

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
CITY OF SKY VALLEY, GEORGIA  
NOVEMBER 20, 2014  
THURSDAY, 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, Howard, and Whatley, City Manager Lapeyrouse, Chief Dills, and City Clerk Cantrell.

Lynn Becker gave the invocation. Mayor Goodgame led the Pledge of allegiance.

Councilor Greene made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 28 Regular Meeting, the November 10 Public Hearing, and the November 13 Public Hearing, 2<sup>nd</sup> Councilor Howard, unanimously approved.

Councilor Carr made a motion to adopt the agenda, 2<sup>nd</sup> Council President Larsen, unanimously approved.

**MAYOR'S REMARKS**

Mayor Goodgame said that with so much going on, it is important for us to have open meetings and discussion. He would like committee chairmen to have meetings to gather public input to form a vision statement for the city. The Marketing Committee has been working vigorously to help get our name out and recognized. Mayor Goodgame said that his goals are to get sewer so we can have some development. He gave examples of an assisted living home, a small hotel/conference center, more single family housing. Getting our property valued back up and having small development are only one person's goals, but he would like to see community's goals and how we can move toward what the majority of community wants to see happen. He said that we will plan a meeting for the committee chairmen in the spring when more residents are here to participate.

The Visitor Center is open. We are doing some building repairs, Georgia Power is going to move power poles/lines out of the front of building, DOT is putting up signs that say Visitor Center on Hwy 246. We need volunteers to help it be open. We are having people volunteer for Thursday and Friday but are having trouble finding people to work Saturdays. He said you can sign up online, but if you need help signing up, please call Mandi at city hall. We've had a good bit of traffic already. We have information available on hiking trails, waterfalls, and things to do in our area, not just Sky Valley. He encouraged people to stop by and check it out.

The Maintenance and Public Works Committee has been working on options for garbage collections. The current contract to outsource once-a-week collection goes through February.

**COUNCIL REMARKS**

Councilor Carr said she has volunteered at Visitor Center, and it was great to see a few people stop by.

Council President Larsen said that the Club is still open and they plan to remain open all winter.

Councilor Howard encouraged people to volunteer to work at the Visitor Center to help make it a success.

Councilor Greene said the Maintenance and Public Works Committee has met a couple of times discussing garbage collection options, and they are working to narrow down the options. He wants to have another committee meeting in December so we can have our current 13 options narrowed down to three or four so that we can send out a community survey by the end of December. We want to offer the service the community wants.

Councilor Carr asked City Manager Lapeyrouse if we have solved the problem of the dumpsters being overloaded. Lapeyrouse said that we have cameras up at the dumpsters so that we can monitor for illegal dumping such as building materials and furniture. We also have the dumpsters emptied if they are full before the scheduled pick up.

#### **CITY MANAGER & DEPARTMENT REPORTS – EXCEPTIONS AND QUESTIONS**

City Manager Lapeyrouse announced the city hall holiday closing schedule.

We have received several phone calls regarding property tax bills. The Council should set the millage rate today, and tax bills are due 60 days from the date they are mailed.

We have new leaf vacuum that is much more efficient than the one we had. She asked people not to put small limbs and brush in the ditches because it can clog up and damage the hose on the vacuum.

Mayor Goodgame said that at the last Public Hearing for the budget and millage rate, we were asked how frequently our officers respond to calls outside the city. Chief Dills said that he is compiling this information from prior year's reports, and that in 2011 there were 33 calls outside of city limits. There are three departments in the County with coverage 24/7, the Sheriff's Department, the City of Clayton, and Sky Valley. Sometimes, the Sheriff's office will call Clayton or Sky Valley to assist because, depending on the location of the call, the city departments can get there faster and remain on the scene until they arrive. Councilor Carr asked if the Sheriff's Department responds to assist us. Chief Dills said that we have rarely received assistance from them. If we respond to a call outside of the city, we render aid, direct traffic until the appropriate department arrives. He said that if we are responding on a call on Hwy 106 in NC, it usually takes an hour for the State of NC to arrive on the scene.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Resolution Adopting the Millage Rate for 2014 Ad Valorem Taxes and the 2015 General Fund Budget

City Manager Lapeyrouse read the Resolution. This Resolution sets the millage rate of 16.31 for the 2014 Ad Valorem Taxes and sets the General Fund Budget for the 2015 Fiscal Year. Council President Larsen made a motion to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> Councilor Greene. Councilor Howard said that at some of the Public Hearings, people were stating some misinformation regarding the percentage of the budget different departments are. He said that someone said the police department is 30-percent of the budget, but it is 23-percent. Administration is 19-percent, fire is 3.8-percent, roads

is 47-percent, housing and development is 2.4-percent, economic development is 3.1-percent, and contingency is 1.5-percent. He said that he believes this puts the budget into a different perspective and helps people see it better.

Councilor Howard read a statement prepared by Councilor Whatley.

“Sometime in the coming months, I will enjoy the view from the overlook for the last time. I was taught it was a man’s duty to leave his community not less than, but more than he receive it. I hope I have achieved in some small way this goal. I agree with each of the individual efforts now underway in Sky Valley. However I need more information on the police, garbage, and the amount of support dollars and how it will be used for marketing. The Mayor suggested that we approve the current budget and amend as needed. I cannot go along with blatant attempts to get around the budget process required by budget law. I will therefore have to vote “no” on the millage increase included in the current proposed budget.” Signed David Whatley, November 20, 2014

There being no further discussion, Mayor Goodgame called for the vote. The motion passed 4:1 with Councilors Carr, Greene, Howard, and Larsen voting aye and Councilor Whatley voting nay.

