

BOARD OF MAYOR  
AND COMMISSIONERS

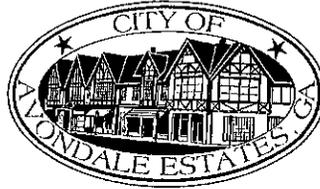
JONATHAN ELMORE  
MAYOR

TERRY GIAGER  
MAYOR PRO TEM

RANDY BEEBE  
COMMISSIONER

BRIAN FISHER  
COMMISSIONER

ADELA YELTON  
COMMISSIONER



R. CLAI BROWN  
CITY MANAGER

GINA HILL  
CITY CLERK

ROBERT E. WILSON  
CITY ATTORNEY

STEPHEN W. NICHOLAS  
CITY JUDGE

**BOARD OF MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS**  
**SPECIAL CALLED MEETING**  
**September 19, 2016**  
**5:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

Members Present: Jonathan Elmore, Mayor  
Terry Giager, Mayor Pro Tem  
Randy Beebe, Commissioner  
Brian Fisher, Commissioner  
Adela Yelton, Commissioner

Staff Present: Gina Hill, City Clerk  
Lynn Thomas, Chief of Police

Item No. 1 Meeting Called to Order

Item No. 2 Adoption of Agenda  
Commissioner Fisher moves to adopt agenda. Commissioner Yelton seconds. All ayes.

Item No. 3 Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) Applicant Interviews

Mayor Elmore: You live in Stratford Green?

Kelly Cobb: I do

Mayor Elmore: We sent out questions prior to tonight so applicants could respond ahead of time if they couldn't be here and the others could think about the questions. We have a sheet to score everyone so it can be more objective. We can take turns asking the questions. Number one, could you tell us about your professional and volunteer experience and how that prepares you to be on the PZB?

Kelly Cobb: I went to Vanderbilt University and graduated summa cum laude. I work at Emory University in the law library. I'm currently on the executive board of Stratford Green. I'm interested in the City and how things work. I don't bring a wealth of experience but I'm interested in learning.

Mayor Elmore: What is your experience reviewing ordinances and city planning documents?

Kelly Cobb: I don't have a lot of experience but I did deal with that some with our concerns at Stratford Green.

Mayor Elmore: Do you deal with that at the law library?

Kelly Cobb: I don't do reference. I mainly do document delivery and reserves for the professors. I spend more time finding things than interpreting them.

Mayor Elmore: In your own words, what is the mission of the PZB and how does that fit in with economic growth of the City?

Kelly Cobb: I think it's an exciting time for the City. There are a lot of things going on and hopefully new businesses coming in. I think the PZB has a huge role to play in unifying the vision of Avondale Estates. They can bring people in and make sure they're in the right places, work with business, be open to new solutions. The economy is changing so much right now. I've wondered about the new gig economy and how that affects zoning, home based businesses. I think this is an exciting place and I'm interested to see how things develop. I follow the news and sometimes it seems the City wants lots of things and maybe hasn't decided what's most important. It seems like the City would like people to be able to age in place. I think we can make this a good place for people in all stages of life.

Commissioner Beebe: Are you ok with a four year commitment?

Kelly Cobb: I am. I'm not planning on going anywhere.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: How long have you lived here?

Kelly Cobb: It will be three years in November.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: So you don't know about past troubles we've had developing the downtown?

Kelly Cobb: I've been following the issues since I arrived. There are probably more that I'm unaware of. I've been to meetings with Stratford Green and others so I know some of the concerns I think.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: Does your job require common sense. That's a lot of what the PZB needs.

Kelly Cobb: I think so. A lot of professors are very theoretical so I have to cut through what they say to figure out what they need and where to find it. I track a lot of details at work.

Commissioner Fisher: I think the PZB has a very difficult job trying to read and interpret ordinances. Trying to find a gray area is tough. Do you think you can do that?

