

## Council Work Session

April 17, 2018

Meeting called to order by Mayor Harley at 5:00pm.

Invocation given by Councilman Andrews.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Harley.

Welcome Extended to all by Mayor Harley.

Present were Mayor John R. Harley, Councilman Cameron W. Andrews, Councilman Justin Wright, Councilman J. Micheal Evans, Councilman Edward Armijo and City Attorney Rebecca Tydings.

### Public Comments

Geraldine Parker, 129 Ridgebend Drive, inquiring about why the City does not have a reporter from the media present at the meeting. Mrs. Parker voiced concerns and expressed her opinion as follows:

- Alleged that the City is in violation of “GMA’s rules” because there is a quorum of City Council present with no reporter in attendance;
- Strongly feels that there should be an actual, impartial news/media reporter present at City Council meetings in order to properly represent residents;
- Alleged that Director of Marketing and Economic Development Director Kate Hogan is acting as a reporter for the City of Centerville due to Ms. Hogan’s contact with HHJ reporter Kristin Moriarty and that Ms. Hogan isn’t impartial because she is paid by the City.

Councilman Wright informed everyone that he had recently taken a class: government in sunshine law. The city is required to notify the media of all meetings where a quorum will be present to conduct city business. Councilman Wright pointed out that the City doesn’t employ the reporters and therefore has no authority to compel the attendance of reporters at City Council meetings. Councilman Wright stated that Mrs. Bedingfield, City Clerk notifies the media as required by law and does a great job.

### Old Business

None

### New Business

Proclamation recognizing “April As Child Abuse Prevention Month”: Mayor Harley read proclamation; city, county, and federal government recognize this month and he attends a community-wide event about this important issue every year.

Presentation: Proposed future affordable housing development on Gunn Road (Tupelo Creek at Town Center): Councilman Evans, Director of Economic Development Hogan, and Robert Fink,

Zimmerman Properties. Mr. Fink presented a power point presentation. Mr. Fink stated that Zimmerman Properties is a family-owned company, operating in 12 states and building 904 properties since 2001. Mr. Fink stated that Zimmerman Properties is a part of Georgia's housing affordable program.

General discussion:

Councilman Wright commented about the 168 parking spaces along interior piece of complex. Councilman Armijo expressed concerned re: high density of housing 14 units per acre, a lot of housing in such a small area. Mr. Fink responded, 14 units is lower than the zoned requirement and there is a nice market for this size and density of development. Councilman Wright expressed concerns about traffic flow, opining that it is impossible to say that this would not impact travel and traffic congestion in the area. A lot of people would be going to and from work and there needs to be a better site layout to help manage increased traffic. Mr. Fink stated they would be glad to review layout and accommodate any requests the City might have that would help. Councilman Wright agrees this needs to be discussed, hopefully in an effort to alleviate traffic flow problems. Mr. Fink informed everyone that the state has to weigh in and select the project for an award of funding. The project is at a theoretical point in the development phase. When and if the project is chosen for funding, Zimmerman Properties would communicate with Mayor and Council on how to proceed. Councilman Armijo stated he has major concerns, including the privacy of homeowners behind the proposed complex. Mr. Fink informed all that he has pushed the development as close to the road as allowed and plans on having buffers in place in the transition area between the buildings and the houses behind them. Councilman Armijo mentioned the playground, expressing his concern about noise. Mr. Fink stated that inclusion of a playground is a requirement from the state. Councilman Armijo also expressed concerns about lighting creating a disturbance. Mr. Fink stated that he respects the concerns about lighting but pointed out that security is of great importance as well. Councilman Armijo asked what additional requirements are there before the application package gets submitted to DCA. Mr. Fink said that once the application package is submitted, there is no open dialogue during the consideration process. If the project is approved for funding, then there will be an opportunity for dialogue about the project at that time. Councilman Wright stated there would be ordinances governing lighting and screening. Councilman Armijo expressed concerns about placing apartments next to a high end income neighborhood (Eagle Springs). Mr. Fink responded that they have several projects adjacent to higher income residences. Councilman Armijo asked if this would affect their home values. Mr. Fink stated that most areas do not have a decrease in a real estate value trend due to the presence of multifamily properties. Mr. Fink stated that all renters must undergo a back-ground check, have to meet strict requirements to lease, have verifiable income, and adhere to all safety policies. Councilman Andrews requested a list of completed facilities, to review data related to crime statistics and property value trends in those areas. Mr. Fink stated he can provide a whole list and make data available. Mr. Fink introduced Brian Kubik (Buxton Kubik Dodd) Architecture for the proposed project. Councilman Andrews recommended changing the entrance to the apartments, stating that the current plan, encroaches on Willie Lee Drive to the West. Mr. Kubik stated this is a schematic design, when the final plan is being laid out, if there are issues, they would consider moving the entrance. Mr. Kubik repeated that they have made a conscious effort to bring the buildings closer to Gunn to allow more space between the apartments and the homes behind them. Mr. Kubik stated that the buildings are centrally focused, with an interior core, nice entry statement with roundabout, attractive to citizens and residents. Access points can be anywhere along that road, this is all still very schematic. Councilman Andrews asked what the plan is for the back buffer. Mr. Fink stated to plant tall trees, best visibility and noise buffer, natural sound barrier. Councilman Armijo asked if they were aware of project across the street, small densely placed home with an additional concentrated level of traffic. Mr. Fink stated that he was not, however

