis recognized leaders present from the Locust Grove schools including (Elementary, Middle and High Schools.) Ms. Davis said Mr. Kevin Van Tone, Assistant Superintendent, is present tonight and will be reviewing the presentation. Mr. Kevin Van Tone stepped forward and thanked the Mayor and Council for the opportunity to provide this update. Mr. Van Tone

reviewed the slides on the overhead screen. Mr. Van Tone said Locust Grove is the eighth largest school district in Georgia and the High-Performance School district was developed by citizens of Henry County schools in 2019. Discussion took place about strategic actions, advanced courses for opportunities for student outcome, and keeping kids safe [with \$33 million dollars investment] in safety.

Councilman Greer thanked Mr. Van Tone and the HCBOE staff and teachers for all they do for his children every day. The mayor and all the council said thank you as well. Attorney Andy Welch said it takes someone who has a vision and great communication and applauded the constant effort and presence of leadership of the school system.

- **Presentation by Tanya Lewis – People Help Exchange Community Food Bank –**

Ms. Tanya Lewis stepped forward to comment. Ms. Lewis said she has lived in Locust Grove for 13 years and said she is accompanied by Ms. JoAnn Lawrence with Fruit of the Spirit Princesses. Ms. Lewis said the organization she is speaking on behalf of is a minority program supporting families who are at poverty level. Ms. Lewis said she is here to seek support from Locust Grove. Further, Ms. Lewis said the need [for food and other necessities] is continuing to increase with families throughout Locust Grove and said there are 51% Caucasian families in Locust Grove and the remainder are a minority [or below poverty level]. Her organization serves 284 families in Locust Grove each month and 18 of the 57 seniors in the senior housing in Locust Grove. The cost to operate the facility, including utilities and purchasing food is \$1,000 per month. Ms. Lawrence said the Skyland community is the main area in need.

Councilman Williams asked Tim what amount Locust Grove contributes to Henry County. Tim said we participate with the county with the CDBG program. Ms. Lewis said she received contributions from Henry County last year; however, they directed her back to Locust Grove for funding this year. Tim asked Ms. Lewis what she needs specifically. Ms. Lewis said food is the largest need; however, blankets, pillows, diapers, etc. are also needed.

Councilman Greer asked what the city is contributing to the county. Tim said the county distributes all the funding because we jointly participate [\$1 million dollars per year] by formula (operations, capital, etc.) and we would have to administer by contract. Tim said he will check with Henry County and ask why they are not giving accordingly. Tim said the need is huge and there are many local food banks. Tim said we will reach out to Commissioner Wilson for more clarity.

Andy said the city doesn't have the authority to give money unless to a non-profit and this organization is a 501c (3) organization. Nothing further.

Mayor Price asked Ms. Audrey Stephenson to step forward.

Ms. Audrey Stephenson stepped forward to comment about the train horn and quiet zone. Ms. Stephenson said she has lived on Jackson Street 16 years and is aware of federal law (the train must blow four times before approaching the crossing). Ms. Stephenson said she hears the horn blow twelve times, and it is very disturbing. Ms. Stephenson asked if a policy can be established for a quiet zone because this has become unhealthy. She said she is very passionate about this and will continue to seek a solution until a policy is set. Discussion took place.

Andy said we will inquire with Norfolk Southern and review the options. Nothing further.

Councilman Shearouse thanked Ms. Stephenson for her email and confirmed the location she is concerned about (Jackson Street crossing). Nothing further.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS –

1. FY 2024 Operating and Capital Improvements Budget hearing (First Hearing) –

Tim stepped forward to review the FY 2024 budget. Tim reviewed each slide on the overhead screen and highlighted certain details of each fund and said this includes a combined budget of \$23 million dollars. Discussion took place about expenses and revenues and added that we received \$2.7 million dollars in LMIG funds. Discussion took place about the possibility of imposing a tax to help offset the budget due to the city needs increasing.

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

Mayor Price asked for public comment from anyone opposed to the request and there were no comments.

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

Councilman Greer asked why we would have to levy a tax and reduce if not effecting citizens? Tim said LOST has been the substitute for property tax. If we maintain a positive account and meet expenditures, we wouldn't have to have a property tax. Sales tax always filled the gap; however, the city's needs have increased. Our budget has always covered the needs and now we will need to dip into the reserves for expenditures (police expenses, capital projects). We spent \$1 million dollars from the general fund for Bethlehem Road interchange. We want to make sure we don't go below fifty percent of our budget.

Councilman Williams asked if we would adjust the budget to fit the tax levy. Tim said we can lower some from using the previous year revenue and still be within our capital. We don't have a levied property tax until June/July.

Andy said the LOST rolls the property tax back to zero because sales tax revenue allowed us to not have a sales tax. With the road infrastructure and other projects ahead, Tim is concerned the sales tax revenue will not cover those needs ahead. The city is growing, and needs continue for staffing, road improvements, sewer plant expansion and will outstrip the current revenue stream which will lead to a millage rate in June. Tim said this would affect the businesses not the homeowners with homestead exemption.