Kelly Cobb: I think I do a lot of that at work. We're very tight on space. We have to finesse the policies and think about what's best for the students and how we can satisfy the most people while being true to our mission.

Commissioner Yelton: I appreciate you taking the time to come in.

Commissioner Fisher: Tell us about your professional and volunteer experience and how that will help you on the PZB.

Todd Pullen: I've been in architecture for 17 years. I've dealt with local ordinances throughout the city of Atlanta and do so at least once a week. I've been through many variances first hand. I was on our City's Historic Preservation Commissioner (HPC) for ten years. I understand how all the boards need to work together.

Commissioner Fisher: What is your experience reviewing and interpreting ordinances and community planning documents?

Todd Pullen: I've worked with all the zoning ordinances in the area for 17 years. I was on the steering committee for the City's zoning ordinance around 2007. So I'm very familiar with our first hand. As you mentioned, the gray areas are the ones that need improvement.

Commissioner Fisher: In your words, what is the mission of the PZB and how does it fit with the economic growth of the City?

Todd Pullen: I think the PZB is a central core to the development of the business district. Are we getting an imbalance of residences or businesses and how do we get that area to grow? Maybe we could open things up to encourage that development or tighten things up in certain areas to discourage things we don't want. For the residential area, it's just a matter of preserving what we have and not let growth get the better of us by keeping our scale and density.

Commissioner Yelton: What do you see as the biggest challenge for the PZB?

Todd Pullen: I think it's the gray areas that you mentioned before. We need to make sure the proposed concepts for the business district are in harmony. So many projects request variances these days.

Commissioner Beebe: Do you have thick skin? Can you let things roll off your back?

Todd Pullen: I dealt with that a lot on the HPC/ARB.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: To revamp the zoning would have to be a decision for the BOMC.

Todd Pullen: I think what I meant was that things need to be in harmony with our vision. I know a lot of our zoning refers back to the 2007 comprehensive plan and I think that's outdated. I think modifications would be fine.

Commissioner Yelton: Thanks for coming in. Tell us about your professional and volunteer experience and how that would help you on the PZB.

Martha Teall: My interest in zoning comes from historic preservation. I'm an architectural historian for an environmental consulting firm. I've been there for 11 years. We work on federal, state, and locally funded projects. We identify

resources and determine the impact the project will have on them. My current job is identifying and surveying historic resources. We go into an assessment of effects phase. My work has made me interested in zoning and development. I owned a property near all the development around Suburban Plaza so I became involved with Good Growth Dekalb. Serving on the PZB seems like a good fit.

Commissioner Yelton: What's your experience reviewing and interpreting ordinances and community planning documents?

Martha Teall: When we complete our historic resources survey, we identify National Register or historic properties. We go through a process called assessment of effects. We look at direct, indirect and cumulative effects to determine whether the resource would survive the project. For example, a road widening project. In trying to determine effects, I look at comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, LCI plans. I've worked on the multi modal passenger terminal for the Gulch and Beltline areas of downtown Atlanta. I've worked on a large road widening of Jonesboro Road where there are old farms.

Commissioner Yelton: In your own words, what is the mission of the PZB and how does that fit in with the economic growth of the City?

Martha Teall: I think a knowledgeable PZB is essential. I see the board as determining whether requests in changes in zoning and land use would best reflect the community plan. You can get a lot of offers but the first one might not be the best.

Commissioner Beebe: Are you okay with the conflicts that may arise?

Martha Teall: I would work through that with the rest of the group to decide what's best based on the plans.

Commissioner Fisher: How long have you lived here?

Martha Teall: I've lived on Exeter for two years and then Stratford Green for three years before that.

Commissioner Fisher: What would be your vision for joining the historic aspects of our City with development?