there are a lot of desirable amenities in the area, so he could see why that would the area might become concentrated, stating that he will do more research and will draw distinction with this housing project. Mr. Fink reported that this Zimmerman is currently under contract to purchase this property location with an individual, private seller. Mayor Harley asked how long Zimmerman maintains ownership of such projects. Mr. Fink stated that there is a mandatory 30-year ownership requirement. Mayor Harley thanked them for coming to the meeting and presenting this proposed affordable housing project.

Mayor Harley closed council meeting and opened public hearing at 5:33pm.

Public Hearing- Tupelo Creek at Town Center:

Robin Yesconis, 111 Huntington Way, would also like to have information about other similar projects. Councilman Andrews stated he would not have an issue sharing the information - he would review data and be glad to share that information with the public. Councilman Wright also wants to at comparable communities and review data.

Darla Stahl, 104 Huntington Way, believes the property is commercial and asking if this would have to go before Mayor and Council to rezone to residential. Eagle Springs has ongoing issues with standing water, it's all about doing the right thing at the right time. Dir. of Operations confirmed the property is currently C2; which allows for multi-family housing as long as it conforms to R-3 requirements. City Attorney Tydings stating that the building inspector would oversee the process when and if permits were applied for. Councilman Andrews advised residents to contact Water & Sewer Department when flooding occurs.

Dan Carter, 95 Pembroke Pt, stated this is a repeat from last year's proposed affordable housing for this location. Mr. Carter stated that DCA did not choose to award funding for this project due to lack of public transportation and limited jobs in the area; need to monitor when DCA looks at proposal. This is a federal government tax credit program, which requires a QAP (Qualified Allocation Plan). Mr. Carter stated that he is interested in how these projects get funding – they are lucrative for the developer, who, as required by law has to stay involved for 30 years- according to state laws. Mr. Carter gave his opinion that the median income stated by Zimmerman, if looked up, reveals that studies conflict. Mr. Carter says that this is all an economic issue. Mr. Carter mentioned that stats suggest that income is higher than stated. In neighborhoods where these projects have been built, housing pricing fell by 2.5 %. Segregation increased, but reports varied about no noticeable increase in crime. Seems like Eagle Springs and Centerville are taking all the risks. He does not want to take all the risks, developer needs to put some skin in the game. Look at this closer, it's all about the money-sale of the land. Dig deep into it being “all about the money.” Eagle Springs board is not for this. Sewer, water and electrical needs have to be reviewed. Based on the census, Warner Robins, Perry, and Centerville are over the national average for median income. Suggested that Zimmerman should look at Macon-Bibb for possible development locations. Mr Carter closed by saying that he hopes we have some kind of voice, scares him that DCA has unilateral authority to do something without citizen's approval. Councilman Wright informed everyone that he has spoken to Representative Clarke and encourage all to contact their legislators to voice their concerns.

Dave Bumps 304 Blossom lane, original proposal was 72 units but is now 80 units; worried about traffic, asked why the number of units changed. The main reason, according to Mr. Fink, is that there is enough demand to support the additional 8 units. Mr. Fink pointed out that there isn't a change, this application is a new, totally different application from last year.

Phillip Bloom, 105 Trellis Walk, does not agree with affordable housing project.

Judy Weatherford, 531 St Marlo, spoke about a rental property that she owns in another location close to affordable housing. She is having issues with renting home due to low income housing, Also, stated that this project would have a negative impact on school system due to overcrowding

Rich Weatherford, 531 St Marlo, stated that he and his wife are property investors, who quit working in private equity. His mother lives behind the proposed project and asked that the privacy fenced be raised to 12 feet due. There are other people to think about, please consider something like senior living and vote against project. Houston County has grown. Councilman Wright stated we do not have a vote and have very limited capacity to provide input – this process is largely between DCA and the private developer.

Darla Stahl, 104 Huntington Way, encouraged all to contact their state representatives.

The Mayor and Council also encouraged everyone to call, write or email their state representative with their concerns.

Richard Beladino, commended Mr. Fink on his presentation stating it was excellent. In addition, Mr. Carpenter's comments and research were thorough and he did a great job. Mr. Beladino stated that there is already a lot of traffic on Gunn Rd., a lot of accidents on Gunn Rd, more than one accident at the entrance/exit into Eagle Springs. Please take into consideration the traffic study. Mr. Beladino agrees that this isn't the right place for the proposed housing development. Requesting that there be a traffic study if one hasn't already been done. Mr. Beladino asked where in Georgia have other such developments been built? Mr. Fink stated that there are several affordable housing projects: Jackson County, to be placed in service October 2018-70% completion, Lawrenceville, Ga., and one under construction in Warner Robins, Ga. - 1131 Houston Lake Rd.