Mayor Goodgame said that he wants to make known that we do not go into this millage rate increase believing it will need to be raised again next year, and that it may go back down. He presented the history of millage rate increases and decreases over the years. He said that if our marketing efforts are successful, property values will increase, and that will help keep the millage rate low.

Councilor Howard said that the proposed budget includes staffing of the police department as it is now, with a Chief as a supervisor and four patrol officers. He said that we need a police supervisor just the same as we have a city manager.

- Two-Way Traffic on Saddleback Circle

Mayor Goodgame said that Saddleback is currently a one-way street. He said it is just as wide as other streets that have two-way traffic, and the Fire Chief has no objections to making it a two-way traffic street. The Fire Chief suggested turning a wider section of the street into a pull-off if possible. He asked for input on making it two-way traffic. Councilor Howard said he is in favor of it being two-way. Citizen BobMacNair, who lives on Saddleback, said that in the summertime there is no problem, but in the wintertime it will be dangerous if people try to go out the steeper route. City Manager Lapeyrouse said that we can monitor that street, like we do others, in inclement weather situations, and mark it as one-way if needed. Councilor Howard made a motion to make Saddleback Circle a two-way street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Council President Larsen. Councilor Carr said that we may need a little more planning before we make that decision citing the police having to travel it no matter what the weather is. Chief Dills said that generally, if we have impassible roads, we make the decision to close roads or detouring traffic. The motion passed 4 – 1 with Councilor Greene, Howard, Larsen, and Whatley voting aye and Councilor Carr voting nay.

- Discussion of Tree Ordinance – Clear Cutting

Mayor Goodgame explained that there have been a couple of occurrences within the last year where people have clear-cut their lots. Our Tree Ordinance defines trees as tree that is larger than eight inches in diameter at 18 inches above the ground, and states that you cannot cut more than

25 percent of the trees from your property. It does not cover smaller trees, rhododendrons, mountain laurels. Council President Larsen made a motion to pursue adding protection for smaller trees to the ordinance, 2<sup>nd</sup> Councilor Howard. Mayor Goodgame asked for community input. Citizen Bob MacNair said that we only have two houses where this has created a problem and that the council should not impose more rules on residents unless necessary. Citizen Barbara Kobacker said that when people who move here, they do not realize what native plants are and how beautiful they are. She said that they can look pretty bad in the wintertime, but that once they are cut, it takes years for them to grow back if they do. City Manager Lapeyrouse said that someone at a condo association cut down the rhododendrons, and we have had other people in the association stop by city hall concerned that the city has no way to prevent that from happening. Citizen Bill Otis said there is a similar situation where his house is in Florida with people cutting mangroves. Linda Durrence, a local real estate agent, said that she is concerned with protecting people's property rights, but that when she shows homes in Sky Valley, she tells people that they will need permits to cut trees, and she has not had any complaints. There being no further discussion, Mayor Goodgame called for the vote. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **PUBLIC FORUM AND GENERAL COMMENTS**

Ray Brooker asked how much it is going to cost to move the power poles in front of the Visitor Center. Mayor Goodgame said the original quote was for \$10,500, but that he was able to negotiate it down to \$7,000.

Dick Parrott said that the corner across from the general store would be very prominent location for a hotel even though it is in NC. Mayor Goodgame said that the city has been contacted by different people through the years, and the biggest deterrent is that we don't have sewer or a high enough traffic count in Sky Valley for a hotel. He said that a hotel on that corner would benefit our entire area. We need to add some specific items to our marketing plan such as this. We have prepared ourselves to have a good 2015. One of the suggestions is that we have another festival. He asked City Clerk Cantrell to present information on a festival she has been working on. City Clerk Cantrell gave a brief presentation on a beer festival, and the work she has been doing to see how this can work. The goal is for it to be a destination weekend event including a run, beer festival, and a gold tournament. She said she believes this will be a great way to attract people from the Atlanta area.

Sally Shearon asked for an update on the cell tower. Mayor Goodgame said that we were assured it would begin in October, and it wasn't. We have emailed and called on a daily basis, and it is difficult to get in touch with someone who can help. He said that City Clerk Cantrell to give an update. City Clerk Cantrell said that she was directed to Verizon's real estate manager who has access to the construction calendar, and that she has called him on a daily basis, but has not reached him yet.

Ray Brooker asked who owns the property above the Fellowship Hall. City Manager Lapeyrouse said that it is owned by Harrison Merrill. Brooker asked if we could add that piece of property to what we are requesting from him in exchange for demolishing the old lodge. Mayor Goodgame said that demolishing the lodge will cost between \$60,000 and \$70,000, and we have presented him with a list of properties of about that value. He said that Merrill offered a piece of property


worth about \$15,000. Merrill is working with the City of Douglas, trying to have a Westin Hotel build on his resort, Foxhall.

Ed Dean asked city to focus on getting sewer. It is stopping not only growth from future construction, but also existing homes from being able to add on to their homes. Mayor Goodgame said that he and Ray Becker are on different committees who are working on sewer.

John Hoppes complimented the marketing committee for the commercial on youtube.com.

Councilor Howard made a motion to adjourn, 2<sup>nd</sup> Councilor Carr, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted:

  
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Hughel Goodgame, Mayor

Attested:

  
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Mandi Cantrell, City Clerk