

WALNUT GROVE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2016

Present at Meeting:

Mayor Lamar Lee
Carol Witcher
Kevin Schultz
Wayne Dimsdale
Kathy Dimsdale

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to Order by Mayor Lee

II. **INVOCATION**

Given by Carol Witcher

III. **PEDGE OF ALLIEGENCE**

IV. **AGENDA APPROVAL**

Motion made by Kevin Shultz to approve Agenda, Seconded by Wayne Dimsdale Motion Passed.

V. **PUBLIC HEARING – Zoning Map and Downtown Overlay**

Opened by Lee Abney and turned over to Joe Walter

a. Presented by Joe Walter with Precision Planning

Discussion

Joe Walter opened with the initial report regarding the public notice. Joe Walter I was asked to introduce the Downtown Overlay District back into the zoning ordinance. Back in 2007 we did a bunch of work and developed what was the downtown overlay district. And we went through a lot of discussions and put it in place to help guide in development up and down 138 and 81. Then the economy tanked and there wasn't a lot of need for that. In 2012 the Council adopted a new zoning ordinance and the downtown overlay district was not adopted at that time. So in August we made a bunch of technical changes to the ordinance but since then the Mayor has asked that we draft some language to introduce the Downtown Overlay District back into the ordinance. So what I have...distributed copies of zoning map. Also, as part of this process we would be amending the official zoning map to add the Overlay District back into the drawing. I took some concepts from the City of Grayson and tried to compress it into a much easier document to use. So what is before the Council is about 8 pages of text to be added to the zoning ordinance. Essentially it says if you were in the Downtown Overlay here in Walnut Grove. From the Crossroads up and out including the Parkway area. You are allowed some additional flexibility, lot sizes and setbacks you get to use a lot more of your property than you would otherwise if you were somewhere else in the city. This will encourage a downtown feel to your community. That came up in 2004 when you had a group from the University of Georgia who came through and did a lengthy study of Walnut Grove. So this is something that was in place before. It was not added in 2012. We want to add it back in given the fact the economy is improving we anticipate growth coming back in to the community. We want to get on the leading edge of that. We want to put some standards in place that will add some flexibility to site design. On street parking in some areas allow taller buildings, skinner buildings and try to get a better look at how the architecture goes. So if someone comes in the area now they have to do a site plan, building plans and provide you with elevation, materials, this will give the Council a chance to look at it to see if it kind of fits the criteria before they can apply for

a building permit. Wayne Dimsdale – But basically the commercial zoning on 138 and 81 as we submitted to the state many years ago. Joe Walter – An overlay district sits on top of it. It may change things underneath it but it doesn't change, what is zoned C-2 now is still C-2. It just allows a little flexibility that you wouldn't have if you were a C-2 outside of the district. Wayne Dimsdale – I know back then when we submitted to the State somewhere around 2000 and that is the one that was left off in 2007. That one in particular stated that if anybody wanted to go commercially on 138 or 81 beings we submitted that to the State that we really could not unless it fell totally against our ordinances we could not turn them down for going commercially. Is that correct? Is it still that way? Joe Walter – Ah no sir not now. Right now the way we set it up if it is zoned C-1 or C-2 or whatever you can do the uses generally permitted in that district. For instance you had an agricultural piece and wanted to come in and zone it commercial you had something you wanted to do that needed commercial zoning then they would have to come before the Council and make a permit to zone it. They also would have to show it was a good idea to ask you to zone it but they would also have to show the architectural and lighting as well. I don't think it is designed to set up to not allow a commercial district. A lot of the Overlay District now is zoned commercial. It just will give you more flexibility. Some of these lots are kind of small. Also on the Parkway we talked about some of these lots are small narrow lots. The Downtown feel of buildings close to the road. I took out a lot of the wordiness so that it was easier for an outside person to read or for staff or for us to interpret. Wayne Dimsdale – Does it still provide for commercial on two story buildings in the District to have residential over the top. Kind of like Madison did? Joe Walter - Yeah it does still allow for that. I think our Commercial zoning as it stands does allow that. Wayne Dimsdale – Will we still have the ability to require these businesses that come in to have three side brick, stucco or rock whatever on those and no metal buildings and no shacks put up. Joe Walter – yes it is in there. I specifically put it in there. We took a lot of this language from the city of Grayson. Wayne Dimsdale – Well we have always been very specific about wanting our town to look really good. It looks like we might be starting development and I want to make sure it is physically appealing. Joe Walter - What we are proposing is right along those lines. We put the process in where it is a little more clear what you have to submit to the City to get a building permit. It gives you a little more time to look at it. The City engineer would look at it first, which we do that now for you. And now we would have a better set of criteria. We left it open so it would come back to council for review. Carol Witcher – Mr. Walter, on page 5 as I am reading down at the window frames. What do we consider an historic color? I don't know that we have a defined historic color. Windows section D-1. Joe Walter – it just says the head and jam should be the historic color. I think there is a little bit of an interpretation there, I don't think neon pink would be a color. In that case what would happen would be if somebody submitted they would have to submit a finish board which has samples of the materials on the board that has details about the finish and colors proposed. That would give a chance to identify that. They only other thing you could do is put a partum chart which some jurisdictions do and they actually spell out the colors that are allowable. I didn't know if we want to go to that level just yet. Carol Witcher – I was just curious to what we might call a historic color. Because somebody might come in here with say ivory and we decide that's really not historic to this community, to this area, or to this part of the State. So that could be interpreted to either way. I don't think we as a Council have sat down and decided what we consider historic colors. It is ambiguous in that way to me. Joe Walter - The good thing is with the process now they have to submit, if they are going to build a new building or if they are going to do a renovation, the information. If a fast food were to come in they would have to meet your criteria they would not just come in and put up their standard store. Most of these places when they come in and they understand what we want they will build it into the project cost. It has been in place before but the Waffle House is the only business that came in under it.