Mr. Fink stated that he appreciates everyone coming out tonight, feels it is important to get information prior to presenting. Wants to buy in to the community and education system. The project would be part of the Get GA Reading program, sponsored by Governor Deal. The development will provide an early learning center, offering tutoring and incentives to get children on track with reading skills.

Larry Cooley 106 Orchard Lane, Disgusted and discouraged, we are spinning our wheels, can't stop this.

Councilman Wright urged Mr. Cooley to contact state representative. Councilman Andrews added when enough people to make contact with them, they will listen and will take this information into the next session.

Councilman Armijo informed all that he had made contact with the gentleman at DCA and expressed his displeasure with the project. All have the right to voice opinions and encouraged all to do so.

Jeremy Field ( Imery Ratings), 140 Edgewood Drive, Athens Ga., stated that these are sustainable buildings, that the process will involve a design charrette, which is an all-inclusive design process. He is here tonight to listen to concerns, has taken down notes, re: traffic, lighting. This is project is nationally-based with many stipulations, such as healthy indoor living and is a LEED silver tier building process. Mr. Field stated that he is working with Zimmerman

on other projects. Happy to hear concerns and has copies of mandatory regulations. Provided a copy to City Clerk Bedingfield.

Dan Carter 95 Pembroke Pt, we talk about state representatives, what can they do to get DCA's unilateral authority changed? Councilman Andrews stated that DCA isn't as big as the legislature. Go through the process and make contact with your legislators. They also need to feel that heat.

Phil Pitts, 116 Orchard Lane, opposed to the project.

David Parker, 129 Ridgebend Drive, affordable housing residents - when they bring in guest and friends - Is there anyway to screen guest? Mayor Harley stated "no" and asked "does anyone screen guests that come to your home?" Mr. Parker, stated "no, but maybe they should". Encourage use of the permitting process.

Mayor Harley closed public hearing at 6:26pm.

Councilman Andrews stepped out of the meeting at 6:27pm and returned at 6:29pm.

Point of Information & Designation of Signatory Pyrotechnico Agreement-June 29, 2018 Independence Day Celebration: Councilman Evans & Director of Economic Development Hogan provided a copy of the contract, funds are included in the budget. Mrs. Hogan stated she is seeking approval for Mayor to sign the contract. Ms. Hogan stated that City Attorney Tydings has reviewed the contract and made revisions. Motion made by Councilman Evans; seconded by Councilman Wright. Councilman Armijo inquired about the revisions. Mrs. Tydings reported that she revised the contract language to remove provisions related to indemnification by the City as well as establishing jurisdiction in area courts in the event of a dispute – all revisions were made so that the contract terms are favorable to the City. Mayor Harley called for vote - motion carried.

2018 LMIG Contract Award/Approval and Signature: Councilman Evans recognized Director of Operations Brumfield. Mr. Brumfield recommended that the contract be awarded to Georgia Asphalt. Motion made by Councilman Evans to approve; seconded by Councilman Wright. Councilman Evans amended motion to include authorizing Mayor to sign on behalf of the City; seconded by Councilman Wright. Motion carried.

Discussion-K-9 Policy: Councilman Armijo recognized Chief Hadden. Chief Hadden provided draft policy. Wanted to give Mayor and Council the opportunity to review prior to voting. Proposed adoption / approval will be at the May 1, 2018 Regular Council meeting. This serves as a point of information. No motion or action taken.

#### Comments from Council

Post 4, Councilman Armijo, recognized Chief Hadden, mentioned the recent efforts by officers who saved woman in a burning car; glad they are safe. Councilman Armijo proposed that, if the proposed Gunn Road affordable housing project is rejected, would the city consider rezoning the property for assisted living? City Attorney Tydings responded that the City does not own the property and cannot, therefore, simply take steps to re-zone the property for assisted living and that it would be up to the property owner to request re-zoning if they chose to do so.

Post 3, Councilman Evans, thanked the citizens that came out tonight and thanked Mr. Carter for his research. This is an issue that we all would like to see addressed. Councilman Evans reminded everyone about the Farmer’s Market event this Saturday from 9-1 at Center Park.

Post 2, Councilman Wright, stated that he worked as a college sports official at Mercer, and that when rendering a decision, he has learned that you cannot mistake passion for anger, discussion for disunity, volume for authority. Councilman Wright continued, saying, “We as a community, as a nation, need to find a way to discuss things with each other without ending friendships. Daniel Boorstin, author, professor and congressional librarian wrote that disagreement produces debate but dissent produces dissension. A society thrives on disagreement but is killed by dissension. Disagreement is the life blood of democracy, dissension is its cancer. Encouraged citizens to contact them if they have issues because ‘we want to hear from you. . . . we will do our best’ and again asked citizens to reach out to the council.

Post 1, Councilman Andrews, expressed appreciation for Councilman Wright’s wisdom.

Mayor Harley, stated that he continues to volunteer at the recycling center, “it’s a way to give back.” Encouraged those present to help, saying “we need more volunteers.”

Mayor adjourned meeting at 6:43pm.

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Mayor John R. Harley

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Attest by City Clerk Krista Bedingfield

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Date