



CITY OF TOCCOA
CITY COMMISSION
MINUTES • MARCH 25, 2024

Regular Meeting

City Commission/Court Room

5:00 PM

92 North Alexander, Toccoa, GA 30577

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Gail Fry called the regular meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Reverend Paul Garrison.

PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

ROLL CALL

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Terry Carter	Vice Mayor	Present	
Gail Fry	Mayor	Present	
Evan Hellenga	Commissioner	Present	
Ron Matheson	Commissioner	Present	
Michelle Jamieson	Commissioner	Present	
Fredda O. Wheeler	City Manager	Present	
John Dickerson	Attorney	Present	
Beth Rider	City Clerk	Present	

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Hellenga, seconded by Vice-Mayor Carter to approve the agenda and consent agenda. Motion was carried unanimously.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Evan Hellenga, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Terry Carter, Vice Mayor
AYES:	Carter, Fry, Hellenga, Matheson, Jamieson

REPORTS

Commissioner Hellenga reported he attended the Humane Shelter Board meeting February 19th. Commissioner Hellenga gave some interesting numbers for February the shelter took in 117 animals, adopted 74, returned 10 to owner, transferred out 17 and 15 were put down. The live release rate was 87. The City and County had requested a two year audit, we have not received it yet. Commissioner Hellenga stated we have worked with the Executive Director to use more basic accounting principles to give a report easier to understand.

Commissioner Hellenga commented on the show at the Ritz over the weekend.

Vice-Mayor Carter reported he also serves on the Humane Shelter Board and the American Woodmark Foundation awarded a \$1,000.00 grant to the shelter. The shelter has applied for a grant from the Atlanta Humane Society for a 2024 Ford Van.

Vice-Mayor Carter stated on March 22nd, the Downtown Development Authority met and one of

the reports given was Stan Roberts building on the corner of Sage Street and Savannah has been converted to apartments and Stan has applied for a facade grant for \$15,000.00 and that will be awarded at the April meeting.

Vice-Mayor Carter gave an update on the brick fund raising campaign, Kristen said they sold 506 bricks, raising \$76, 700.00. The expenses are \$50,000.00 which would net around \$27,000.00. We appreciate Main Street and the employees working hard to sell the bricks.

Vice-Mayor Carter stated it was a treat to have four new businesses that came to the Downtown Development Meeting that will be new to Downtown. One of those businesses is Middle-Earth Café being opened by Nathan Collins and will be on the corner of Tugalo and Broad Street. They will be selling coffees and tea. Another new business to Downtown is Wesley's on Doyle, it is a cigar lounge, it is under contract in the R&R Prime location. It will be an upscale facility similar to the one in Anderson. Vice-Mayor Carter stated we have a bakery coming to town located on Sage Street, Liz Payne is the owner and she is already successful selling sour dough bread and rolls. We also met Jorge Ortega that is opening a restaurant in the old Waffle House on Currahee Street that has been renovated. We are really excited about what he has to offer.

Vice-Mayor Carter stated we had a bid opening for the Greenspace lights. We got a bid from Georgia Power for \$88,000.00, Foothills Contracting \$34, 619.00, Hayes Electric \$38,450.00. Dillon Long, Foothills Contracting has been very generous to donate back to the City \$13,000.00 to go toward that effort. We appreciate Dillon and what he does for the City.

Commissioner Ron Matheson reported he meets monthly with the Chamber, last week we discussed Stephens County Day at the Capitol which is tomorrow. We have about 26 people going.

Also, the Chamber would like to remind everyone about the Town Hall Meeting on Monday, April 15th at the Ritz at 6:00 p.m., questions for the candidates can be submitted to the Chamber of Commerce.

Commissioner Matheson congratulated Main Street on an exceptional brick campaign they did a wonderful job.

City Manager Fredda Wheeler ask Jeremy Ward to give an update on the construction of the Tugalo Greenspace Project.