Martha Teall: I think there's a lot of room for flexibility. Preservation of existing structures is essential. And also maintaining coherency as you move farther west down the road. That's where the PZB comes in to maintain that integration. I think there's been a huge amount of progress and I see a lot more people coming. Those changes will have to be taken one by one.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: I think that's more up to the HPC/ARB to do that and you identified that. There is someone leaving the PZB that is very detail oriented and I'd like to see someone with the same qualities replace her. You sound like you're very busy. Would you have time to be on the PZB?

Martha Teall: The PZB would be a priority for me.

Commissioner Beebe: Tell us about your professional and volunteer experience and how does that make you the best fit for the PZB?

Craig Alexander: I've been a software developer for about ten years now. There are a couple of skills I think would transfer well. I can read poorly written documentation really well. I can figure out hidden requirements and things that are missing. I have to take into account everything that's going on in different parts of the company and plan out all the long term repercussions of developing a new feature. I don't really have any volunteer experience that would apply.

Commissioner Beebe: What is your experience is reviewing and interpreting ordinances and community planning documents?

Craig Alexander: I really don't have any but I'm a pretty quick study. I feel like I can take cues from the other members while I get my feet wet.

Commissioner Beebe: In your own words, what is the mission of the PZB and how does that fit with economic development in the City?

Craig Alexander: There are a couple of things important to me. One is expanding business in the right way in the downtown and surrounding areas and making it a good place for relatively small businesses, preserve mom and pop shops. Another thing is public transit. I commute on Marta every day and any kind of variances we can give them to build that up is important to me. The third thing is planning for new technologies. I would hate for there to be a repeat here of what happened in Brookhaven with Google Fiber.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: I appreciate that you're honest enough to say you have no real experience. You represent what our City is about, volunteer residents who are willing to work and learn. I think it's good to have lay people on the boards.

Mayor Elmore: I appreciate your honesty and interest in small business and taking Marta and technology. It's refreshing to hear that.

Craig Alexander: I work with a company that does small business loans so we're constantly working to support small business.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: Tell us about your professional and volunteer experience and how that makes you the best fit for the PZB.

Denny Walton: I spent 17 years at Coke. I did many different things for them. I ran their supermarket business here in the southeast – Tennessee to Miami to New Orleans. I also ran their convenience store business in that same territory. The last four years with them I managed brands, such as their energy drinks. Within the past year though, I became CEO for the Atlanta Retailers Association. We have 1,023 convenience stores in Georgia. I decided to get out of my comfort zone at Coke and take a risk. My wife and I also own a massage place in Loehman's Plaza on North Druid Hills Road. It's been open a couple of years.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: Not taking enough risk is a common regret among people. That is being a good role model for kids. What is your experience reviewing and interpreting ordinances and community planning documents?

Denny Walton: In the convenience store world I'm in now, it's very important that we understand when we buy or open a store things like signage, lighting, noise ordinances, putting gas tanks in the ground. I'm very in tune with that but I also work with people that I work with as a team.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: In your words, what is the mission of the PZB and how does that fit in with economic growth of the City?

Denny Walton: The southeast economy is coming back. The City should match that growth. I moved here about three months ago. My wife fell in love with the downtown area here. There's a character about the town that doesn't match what you see in downtown. I don't know the answer but if you put smart people in the room and they collaborate and plan and put it in writing, good things can happen. I've been taking my entire life and now it's time to give back.

Commissioner Fisher: How do you feel about trying to find the gray areas with the rest of the board?

Denny Walton: When you have those people in the room, you have to think of every possible situation and you have to be patient. People are always in a hurry and this is important. Vet things out and debate it.

Mayor Elmore: Tell us about your professional and volunteer experience and how that makes you the best fit for the PZB.

