

City of White Georgia  
City Council Meeting  
May 6, 2024

Present at the meeting were Mayor Curtis Powell, Councilmembers Stephanie Nicholson, Jean Swank, Karissa Noland, and Gary Crisp, City Clerk Robin Cochran, and City Attorney Brandon Bowen.

Mayor Powell called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and led with the pledge of allegiance. Councilmember Nicholson followed with the invocation.

Mayor Powell began with the review and approval of the May 6<sup>th</sup> agenda. Powell recommended striking the surplus Public Works items as Water Superintendent, Jimmy Nichols was still working on his list stating that Nichols would have at next month's meeting. Powell asked for discussion, with there being none, Mayor Powell asked for a motion to approve. Councilmember Crisp made the motion to approve. Councilmember Swank seconded the motion. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

Mayor Powell moved to approve the minutes from the council meeting on April 1, 2024. Powell asked for discussion, with there being none, Powell asked for a motion to approve. Councilmember Nicholson made the motion to approve. Councilmember Crisp seconded the motion. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

Mayor Powell opened the floor for public comments. Powell reminded the room these public comments did not have anything to do with the public hearing they intended to have at this meeting. Citizen Kesha Fussell addressed the council. Fussell started by saying she wanted to speak on historic preservation regarding the tree that was cut down in front of the Public Works Department. Fussell explained her part in trying to get the tree carved instead of cutting it down. She stated that she spoke with the city clerk about getting a round or two cut with the full diameter of the tree saved so she could display the trunk with all its rings. She continued by stating the city clerk went and spoke to Woodpeckers, who were in the process of cutting the tree down, and they fulfilled her request. Fussell continued by saying that because of council member Crisp, Woodpecker's tossed her tree pieces because of who she is and expressed her hurt, anger, and disappointment with him in the situation and his disregard for historic

preservation. She concluded by reading a poem she wrote on the tree's behalf.

Mayor Powell moved to the second reading of the SA Land Group rezoning request of the Dunn property from R1 to R4 Parcels W002-0004-002 and 004-005. Powell opened the floor for public comments. The developer from SA Land Group, Adam Baker, addressed the council. Baker started by explaining why they're wanting to rezone the property and after speaking with some of the council members, he had made some adjustments to the plan and went over the changes as well as reminding the council of the profit the city would make from water service, sewer service, trash service and the tap fees. Councilmember Nichelson previously voiced her concern with school capacity with this new development. Baker stated he spoke with the school board members and the incoming School Superintendent to understand how schools work. Baker stated that this new development would hardly have any effect on the capacity of schools. Mayor Powell told Mr. Baker that the City Engineer recommended tabling this until the following month's meeting to give him more time to review the new site plan that SA Land Group provided. Mayor Powell opened the floor up to the council. Council member Nichelson thanked Baker for taking her concerns seriously and looking into it. Powell asked if the residential areas on East Rocky St. are going to be opened or planted. Baker stated that the code is a setback, not a buffer and the way he's going to lay it out will increase the setback along the property line. There was some chatter about keeping the setback mowed down and weeded. Baker finished up by going over timelines on developmental procedures for this project. Councilmember Nichelson stated that with this development, it would double the city's population and she felt like that was a bit too much in her opinion. Councilmember Swank said she read an article that single women are buying 19% of the houses that are purchased and stated she is all for this development. Councilmember Crisp stated the traffic is already bad as he lives on 411 and he must wait 15 minutes to get out on the road and he is not for this development. There was chatter amongst council members Swank and Crisp on traffic in the area as Swank says most of the owners would be working at TOYO or NOTS Logistics. Mayor Powell mentioned, to Swank's point, that most of the traffic in the morning on highway 411 is strictly pass through. Powell stated that he believes this development would actually cut down on traffic as they would be leaving their home and going right up the road. He continued by saying that Mr. Baker had done an amazing job listening to those who would talk to him and had tried to make

