

**WORK SESSION NOTES  
MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
CITY OF DULUTH, GA  
AUGUST 10, 2009**

**1. GEORGE ROGERS BOULEVARD**

Mayor Harris reported that over the past two years, several citizens have asked about doing some kind of permanent recognition for Heisman Trophy Winner and Duluth High School graduate, George Rogers. George's family still lives in Duluth and would really appreciate our efforts in recognizing him. Mayor Harris asked the council to support this effort by naming the "Hospital Connector" after George Rogers. She felt it would also be very appropriate to ask Duluth High School to name their new entrance road off of Abbotts Bridge Road after George as well, as these two roads will eventually connect.

***No action taken by Council.***

**2. DULUTH CITY ATHLETIC LEAGUES**

Parks & Recreation Director Kathy Marelle brought forth the concept of the City developing and coordinating a separate City athletic league. She reported that, in 1997 the City of Duluth designed and developed athletic fields for the Duluth Youth Athletic Association to expand and enhance the youth programs, and provide athletic opportunities for the City residents. During this time, the Duluth Association was the only local county youth association providing athletic programs. In lieu of charging additional fees, it was determine that the association would pay utility fees, and fund capital improvement projects, (Batting cages, backstops, fencing, lights for field 3, dugouts) in exchange for operating the youth athletic programs for the City. The partnership was beneficial to the youth association as well as the City, for the City children were guaranteed the opportunity to participate. In 2002, the Duluth community embraced another local county youth association, Peachtree Ridge, and once again local city residents did not have a park to operate their youth programs. The City Park provided a place for the Peachtree Ridge Association, and during the building of the Peachtree Ridge Park and the renovations of the Shorty Howell Park, the city park was home to both associations.

Bunten Road Park lost its identity as the community expanded with the development of the two local county parks and the separation of the community. Currently, both local youth associations rely on the City Park for expansion of their softball, youth baseball, and senior leagues. Both associations do not have the volunteer base to fulfill the maintenance of the field improvements, to prepare their fields, to maintain playing conditions of the fields, to maintain the spectator area, nor the funds to fulfill their obligations. During the past two years, the perception of the new families utilizing the park is that the City is primarily responsible for the playing condition and maintenance of the park fields. Staff has been responsible for preparing fields for games, maintenance of the area, repairs to the fields, installing bases, windscreens, repairing nets, cleaning dugouts, and many other duties that the associations are responsible for in their respected county parks. The concession stand assigned to Peachtree Ridge has been vacated and the coke cooler reclaimed by Coke for lack of product purchase. While the City staff performed many operational responsibilities for the youth associations, the City became responsible for critical operational aspects of the programs without receiving revenue from the program registration fees to offset City expenses. The Youth Associations are not able to supply adequate funds for field

improvements, as specified in the Youth Agreement. Staff has spent endless Hours solving scheduling issues, cleaning the fields, spectator and restroom areas, and preparing fields for games.

Staff met with representatives from Peachtree Ridge and Duluth for the purpose of formulating a City athletic league for programs that utilize City fields. The city league would determine policies for scheduling, fees, program operations and fundraising efforts to fund park improvements for Bunten Road. The ultimate objective is to establish the purpose of the city facility, establish the identity of the department, and to unify the community to coordinate efforts and resources.

Staff recommended development of a City Youth League Association primarily for the programs that solely rely on the City facilities, senior boys' baseball, and basketball. The City Youth Association would be comprised of members from the Duluth and Peachtree Ridge Association, and work closely with staff to coordinate the transition of the responsibilities for utilizing the City facilities. The programs that strictly rely on City facilities will be assessed a team fee per team in the league that would be payable to the City. The team fees include cost associated with utilities, restroom supplies, grounds maintenance, field preparation and supplies for the field, and facility maintenance (cleaning). Teams utilizing the city facility for supplemental usage will be assessed an hourly usage charge. The charges range from \$15.00 hr to \$35.00 hr depending on if the team requires lights, and/or field preparation. Team fees will be paid in full after registration is complete, and team rentals will be collected on a monthly basis.

***Council authorized the development of the City's Youth League Association.***

Council member Bomar explained that she had received a request from residents who live in or near the downtown area, once property becomes available in the Downtown to consider the development of a dog park.

