



CITY OF STONECREST, GEORGIA

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – MINUTES

3120 Stonecrest Blvd., Stonecrest, GA 30038

Monday, October 23, 2023 at 6:00 PM

Mayor Jazzmin Cobble

Council Member Tara Graves - District 1 Council Member Rob Turner - District 2

Council Member Alecia Washington - District 3 Mayor Pro Tem George Turner - District 4

Council Member Tammy Grimes - District 5

Citizen Access: [Stonecrest YouTube Live Channel](#)

I. CALL TO ORDER: George Turner, Mayor Pro-Tem

The meeting began at 6:05pm.

II. ROLL CALL: Sonya Isom, City Clerk

All members were present.

III. INVOCATION: Rob Turner, District 2 Councilmember

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Alecia Washington, District 3 Councilmember

V. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion – made by Councilmember Rob Turner to approve the City Council Meeting agenda for October 23, 2023. Seconded by Councilmember Alecia Washington.

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Approval of Meeting Minutes - Special Called Meeting, September 6, 2023

Motion – made by Councilmember Rob Turner to approve the September 6, 2023, Special Called Meeting minutes. Seconded by Councilmember Tammy Grimes.

Motion passed unanimously.

b. Approval of Meeting Minutes - Special Called Meeting with SPLOST, Parks and Rec, Finance Oversight and Transportation Committees, September 13, 2023

Motion – made by Councilmember Tammy Grimes to approve the September 13, 2023, Special Called meeting with SPLOST, Parks and Rec, Finance Oversight and Transportation Committees minutes. Seconded by Councilmember Rob Turner.
Motion passed unanimously.

- c. Approval of Meeting Minutes - City Council Meeting, September 25, 2023

Motion – made by Councilmember Tara Graves to approve the September 25, 2023, City Council meeting minutes. Seconded by Councilmember Alecia Washington.
Motion passed unanimously.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Citizens wishing to make a public comment may do so in person. Citizens may also submit public comments via email to cityclerk@stonecrestga.gov by 2 pm on the day of the meeting to be read by the City Clerk.

All members of the public wishing to address the City Council shall submit their name and the topic of their comments to the city clerk prior to the start of any meeting held by the City Council.

There is a two (2) minute time limit for each speaker submitting or reading a public comment. Individuals will be held to established time limits.

Dave Marcus – Comments on the Botanical Garden Design item. Asking to defer.

Herbert Woods – Concerns about property on the corner of Panola and Thompson Mill Road. He would like the city to purchase this property and turn it into a park, while saving green space.

Malakia Wells - She appreciates the Stonecrest Citizens Academy. Requesting public comments be added to all meetings, specifically Special Called Meetings and Council Work sessions. She also asks that an additional minute be given to each speaker. Stressed concerns regarding the budget process and stated she has shared multiple times over the last several years that the budget process and would like to know how council obtains agenda items from constituents to add items to the meeting agendas.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Citizens wishing to participate and comment during the public hearing portion of the meeting may comment in person. You may also submit your request including your full name, address, position on the agenda item you are commenting on (for or against) via email to cityclerk@stonecrestga.gov by 2 pm the day of the Public Hearing to be read into the record at the meeting. A zoom link for the meeting will be sent to you.

When it is your turn to speak, please state your name, address and relationship to the case..

There is a ten (10) minute time limit for each item per side during all public hearings. Only the applicant may reserve time for rebuttal.

a. Public Hearing - FY24 Budget Recommendation - *Gia Scruggs, City Manager & Jazzmin Cobble, Mayor*

Presentation by City Manager Scruggs and Mayor Cobble regarding the budget calendar, including input on the FY24 Budget from a combined committee meeting and also a previous work session. This hearing is for the public to provide comments. There was a review of council recommendations, which was made available to the public during committee meetings, where there was also opportunity for public engagement. The revenue increased in some areas allowing the city to have a revenue projection of \$16.6 million. There are twenty recommended positions throughout various departments. The next action will occur on November 13, 2023, 5pm, at a Special Called Meeting to approve the FY24 Budget.

Motion – made by Councilmember Tammy Grimes to open public hearing for FY24 Budget Recommendation. Seconded by Councilmember Tara Graves.

Motion passed unanimously.

