



BROOKS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

July 17, 2023

Mayor Langford called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.; Scott Israel led the Invocation; Mayor Langford led the Pledge.

Council Member present: Kay Brumbelow
Brian Davis
Scott Israel
Todd Speer

Council Member absent: Ted Britt

The proposed Agenda for Monday, July 17, 2023, was emailed to the Mayor and Council Members for review before tonight's meeting. Mayor Langford asked for a motion to approve the agenda; Council Member Scott Israel made a Motion to approve the agenda as presented; Council Member Todd Speer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

The draft Minutes for Monday, June 26, 2023, were emailed to the Mayor and Council Members for review before tonight's meeting. Mayor Langford asked for a motion to approve the minutes; Council Member Todd Speer made a Motion to approve the minutes as presented; Council Member Kay Brumbelow seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

The draft Executive Session Minutes for Monday, June 26, 2023, were emailed to the Mayor and Council Members for review before tonight's meeting. Mayor Langford asked for a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes; Council Member Scott Israel made a Motion to approve the minutes as presented; Council Member Brian Davis seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

New Business

Trash Rate Increase Proposal:

L. Spohr presented a trash rate increase of 4.9% to the Mayor and Council to offset the 4.9% CPI increase the Town received from AmWaste. AmWaste (previously known as Dependable Waste) has been providing trash service to the residents of Brooks since September 1999. The last rate increase from AmWaste to the Town of Brooks was based on a 5.8% CPI on October 1, 2008. The Town's agreement with AmWaste allows for annual rate adjustment. AmWaste notified the Town of Brooks on May 25, 2023, that it would increase its rates effective July 1, 2023; in turn, the Town of Brooks rate increase would be effective October 1, 2023. Mayor Langford asked for a motion to approve the 4.9% increase; Council Member Todd Speer made a Motion to approve the 4.9% increase; Council Member Scott Israel seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Historic District Proposal Presentation by Bishop Watts:

B. Watts presented his proposal to the Mayor and Council for the Value of the Establishment of a Historic District within the City Limits of Brooks, GA. The presentation stated that A Local Historic District's main value to small-town America is to prevent insensitive change to the community and protect locally beloved structures from demolition. It allows for an area within a municipality to be recognized for its historic value to the town and allows that area to remain as things were, even as the world changes around it. A local historic district is defined as a “geographically definable area, urban or rural, which contains structures, sites and/or works of art which have special historic or aesthetic interest or value; represent one or more periods or styles of architecture typical of one or more eras in the history of the municipality, county, state, or region; and cause that area to constitute a visibly perceptible of the community.” Georgia Historic Preservation Act. Based on the definition, Brooks meets all the qualifications. From an economic standpoint, houses within a historic district have been shown to have an appreciation in value at a rate that is a minimum of 5% higher than similar areas that are undesignated. Homes are also eligible for two tax incentive programs; the first program is the Preferential Property Tax Assessment Program which freezes the county property tax assessment for eight years for any historic home that is being rehabilitated; the second is the homeowners will also gain access to the State Income Tax Credit Program for the rehabilitated historic property, which is a tax credit of 25% of all qualifying expenses for the rehabilitation of a historic home up to \$100k.

After a lengthy discussion between B. Watts, residents of the Town of Brooks, and the Mayor and Council, it was decided to continue gathering information on how many historic homes vs. non-contributing/non-historic" homes are within the proposed area and different types of historic districts (local vs. federal, etc.) and how these would affect our residents.

Committee Reports:

Mayor’s Report: Mayor Langford reported that the Town received its annual Audit Engagement letter and requested a motion to approve it. Council Member Brian Davis made a Motion to approve the engagement letter; Council Member Kay Brumbelow seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Planning and Zoning:

M. Ungaro reported he had received multiple inquiries regarding resident Jeff Lindsay clearing the fence line on his property located on Hwy 85 Connector. His property is zoned for 5-acre parcels, and as of this evening, the Town has not received any requests for permits.

Recreation:

D. Holliman reported that BAR is still running the fundraiser campaign, and there is a delay in the initial construction. Baseball sign-ups remain open until August 1st, Cheerleading signups have closed, and cheerleading will begin August 1st. EMC will move some power by the end of the month, which will allow the start of demolition.

Library: K. Bradley reported she is continuing to clean shelves and has seen a decrease in the summer crowd as we approach the start of school. K. Bradley requested the approval to de-access 304 books with copyright dates ranging from 1963 to 2006 valued at \$485.83. Mayor Langford asked for a motion to approve the deaccession of the 304 library books: Council Member Todd Speer made a Motion to approve the deaccession, and Council Member Scott Israel seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Town Clerk Report: L. Spohr reported that three Public Hearings for the increase of Property Tax /2023 Millage rate value will be scheduled in the month of August; proposed dates and times are Monday, August 14th at 6:30 p.m. and Monday, August 21, 2023, at 4:30 and 6:30 p.m.

Finance Officer's Report: L. Spohr reviewed the June financials; LOST and SPLOST are at an increase over the same time last year. SPLOST YTD over last year is at an increase of 7.18%, and LOST YTD over this time is at an increase of 8.96%. The referendum for the 2017 SPLOST ended June 30, 2023, leaving an available balance of \$409,846 to fund part of the remaining 2017 SPLOST projects. The 2023 SPLOST referendum income will begin in July 2023. Sales Tax, TAVT, and Rental Income have exceeded the budgetary goals; unfortunately, Property Tax revenue is currently at 97% of the fiscal goal.

Town Manager Report:

Brooks Market:

July Market is this weekend.

Storm Water:

Fayette County has removed the pipe in the creek at Brooks Park and is in the primary stages of restoring the creek bed. The creek's banks have been graded and will be seeded and strawed later this week (hopefully). Afterward, the Fayette County Recreation Department will design the final appearance with rocks, boulders, etc.

The creek flowing under Woods Rd. through the paired culverts were dammed up by beavers. The water level was about one foot from the top of the six-foot-tall culvert. M. Ungaro contacted the Fayette County Road Department last week and was informed that they dispatched a crew to clear the dam and remove the debris. The creek is now at a normally low level with a small flow of water.

Any Other Reports: None

Any Other Business: None

Mayor Langford stated that with no further business to discuss, the public portion of the meeting is closed at 8:02 p.m. to begin the Executive Session.

Adjourn: With no further business to discuss this evening and the Executive Session is closed, Mayor Langford asked for a motion to adjourn; Council Member Kay Brumbelow offered a Motion to adjourn; Council Member Brian Davis seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lorey Spohr
Town Clerk