

Minutes
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2024

Meeting Location: City Hall, 330 Town Center Avenue, Council Chambers

Attendees: James M. Burnette, Jr., Mayor
Beth Hilscher, Mayor Pro Tempore
Larry Pettiford, Councilmember
Linnea Miller, Councilmember
Peter Charpentier, Councilmember
Marty Allen, City Manager
Robyn O'Donnell, City Clerk
Gregory Jay, City Attorney

Absent: Julianna McConnell, Councilmember

A. Call to Order

Mayor Burnette called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

B. Public Hearing

1. 2024 Millage Rate

We have received our 2024 tax consolidation information from Gwinnett County. During the FY 2025 budget process, we assumed a millage rate of 4.93, the same millage rate as the past twelve years. Marty Allen delivered a presentation on the millage rate data and related information. Additional public hearings were held on August 15th at 5:30 p.m. and August 27th at noon.

Michael Sutherland, 4668 Settles Bridge Road – Mr. Sutherland expressed concerns about taxes and overall financial matters, particularly supporting property tax relief for senior citizens. He referenced the tax exemptions recently approved by the city of Sugar Hill and requested that the city explore similar measures to lower property taxes for seniors and other residents.

David Martinez, 3656 Suwanee Creek Court – Mr. Martinez referenced speaking at the Public Hearing earlier today and acknowledged that the city and most residents are doing well based on the millage rate presentation. However, he emphasized that some citizens are struggling and requested Council provide tax relief with exemptions, particularly for senior citizens, so that all residents can continue to enjoy the city's offerings.

2. RZ-2024-001 – Owner: Sure, Inc. Natt Nwokolo. Applicant: Andy Sutton.

Location: 15 Buford Highway

The applicant requests a rezoning from C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial District) to OTCD (Old Town Commercial District) to allow for a mixed-use project containing residential and commercial uses. The site is located at the corner of Buford Highway and Cherokee Trail and contains approximately 1.54 acres. The Planning Department and Planning Commission recommend approval with conditions.

Applicant Rob Forrest, 3810 Heritage Walk, Milton, spoke on behalf of the request, noting that he has been developing mixed-use since 2004.

No one spoke in opposition of the request.

3. Alcohol Beverage License for Vemman Foods Inc., dba Cheeky Taqueria, 1039 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard

Praveen Vemanedi, Vemman Foods, Inc., recently purchased Cheeky Taqueria and has applied for an alcohol beverage license for on premise consumption of beer, wine, and distilled spirits. The business, located at 1039 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, previously held an alcohol license under the former owner. Praveen Vemanedi has applied to be the licensee and the Business Services Department recommends approval.

Applicant Praveen Vemmendi, 1039 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard spoke on behalf of the request.

No one spoke in opposition of the request.

C. Announcements

1. Suwanee's Summer Farmers Market is happening now! Come and check out the season's best offerings at Town Center Park every Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon.
2. On Saturday, September 14th, join one of the races in the 2024 Suwanee Running Series by registering for the Care for Cops 5K Run/Walk, beginning at 8:00 am at Town Center Park. Care for Cops is a non-profit organization that provides financial assistance to the families of fallen Georgia officers. To register for this Peachtree Road Race qualifier, visit runsignup.com.
3. Suwanee Fest, our annual two-day event, marks its 40th year and returns to Town Center Park for the Ultimate 80's party on September 21st & 22nd! Nearly 200 vendors and exhibitors, 15 entertainment acts, and one amazing parade are just some of the highlights of this beloved fall tradition. For full details, including information about free parking area shuttles, parade, vendor listing, stage entertainment schedule, and more, visit SuwaneeFest.com.

4. Join us in Town Center Park on October 5th beginning at 10 am for the Suwanee Taste of BBQ and Music Festival. This family-friendly event features BBQ and live music plus local vendors, an artist market, and a Family Fun Zone with activities for children of all ages. This event is a fundraiser for Project Green, a local kids' non-profit. Visit AliveExpo.com for more information.