In Favor

Terry Fye

In Opposition

None

Neutral

Malaika Wells

Andrew Wells

Dave Marcus

Motion – made by Councilmember Rob Turner to close the public hearing for FY24 Budget Recommendation. Seconded by Councilmember Tammy Grimes.

Motion passed unanimously.

The City Manager gave comments to the public in regard to marketing, code enforcement, the Botanical Garden Design, software and service contracts, funding for public safety and improving the budget process for FY25 and police services, including a public safety liaison.

b. Public Hearing - SLUP 23-007 2547 Lithonia West Drive - *Matthew Williams, Deputy Director of Planning & Zoning*

Presentation by Deputy Director Williams stating the applicant, which was present, is seeking a SLUP to operate an asphalt plant and has requested a withdrawal without prejudice. It was confirmed the applicant can come back if withdrawing without prejudice. If heard and denied, the applicant must wait two years.

Motion – made by Councilmember Rob Turner to open public hearing for SLUP 23-007 2547 Lithonia West Drive. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem George Turner.

Councilmember Tammy Grimes stated unreadiness and asked if the application had been heard by council and withdrawn previously. The Atty Attorney stated the item is being withdrawn for issues that are present but prohibited by the charter.

Motion – made by Councilmember Rob Turner to withdraw the previously stated motion. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem George Turner.

- c. **For Decision** - SLUP 23-007 2547 Lithonia West Drive - *Matthew Williams, Deputy Director of Planning & Zoning*

Motion – made by Mayor Pro Tem George Turner to permit the withdrawal of SLUP 23-007 2547 Lithonia West Drive. Seconded by Councilmember Tara Graves.

Motion passed unanimously.

- d. **Public Hearing** - SLUP 23-004 3575 Trinity Place - *Matthew Williams, Deputy Director of Planning & Zoning*

Presentation by Deputy Director Williams stating the applicant is requesting a SLUP to operate a short-term vacation rental. There was a review of facts & background, a zoning map, and short-term vacation rental regulations. The city permit is not transferable and will only be permitted for the owner. The applicant must comply and remain in compliance with Article VII – Noise Ordinance. The short-term rental unit must be properly maintained and regularly inspected by the owner or agent. All marketing or advertisements must contain limit of occupancy, maximum parking availability and must have a city license as well as any license required by the State of Georgia before operation. Staff recommends approval with recommendations as listed in the packet. The item has gone before the CPIM and Planning Commission.

Councilmember Grimes recused herself from participating in this item.

Motion – made by Councilmember Tara Graves to open the public hearing for SLUP 23-004 3575 Trinity Place. Seconded by Councilmember Rob Turner.

Motion passed 4-0 (Councilmember Tammy Grimes recused).

The applicant, Jeffrey Dickerson, gave information on the lot and stated they do not bring any unwanted elements into the neighborhood.

In Favor

Dave Marcus

Dele Lowman - Question

In Opposition

Philip Lehman

Billy Chestnut

Lemuel Hawkins

Motion – made by Councilmember Rob Turner to close the public hearing for SLUP 23-004 3575 Trinity Place. Seconded by Councilmember Tara Graves.

Motion passed 4-0 (Councilmember Tammy Grimes recused).

Mr. Dickerson confirmed the tree house has been in operation for 3 years and there have been no negative comments. The City Attorney stated the governing bodies of the City of Stonecrest must enforce the governance and Charter of the City of Stonecrest with no ability to enforce private agreements between property owners. His concerns touch on the City's ordinances and not issues between parties.

Staff mentioned that the applicant was not issued a building permit, but during the business license process will complete a building inspection for a building permit. The normal process is for the applicant to come to Planning & Zoning first for SLUP and then the Building Department for permits. The Planning Commission recommends approval. The preamble was read by the City Clerk.

- e. **For Decision** - Ordinance for SLUP 23-004 3575 Trinity Place - *Matthew Williams, Deputy Director of Planning & Zoning*

Motion – made by Councilmember Rob Turner to approve SLUP 23-004 3575 Trinity Place. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem George Turner.

Motion passed 3-2 with Councilmembers Tara Graves & Alecia Washington voting Nay and Mayor Cobble as the tie breaker, voting in favor of.

