

**TYRONE TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING
MINUTES**

September 21, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Eric Dial, Mayor

Gloria Furr, Mayor Pro Tem, Post 4

Linda Howard, Post 1

Melissa Hill, Post 2

Billy Campbell, Post 3

Brandon Perkins, Town Manager

Dee Baker, Town Clerk

Dennis Davenport, Town Attorney

Attorney Davenport was absent.

Also present: Ali Cox, Attorney

Sandy Beach, Finance /HR Manager

Patty Newland, Library Supervisor

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. INVOCATION

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS: *Comments are limited to three (3) minutes. Please state your name & address. Comments that require a response may not be answered during this time. The Council or staff may respond at a later date.*

Mayor Dial welcomed everyone and explained that item number 10 was not a public hearing but invited folks to speak under the two public comment sections.

Dia Hunter who lives on O'Connell Street spoke regarding item number 10. He shared that he wholeheartedly disagreed with an extended-stay hotel, it did not fit with the Town. He hoped that Council would come to that conclusion also. He agreed that businesses should come to town but that they should support Tyrone. He asked Council to reconsider the application when voting.

John Reape who lives on Wynfield Drive spoke opposing the extended-stay hotel. He shared that he spoke with his neighbors regarding the business. He had lived in Tyrone for 20 years and an extended-stay hotel would not be a good fit for the Town, it would not be helpful. The property values would diminish and there would be a tax burden on law enforcement. He shared that he had been in law enforcement for 30 years and he knew what issues that type of business would cause. He encouraged Council to take a close look and deny the application, the citizens did not want this.

Gregory Porter who lives on Green Branch Drive shared that he was a Retired Police Chief of Clayton County and a resident of Southampton for 20 years. He had watched the Town evolve into a good community. He warned his bosses years ago to never approve that type of business (extended-stay hotel) because it brought crime. Citizens could enjoy a new restaurant but there was no benefit of an extended-stay hotel. We do not want this. He respectfully asked Council to not put the burden on the police department.

Rosalyn Jackson-Eatman who lives on Keswick Manor Drive and had been a resident of Tyrone for 20 years spoke regarding the extended-stay hotel. She had seen Tyrone grow and blossom over the years. She gave facts about crime in extended-stay hotels. She quoted former Solicitor General Brian Whiteside of Gwinnett County regarding extended-stay hotels. He stated that extended-stay hotels brought an alarming amount of violent crime, and death and called them the Devil's Triangle. In one year, Gwinnett police responded to 271 calls at the long-term stay facilities. She then listed the types of crimes that were reported, rape, aggravated assault, battery, cruelty to children, breaking into cars, false imprisonment, missing persons, larceny, and prostitution. Another magazine article listed hospitality crimes that were reported at extended-stay hotels. That list consisted of prostitution, drug sales, methamphetamine manufacturing, heroin use, drug overdoses, child pornography, theft, and rape. She added that people found out about that particular facility due to word of mouth. That particular hotel had three times the normal calls than others combined. Ms. Jackson-Eatman also stated that the stated crimes did not mention how the facility would affect Tyrone property owner's property values.

Del Smutherman who lived on Chadmore Lane spoke. He stated that he had lived in Tyrone for 16 years. He added that after researching, Tyrone was one of the best places to live in Georgia. An extended-stay hotel would not be part of one of Georgia's best-kept secrets. He shared that he had asked a State Representative some time ago, why was Tyrone not growing and thriving. He added that at a past meeting, Council spoke of increased property taxes. He asked Council to look at all of the representation that showed up tonight, the last meeting did not look like that. He stated that the citizens were asking Council not to approve an extended stay hotel, we have children and grandchildren, and it's a lovely community, and this would take away from our community.

Jessica Whelan who lives on Valleywood Road spoke next and shared that her son worked for a police department in a major city in Florida. He dealt with major elicit crimes regarding extended-stay hotels. She stated that she understood that by law, Council had to consider the proposal. She added that regarding the zoning in that area, the comprehensive plan did not call for multifamily dwellings. She stated that the uses were considered apartments/hotels. It was a conflict for the Town, it was wrong. Folks in Southampton love their homes, they feel safe, she would not like to see them move because a hotel was brought to the Town. It was inappropriate.

Georgia State Representative Derrick Jackson spoke next. He shared that he had been a Tyrone resident for 19 years. He asked what the marketability was for the extended-stay hotel. He said less than three miles there were seven hotels in Fairburn and five hotels within six miles in Peachtree City. Present to the audience the Town's market study. He stated that for 18 years he had preached to Council, about smart growth because the Town did not wish to look like Fairburn or Peachtree City. He stated for Council to present to the body, smart growth, the growth had doubled. Tyrone was growing but we want smart growth. Show us the market study, the government had to have a feasibility study.