Planning Director Jeremy Ward stated we wrapped up the brick campaign last week and we are still working with some Companies who are interested in sponsoring the park. We were pleased, the community and Commission really came behind this project we blew past our target of 350 bricks; over 500 bricks were sold which relieved a lot of financial stress for this project. Mr. Ward stated infrastructure has been under way for about one and a half to two weeks, TriScapes has been out there hard at work with a team of 5-10 men every morning and afternoons weather permitting. They are working on all the concrete work, sidewalks and curb and gutters. Mr. Ward stated he checks on them daily and so far no snags and seems according to schedule. They are purchasing all of their concrete from a local supplier in town.

Mayor Fry reported last week she had a meeting with the Development Authority and they are busy recruiting new businesses to our entire community. They had some upgrades to the Lift

Station that is coming out on the 106 property in preparation for that project. Hopefully we will see movement on that before too long. Mayor Fry stated they continue to meet with Investment Companies to recruit people to our community. They work great with the youth getting them involved, they go out to the existing businesses to make sure they have what they need and keep strong lines of communication.

I. CONSENT AGENDA

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Evan Hellenga, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Terry Carter, Vice Mayor
AYES:	Carter, Fry, Hellenga, Matheson, Jamieson

A. Request for Approval of Minutes of March 11, 2024 Commission Meeting

II. OLD BUSINESS

III. NEW BUSINESS

B. Public Hearing: Consideration of Rezoning Request from Chuck Wright for Property Located on Parkway Drive

Attorney John Dickerson opened the public hearing for any one that would like to speak in favor of the consideration of rezoning request from Chuck Wright for property located on Parkway Drive.

Chuck Wright, 3799 Hwy 184, Toccoa, Georgia. Mr. Wright spoke in favor of the request to rezone to Multi-Family and would like to build multi-family residences.

Ms. Jennifer Hulse - 157 Parkway Drive, Toccoa, Georgia stated she is in the middle not for or against. She supported the sale and the property would allow for need of additional rental properties but wanted the parcel excluded from Currahee Heights Subdivision and any access to Parkway Drive permanently obstructed.

No one else spoke in favor.

Residents who spoke in opposition to the request.

Dan Moyer - Parkway Drive

Herman King - 358 Skyline Drive

Angela Thurman - 383 Parkway Drive - discussed the erosion from water coming from Big A Road, discussed the dead end road (driveway), she stated she has fought for this neighborhood for years.

Christina Beck - 343 Parkway Drive -

Roy Graham - 90 Parkway Drive -

Tammy Wilson - 29 Parkway Drive corner of Parkway and Skyline Drive

Doug Westmoreland - 68 Parkway Drive, Co-Owner of property

Sheila Patterson - 1256 Highview, Has property on Parkway Dr

Martha Boyer - 277 Parkway Drive

Carmen Martinez - 48 Parkway Drive

Mr. Wright stated if he had known the neighbors were all against this project he would have removed it from the meeting. Mr. Wright asked the Board to deny his request.

Julie Paysen - 37 Boulevard - Ms. Paysen stated that housing is a huge issue in Toccoa and these type of developments are needed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hellenga, seconded by Commissioner Matheson to deny the rezoning request. Motion carried unanimously to deny the request.

Mayor Fry thanked everyone for coming out and voicing their opinion every one of us are elected to represent you. Mayor Fry stated the Board is here to listen to each of you and support our community. Mayor Fry stated we owe Mr. Wright a debt of gratitude for coming forward.

Tim Beck - 343 Parkway Drive - stated we did not know about the meeting until Wednesday because the sign could not be seen.

Mayor Fry stated we are required to put the sign on the property.

RESULT:	DENIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Evan Hellenga, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Ron Matheson, Commissioner
AYES:	Carter, Fry, Hellenga, Matheson, Jamieson

C. Consideration of Appointment to the Historic Preservation Commission

A motion was made by Commissioner Hellenga, seconded by Vice-Mayor Carter to approve appointment of Brenda Carlan to the Historic Preservation Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Evan Hellenga, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Terry Carter, Vice Mayor
AYES:	Carter, Fry, Hellenga, Matheson, Jamieson