Councilman Boone asked what millage rate this is calculated from. Tim said this is using last years rate and about 3.49 mills. Our digest has been growing about 100 million per year. If living in the city the property taxes are lower than that of a homeowner in unincorporated Henry County.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES –

2. OCTOBER 2, 2023- REGULAR MEETING MINUTES –

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Shearouse made the motion to approve the October 2, 2023, regular meeting minutes.

RESULT	APPROVED OCTOBER 2, 2023, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN SHEAROUSE
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN BOONE
FAVOR	MOTION CARRIED – ALL IN FAVOR

3. OCTOBER 16, 2023- WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES –

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Williams made the motion to approve the October 16, 2023, workshop meeting minutes.

RESULT	APPROVED OCTOBER 16, 2023, WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN WILLIAMS
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN BOONE
FAVOR	MOTION CARRIED – ALL IN FAVOR

4. OCTOBER 16, 2023- EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES –

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Boone made the motion to approve the October 16, 2023, executive session meeting minutes.

RESULT	APPROVED OCTOBER 16, 2023, EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN BOONE
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN TAYLOR
FAVOR	MOTION CARRIED – ALL IN FAVOR

ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT –

5. SEPTEMBER 2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Williams made the motion to approve the September 2023 financial statement.

RESULT	APPROVED SEPTEMBER 2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENT
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN WILLIAMS
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN BOONE
FAVOR	MOTION CARRIED – ALL IN FAVOR

UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS –

6. Resolution to adopt the annual update of the Capital Improvement Element for the city (Motion Required) –

Item removed from the agenda until further notice.

7. Ordinance to amend the City of Locust Grove Future Land Use Plan from Service Commercial and Parks, Recreation and Conservation to Industrial for property located on Highway 42 (Parcels: 111-01012000, 111-01012001, 111-01011000, and 111-0101000) in LL 233 of the 2nd district for the purpose of developing a gravel surfaced truck/tractor-trailer parking lot -

Councilman Breedlove read a letter of recusal to recuse himself from all discussion and deliberation for items seven, eight, and nine. Breedlove exited the meeting.

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Taylor made the motion to approve the request.

RESULT	ORDINANCE DENIED
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN TAYLOR
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN SHEAROUSE
FAVOR	MOTION NOT CARRIED – TWO IN FAVOR (SHEAROUSE AND TAYLOR) AND THREE OPPOSED (GREER, BOONE, AND WILLIAMS)

Daunté said the staff recommendation was approval; however, the motion to approve failed. The motion resulted in denial.

8. Ordinance to rezone property located on Highway 42 Parcels: 111-01012000, 111-01012001, 111-01011000, and 111-0101000) in LL 233 of the 2nd district from RA (residential agriculture) to M-1 (light manufacturing) for the purpose of developing a gravel surfaced truck/tractor-trailer parking lot -

Daunté said staff’s recommendation is now denial based on the FLUM being denied; however, if the council chooses to approve the request, conditions will be attached.

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Shearouse made the motion to approve the request with conditions recommended by staff by approving ordinance # 23-11-088.

Daunté read seven conditions aloud.

RESULT	REQUEST APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS ORDINANCE # 23-11-088
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN SHEAROUSE
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN TAYLOR
FAVOR	MOTION CARRIED – THREE IN FAVOR (SHEAROUSE, TAYLOR, GREER) AND TWO OPPOSED (WILLIAMS, BOONE)

Councilman Greer made a comment the LCI Study showed the industrial corridor north of town, correct? Bert said the study identified three areas of study including (downtown, gateway, and residential south of the city). Andy said there was a future land use plan that focused on industrial to the north and discussion took place.

Councilman Williams said since the FLUM was denied, would the items following not automatically be denied? Daunté said the recommendations are still the same, but the council can approve even though staff recommends denial. The conditions are added should the council approve. The Future Land Use categories do not support zoning.

Andy said the current motion is to approve the rezoning as requested with conditions staff recommends.

9. Ordinance for a Conditional Use to allow gravel-surfaced truck/tractor-trailer parking on property located on Highway 42 (Parcels: 111-01012000, 111-01012001, 111-01011000, and 111-01010000) -

Daunté said staff recommends denial of this request; however, if the council motions to approve the request, staff recommends conditions and Daunté read conditions one through nine aloud.

Andy said if approved with the staff conditions, the same conditions are placed on other gravel facilities for consistency.

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Shearouse made the motion to approve the request with staff conditions. Motion to approve failed and ordinance **#23-11-093** to deny a Conditional Use is approved.

