

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 29, 2020

Committee Members Present:

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

Committee Members Absent:

Staff:

Josh Edwards, Assistant Manager
Sherrie Hines, Interim Chief Assistant Attorney
Brad Griffin, Planning Director
Kent Kilpatrick, Leisure Services Director
Butch McDuffie, Transit Director
Pat Hale, Assistant Transit Director

Rachel Hopkins, Transit Marketing Coordinator
Stephen Bailey, Assistant Director
Todd Stevenson, Stormwater Administrator
Rani Katreeb, Engineering Administrator
Kevin Gentry, Streets Superintendent

Committee Chair Herod called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

A. Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Herod requested a revision to the September 17, 2020 Minutes. He requested that the second sentence of the paragraph under the Transit Advertising Program be revised to read "Commissioner Herod said he agreed with Commissioner Denson's recent proposal regarding increasing the proportion of our buses with full and half wrap advertising."

Commissioner Denson made the motion to approve the Minutes of the September 17, 2020 meeting with the requested revision. Commissioner Link seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

B. Commission Identified Items of Interest:

Review of the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government policy for naming of public places in Athens (Mayor Girtz assigned to GOC on July 7, 2020)

Kent Kilpatrick reviewed the revised draft policy. He said that the biggest concerns discussed at last month's meeting were proving broader community support and naming after deceased individuals.

Commissioner Link requested that trails be specifically listed in the naming policy.

Discussion was held regarding the requirement of a minimum percentage of signers living within a one-mile radius of the location. Commissioner Link said that some facilities are located in less populous areas and there may not be 151 people living within one mile of the facility. Commissioner Denson suggested revising to 51% or 10% of the population in a 1 mile radius, whichever is lower. Commissioner Herod suggested having a larger percentage for parks and a lower percentage for other amenities. Commissioner Herod suggested having a tier approach with fixed percentages instead of fixed numbers.

Discussion was held regarding earlier notification to the Mayor and Commission, instead of just the Mayor. Commissioner Denson liked the requirement in the proposed street naming policy for

an endorsement by the current Mayor and Commissioner representing the district it lies within. He also would like to see a public hearing built in as a structured part of the naming policy.

Brad Griffin reviewed the proposed Street Name Changing Policy. Commissioner Herod requested that "An endorsement by the current Mayor and Commissioner representing the district in which the right-of-way is located" be changed to "An endorsement by the Mayor and Commissioner(s) representing the district in which the right-of-way is located" since some district lines run down the middle of streets.

Commissioner Denson requested that occupants and owners receive the notification of the street name change, not just the owners.

Brad Griffin reminded the Committee that if this item is sent to the full Mayor and Commission, that vote will be directing it back to the Planning Department to prepare the actual text amendment for Planning Commission consideration. The formal amendment to the ordinance would probably come back to the Mayor and Commission in February.

The Committee requested staff to make the suggested revisions to the naming policies for review at the next GOC meeting.

Transit Advertising Program (Mayor Girtz assigned to GOC on September 1, 2020)

Sherrie Hines reviewed the memo that she had provided to the Committee regarding Transit Advertising Policy considerations.

Discussion was held regarding content of advertisements. It was decided that no further action is needed.

Discussion was held regarding removing limitations on percentages of buses with full and half wrap advertising. It was decided that no further action is needed since the M&C approved amending the policy at the September 1, 2020 meeting to allow full and half wrap advertising on up to 50% of the fleet.

Commissioner Herod made the motion to make a recommendation to the Mayor and Commission to "Pass Out with No Action" the review of the Transit Advertising Program.

Commissioner Denson seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Stormwater Management Public and Private Agreement (Mayor Girtz assigned to GOC on September 1, 2020)

Discussion was held regarding the October 29, 2020 email from Manager Williams regarding the possible creation of a Citizen Stormwater Advisory Committee. Commissioner Herod said that he served on the 2003 Citizen Stormwater Advisory Committee and there are two things that need to be very clear when this committee is formed. First, we have to have some kind of stormwater utility under the Federal Clean Water Act, getting rid of it is not an option. The second then becomes how to pay for it. The big discussion the 2003 committee had was that there are only two ways to pay for it – property taxes or a utility. If pay for it as a utility, then all of the tax exempt properties in the county pay the utility. If pay for it out of property taxes, about 40% of the county will not pay toward stormwater management.

Commissioner Herod said that he would agree with a recommendation that a Citizen Stormwater Advisory Committee be formed but also make those two items abundantly clear to

whoever sits on this committee. Commissioner Denson suggested that the GOC come up with a more specific scope for the Citizen Stormwater Advisory Committee. Commissioner Davenport said that he still wants to discuss zone of influence.

Commissioner Herod suggested that for the next GOC meeting, the GOC mull over the email and think about narrowing down what they might want a citizens committee to look at. He suggested narrowing it down to some of the things that need tweaking.

Commissioner Link asked for clarity on the public and private agreement issue that the GOC is to discuss. Commissioner Davenport said that he and Commissioner Hamby have some issues with residents who feel that water that drains from a pipe from a street onto private property should be paid for by the county, but the contract agreement is that the County pays for labor and the resident pays for the material and there are certain areas that are a gray area. Commissioner Link said a broader committee that focuses specifically on stormwater issues could focus on this as part of their discussion.

Commissioner Herod said that the specific information he got from the Mayor is that the GOC is to look at the specifics of the private property impact support program. Historically we have funded staff labor if the impacted neighborhood or property owner funded the materials. Staff from the Attorney's Office needs some direction. The legal liability of the labor might have been called into question.

Commissioner Herod said there is also the broader issue which is part of this conversation about what to do when people who should be maintaining easements on their private property are causing problems for people downstream. We could maintain it on their behalf but then the question becomes do we charge them for it or does that simply become part of the community cost of making sure that we handle stormwater as a community. Sherrie Hines said that we have to be careful about the gratuity clause. Cost sharing helps with this issue. Commissioner Herod said there is a community value to collectively managing stormwater.

Commissioner Link suggested that staff write a memo expounding upon the issue that the GOC is looking at for consideration by the GOC next month to decide if we are going to pursue it or ask that it go to committee.

Commissioner Denson said for the most part Blaine's memo hits the priorities for the committee to look at but there are a few specifics he would like to see focused on: the level of service and the zone of influence, utility rate structures to pay for this larger service, look into a schedule of rebates based on mitigation efforts, and need to have some recommendations on the utility's outward facing parts so that we can fix the public perception of stormwater but also create a better understanding of community responsibility. Commissioner Denson said he thinks this would also help us get rid of the demonization of stormwater which a lot of times is based on people not understanding the utility and how it is a community shared responsibility. The last thing is looking at planning and zoning policies so that we don't get stuck in these situations, such as a subdivision that was created with a poorly managed stormwater structure. May need higher standards.

Commissioner Herod asked Sherrie to pull together materials on how community benefit intersects with the gratuity clause.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.