



MILTON GROWS GREEN COMMITTEE
MARCH 31, 2015 MINUTES [ACCEPTED]

 ORIGINAL

Date: March 31, 2015, 6:30 PM - 8:35 PM

Place: Executive Conference Room, Milton City Hall, 13000 Deerfield Parkway, Milton GA 30004

Attendees: Chair, Teresa Stickels, Vice-chair Jack Lindon, Bruce Langston, Charlie Fisher, Francia Lindon, Kathy Johnson, Laura Rencher, Mark Law and Julie Zahner Bailey came after the start.

Agenda: It was posted on the City's web site.

I. *Minutes:* No minutes were approved.

II. *Updates & Old Business:*

- ***Pre-Earth Day Friendship Community Park Cleanup:*** Mostly we'll pick up the dead stuff and cut back the briars. Last year we had a master gardener helping us in identifying native plants. Front part should be easy. Cleanup is Saturday April 11th. Mark Law invited to supervise so we don't cut down anything important.
- ***Conservation Subdivision Ordinance:*** Kathy spoke about a major change since Michelle MacIntosh-Ross came to our last meeting when she said the ordinance was going to be mandatory. It is now optional. Jack wanted everybody to understand what the process was for getting the ordinance adopted. Five meetings will be held – Jack gave the schedule for the City's planning commission and council meetings intended to solicit public comment. Consultants will be at all the meetings. There was so much going on with Earth Day, Jack wanted to put together a "white paper" on what MGG's position is. There was a question about whether or not City Council will extend the moratorium until a vote on a CSO is taken. The CSO will only affect subdivisions with a 17-home minimum because of septic issues. Once a CSO is drafted and distributed, our job would be to mobilize voices in favor of it. A lot of developers were at the first session in full force despite the fact that there was little notice of the topic being posted. When the consultant stressed the CSO was going to be optional, this news didn't seem to dim the developers' objections and their comments after didn't indicate they had listened to the consultants' presentation. No concrete data was given substantiating developers' objections.

Julie Z. B. talked about the devil being in the details. She can't support it as written and wanted to go through the ordinance point-by-point with her 3 pages of comments. Most on the committee hadn't read the ordinance because it wasn't available until 2 days prior to our meeting. Jack's position was that MGG needed to make the decision first on whether or not we support the concept and then whether or not it should be mandatory or optional. He wanted to come up with a plan of action for MGG before we get bogged down in the details on the current draft. "Nobody is saying we don't want to go through the details." He thought there was a lot to the draft document that we had to understand before we could make suggestions for changes. He suggested that if there was time at the end of the meeting, we could go through Julie's concerns. He suggested MGG start a round-robin of e-mail of related documents to begin the education process. How are we going to function as a committee to come up with a decision on what we support? We can't talk in earnest about a CSO until we understand what it is and how it works.

Jack said he had many of the same concerns about the details Julie did but wanted to fully understand them before MGG made an attempt to flush them out. He hoped Julie would become a major contributor to the dialogue; suggest different language for the things she finds objectionable; make specific recommendation for how to eliminate unintended consequences.

Julie asked how MGG could support it without knowing the details. Kathy said we can support the concept. If the choice is between AG-1 or a CSO, broad category, we can support the concept. Julie's concern is that by MGG saying we support "this," we're saying we support the ordinance as written. Francia said there had to be a dialogue to understand what each detail means before we could comment intelligently. We have to become familiar with the document, what its problems are and what alternatives exist to eliminate or mitigate the problems.

An e-mail sent by Curtis Mills was mentioned as having good carefully crafted comments. There were others. We can look at all of these. Use them to come up with something of our own as a group. Julie is concerned about unintended consequences allowing for higher density development and hasn't seen anything to date in GA code that accomplished the goals of a CSO. Everybody agreed to read the documents and other people's comments, spend time so we have a plan.

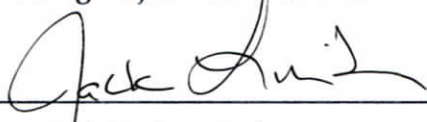
"Kathy said, from a legal standpoint, there is a need to have some of the terms defined in the ordinance itself." It's one way to circumvent any unintended consequences and add clarity as to meaning. The definition section is the controlling section of the law. "Perception of density" was an example mentioned of a term that could be interpreted in different ways. If the intent is to keep it density neutral, then this needs to be clear in the language. Another mentioned was "neutral density," specifically how is the density baseline established. If the language is too broad or too short, there will be too many ways to interpret the language depending on what your point of view is. Some thought it would be good to see the original 18-page consultants document. At our last meeting, Kathy Field and Robin stressed that this really is a first draft. As staff they couldn't make a policy decision on making it mandatory or optional. They wanted MGG's input. They wanted something that will be used and not sit on a shelf.

Julie said that there were a lot of people who have read the draft ordinance in detail and have read about conservation subdivisions for this area. But that she hasn't seen anything to date that isn't something other than a guise for higher density housing. "This is a train leaving the station." We need to make sure there aren't any unintended consequences. She defined her approach is linear. She felt our support for the concept will be wrongly interpreted as support for the ordinance as written, that it wasn't specific enough. She didn't believe that we (MGG) could adequately come up with an ordinance that we could live with in the short time frame available. If I'm a staff member and I want to have as much latitude as possible to apply this, I'm going to make the ordinance vague. The public needs to know what are the risks and what are the alternatives to those risks before they can give their support.

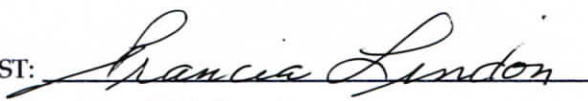
A number of people stressed that it wasn't their intent to give blanket support for the document as written. We want to examine this and exchange ideas so that we can come up with plan before April 22nd. An informal voice vote was taken to move forward in establishing a plan of action and to then examine the details of what the ordinance says. Jack wanted a number of average citizens to ask questions of the consultants at the next planning commission meeting rather than having just a bunch of developers shutting the door by saying it can't be done in Milton. Teresa wanted to invite the public to submit suggestions to staff. How do you make the draft workable rather than how do you kill it all together. There shouldn't be a time crunch. We need to get this right. There needs to be more publicity on the fact that this is being discussed and its significance to Milton's future.

- **Adopt-A-Stream:** No new news. Jennifer still looking for someone to take over managing it. She has accepted a new position and is now working full time.
- **MGG Volunteer Log:** Any email sent to MGG is supposed to automatically go to Jack but he will check with Jason on this.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:35 PM



Jack Lindon, Chair

ATTEST: 

Francia Lindon, Secretary