- f. **Public Hearing** - SLUP 23-005 4908 Ardsley Drive - *Matthew Williams, Deputy Director of Planning & Zoning*

Presentation by Deputy Director Williams stating the applicant, Teshaye Lowe, is seeking a SLUP to operate a childcare service. There was a review of facts & background, including obtaining a business license for educational purposes in the home-setting. There was also a review of property info, the zoning request, characteristics and zoning criteria. The backyard and basement will be used for childcare services. The applicant must comply and remain in compliance with all International Building Code regarding care facilities within a dwelling. The city permit is not transferable and will only be permitted for the owners, Teshaye Lowe and Nathaniel Lowe. A city license is required before beginning operation, no parking is allowed on the street or lawn of the property, no child should remain at the property for more than 12 hours and the play area must be secured and not easily accessible to the public.

Motion – made by Councilmember Rob Turner to open public hearing for SLUP 23-005 4908 Ardsley Drive. Seconded by Councilmember Tara Graves.

Motion passed unanimously.

In Favor

None

In Opposition

None

Motion – made by Councilmember Rob Turner to close public hearing for SLUP 23-005 4908 Ardsley Drive. Seconded by Councilmember Alecia Washington.

Motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Lowe confirmed six students are allowed and that is her intent. The applicant will be the only staff member and is licensed with Bright from the Start to have six students per one adult. Mrs. Lowe also confirmed the backyard is fenced and that she is willing to abide by all conditions. Deputy Director Williams confirmed all boxes have been checked. Staff recommends approval with six conditions as listed in the packet and read by Deputy Director Williams.

The preamble was read by the City Clerk

- g. **For Decision** - Ordinance for SLUP 23-005 4908 Ardsley Drive - *Matthew Williams, Deputy Director of Planning & Zoning*

Motion – made by Councilmember Rob Turner to approve SLUP 23-005 4908 Ardsley Drive with stated conditions. Seconded by Councilmember Tara Graves.

Motion passed unanimously.

IX. CONSENT AGENDA

X. APPOINTMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Resolution for Appointments to Charter Commission - *George Turner, Mayor Pro-Tem*

Presenter Mayor Pro Tem Turner stated that each member of the council had the opportunity make an appointment to the Charter Commission. The State House of Representatives and State Senate would still need to appoint a member and legal to assign an ex-officio member. The preamble and names of appointees were read by the City Clerk

Motion – made by Councilmember Tara Graves to approve the appointments to the Charter Commission. Seconded by Councilmember Tammy Grimes.

Motion passed unanimously.

XI. REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS

XII. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **For Decision** - MP 23-000002 6718 Varkel Lane - *Matthew Williams, Deputy Director of Planning & Zoning*

Presentation by Deputy Director Williams with a review of existing properties of the first six lots and the last lot on Randall Road. There was a review of the proposed lot that was approved by DeKalb County. The existing lots are 6817, 6734, 6750, 6766, 6782, 6798 Varkel Lane and 2269 Randall Road. The proposed lot is currently a gravel truck parking lot that was approved by DeKalb County with the objective to combine all the lots as one lot. Staff confirmed the nine acres of gravel parking was approved before the moratorium was in place, therefore will be grandfathered as a gravel lot.

Councilmember Graves confirmed she spoke with the resident that attended the last meeting and had a question..

Motion – made by Councilmember Tara Graves to approve MP 23-000002 6718 Varkel Lane. Seconded by Councilmember Rob Turner.

Motion passed unanimously.

- b. **For Decision** - Ordinance for RZ 23-003 4700 Browns Mill Road - *Matthew Williams, Deputy Director of Planning & Zoning*

Presentation by Deputy Director Williams stating the applicant, Ray of Hope Christian Church Disciples of Christ, Inc is seeking major modifications of property to change the zoning conditions to allow 46 single-family detached dwellings. The applicant has requested a withdrawal of the application, without prejudice.

Motion – made by Mayor Pro Tem George Turner to approve the withdrawal without prejudice for item RZ 23-003 4700 Browns Mill Road. Seconded by Councilmember Rob Turner.

Motion passed unanimously.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. For Decision** - Everett Park Project Contract Recommendation - *Sedrick Swan, Director of Parks & Recreation & Shakerah Hall, Procurement Manager*

Presentation by Procurement Manager Hall and Director Swann. A grant was received from the National Recreation and Parks Association and Bob Cat for \$50,000 to construct a trail at Everett Park. Staff will need to award a contractor with construction of the 1.5 mile & 6 feet wide trail.