Joe Anziano: My professional experience is in real estate. My wife and I have sold real estate for 40 years. We've done that as salespersons, managing brokers, CEOs. I have knowledge of real estates, mostly residential, is deep. As far as volunteering, I've led two associations of realtors. I've done every officer position for the Gwinnett Board of Realtors and I've also served for the state associations. I was responsible for 20,000 realtors. I've also volunteered with Habitat for Humanity. When we had the Flint River floods, I was responsible for putting together a program on behalf of the state association of realtors to see how we could help. I did the same thing when there were tornadoes in North Georgia. All that has given good experience and skills in working with people. I have handled a lot of subdivisions in my real estate career so we've looked at plans and sites. Those developers had their own staff so there was little I had to do other than the marketing. My skills with that are slim but I'm comfortable looking at plans. I have read the downtown master plan and the comprehensive plan. I don't think the PZB is responsible for making the zoning, the BOMC does that. The PZB's job is to interpret what people bring to them and see how that fits with the comprehensive and master plans. Then make our recommendations to the Board for your ultimate decisions. I know what we're missing is whatever will attract businesses to us in the first place. Maybe a big marketing plan. Even though a street grid is in our master plan, we don't have a budget for it. Perhaps all the pieces could be blended together for a unified timeline.

Mayor Elmore: I think the PZB should step it up. I think they should participate in planning too. We've got great candidates.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: I appreciate all you've done for our city.

Mayor Elmore: Thank you, Joe. Any other commissioner comments?

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: I think it's very difficult to interview six people and not the four others. I wouldn't have called this meeting unless we could interview all the candidates. I don't think it's fair. I'm glad we had the chance to ask other questions because I felt those were extremely limiting. For a board to work together there has to be a combination of things. We've historically taken the recommendations of the remaining board members. We did get recommendations from the two remaining PZB members and I question what we're representing to the community by setting a new standard and trying to make these decisions ourselves. Also, this is the regular meeting night for the PZB. If four of the applicants can't be here tonight, how are they going to be able to be at the meetings?

Commissioner Yelton: No process is perfect. One thing I like about what we're doing today is that it's open and transparent, more so than it was before.

Mayor Elmore: I know the process isn't perfect. I'm sorry the other applicants couldn't be here. I think we gave them pretty good notice. It's difficult to get ten people in the same room on the same night.

Commissioner Beebe: You can still vote for the people recommended by the remaining PZB members.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: I think it was transparent the way we did it before.

Mayor Elmore: I think we're setting a good precedent. I don't know what the process was in the past or even if there was one. We should have a standard practice. Especially when a lot of people are coming off a board at the same time we should have public interviews and have standard questions and some kind of grading system. That's about as objective and open as it can get.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: For all boards and all appointments?

Mayor Elmore: Yes. Why not? This is open, objective, I think it's a better way to do it.

Commissioner Yelton: We were worried no one would apply and now we have ten candidates. I want to thank everyone who applied. I hope those who are not selected volunteer in other ways.

Commissioner Fisher: In moving forward, the relationship between all the boards is important. I thank everyone for applying.

Mayor Elmore: Everyone can submit their top three candidates to City Clerk Hill. We'll also weigh in the recommendations from the two remaining PZB members.

Commissioner Beebe: I'm afraid we won't reach a solution that way. There will be no consensus.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: I'm still concerned about the BOMC interviewing everyone. Checks and balances have been brought up many times. If the BOMC approves everything we lose the checks and balances. Will the residents look at us like we're all controlling. That really bothers me.

Mayor Elmore: If we're trying to get better people on more boards with more reign, how is it doing that?

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: In our opinion we're doing that. But if there's a board that's already doing the work why don't we let them make the recommendations?

Mayor Elmore: We're elected to do that.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: We're elected to approve. The PZB's recommendations aren't on the matrix.

Commissioner Yelton: We can add that as a criteria.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: I know you can. That's why I said it. But how would you weight it?

Commissioner Fisher: When this was first brought up, we asked the PZB to give us feedback on who they think they could work with. I even suggested they do the interviews with us. The next morning, we got three recommendations. So were there other conversations and such trying to get to know the other candidates that I'm not aware of in a 12 hour period of time?

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: Yes. They phoned them. So you're saying the people on the board, they're worthless as far as credibility?

