

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF SKY VALLEY, GEORGIA
OCTOBER 28, 2014
TUESDAY, 10:00 AM
FELLOWSHIP HALL, 817 SKY VALLEY WAY**

MINUTES

Mayor Goodgame called the meeting to order.

Those present: Mayor Goodgame, Council President Larsen, Councilors Carr, Greene, and Howard, City Manager Lapeyrouse, Chief Dills, and City Clerk Cantrell.

Helen Kleiber gave the invocation. Mayor Goodgame led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilor Greene made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 23 Regular Meeting, 2nd Councilor Howard, unanimously approved.

Council President Larsen made a motion to adopt the agenda, 2nd Councilor Greene, unanimously approved.

MAYOR'S REMARKS

Mayor Goodgame spoke about his future vision of Sky Valley. It is extremely important to get sewer. We are the only city in Rabun County without sewer. He said he wanted people to know that he stays in contact with the County and is continually working toward this goal. Many people end up having to move away from Sky Valley because they need assistance in their older years. Having sewer would open the possibility for an assisted living home. It would also help us attract a small hotel/conference center. We also need more homes to be occupied. We are working so hard to market our community, and this is one of the reasons we opened a visitor center.

Mayor Goodgame said that there has been a lot of discussion about the City purchasing the property at 3608 Hwy 246. This is the only commercial piece of property on the highway, and the Council feels that it is a great site for a future city complex, including a meeting room. Some discussion has occurred regarding the purchase price and why no appraisal was done. An appraisal was not done because appraisals are based on comparable sales and buildings. There are no comparables to this building. It was purchased several years ago for \$275,000 and it was converted from a liquor store to an office building. The property tax value is \$125,000. Property tax values are not a direct comparison to sales values.

Fall Fest was fabulous, and it was so great because the community pulled together as one. The event was headed up by the Marketing Committee. He said he knows that at least one timeshare sold that day, and a few real estate agents set up appointments to show houses.

Garbage and recycling are hot topics right now. Councilor Martin Greene and the Maintenance and Public Works Committee are working diligently researching options for our garbage service.

The State is going to put up Visitor Center signs on Hwy 246 on both sides of the building so that people will know to look for it. We are also asking the State if we can turn the shoulder area that is already paved into a turning lane.

COUNCIL REMARKS

Councilor Carr said that when the gate at Eagle Circle and Driver Lane is open it creates a lot of additional traffic. She asked if the police can check on that on a daily basis.

Councilor Greene said the Maintenance & Public Works Committee met yesterday and looked at 13 or 14 different options for garbage collection. They are scheduling another meeting soon. When the Committee narrows down the options, the City will send out another survey for community input. No matter what option is chosen, the garbage rates will have to increase. We cannot cover expenses at the current rate whether we purchase a new truck or outsource collection.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning & Zoning Commission

City Clerk Cantrell reported on the Planning & Zoning Commission's public hearings. They have heard two variance requests. One request is for 1024 Ridgepole to encroach into the front and side yard setbacks to construct a garage. The Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval. The other request is from the adjoining property owner, Ridgepole, Part One, Lot 143, to encroach into the required distance between principal structures and to allow the approval period to be a perpetual easement. This request was made because, if the encroachment is approved for 1024 Ridgepole, the most conceivable plan for a house and garage to be built on this lot would put it within the 30 foot distance requirement between the structures. The Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval. The engineer who worked with both property owners was present to answer any questions, and the attorney for Mr. Martin, who drafted the perpetual easement, was also present. Attorney Dickerson reviewed the easement, and approved the content

CITY MANAGER & DEPARTMENT REPORTS – EXCEPTIONS AND QUESTIONS

City Manager Lapeyrouse thanked the POA for sponsoring the Employee Appreciation Day. The Club hosted at the pavilion and cooked fried chicken for us.

If you are not on the city's email list and would like to be, please call us so we can add you. This is the best way to reach the most people with announcements, surveys, and meeting notices.

NEW BUSINESS

- Variance Request: 1824 Ridgepole, Don Rice, to encroach into the 15 foot front yard setback requirement by 10 feet and encroach into the 15 foot side yard setback by 15 feet

Councilor Howard made a motion to approve, 2nd Council President Larsen. Councilor Carr asked if we have a signed affidavit from the adjoining property owners. Mitch Baker, attorney present for Richard Martin, said that the adjoining property owners have worked together throughout this entire process. City Manager Lapeyrouse explained that once the Rice's pull the permit and build their garage, no further documentation is needed for their property. Councilor Carr asked if this variance would hinder emergency vehicle's ability to travel the road. There is no encroachment into the right of way. There being no further questions or comments, Mayor Goodgame called for the vote. The motion to approve the request was unanimously approved.

- Variance Request: Ridgepole Part 1, Lot 143, Richard Martin
 1. to encroach 5 feet into the 30 foot required distance between principal structures
 2. to extend the approval period from six months to a perpetual encroachment – to be filed with the property deed

Council President Larsen made a motion to approve, 2nd Councilor Greene, unanimously approved.

- Joint Comprehensive Plan

Mayor Goodgame explained that this is the plan we have been working on with the Georgia Mountain Regional Commission. It is a plan with Rabun County and all the Cities within the County and must be updated every ten years. Councilor Greene made a motion to approve, 2nd Council President Larsen, unanimously approved.