City Manager Scruggs stated the park entrance, and the parking lot are separate projects, and the entrance is being addressed. On November 8th there will be an opportunity for engagement with Bob Cat and the Parks Association. Staff confirmed the city received 6 bids and the selected bid was the lowest qualified in the amount of \$48,225.00. Staff answered Councilwoman Grimes question and confirmed ADA compliance is in the fore front and in thought while developing the trails. The park is closed from dusk to dawn and there will be no lighting on the trail.

Motion – made by Councilmember Tammy Grimes to approve the Everett Park Project Contract Recommendation. Seconded by Councilmember Alecia Washington.

Motion passed unanimously.

- b. For Decision** - Paving Study Contract Recommendation - *Hari Karikaran, City Engineer & Shakerah Hall, Procurement Manager*

Introduction of item by Procurement Manager Hall. City Engineer Karikaran stated the first study was completed in 2019 and he believes it is time to complete another study, to reflect on the amount of improvement. Staff recommend approval of this contract.

DeKalb County conducts manual inspections to evaluate roads. This method scans the road for evaluation of the surface and sub surface conditions by sending signals through vibrations. The terms of the contract are from July 2023 - December 2023, starting October-November and the contract carrying to next year. The cost for the entire project is \$66,530.00. It was confirmed that all language in the contracts are per state law.

Motion – made by Councilmember Rob Turner to approve the Paving Study Contract Recommendation. Seconded by Councilmember Alecia Washington.

Motion passed unanimously.

- c. For Decision** - Botanical Garden Design Contract Recommendation - *Hari Karikaran, City Engineer & Shakerah Hall, Procurement Manager*

Introduction of item by Procurement Manager Hall and review by City Engineer Karikaran of the RFP in the park's masterplan with two additional items. This item is for the design

of the Botanical Garden with Stantec Consulting Inc in the amount of \$293,500.00. Appendix A is the deed for the conservation easement and baseline documentation report for Fairington Trace. Per the City Engineer, the plan is to do an entire design.

Motion – made by Councilmember Rob Turner to approve the Botanical Garden Design Contract Recommendation. Seconded by Councilmember Tara Graves.

Motion passed unanimously.

- d. **For Decision** - Fairington Park Additional Parking Vendor Recommendation - *Hari Karikaran, City Engineer & Shakerah Hall, Procurement Manager*

Presentation by Procurement Manager Hall and City Engineer Karikaran. Four proposals were received and the evaluation team concluded Stantec Consulting in the amount of \$42,000.00 was most qualified. City Engineer Karikaran stated the city holds several events at this location and visitors could not avoid parking on the lawn due to lack of parking. Staff is looking to improve the lower deck and increase the number of parking spaces at this location. The number of spaces is open at this time and there will be a tree survey done first. Hoping to get 150 spaces. Staff recommends approval to get additional parking designs constructed. The design is in FY 23 Funds, Construction SPLOST II.

Motion – made by Councilmember Alecia Washington to approve the Fairington Park Additional Parking Vendor Recommendation. Seconded by Councilmember Tara Graves.

Motion passed unanimously.

- e. **For Decision** - Salem Park Outdoor Equipment Vendor Recommendation - *Hari Karikaran, City Engineer & Shakerah Hall, Procurement Manager*

Presentation by Procurement Manager Hall and City Engineer Karikaran stating the item is to allow Southeast Outdoor Solutions to supply and install all exercise equipment. The City Engineer stated there will be 12 pieces of exercise equipment installed where the walking trail is. This will help improve the quality of life in that neighborhood. Salem Park will also have a gazebo and an additional pavilion. The City Engineer stated the playground equipment will come from SPLOST. Restrooms are also a part of SPLOST II.

Motion – made by Mayor Pro Tem George Turner to approve the Salem Park Outdoor Equipment Vendor Recommendation. Seconded by Councilmember Rob Turner.

Motion passed unanimously.

- f. **For Decision** - Memorandum of Understanding Approval - Georgia Piedmont Technical College - ARPA - *Gia Scruggs, City Manager*

City Manager Scruggs gave a presentation of the MOU that was identified last year. The City Manager and staff, along with Berry Dunn and legal team worked with Georgia Piedmont Technical College to come up with a MOU for commercial truck trailers, simulators as well as offering internships, scholarships and other free or discounted workforce training and certifications for the City of Stonecrest residents. There will be mandatory reporting as governed by the federal ARPA funding for the MOU in the amount of \$500,000.00.

