

## *Dunwoody Crier*

### **Council passes green initiatives, sidewalk plan**

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**By Brent Adams  
For The Crier**

The Dunwoody city council passed a number of proposals on its agenda at its April 26 meeting. Among the more prominent ones included land-use master plan contracts for the Dunwoody Village and Georgetown areas, a sidewalks plan and an ordinance to step up enforcing code violations at multi-family residences in the city.

Councilors Adrian Bonser and John Heneghan were absent from the meeting, and Tom Taylor said he had to recuse himself from voting because of a legal dispute; leaving the seven-person council to a minimum four voting members.

One of the bigger proposals on the nine-item consent agenda passed was new guidelines for apartment code inspections. The city is going to hire a full-time certified building inspector to inspect the many apartments and other multi-family structures in the city. Many have fallen into disrepair, with collapsing staircases and decks, as well as fire hazards (such as no fire extinguishers); creating a real safety problem for tenants. The city plans on handing out citations and if the conditions are not improved, eventually yanking business licenses. About two-thirds of Dunwoody's 40,000- residents live in apartments.

The council is also awarded contracts on the Dunwoody Village and Georgetown master land-use plans to Urban Collage and Houseal Lavigne, with a number of other subcontractors, for \$125,000 per project for a total of \$250,000. The city says it will benefit from the collaboration in terms of talent, the flow of ideas and saving money on the redevelopment project. The city also received an \$80,000 grant from the Atlanta Regional Commission, but will pocket \$80,000. The council added an amendment to direct city staff to seek the council's approval on how to use the extra money.

City public works director Michal Smith laid out sidewalk improvement plans to the city at a previous meeting, and the proposal was accepted during the consent agenda on April 26. The first is an "improvements" plan, which will include building new sidewalks, updating existing ones, filling in gaps between sidewalks and particularly building ones near schools. He will use a scoring system based on walkability, traffic volume, nearby speed limits, distance to schools, demand

for the sidewalks and ease of construction (saving the city money). The second plan is for city sidewalks to improve accessibility, particularly for handicapped people. Finally, he will present a proposed plan for neighborhoods to fund the building of their own sidewalks, provided 51 percent or more of the neighbors approve.

At a previous work session, Councilor Denis Shortal proposed updating the construction noise ordinance, pushing back start times to from 7:30 a.m. to 8 a.m. on weekdays and from 8:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. on Saturdays. End times remain at 8:30 p.m. with no construction on Sundays or other holidays. Emergency construction and city-approved off-hours construction exceptions still apply.

Other councilors were wary that the change could impact construction jobs in the area, particularly in the commercial areas such as the Perimeter Cental Improvement District, but Shortal argued that neighbors and other residents asked for the change, citing a quality-of-life issue.

At the April 26 meeting, Councilor Robert Wittenstein pondered if the city could have separate construction hours for residential areas and the PCID, but some residents pointed out that a number of Dunwoody citizens live in apartments and condominiums in the PCID, so it would interfere with their quality of life. Councilor Danny Ross also pointed out that 24-hour construction, while annoying, actually saved a number of firms a significant amount of money, and provided jobs within city limits.

During public comment, local developer Bill Grant pointed out that a number of builders prefer to get started earlier in the morning, especially in the summer, to beat the Georgia heat. At later comment, Page Olson told the council that the Dunwoody High School renovations and construction will be taking place this summer at an accelerated schedule to meet phase one completion before school starts, and that changing start times could affect the project's completion. She said that she and the build team would work alongside city officials and the police department. The issue is expected to be discussed further at subsequent meetings.

A resolution naming members to a "Town & Gown Committee" was passed. The committee is a joint effort between the city and Georgie Perimeter College on addressing traffic concerns around the college. The seven members who will represent the city and community are councilors Bonser and Wittenstein, city manager Warren Hutmacher, police chief Billy Grogan, residents Janet Glass and Saul Sloman and Elizabeth Jester, a joint-enrollment student at Dunwoody High School and GPC. Seven members will represent the college as well.

A number of "green" measures were passed by the city, including a green building policy for city government buildings that follows LEED and Energy Star standards; a "no net loss of trees" policy for city government properties, meaning every tree removed will be replaced; and the use of LED lights traffic signals. While the LED bulbs themselves are a little more expensive than incandescent bulbs, the city would save money in the long run by not having to buy so many bulbs and replace them; as well as save on energy costs.

The city also approved a policy that would provide incentives from the city to encourage builders to adopt green building practices — such as solar power use, using water-soluble practices and permeable, pervious pavement.

The city also officially named an access road next to Peachtree Industrial Boulevard in east Dunwoody to "Peachtree Industrial Boulevard Access Road," in order to cut down confusion from the road next to it (the access road's original name was also "Peachtree Industrial Boulevard"). The city almost passed the proposal a few weeks ago, but confusion arose over whether the city had the right to name or rename a road within its boundaries. Councilors also felt the city could have done a better job publicizing and advertising the change, so it held off on passing the resolution until a later time.

The city amended a contract to Lowe for parks upkeep and other maintenance. Since the city is expected to now be in control of its own parks, the contract now provides for a full-time parks manager for the city.

Finally, the city announced its three nominees for the seven-member Dunwoody branding committee. Debbie Smith, Brian Sims and Nancy Muscwhite will represent the city with its branding efforts.

Chesnut Elementary student Katherine Bowman was honored as "mayor of that day." Mayor Wright joked that she could run the council meeting.

Sheryl Arno, an advocate with "All About Developmental Disabilities," announced during public comment that state Rep. Fran Millar (R-Dunwoody) and Councilor Wittenstein were both honored by the organization for their work.

During other council comment, the mayor and council expressed excitement over the recent Georgia legislature's passage of a bill that enables the city of Dunwoody to buy parks within its borders from DeKalb County. Mayor Wright thanked the numerous people who fought for the bill, including state. Sen. Dan Weber (R-Dunwoody), state. Rep. Millar, councilors Shortal, Taylor and Ross, city attorney Brian Anderson, city manager Hutmacher and the numerous other people who negotiated and fought for the bill, especially those in the legislature

who voted for the bill.

Also, Councilor Ross thanked all who were involved with Lemonade Days and the related bicycle ride around Dunwoody.

Members of the first graduating class of the Dunwoody Police's Citizens' Police Academy were honored with diplomas by Police Chief Grogan and Sgt. Mike Carlson. The class presented Carlson with a plaque in appreciation for his time and work.