

Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia
Mayor and Commission
Tuesday, January 7, 2020
6:05 p.m.
City Hall

The Mayor and Commission of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia met this date in regular session. Present: Mayor Girtz; Commissioners Davenport, Parker, Link, Wright, Denson, NeSmith, Edwards, Herod, Thornton, and Hamby. No one was absent.

A motion was made by Commissioner NeSmith, seconded by Commissioner Parker, to approve Minutes of meeting of Tuesday, December 3, 2019. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Written communications

There were no written communications.

Recognitions

Mayor Girtz recognized Leisure Services Department for awards received from the Georgia Recreation and Park Association at the state conference in November.

This past year, the Leisure Services Department launched "Leisure Services 2030," a ten-year plan for the future of the Department. Community input and guidance is essential for the development of this important document, which will shape the future of Athens parks, programs, and facilities. Staff planned and implemented an effective media campaign to engage the public about the development of the plan and encourage participation. Because of the impressive effort, the Department received the "Marketing and Visibility Award for a Marketing Campaign," which recognizes successful and creative coordinated plans used by an agency to market and promote a program, event, or service. Leisure Services Director Kent Kilpatrick and Marketing Specialist Aimee Cheek accepted the award.

The Leisure Services Department was further honored by GRPA with another statewide award. For the ninth time in 17 years, the Leisure Services Department received the prestigious Georgia Recreation and Park Association's state "Agency of the Year" Award for populations of 80,000 -150,000. The award recognizes the agency which has made a significant contribution to recreation, park, or leisure services on a local level, and is based on outstanding programs and accomplishments over the past year. This recognition is particularly significant because it is voted on by Recreation professionals. Director Kilpatrick accepted the award.

Mayor Girtz announced Keep Athens-Clarke County Beautiful received the First Place Keep Georgia Beautiful Affiliate Award (100,001 – 150,000 population category) from the Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation on December 5, 2019 at the Marriot Century Center in Atlanta. This award recognizes the Keep America Beautiful affiliates who prevent litter, improve their community's waste handling practices, and preserve the natural beauty and environment at the grassroots level. The annual awards ceremony recognizes outstanding efforts in the areas of litter prevention, waste reduction and recycling, community beautification, and overall community improvement. In Fiscal Year 2019, KACCB administered eleven litter prevention programs, four recycling programs/events, and seven beautification programs annually. KACCB engaged 7,348 volunteers in the community for 19,677 volunteer hours. [Stacey Farrell, Keep Athens-Clarke County Beautiful Executive Director](#), Stacy Smith and Carlos Pinto accepted the award.

Citizen input.

There was no citizen input.

New business – Consider under suspension of Rules

A motion was made by Commissioner NeSmith, seconded by Commissioner Edwards, to suspend Rules of Commission for items on this agenda. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner NeSmith, seconded by Commissioner Link, to

- a) Authorize an appropriation in the amount of \$9,259,479 which includes \$841,770 contingency for the Tanyard Creek Interceptor Improvements Phase 2 Project. A change order will be initiated at a later date to reduce the contract amount by \$734,610 since purple pipe will not be installed at this time by Athens-Clarke County as per agenda report dated November 26, 2019;
- b) Award a unit price construction contract to the apparent low bidder, Strickland & Sons Pipeline, Inc., in the amount of \$8,417,709; and
- c) Authorize the Mayor and appropriate staff to execute all related contract documents

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Parker, seconded by Commissioner Davenport, to establish qualifying fees for the 2020 general primary election as per agenda report dated November 26, 2019 as follows; and authorize the appropriate staff to publish the subject qualifying fees.

Judge of Probate Court	\$3,661.04
Clerk of Superior Court	\$3,702.48
Chief Magistrate	\$3,117.67
Tax Commissioner	\$2,761.07
Sheriff	\$3,613.30
State Court Judge	\$3,820.67
State Court Judge (Chief)	\$4,149.88
Coroner	\$ 506.67
Commissioner	\$ 450.00
School Board Member	\$ 108.00

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wright, seconded by Commissioner Edwards, to approve Legislative Review Committee recommendation as per report dated December 3, 2019 that the Athens in Motion Commission submit a written recommendation concerning the health and safety impact of the proposed Shareable Dockless Mobility Devices Pilot Program, as well as the potential impact of the proposed Shareable Dockless Mobility Devices Pilot Program on all current modes of transportation in Athens-Clarke County. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner NeSmith, seconded by Commissioner Wright, to authorize the purchase of virtual server infrastructure hardware, software, licensing and professional services not to exceed \$267,142.92 as per agenda report dated December 12, 2019. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner NeSmith, seconded by Commissioner Edwards, to approve an intergovernmental agreement with Athens Housing Authority for master planning services for the North Athens Downtown Development Project in the amount of \$450,500 as per Exhibit A attached thereto, and authorize Mayor and appropriate staff to execute all related documents. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Denson, seconded by Commissioner NeSmith, to adopt the following resolution which was presented by title only. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

