

Minutes - Draft

**PECS-Planning, Economic Development & Community Services
Committee**

Thursday, February 18, 2021

10:00 AM

*This meeting will be conducted via teleconference (Zoom). Simultaneous public access to the meeting will be available
(1) via live stream on DCTV's webpage,
(2) on DCTVChannel23.TV*

Meeting Started At: 10:00 AM

Attendance: All Commissioners Present

Present 3 - Member Jeff Rader, Chairperson Larry Johnson, and Member Mereda Davis Johnson

I. DISCUSSION

Budget Considerations

Budget Question - Last year the Youth Garden was funded with \$225,000 from Hotel/Motel Tax and \$75,000 from the Super District's 7 Discretionary Fund. Can the Hotel Motel Tax Fund include this same funding level of \$225,000 for FY 2021?

-Question JR: is there a plan for the use of these funds over time?

-LCJ: This was a commitment made last year; we are attempting to ensure the allocation for this is clear. We need to have a system for the allocation of the funds that focuses on tourism and even trail system. My hope is that we honor what has been committed to pertaining to the Youth Garden.

-Question MDJ: are we asking for funding for programming? I thought this allocation came from D7 discretionary funds.

LCJ: This came from a variety of sources (bond funding, hotel/motel tax, and discretionary funds). It is not for programmatic funding at this time, but for the continued building and design of the Youth Farm. I would be happy to present this to the BOC.

-Question JR: Was the \$225 from hotel/motel was not expended?

LCJ: The YMCA came to us with the position that DeKalb County take over the park. We are pending some legal work-throughs so that construction can begin

-Question JR: have we made the expenditures on this site?

Z Williams: what should happen with capital expenditures is that we roll it over if it wasn't spend the previous year. The way we understand this item is that this is a continuation of funding from the original approval of the \$225K.

LCJ: we are ready to go, we just have to get past the legal actions currently pending before we can begin in earnest the buildout of the Youth Farm. The structure of this program, the location of it within a food desert, provides DeKalb County w/ the tools to tackle food insecurity. Students have also created a marketing strategy, and there are several projects that will happen at the Youth Farm.

-Question LJ: so the \$225K is used to have a design plan for the Bransby-Rock Chapel Park?

LCJ: this has to be done in phases, b/c we don't have everything at this time for a full restoration. There are some elements ready in the initial phase that are focused on farming

-Question LJ: will we use funding for Sugar Creek Golf Course also to repair some of its amenities?

-Z Williams: no action needed at this time, we support the Commissioner's request to ensure these funds are being rolled over into the capital account for FY21.

Budget Question - Planning Department has 2 vacancies. Can the FY21 Budget include funding these positions to give the department more capacity to work with customers?

-Z Williams: the positions filled will assist with administrative work in the department. Our office will support taking these actions.

*-Question LJ: Can you come back in March to give us an update as to why we have a backlog in Planning Dept for projects?
A Baker: we are reviewing the impacts of COVID on the department. E-permitting processes, call volume, have impacted the department*

-LJ: that item can be removed and we will revisit in March.

Business License Exemptions

-Discussion of Internet businesses (gig economy) allowed in residential areas w/o a permit

-LJ: we should not lose our home rule/local control with this. What can we do to deal with that population of businesses?M

Welch: we would need guidance on how broad the resolution should be, or whether it should be narrowed to home businesses with no customer contact?

LJ: That's what we should focus on right now, I would like to stay narrow, test it for a year or two, then revisit in terms of has this helped our economy, etc.

JR: Narrowly tailored stance is on point. We should also make sure we can license businesses that are operating consistent with our law. The problem we've seen is that sometimes businesses get a license for one thing then do another, so we should keep the resolution narrowly tailored.

-Question LCJ: agree with narrow scope in initial rollout...Question - Has there been, from a constituent standpoint, a need that has been addressed? How does this affect county tax revenue? We should also bring the GA Association of Realtors to discuss.

A Baker: we can run our numbers as far as revenues we've received from home-based businesses to show how this has impacted our budget. But for companies that are running businesses under the table, we don't have a way to account for that at this moment, unless there are complaints from other residents

LCJ: we need to know whether or not the County would be held liable

M Welch: our department will look into this and get back to you.

-V Ernestes: this is a provision in our business license division, not zoning. Related to licensing, so the liability here on the County is limited. The ordinances both broad and narrow have been drafted. M Welch will provide to the committee after this meeting

LCJ: we need to ensure a provision in the ordinance that requires that business to have insurance in the event there is an adverse situation.

-TT: supports moving quickly on this because it has been happening in the County for a while

-JR: Let's ensure that the purpose of licensing gives us information on the economic activity of the County. We have a difficult time dealing with businesses that operate without a business license. This needs to be addressed. Also we should consider entering into a relationship similar to what we have with Water customers, where we identify those that are not paying and structure the fee system in that regard. Would love to see the Administration put that RFP out.

-LJ: once we get the resolution from Law we need to act on this as a Board

Meeting Ended At: 10:47 AM

MOTION was made by Jeff Rader, seconded by Mereda Davis Johnson, that this agenda item be adjourned meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Member Rader, Chairperson Johnson, and Member Davis Johnson

Barbara H. Sanders-Norwood CCC, CMC