Lee Abney – If there are no more questions we can move on with the Public Comments portion. At this time we will open up the floor for the public comment. We will ask for any citizens that are

speaking in favor of the zoning change if they will approach the podium and give their name. We will limit this portion for ten minutes. **No one came forward to speak in favor of the change.** If there are no comments for, we will open up the portion of the public hearing to any comments against this change. Again step forward to the podium, state your name and limit your comments to ten minutes please.

Maxine McClanahan – May I just ask a question. Mr. Walter said something about a taller building. What does that mean? Since I don't have anything to look at to know what is in the plan there. Joe Walter - Right now section 900 of your zoning ordinance specifies the maximum height. And I think right now C-2 is limited to three stories. I could check to be exact. At this time we haven't allowed any additional height. Most towns of this size, three stories is it. That could be introduced if the demand was there. Someone could always come in and ask for a variance.

Lee Abney- Are there any further comments against the zoning?

Cynthia Head – I just have a clarification question actually. He was talking since we don't have the information in front of us, is the grandfathering of the buildings that are already here in place?

When you do renovation on those I might consider it minor and someone else might consider it major. I mean that definition term could be very wide and broad. The ones that are grandfathered in does that mean they have to come before the Council before you do any renovation to the building? Joe Walter - In the ordinance on page 2 there is a section called non conforming uses. In this section if it is there now and continues to be what it is. If it is a store and continues to be a store but if it is a store and it is being changed to be a house then the provisions would trigger. A lot of this has to do with the exterior. If you wanted to paint and change out light fixtures it wouldn't trigger. But at some point if someone came in and bought a lot and cleared it off. We considered the fact there are a lot of businesses already in the district that would not meet the criteria. As long as it didn't trigger one of the criteria under section 800 it would still be allowed to operate as it is.

Janet Byrd – Well you know we are a small town and we are not going to get a big box store here in Walnut Grove. So if we keep Walnut Grove as a small town and cater to the small business don't you think we would be better off than having all this land that is sitting growing up and not having anything built on it at all. People are not going to come out here as long as they are going to have to spend a lot of money for a lot and a building. They are just not unless there is a lot of traffic. But there is just not a lot of foot traffic through here. Joe Walter – I understand. That is sort of a policy question for the Council but at the same. The Council's vision is to try as things do come that they do look presentable and also these materials will make it, the exterior, it could still be the way it will look and the way it will be maintained. It will certainly make it last longer and certainly not drop the property values. This is not any different than what was in place before. We just didn't have a chance to use it because there was no development. Wayne Dimsdale – Part of Ms. Byrd's question is yes, it is probably going to be an increase of people coming in here businesswise. It will increase now that we have sewer. What we are trying to do with this is control the growth so it is appealing to people when they see it. Joe Walter – We updated in August and we are preparing to send the copies to get published. This came up so if the Council approves it we will send it back and there will be hard copies at City Hall.

Lee Abney - Are there any further comments against the zoning? If there are none we will close the public hearing portion. Mr. Mayor I will turn it back over to the Council for discussion.

Mayor Lee - anyone have anything? Wayne Dimsdale- none. Kathy Dimsdale – none. Kevin Shultz – Are we voting on this evening? Mayor Lee – Yes. Is there a motion?

Wayne Dimsdale – I make a motion to adopt and add to our existing program, Mayor Lee – Is there a second? Kevin Shultz seconded the motion, motion passed.

Motion to amend the zoning map made by Wayne Dimsdale, seconded by Kevin Shultz, motion passed.

Joe Walter – I will make the changes and send a revised zoning map to Kathy and I will also send a revised version of the document with the changes to it in PDF and Word. You can make it available to whomever.

Lee Abney – That concludes the Public Hearing and I will turn it back over to the Mayor.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT
NONE

VII. MINUTES APPROVAL – October 17, 2016 City Council Minutes
Wayne Dimsdale made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, Kevin Shultz seconded the motion, motion passed.