a plan that works. City Attorney Brandon Bowen spoke on the project agreeing with Powell and Swank on the traffic issue saying there would be a 2% increase in traffic flow but as the majority of the traffic will be TOYO workers, and with the turn lane put in, it wouldn't impede traffic. Councilmember Crisp states he has a petition with 85 signatures on it that citizens have signed that do not want this development to happen and stated it was his duty to represent what the citizens want, therefore he was against this development. Powell asked for anyone for or against this development to speak on it now. Citizen Christine Swank addressed the council to speak in favor. Citizen Swank stated that current workers at both TOYO and NOTS Logistics drive very far to work daily because they're not able to find a home close to work. Citizen and employee of TOYO Tire, Eddie Billue addressed the council to speak in favor of the development. Billue stated that he conducted a survey regarding interest in housing in the city limits and 192 employees are ready to buy a house closer to work in the next year, the remaining employees are said to be ready to buy a house in 1-3 years. Billue reminds everyone of TOYO's intention in assisting these employees with credit repair classes which are already in progress and with financial assistance after qualification. He continued by saying that the COO Patrick Lentz has also given to Billue in writing that if the housing developments gets approved, Lentz would provide a shuttle bus for TOYO employees that starts at 6:00am to pick up the employees from their home to take them to work and back home. This would help with any traffic issues as it would allow less cars on the road at the time. There was some chatter amongst Billue, Bowen, and the council. Councilmember Nicholson asked if the shuttle bus would go to the Talmar Properties development. Billue stated, yes, wherever the TOYO employees are, the shuttle bus will pick them up and drop them off. Powell asked if anyone would like to speak opposing this development. Citizen Micheal Godfrey approached the podium. Godfrey spoke on crime rate concerns; more people equals more crime and asked the council to take that into consideration before voting. Citizen Charles Buttrum stated that out of 50 people he had talked to, two were in favor of this development happening. Buttrum said that he doesn't think it's the right time for this development. Mayor Powell asked if anyone else not in favor would like to speak on the development. There being none, Powell closed the public comments section. Baker responded to Godfrey on crime and gave some satisfying statistics and eased minds stating like other communities and neighborhoods, there would be a neighborhood watch in place. Baker continued by explaining what transitional zoning is and stated this would be a perfect transitional zoning, and it's something that is done

all over the world. Powell asked if there would be a mandatory HOA, Baker responded, "yes". Councilmember Crisp asked Police Chief, Jason Smith if he thought this development would bring more crime. Smith responded that historically, looking at subdivisions, your higher cost housing, you're not seeing a lot of crime as you'd see in the lower cost housing areas. Smith continued by stating he's sure crime would go up as there's more people in the city, there would probably be more crime, but he doesn't see it becoming an overbearing problem as it is a nice development taking place and the majority of its homeowners would be working at TOYO. Mayor Powell asked Smith if he thought this would be a major concern for his department to handle. Smith responded he didn't think so, as the city grows and its needs for a 24/7 police department increases, he foresees this being an issue as his department doesn't have the manpower for to keep officers out 24/7, 365 days a year, but with the other things associated with the subdivision, that would help with costs to make that happen. Mayor Powell closed the public comments section and opened the floor to the council. City Attorney Brandon Bowen spoke on professional staff analysis and review. Councilmember Crisp made the motion to table until next month's meeting. Councilmember Swank seconded the motion. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

Mayor Powell moved to the first reading of the storm water ordinance prepared by Keck & Wood. Bowen stated the importance of this ordinance saying that the Northwest GA Regional Association recommended ordinances to assist in developments and if the city fails to adopt this ordinance, the city will lose the status as a qualified city. Mayor Powell opened the floor for public comments. As there were none. Powell closed the public comments section for the first reading of the storm water ordinance.

Mayor Powell moved to the first reading of the Sign Ordinance. There was chatter amongst the council members, Mayor Powell, and City Attorney Brandon Bowen. Mayor Powell opened the floor for public comments. An unnamed citizen asked what exactly it pertained to. Powell stated its for height requirements, how bright they can be, those type of things. Powell closed the public comments.

