

**GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, February 20, 2020

Committee Members Present:

Commissioner Andy Herod, Committee Chair
Commissioner Patrick Davenport
Commissioner Tim Denson
Commissioner Melissa Link
Commissioner Jerry NeSmith

Committee Members Absent:

Visiting Mayor/Commissioners:

Staff:

Josh Edwards, Assistant Manager	Chris Caldwell, Assistant Finance Director
Sherrie Hines, Assistant County Attorney	Annette Loggins, Financial Services Administrator
Michael Petty, Assistant County Attorney	Jerry Saulters, Deputy Chief of Police
Andrew Saunders, Interim Central Services Director	Brad Griffin, Planning Director
Angel Helmly, Operations Analyst, Central Services	Doug Hansford, Building Inspections Director
Travis Cooper, Interim I.T. Director	Cynthia Lambright, Recorder

Committee Chair Herod called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

A. Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner NeSmith made the motion to approve the Minutes of the January 23, 2020 meeting. Commissioner Davenport seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

B. Commission Identified Items of Interest:

Develop a consistent leasing policy for ACC properties, considering local community benefit provided by the tenant (Mayor Girtz assigned to GOC on June 4, 2019)

In response to Commissioner Herod's question, Assistant Manager Josh Edwards told the Committee that staff talked with Finance staff about the leasing period. Finance confirmed the Committee's suggestion that Fiscal Year, which is July 1, is the best date for the leasing period.

Andrew Saunders reviewed the draft policy. Commissioner Herod asked staff to add to the policy that an affidavit is required to be filed by entities younger than three years in age that are applying for a reduced lease rate based on income. Andrew will revise the policy regarding Accelerated Wear and Tear to read "The terms of accelerated wear and tear shall be incorporated into the lease ..." instead of the "The costs of accelerated wear and tear shall be incorporated into the lease..." Accelerated wear and tear will be determined on a case by case basis.

Andrew explained that in practice, an entity will complete an application and if they want to try to get a reduced lease rate, a Community Benefits Agreement. An agenda report will be brought before the Mayor and Commission to approve the Community Benefits Agreement and the lease. The costs will be included in the agenda report. Each time someone comes up for a renewal, they will be required to provide information as to what they have done to meet what they stated they would do in the Community Benefits Agreement.

The Committee requested that staff revise the policy as discussed and provide a draft policy and a draft Community Benefits Agreement to the Committee members in advance of the next GOC meeting.

Review of short term rentals: tax payments same as hotels; possible permitting process; health and safety related issues (Mayor Girtz assigned to GOC on November 5, 2019)

Sherrie Hines gave an update on two State House Bills. HB 276 passed, has been signed and will go into effect April 1. This is the Market Place Facilitator Law which will make it much easier to collect taxes. HB 523 is a bill that would set definitions for short term rentals. While it will technically allow local governments to regulate short term rentals, it will really cut off any way that we could. It will require that whatever regulations are imposed will have to apply to all residences in Athens-Clarke County. State Law prohibits the registration of residential property.

Travis Cooper gave a PowerPoint presentation showing the features of a software platform for tracking short-term rentals. Services that are available include Mobile-Enabled Registration and Tax Collection, Address Identification, Compliance Monitoring, Rental Activity Monitoring and Tax Calculation Support, and a 24/7 Dedicated Hotline for complaints. An annual fee for each module is charged based on the number of short term rental units.

The Committee requested that Josh work with Finance and make a recommendation on which modules are needed. Staff is to also provide an estimated cost benefit.

Home Occupations Ordinance review, including consideration of noise-creation, material and vehicle storage, and allowances for in-home child care at the (greater) population level permitted by the state (Mayor Girtz assigned to GOC on December 3, 2019)

Deputy Chief Saulters explained enforcement of the Noise Ordinance. One of the issues is enforcement when the complainant doesn't want to go to court and testify about the impact of the noise on their quality of life. The officer can write a citation if the noise is audible beyond 300 feet when he arrives. Brad Griffin said that the complaints that have been received are about home occupations that are not licensed. Doug Hansford said they have not received any complaints about legitimate home occupations.

Commissioner Denson said we should create a policy to offer a benefit to encourage people to get a home occupation permit for their home businesses. Maybe some services could be offered through the Economic Development Department to help small businesses that have home occupation permits. Brad Griffin said that most people know that they need a business license and when they go to the Finance Department to get their business license, they are told that they need to also come to the Planning Department to get a home occupation license.

Doug Hansford said that when they receive a complaint about someone in the neighborhood running a business, Code Enforcement typically approaches the front door and tells them they have received a complaint. While they are there they look for evidence, and scour social media to look for ads to see if they are advertising for business. What they have found is that if it is an allowed home occupation business, people don't mind coming in and registering it.

Commissioner Davenport said he is also concerned about materials and vehicles storage. Deputy Chief Saulters said that if cars are parked on the street and impeding traffic they will tow

them. If cars are parked on a yellow curb, they will cite them. If cars are legally parked, not blocking a driveway or impeding traffic, there is nothing they can do about it. If the cars have not been moved in 48 hours, they can be cited.

The Committee will look at the ordinance in regards to vehicles at the next GOC meeting.

Review and make recommendations regarding contracting and procurement activities related to minority, local and underserved businesses, to create a favorable business environment and enhance local wealth creation. This should include outreach efforts and measureable goals and tracking. (Mayor Girtz assigned to GOC on February 4, 2020)

Josh Edwards said staff will bring short-term and long-term ideas to the next meeting. He will send Macon-Bibb and Durham policies to the Committee members. Sherrie Hines will provide a legal brief on what can and cannot be done.

Josh Edwards asked the Committee if the March meeting could be rescheduled for another date. Commissioner Herod requested that staff send a doodle poll to the committee members to determine a date for the March meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.