D. Consideration of Paving Boathouse Lane

City Manager Fredda Wheeler stated the short road and parking area is in need of paving for people to utilize this facility easier. We received an estimate from Thomason Construction in the amount of \$22,500; the funds are available through SPLOST.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jamieson, seconded by Commissioner Hellenga to approve the paving of Boathouse Lane. Motion carried unanimously.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Michelle Jamieson, Commissioner
SECONDER: Evan Hellenga, Commissioner
AYES: Carter, Fry, Hellenga, Matheson, Jamieson

E. Consideration of Moratorium on the Issuance of Alcoholic Beverage Licenses

City Manager Fredda Wheeler stated the current moratorium for alcoholic beverages will expire on March 31, 2024 we are asking for an extension of the moratorium be put in place until June 1, 2025 pending the review and amendment of the entire alcoholic beverage ordinance by our Alcohol and Beverage Control Board.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Carter, seconded by Commissioner Jamieson to approve moratorium extension. Motion carried unanimously.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Terry Carter, Vice Mayor
SECONDER: Michelle Jamieson, Commissioner
AYES: Carter, Fry, Hellenga, Matheson, Jamieson

F. Consideration of Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System Defined Benefit Retirement Plan

City Manager Fredda Wheeler stated on August 31, 2023 the IRS issued a favorable opinion letter for the Amended and Restated Third Six-Year Cycle Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System Defined Benefit Retirement Plan. The plan as approve incorporates required federal law updates, as well as administrative updates adopted by the Board of Trustees of GMEBS over the last several years. The IRS requires that each Adopting Employer sign an updated DB Plan Adoption Agreement.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Carter, seconded by Commissioner Matheson to approve and adopt the updated plan. Motion carried unanimously.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Terry Carter, Vice Mayor
SECONDER: Ron Matheson, Commissioner
AYES: Carter, Fry, Hellenga, Matheson, Jamieson

G. Consideration of Reallocating SPLOST Funds in the Current Budget

City Manager Fredda Wheeler proposed replacing a tandem dump truck in our current 2024 budget and reallocating those funds of \$100,000.00 to move forward with a Hydraulic Water Model as proposed by our engineers Carter & Sloop. The water model would bring much more value to the Water Department and the City of Toccoa. The \$100,000.00 is budgeted in our SPLOST Funds and the additional \$2,500 will be covered with funds out of the reserve account.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jamieson, seconded by Commissioner Hellenga to approve the reallocation of SPLOST Funds. Motion carried unanimously.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Michelle Jamieson, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Evan Hellenga, Commissioner
AYES:	Carter, Fry, Hellenga, Matheson, Jamieson

H. Consideration to Change the Budget Meeting Calendar and Second Commission Meeting in April to Tuesday, April 16, 2024

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Carter, seconded by Commissioner Hellenga to approve changing the Budget Meeting to April 16, 2024 beginning at 1:00 pm and the second Commission meeting in April to Tuesday, April 16, 2024 at 5:00 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Terry Carter, Vice Mayor
SECONDER:	Evan Hellenga, Commissioner
AYES:	Carter, Fry, Hellenga, Matheson, Jamieson

I. Consideration of Lease Agreement for Paddle Boats

A motion was made by Commissioner Jamieson, seconded by Commissioner Matheson to approve lease agreement with Currahee Outdoors, LLC. for the use of Lake Toccoa Boathouse. Motion carried unanimously.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Michelle Jamieson, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Ron Matheson, Commissioner
AYES:	Carter, Fry, Hellenga, Matheson, Jamieson

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Recognition of Visitors Wishing to Speak on General Items. **(Limit 3 Minutes)**

Presentation from Kevin Levinsky Center for Wellness and Recovery presented their plans for revitalizing the Coats & Clark building.

Phase I will be Education and Training, partnering with North Georgia Technical College for skill sets.

Employment will be partnering with Patterson Pump

Residents will be in 12 week training and a 12 week apprentice program.

It will be an ECO System platform.

The Board also heard from Kathy Whitmire regarding housing and recovery.

Mayor Fry stated you all have talked a lot about recovery and we have a Moratorium on Recovery homes and this will require a lot more discussion before we agree to that.

V. ADJOURN

Mayor Fry adjourned the meeting at 6:32 p.m.



Mayor
Beth Ruder

City Clerk