The preamble was read by the City Clerk.

Motion – made by Councilmember Tara Graves for approval of the Memorandum of Understanding for Georgia Piedmont Technical College, ARPA. Seconded by Councilmember Tammy Grimes.

Motion passed unanimously.

- g. For Decision** - Memorandum of Understanding Approval - DeKalb County School System, ARPA Funding - *Gia Scruggs, City Manager*

City Manager Scruggs along with consultation from advisory consultants Berry Dunn, City Attorneys and DeKalb County School System, bring before council a MOU that will provide assistance and wrap around services for the twelve school districts located within Stonecrest city limits. Some items that will be provided is a zen den, which is a mindfulness room for students as well as funds to assist with those qualified as high poverty schools with the option to purchase school supplies, including some personal care items. For high schools, there will also be a with Student Engagement that will free of charge at the Safe Center. The Safe Centers provide academic, social, and emotional support and wrap around services to the students.

Councilmember Grimes was not in agreement with the supply piece, as the school district gets funds for supplies, which could cover those basic items. She would like to see all funds go towards the Safe Centers and wrap around service. Mayor Cobble stated that due to teachers using their personal funds to supply students with materials, using some of the ARPA funds to help aid these circumstances should be feasible, as some of the school faculty has asked for additional assistance with these items. Mayor Pro Tem wanted to confirm there are no legitimate conflicts and that the city would not be violating any guidelines. Mayor Cobble stated the city would not be violating any guidelines as the MOU is written today. Councilmember Grimes stated that undergarments are necessary but pens, pencil & paper should be purchased by Title 1 funds and not ARPA funds.

Motion – made by Councilmember Rob Turner to approve the Memorandum of Understanding for DeKalb County School System ARPA Funding. Seconded by Councilmember Tammy Grimes.

Motion passed unanimously.

XIV. CITY ATTORNEY COMMENTS

No comments.

XV. CITY MANAGER UPDATE

The Fall Festival is this Saturday, and the Citizens Academy is in progress and department heads are enjoying sharing the services offered by the city.

XVI. MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

District 1/Councilmember Tara Graves – There is a Parks Advisory meeting next Thursday. Everyone be safe during the holidays and Happy Veterans Day to all veterans.

District 2/Councilmember Rob Turner – He is hosting a Town Hall meeting this Thursday at 5pm at the Lou Walker Senior Center.

District 3/Councilmember Alecia Washington – She is hosting a Trunk or Treat at Farrington Park on Halloween from between the hours of 6pm – 7:30pm and encourages everyone to come out. Be safe.

District 4/Mayor Pro Tem George Turner – Wants citizens to know that who you vote for is your business, but please vote. Early voting is going on now thru November 2nd and Election Day is November 7, 2023. Go to the website for up to date information.

District 5/Councilmember Tammy Grimes – Thank you to all veterans. Parents, please send children to school on time.

Mayor Jazzmin Cobble – There will be a Fall Festival at Browns Mill Park this Saturday from 11am – 3pm. If you missed the open house for the bike trail and pedestrian plan, please visit the public engineering page until Wednesday, October 25th.

XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

(When an executive session is required, one will be called for the following issues: 1) Personnel, 2) Litigation, 3) Real Estate)

Motion – made by Councilmember Tammy Grimes to enter into Executive Session for Litigation. Seconded by Councilmember Rob Turner.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion – made by Councilmember Rob Turner to exit Executive Session and resume the regular scheduled City Council meeting. Seconded by Councilmember Tammy Grimes.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion – made by Councilmember Tammy Grimes to approve the minutes from the Executive Session. Seconded by Councilmember Tara Graves.

Motion passed unanimously.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion – made by Councilmember Rob Turner for adjournment. Seconded by Councilmember Tammy Grimes.

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:19pm.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The City of Stonecrest does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its programs, services, activities and employment practices.

If you need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication (such as a sign language interpreter, an assistive listening device or print material in digital format) or reasonable modification to programs, services or activities contact the ADA Coordinator, Sonya Isom, as soon as possible, preferably 2 days before the activity or event.