D. Pledge of Allegiance

E. Approval of Agenda

Councilmember Charpentier motioned to approve the Agenda with the addition of consideration of an agreement with Norfolk Southern (new Item P), second by Mayor Pro Tempore Hilscher and so carried 5-0.

F. Approval of Minutes

1. July 11, 2024 Council Workshop
2. July 23, 2024 Council Meeting

Mayor Pro Tempore Hilscher motioned to approve Minutes as presented, second by Councilmember Pettiford and so carried 5-0.

G. Special Recognition

- i. Randy Redner, Wellspring Nonprofit Resource, Inc.
- ii. Representative Matt Reeves by the Georgia Municipal Association

H. Audience Participation

Steve Cummings, 4965 Meadow Circle – Mr. Cummings expressed concerns about non-residents speeding in his neighborhood. He requested that the city install additional signs, such as "Slow," "25 MPH," and "Deer Crossing," to address the issue.

NEW BUSINESS

I. Consider 2024 Millage Rate

Motion to approve by Mayor Pro Tempore Hilscher, second by Councilmember Charpentier and so carried 5-0.

J. Consider RZ-2024-001 – Owner: Sure, Inc. Natt Nwokolo. Applicant: Andy Sutton. Location: 15 Buford Highway

Motion to approve by Councilmember Miller per staff conditions, second by Councilmember Pettiford and so carried 5-0.

K. Consider Alcohol Beverage License for Vemman Foods Inc., dba Cheeky Taqueria, 1039 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard

Motion to approve by Councilmember Pettiford, second by Councilmember Charpentier and so carried 5-0.

L. Consider Adoption of Procurement Policy Required by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)

To maintain eligibility for receiving federal funds, GDOT requires the city to adopt a procurement policy that meets their requirements for the procurement of engineering and design services for federally funded transportation projects.

Motion to approve by Councilmember Miller, second by Mayor Pro Tempore Hilscher and so carried 5-0.

M. Authorize Mayor to Enter into an Agreement with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for the Safe Streets for All Grant

The city received a grant for \$200,000 from the FHWA to undertake a Safe Streets 4 All Action Plan. In order to move forward with this Action Plan, the city will need to enter in an agreement with the FHWA and sign a Confirmation of Understanding.

Motion to approve by Councilmember Pettiford, second by Councilmember Miller and so carried 5-0.

N. Authorize Mayor to Enter into an Amended Agreement with the Suwanee Arts Center to Operate the Suwanee Welcome Center, 3930 Charleston Market Street NW

In 2015, the city entered into an agreement with the North Gwinnett Arts Association, now known as the Suwanee Arts Center, to operate the Suwanee Welcome Center at their location, 3930 Charleston Market Street NW. To accommodate expanding Welcome Center services, staff is requesting an amendment to this agreement.

Motion to approve by Councilmember Charpentier, second by Mayor Pro Tempore Hilscher, Councilmember Miller recused herself from the vote. The motion passed 4-0, and one Councilmember abstaining.

O. Consider Amendment to the Adopted FY 2024-2025 Authorized Position Resolution

Staff is requesting to amend the current staffing policy, adopted by Council on June 24, 2024, to allow temporary flexibility in the number of positions by adjusting position counts for roles with high turnover rates. This change aims to ensure continuous service delivery and permits overlapping staffing during the transition period when one employee leaves and a new employee starts.

Motion to approve by Councilmember Pettiford, second by Councilmember Charpentier and so carried 5-0.

P. Consider Authorizing Mayor to Enter into Agreement with Norfolk Southern

Councilmember Miller motioned to authorize the Mayor to enter into an agreement with Norfolk Southern for the purposes of allowing the city and its representatives to enter upon the Norfolk Southern railroad right of way in order to complete the concept plan for the Suwanee Loop Project, second by Mayor Pro Tempore Hilscher and so carried 5-0.

Q. Executive Session: None

R. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:10 p.m. by Councilmember Charpentier, second by Councilmember Pettiford and so carried 5-0.

Approved September 24, 2024