A RESOLUTION OF THE ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY UNIFIED GOVERNMENT COMMISSION RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THAT THE LOCAL LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION INTRODUCE LEGISLATION DURING THE 2020 SESSION OF THE GEORGIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO PROVIDE FOR A LOCAL REFERENDUM TO ADOPT A HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION TO FREEZE THE VALUATION OF PROPERTY AT THE BASE YEAR VALUATION FOR AS LONG AS THE HOMEOWNER RESIDES ON THE PROPERTY AND ALSO THEIR HOUSEHOLD GROSS ADJUSTED INCOME IS AT OR BELOW 150% OF THE FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL

WHEREAS, housing is a basic need that should be accessible to all, and that homeownership is a way to build wealth, a feeling of safety, and stability for individuals and families; and

WHEREAS, wealth-inequality has affected many individuals and families in Athens-Clarke County and resulted in financial hardship and instability; and

WHEREAS, historically, many low-income homeowners have faced displacement during the growing development of Athens-Clarke County; and

WHEREAS, gentrification can create a process of speculation which leads to an increase in land and/or property values, higher tax assessments, increased property taxes, and often displacement of low-income homeowners; and

WHEREAS, the Goals & Objectives of the Mayor & Commission, the ACC Comprehensive Plan, and the Envision Athens Action Agenda all state that acknowledging and developing strategies to address issues related to gentrification is a priority; and

WHEREAS, the Athens-Clarke County Georgia Initiative for Community Housing recommends putting in place a property tax freeze on low income residents to help fulfill its strategy to combat displacement of existing neighborhood groups; and

WHEREAS, the Commission finds that it is in the best interest of the citizens of Athens-Clarke County that the Commission request the assistance of the Local Legislative Delegation in introducing the necessary legislation for implementing a homestead exemption for low-income homeowners; and

WHEREAS, this legislation shall provide for a referendum to be held as part of the General Election in November of 2020 for purposes of allowing the voters of Athens-Clarke County to decide whether to adopt a low-income homestead exemption;

NOW, THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED the Mayor & Commission of Athens-Clarke County Unified Government supports policies and initiatives that create and maintain affordable housing and that help families facing economic hardship to stay in their homes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Mayor & Commission of Athens-Clarke County Unified Government respectfully requests that the Local Legislative Delegation introduce legislation during the 2020 session of the Georgia General Assembly to provide for a local referendum to adopt a Low-Income Homestead Exemption that will freeze the valuation of property at the base year valuation for as long as the homeowner resides on the property and also their household gross adjusted income is at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Citizen input on items other than those listed on this agenda

The following citizen input was received.

1. Paula Loniak - supported tiny houses.
2. Joseph Carter - requested that a resolution to recognize the Linnentown Community be supported by the Mayor and Commission.
3. Sam Rafal –concerned about EMS.
4. Allen Jones – supported lane width of 10’.

A motion was made by Commissioner NeSmith, seconded by Commissioner Wright, to elect Commissioner Edwards as Mayor Pro tem for 2020. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

FROM MAYOR GIRTZ:

1. Thanked Commissioner NeSmith for his service as 2019 Mayor Pro tem.
2. Stated he is working on a Music Walk of Fame Committee.
3. Stated the National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) will conduct an educational session with the commission on February 12.
4. Stated a joint meeting with the Clarke County School District is scheduled Monday, February 10, 5:30 p.m. at Hilsman Middle School.

FROM MANAGER WILLIAMS:

1. Received for information was a report of contract awards in excess of \$10,000 for November 2019.

FROM COMMISSIONER EDWARDS:

1. Stated it is his honor to serve as 2020 Mayor Pro tem.

FROM COMMISSIONER DENSON:

1. Requested manager provide update on contract with Correct Health.
2. Announced he and Commissioner Link will conduct a community meeting Tuesday, January 28, 6:00 p.m. at Flicker.

Commissioner Thornton exited the chamber at 6:57 p.m.

FROM COMMISSIONER LINK:

1. Thanked Commissioner Denson for his work on the downtown historic district.

FROM COMMISSIONER PARKER:

1. Requested a citizen request to rename Odd Street to Rosa Nell Howard Street be referred for consideration.

FROM COMMISSIONER DAVENPORT:

1. Thanked staff who worked to make the Parade of Lights successful.
2. Urged citizens to register to vote and become informed about upcoming elections.
3. Thanked Commissioner Denson for his work on the homestead resolution.
4. Requested FY21 budget include \$15 hourly minimum wage for all employees.

A motion was made by Commissioner NeSmith, seconded by Commissioner Denson, to enter into executive session for discussion of real estate acquisition and/or disposal and an attorney/client conference to discuss threatened or pending litigation. The motion passed by nine YES votes. Commissioner Thornton was absent.

The meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Clerk of Commission