RESULT	ORDINANCE #23-11-093 DENIED
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN SHEAROUSE
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN TAYLOR
FAVOR	MOTION NOT CARRIED – TWO IN FAVOR (SHEAROUSE AND TAYLOR) AND THREE OPPOSED (BOONE, GREER, WILLIAMS)

Andy made a comment to point out for clarification that corresponds with instruction from Daunté in the past from a planning viewpoint; advising that the council makes consistent decisions.

Andy said the council denied the FLUM request (item seven) leaving it as a service commercial designation and voted to affirm change in the zoning which is now making the FLUM inconsistent with the zoning. Andy said this is the only opportunity for the council to make the FLUM consistent and change the original motion [of denial]. Another opportunity will come up in a few weeks; however, as it stands now, the zoning to M-1 is not consistent with the FLUM.

Councilman Greer made the motion to reconsider the vote on item seven (FLUM amendment).

RESULT	APPROVE RECONSIDERATION OF ITEM SEVEN
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN GREER
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN WILLIAMS
FAVOR	MOTION CARRIED – FOUR IN FAVOR (GREER, WILLIAMS, SHEAROUSE, AND TAYLOR) AND ONE OPPOSED (BOONE)

Andy said the council has made the motion to reconsider the decision for item seven. Now the council can proceed with reconsideration.

ITEM SEVEN (7) – ORIGINAL MOTION AMENDED -

Councilman Greer made the motion to approve the FLUM amendment (item seven) by approving ordinance **#23-11-087**.

RESULT	APPROVED ORDINANCE #23-11-087
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN GREER
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN SHEAROUSE
FAVOR	MOTION DENIED – FOUR IN FAVOR (GREER, SHEAROUSE, TAYLOR, WILLIAMS) AND ONE OPPOSED (BOONE)

Councilman Breedlove returned to the meeting.

10. Ordinance to amend Section 17.04.090 Residential Growth Regulation to update residential growth limitations –

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Williams made the motion to approve the request by approving ordinance #23-11-089.

RESULT	APPROVED ORDINANCE #23-11-089
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN WILLIAMS
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN BREEDLOVE
FAVOR	MOTION CARRIED –ALL IN FAVOR

11. Resolution to create a streetlight district in River Oaks subdivision, Phase I –

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Greer made the motion to approve the request by approving resolution #23-11-090.

RESULT	APPROVED RESOLUTION #23-11-090
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN GREER
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN WILLIAMS
FAVOR	MOTION CARRIED –ALL IN FAVOR

12. Resolution to create a streetlight district in Peeksville Landing subdivision -

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Williams made the motion to approve the request by approving resolution #23-11-091.

RESULT	APPROVED RESOLUTION #23-11-091
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN WILLIAMS
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN GREER
FAVOR	MOTION CARRIED –ALL IN FAVOR

NEW BUSINESS/ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS –

13. Ordinance to prescribe the scheduling of regular meetings of the Mayor and Council for the Calendar Year 2024 -

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Williams made the motion to approve the request by approving ordinance # 23-11-092.

RESULT	APPROVED ORDINANCE #23-11-092
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN WILLIAMS
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN BOONE
FAVOR	MOTION CARRIED – ALL IN FAVOR

CITY MANAGER’S COMMENTS –

Tim said we will be closed on Friday November 10, 2023, for Veteran’s Day and our employee Christmas lunch is Thursday November 9, 2023, at 11:30AM. Tim reviewed the upcoming observed city holidays (Thanksgiving Day, Day After Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, and December 26, 2023). Also, please join us on Thanksgiving night for the annual tree lighting. We have the Renewal by Andersen groundbreaking ceremony on November 15, 2023, at 10:00 AM. Nothing further.

Councilman Boone asked about the “No U-turn” signs for Bill Gardner from Marketplace. Bert said those have been ordered and the yield sign will be removed.

14. Items for upcoming Legislative Session –

Andy said we discussed [at the retreat] adding additional areas of the city boundaries to the south at Butts County and other areas as part of the annexations.

Councilman Greer made a comment that Chair Harrell said any roads annexed into the city would be the cities’ responsibility to maintain infrastructure. Andy said Chair Harrell is not correct and that is not the law. Andy said if both sides of the road are annexed, yes, but if only one side is annexed it would remain a county road. Discussion took place and Andy said this will come to the council for action at the next meeting. Councilman Boone said he is still opposed because it would eventually cost the city more money.

Tim said the salary study is complete and the results reflect an increase in salaries overall. A 4% increase is already factored into the budget for next year and would be about a 3.5% increase to the longevity of the budget. Nothing further.

COUNCIL COMMENTS – NONE

MAYOR’S COMMENTS – NONE

EXECUTIVE SESSION – NONE

ADJOURNMENT –

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

RESULT	APPROVED – ADJOURN MEETING
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN WILLIAMS
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN SHEAROUSE
FAVOR	MOTION CARRIED MEETING ADJOURNED @ 8:05 PM.

Notes taken by:

Misty Spurling
City Clerk