- Leaf Vacuum

Mayor Goodgame said that our leaf vacuum was sold as surplus. He said that we found one with low hours that was seven years old on govdeals.com, and bid on it, but it ended up selling for over \$20,000. City Manager Lapeyrouse said that we are continuing to look for a good used one. We have one quote for one that is the same size as the one we had for \$22,000 and a larger unit for \$28,000. The one we had was undersized for what all we use it for, including cleaning culverts. Council President Larsen asked if renting one is an option to at least get us through the season. City Manager Lapeyrouse said she was unable to find one to rent or a demo unit available. Councilor Carr asked where we would store a leaf vacuum. Mayor Goodgame said it will be stored at city hall; we do not have a building to store our equipment in. Council President Larsen made a motion to move forward with the purchase of a leaf vacuum, 2nd Councilor Greene, unanimously approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

General Fund Proposed Budget: Presentation and Questions

Mayor Goodgame presented the proposed 2015 General Fund budget. City Manager Lapeyrouse reviewed the differences from the 2014 budget to the 2015 budget. The 2015 budget is based on a millage rate of 16.31, a two mil increase. Mayor Goodgame said payroll and insurance increases include a five-percent employee raise. Over the last five years, employees have only been given raises in two years. A portion of the economic development

budget is to move the power lines in front of the Visitor Center. This will cost approximately \$7,000. Other one-time expenses to the visitor center include landscaping and building repairs. Mayor Goodgame said that the budget also includes depreciation and contingency funds. We have not budgeted depreciation in the past, and contingency had been cut out of the budget. He said that the City needs to build funds to have cash on hand for future work with the County to have sewer installed. It is also very traditional for developers to request local assistance when investing in a community and gave the examples of an assisted living home, small hotel, or conference center.

Citizen Matt Belfi said he has a second home here and inquired as to how people that don't live here full time have access to information such as the recent property purchased by the city. Mayor Goodgame explained that the City paid cash for the property. Meeting information is available on the City's website, and it is also emailed. Mr. Belfi said that that he hears talk about a newer generation of people for Sky Valley and suggested some of the meetings be held in the evenings for people who work during the day. He asked why the Council wasn't talking about the old lodge. Mayor Goodgame said that he has been trying to negotiate with Mr. Merrill and that the City has offered to demolish the old lodge in exchange for property. We currently lease property from Merrill – the overlook and city park across from post office. It is a situation where the city and the property owner both have leverage. The community would have to decide if we are willing to risk losing the leases to pursue condemning the old lodge property.

Councilor Howard said it sounded like Mayor Goodgame is not currently in communication with Mr. Merrill and wanted to make sure this discussion is still ongoing. Mayor Goodgame said that he is still attempting to communicate with him, but Merrill is not responding.

Citizen Helen Kleiber said the Council should consider a couple weekend meetings for 2015.

Mr. Belfi asked how people can access information being presented at meetings. City Clerk Cantrell said that the packets for council meetings are posted online before the meeting and the minutes are posted after the meetings. City Manager Lapeyrouse added that meeting notices are also emailed and asked anyone who was not on the City's email distribution list and wanted to be, please contact her or City Clerk Cantrell to be added.

Citizen Barbara Kobacker said that the meetings are recorded. City Clerk Cantrell explained that the meetings are recorded, but once the minutes of that meeting are approved, the tapes are recorded over, and the minutes are the official record. Mayor Goodgame said we do not currently have software to support having the recordings being stored and available for viewing, but we can look into it.

Citizen Delano Moore said that we need to be careful about the taxes imposed. He said it does not affect each person buying a home in Sky Valley, but it is a deterrent for some. Mayor Goodgame said our marketing efforts are to attract people to buy in Sky Valley, and that through that raising property values, the millage rate will not need to continue to increase.

PUBLIC FORUM AND GENERAL COMMENTS

Citizen Debbie McAfee asked if the City can put something on the sign at the overlook stating that the Visitor Center is open and the hours. Mayor Goodgame said that we can post it on the bulletin board area of the sign.

Liz Morley asked for an update on the cell tower. Mayor Goodgame said that he called last week, but hasn't heard anything back yet. We have been assured that this is a 2014 project.

Delano Moore asked if all realtors can put up property flyers in the window of the Visitor Center. Mayor Goodgame said that until we have separate building ready for the previous owner to move into, they are still inside building. He said that he would like to see all realtors have information available and volunteer at the center. Citizen Sue Cillo said that it appears to be an endorsement of Ed West Realty.

Citizen Reuel Hamilton said that he had a power failure at his house yesterday and that he called the city instead of Georgia Power thinking city staff would know something about the outage. He said the number in the phone book for Georgia Power only got to a recorded message, not a live person.

Mr. Belfi asked if the small building was purchased with the property and what the plans are for it. Mayor Goodgame said it was storage that we tried to turn into office space for the realtor to move into, but the building's subfloor and foundation was beyond repair. The building will be demolished.

Councilor Carr made a motion to adjourn, 2nd Council President Larsen, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted:

Hughel Goodgame, Mayor

Attested:

Mandi Cantrell, City Clerk