Commissioner Fisher: I think that's just the opposite of what I'm saying.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: No, that's not.

Commissioner Fisher: We asked them to be a part of the process.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: It's not even on the matrix.

Commissioner Beebe: We can weigh their recommendations as equally as one of our votes. Maybe we can put this back on the work session agenda for Wednesday.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: Will we invite the four that didn't get interviewed?

Mayor Elmore: I'm not inclined to. They wrote their answers in. We'll add it to the agenda for Wednesday night. Be prepared with your three picks. We'll consider them with the recommendations of the remaining PZB members. If there's a tie we'll vote on it.

John Mizell/3302 Wynn Dr: I think the people on the individual board should choose who they want to serve with them. That's just my opinion.

Craig Alexander: I really think they should have been here to interview us as well. I agree that if I was on that board, I wouldn't want someone appointed that I didn't get along with. As an applicant, I would want to talk to them before accepting the seat as well.

Mayor Elmore: Did you receive a call from them?

Craig Alexander: No.

Mayor Pro Tem Giager: The PZB members went through the applications and phoned their top choices. They didn't call every single applicant.

Sharon Saliba/56 Clarendon Ave: You're just starting the process and that's why there's conflict. I think it's a great thing you're doing, trying to put a formal process on every board. But I do think the PZB should've been here.

Joe Anziano/3242 Wiltshire Dr: I asked the other candidates here and all three of us got phone calls from the PZB. I have some anxiety about the BOMC choosing members of all the boards. I don't think it's in the best interest of the City. And the BOMC does not know what the PZB does as well as they do.

Mayor Elmore: I understand where you're coming from. Keep in mind that last year we appointed six out of seven DDA members. There was only one sitting person left.

Joe Anziano/3242 Wiltshire Dr: That was an exception.

Commissioner Fisher: With the PZB, there are three out of five seats open.

Joe Anziano/3242 Wiltshire Dr: It could be appropriate right now but I don't agree with it for every seat on every board. If someone's term is coming to an end, they should be getting with the other board members and talking about it months ahead of time.

Todd Pullen: I also think it would be dangerous for the BOMC to choose every board member.

Martha McDermott/6 Kingstone Rd: I agree. It sends a bad message with transparency and so you're not carrying all the weight of this.

Commissioner Beebe: I agree that a board could have someone groomed to take over. Maybe if there's not a quorum on a board to choose someone new we could step in.

Commissioner Fisher: I think it's important to have a process. For example, we would have never gotten to talk to Denny Walton otherwise. We risk limiting ourselves to the same pool of people. For us to tap all the talent in the

community there needs to be some sort of process where people can be heard and met. Otherwise we might not even know about them.

Commissioner Beebe: I like having things weighted. We need to have the mindset when looking at people not recommended of why would we not accept them.

Commissioner Yelton: We could review it on a case by case basis such as when there's not a quorum. I know each board has their expertise but candidate selection is a universal process. It would be nice if we could do it with those boards or check them if their process is not as open as it needs to be.

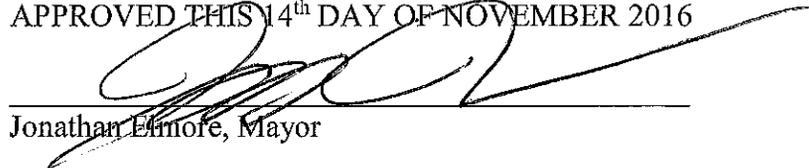
Mayor Elmore: Everyone send your top three picks to the city clerk. She will also have the recommendations of the PZB members. Once those numbers are tallied, we'll see where we stand.

Item No. 5

Adjournment

Commissioner Beebe moves to adjourn. Commissioner Yelton seconds. All ayes.

APPROVED THIS 14<sup>th</sup> DAY OF NOVEMBER 2016

  
Jonathan Elmore, Mayor

ATTEST:



Gina Hill, City Clerk