VIII. PUBLIC WORKS
Public Works Director is out of town

IX. FINANCIAL REPORT
Clerk, Kathy Glass directed the Council to the financials in their notebook.
Motion made to accept financials as presented by Wayne Dimsdale, seconded by Kevin Shultz, motion passed.

X. CLERK'S REPORT
Given by Clerk: Katherine A. Glass
There were 19 citations issued the month of October. Walton County Sheriff's Office issued 11 citations and Georgia State patrol issued 8. We didn't have any citations issued by Walton County Animal Control. We didn't issue any business licenses or renewed and there were not any permits issued. We did have 6 ball park reservations made and the pavilion was reserved 3 times.

XI. CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT
Craig Ellington – Since last meeting in October we have written 3 citations 2 vehicles parked on grass and 1 remodeling without a permit. From July we have had 36 citations issued, 32 of these have been brought into compliance. Right now we have only two outstanding and they are being brought into compliance.
Carol Witcher – have you written any on Habersham Circle for parking on the grass? Craig Ellington - I have written several over there. There is one right now. I believe it is Habersham. Carol Witcher – You need to take a ride through. Craig Ellington – O.K. I will do that. Is it the front yard? Parking in the front yard? Carol Witcher – Parking in the ditch on the street. Part of the truck is in the street. Craig Ellington – Parking on the street as the way I understand it falls under the County jurisdiction as far as our ordinance. Our ordinance states you must park on gravel or pavement. Carol Witcher – You will need to check because they are parking on grass. Craig Ellington – I will take a look at it.

XII. MAYOR'S REPORT

We had the Walnut Grove Fall celebration held October 29th from 10 to 3 – All expenses were covered except \$570.86 which was about the same as last year as far as expenses were concerned. We had a good turn out and a good day.

Sonya Cox is at training in St Simmons this week.

The Tree Lighting is coming up Saturday November 19th. The time will be 5:30 to 7:30. We will have pictures with Santa, music and refreshments.

The office will be closed Thursday November 24th and Friday November 25th.

I spoke with Brian Sullivan with Dollar General he agreed to put up a 6 foot wood privacy fence between them and the precinct.

Carol Witcher – Are we having any responsibility for that? Mayor Lee – No mam. Mayor Lee – We won't have to spend any money on that fence

XIII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. That just handled the matter of the fence.
- B. Amendment to Budget – Kathy Glass – I checked on that matter. My question was whether or not what I wanted to do would require a public hearing. I was able to handle that matter without needing the public hearing or requiring anything from the Council. Mayor Lee – She checked with Mr. Reitman.

XIV. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Bid for Electrical Work at the Building at the Waste Water Facility
 - 1. Legacy Electrical Services, Inc. \$19,648.38
 - 2. T. H. Mize Electric Co. \$20,220.00

This is the building that houses all the controls, the electrical stuff, the pumps, and it has to be heated with a certain kind of pipe where it won't rust because of the chemicals they will be using. Kathy Glass – the bids are in your notebooks. We have to get this done before cold weather. They building is already up and completed. Kathy Glass – This is like all other expenses with the Sewer Plant, the County will pay half of it. Wayne Dimsdale – It comes out of our SPLOST money? Mayor Lee – Yes. Wayne Dimsdale - Are these they only two bids we got? Mayor Lee – Yes, Mize did some work for us before. He is a little higher than the other one. Kathy Dimsdale – Do we know anything about the other company? Mayor Lee – No. Kathy Dimsdale – What did we use the other one for? Mayor Lee – When we had our Christmas Tree Lighting he came out and worked on the tree. He also did some temporary work at the sewer plant. Kathy Dimsdale – Is he the one you would recommend? Mayor Lee – Yes. Wayne Dimsdale – We don't have to take the lowest bid. And they are close and this guy does good work. Just anybody doesn't do this kind of work. Mayor Lee – It was hard to get anybody to give a bid on it.

Wayne Dimsdale made a motion to accept the Mize Electric bid, seconded by Kevin Shultz, Motion Passed.

XV. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

None

XVI. COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Carol Witcher – Thank you for coming we appreciate it.

Kevin Shultz – Thank you Ms. Byrd and your daughter for coming out.

Mayor Lee – Thanks to Jon Dial for coming. It is good to see citizens here.

Wayne Dimsdale – Thank you for coming. Ms. Byrd's husband sat on the Council one time. I sat on it for two years with him.

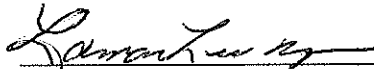
Kathy Dimsdale – Good to see Ms. Byrd and Mr. Dial

Carol Witcher – I would like to know if we are having a County meeting this month and when? Mayor Lee – Municipal Meeting. Kathy Glass – They are not having one in November because it is so close to Thanksgiving so the next meeting will be in December.


Motion to adjourn made by Wayne Dimsdale, seconded by Kevin Shultz, motion passed.

Adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Approved by the Mayor and Council this 8 day of December, 2016.



Mayor Lamar Lee


Katherine A. Glass, City Clerk