Mayor Powell moved to announcements and reports. City Clerk Robin began with her report on the CD she got at 4.46 % for 7 months. Cochran gave new rates for the two CDs that did not roll over from different banks.



Councilmember Nichelson made the motion to put the CDs into Century bank for 4.01% interest rate for 8 months. Councilmember Swank seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0. Cochran continued by giving an update on the reconciling from 2020 to present day to get ready for the auditor. Cochran named the Spring Spruce Up winners and thanked all the sponsors for their donations. Cochran asked for donations to the food pantry and gave its operating hours.

Police Chief Jason Smith gave the report on his department stating it was business as usual.

Mayor Powell moved to unfinished business. Cochran gave the options for the city's mass communication software. Councilmember Nichelson made the motion to go with OnSolve Communication Software. Councilmember Swank seconded the motion. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

Cochran continued by talking about esafety, for safety training software for employees. Powell opened the floor for discussion amongst the council. Councilmember Nichelson asked if this met requirements with the insurance company to which Powell answered "yes". Powell asked if anyone else had something to say, he heard none and asked for a motion. Councilmember Swank made the motion to approve. Councilmember Crisp seconded the motion. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

Cochran stated that she had received information from a company who provides planning and zoning permit tracking, I-WORQ. Mayor Powell opens the floor for discussion stating it was roughly \$8,000 and recommended tabling until 2025 when they have a new budget or denying it. Councilmember Crisp made the motion to table until next year in January. Councilmember Nichelson seconded the motion. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

Mayor Powell continued with the fine schedule update. Cochran stated that this was to get citation pricing in line with surrounding cities. Mayor Powell opened the floor for council discussion. Councilmember Nichelson described her process on getting these numbers and suggested for the council to review. Powell continued by stating that these were all current fines the city has in the system now. Chief Smith stated that July 1, 2024, the Governor signed a new law for people who run a school bus stop sign, the ticket will be \$1000.00. Bowen asked if the judge got to review, and it

sign off on it. Powell stated it was not sent to the judge. Bowen suggested he do that. Councilmember Crisp stated he would like more time to look over it before he decides, and he made the motion to table this until next month's meeting. Councilmember Nicholson seconded the motion. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

Mayor Powell presented the 2026 SPLOST resolution that he sent to everyone prior to the meeting. Powell stated that the county requested the city provided the project by May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, saying this gave them time to pass it and meet the 2024 deadline. Powell opened the floor for council discussion. Powell asked if the council was okay with the percentage breakdown. There were no issues amongst the council. Mayor Powell asked for a motion. Councilmember Swank made the motion to approve. Councilmember Crisp seconded the motion. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

Mayor Powell asked the council to move the June 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting to June 10<sup>th</sup> as he would not be in town on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Councilmember Swank made the motion to approve. Councilmember Crisp seconded the motion. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

Cochran mentioned the RFP proposal for the audit services. The RFP deadline is May 26<sup>th</sup> and she stated she still had only heard back from one auditor so she was waiting until the end of the month to give other auditors a chance to respond, and she would present those at the meeting in June.

Mayor Powell moved to mayor and council comments. Powell spoke on the sign hung in front of city hall that is part of the \$1.8 million grant the city received to correct PFAS levels in the water. The sign with the current tenant of the White House's name on it was required to be put up in order to get the grant. Powell continued saying that Sweitzer Engineering is doing the city's study to get a geo technical on staff to start locating for potential well sites. Powell reminded everyone that it was put on the agenda in December's meeting in 2023 and was voted on and passed 4-0 to get the grant.

Councilmember Swank mentioned her event the Senior Social which takes place every Tuesday from 1:30-3:30pm in the Reception Hall. Swank continued by thanking Councilmember Crisp for saving a 8ft section of the tree to make a bench for the park.

Mayor Powell asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Nichelson made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Swank seconded the motion. Motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Regards,



Robin Cochran  
City Clerk

Attest:



Curtis Powell, Mayor