***No action taken.***

### **3. ROLLOUT OF NEW CITY LOGO**

Public Relations/Marketing Director Alisa Williams requested directive from Council as to how and when to proceed with the roll out of the City's new logo. A "soft" roll out would not have an event surrounding it. There would be a press release introducing the new logo and marketing would then basically just begin using the logo in advertising, promotional items, City documents, website, etc.

Alisa gave ideas for "full" roll out (on varying scales):

1. Tie logo roll out into the opening of Taylor Park Playground. We could tie into "Capture the Spirit of..." Recreation, Family, etc. with this. We could give away t shirts, water bottles, pens, etc. Cost: \$1,000 - \$1,500.
2. Hold a "Press Conference." We would invite the press as well as leaders in Duluth and the Gwinnett Community. We could put together a great video and media kit which could then be used for Economic Development purposes. Some promotional items would also be given away. Cost: \$2,500-\$3,500.
3. Organize another Community Appreciation Day. We could cook hamburgers and hotdogs like we did before, have inflatable rides for the children, entertainment on stage, etc. Perhaps have

the time be from 11:00 am (we would unveil the logo at a short ceremony) – 2:00 pm. We could give away t shirts, water bottles, pens, etc. Cost: \$6,000-\$8,000.

4. Unveil the logo on the Cotton Ball Drop on New Year’s Eve. We are already planning this event so the cost would just be for the promotional items to go along with the roll out. Cost: \$1,000-\$1,500.

Alisa asked for input on other ideas as well.

***Council authorized the PIO/Marketing Director to create an event around the unveiling of the logo only, and not include it with another event.***

#### **4. RENTAL FEES FOR DOWNTOWN RETAIL SPACES**

City Administrator Phil McLemore reported that after a review of the Lease Report done by Economic Development Manager Chris McGahee brought to light a decision that must first be made prior to spending additional time on building assessments and long term rental. A decision on the time frame for widening of Highway 120 needs to be made. The widening of Highway 120 will require the demolition of the buildings along Main Street and would begin in approximately 1 year. If the Highway 120 widening is to be delayed until plans are in place for redevelopment of the City Hall block then a longer time frame is likely and longer leases may be possible. If however the City desires to move forward with Highway 120 then there could not be longer leases and spending time on building assessments in order to determine changes for lease rates would be a waste of time. Even if Highway 120 is delayed it is not recommended to enter into any lease longer than 2 years due to the unknown opportunities that may develop for the City Hall block. Mr. McLemore recommended one of the following two options for Highway 120:

1. Delay widening until plans are confirmed for new construction in the old City Hall Block.
2. Modify the Highway 120 plan to remove the road portion calling for a right turn lane and median in front of the Main Street buildings and proceed with construction of the remainder of Highway 120. Removal of this portion will allow the Main Street buildings to remain. The portion of the road plan removed can be completed at a future time in conjunction with the development of the old City Hall Block.

If Council agrees with either option 1 or 2 above then the recommendations of the Economic Development Manager regarding leases makes sense and are as follows:

1. It is recommended that flat fee caretaker lease rates be phased out over the next six to eight months and that per square foot rates based upon building condition and tenant contributions be implemented instead.
2. It is also recommended that staff perform a space by space condition assessment listing immediate concerns. The goal of this assessment is to prevent blight development, site degradation, and enhance life safety conditions given the time frames involved here.
3. It is recommended that Vacancy policies should be considered to determine recruitment strategies when tenants vacate Old City Hall Block properties.
4. Council may wish to consider establishing a study committee charged with determining policy goals for the block in light of the multi-year development time frame scenario.

**Council authorized the following actions:**

- 1. Modify the Highway 120 plan to remove the road portion calling for a right of turn lane and median in front of the Main Street Buildings and proceed with construction of the remainder of Highway 120. The portion of the road plan removed can be completed at a future time in conjunction with the development of the old City Hall Block.**
- 2. That the flat fee caretaker lease rates be phased out over the next six to eight months and that per square foot rates based upon building condition and tenant contributions be implemented instead.**
- 3. Staff to perform a space by space condition assessment listing immediate concerns. The goal of this assessment is to prevent blight development, site degradation, and enhance life safety conditions given the time frames involved here.**
- 4. Staff to develop "Vacancy policies" to determine recruitment strategies when tenants vacate Old City Hall Block properties.**

Council member Mundrick requested copy of the drawings as well as cost figures.

The next work session will be held after the Council meeting on August 24<sup>th</sup>.

Approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Nancy Harris

ATTEST:

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City Clerk Teresa S. Lynn