Stacy Warrior-Williams who lives on Arbor Crest Court spoke. She shared that her family had lived in Tyrone for 9 years and that she had a thirteen-year-old son.

Her concern was her son waiting at the bus stop at 7:20 a.m. If an extended-stay hotel came, crime would come and Tyrone would be on the news. It was not fair to the public safety officers, that would be where they would spend most of their time.

Raymond Lindsay who lives on Village Green Circle spoke next. He did not wish to look out of his back door and see a hotel. He did not wish to see all of the goings on that the hotel would bring. He stated that it was a bad idea.

Christa Kiggungu who lives also on Village Green Circle spoke next. She stated that she and her husband got married at Glendalough Manor and they had lived in Tyrone for 2 years. What drew them was the beauty and the safety of Tyrone, the people were amazing. She stated that when you read about Tyrone, it was a happy place. (Inaudible) She stated that she would love for it to stay that way. An extended-stay hotel would not be a part of that picture.

Ms. Troy Thompson-McCain who lives on Keswick Manor Drive spoke next. She shared that she and her husband moved to Tyrone 10 years ago and that he was a retired policeman. They were looking for a safe place to live. She stated that good people and families lived in Southampton. An extended-stay hotel would be horrible, we do not want it. We want peace of mind. She asked Council if this would have come up if the diversity was different in Southampton ten years ago. She added that we want to be comfortable in our own homes that we have invested in. Please think about it.

Bertha T. Williams who lives on Hampshire Trace spoke next. She shared that she had been a resident for 20 years and had recently noticed people begging for money on the street corner. These folks have children sitting out there too. How did they get there? She stated that it was clear that someone was monitoring the area. There was no way those people walked to Tyrone. People come to our community from other communities to walk; it is a peaceful place to walk. She stated that her previous residence had extended-stay hotels and there was a lot of crime surrounding them. She asked Council to please think twice.

A gentleman from the audience spoke (inaudible). He shared that he was new to the South and the community. He stated that he had lived all over the country. He had seen communities turn around and a development such as an extended stay was how it started. It begins with people begging. He wished to retire here, and growth was necessary, however, an extended-stay hotel was not needed. He wished for his grandson and great-grandson to be raised in a safe community. People have roots in the area and he stood by those folks.

Twanda Jennings who lives on Carriage Oaks Drive spoke against the extended-stay hotel. She stated that she was amazed that all of Tyrone was not in attendance because it affected everyone, not just residents of Southampton. She just found out about the agenda and showed up. That type of business would affect everyone, the entire room should be filled, and everyone should be concerned.

Mr. Roosevelt Samir spoke next. He asked Council to say no to the development, it was not what the Town was looking for, and it was not appropriate. He liked that the Town was a well-kept secret and wished for it to stay that way.

Mayor Dial clarified that the Town was not presenting nor proposing the item to its residents. He added that the Town would like to give the partitioner their due process.

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made to approve the agenda by moving item number 7 to new business for discussion and to renumber the agenda reflecting the change.

Motion made by Council Member Furr, Seconded by Council Member Hill.
Voting Yea: Council Member Howard, Council Member Campbell.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA: *All matters listed under this item are considered to be routine by the Town Council and will be enacted by one motion. There will not be separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the consent agenda and will be considered separately.*

1. Approval of Minutes from September 7, 2023.
2. Approval of a Grant for the Library in the amount of \$1,750 from the Rotary Club.
3. Approval of the Yard Party Events agreement contingent on attorney review for a trackless train on October 27, 2023, at Shamrock Park for \$550.00.
4. Approval to allow Christ Church of South Metro Atlanta to hold a Fall Festival at Shamrock Park on October 22, 2023, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. which will be open to the public.
5. Approval to allow Christ Church of South Metro Atlanta the use of Shamrock Park on December 24, 2023, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for a Candlelight service which is open to the public.
6. Approval for Crossroads Christian School for the use of the Shamrock Park pavilion/park area for their Annual Family Picnic on October 13, 2023, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
7. Approval of a budgeted \$100,000 transfer to the Town of Tyrone Downtown Development Authority for Economic Development functions.
8. Approval of a budgeted \$27,773.24 transfer to the Town of Tyrone Downtown Development Authority for Economic Development functions.

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda.

Motion made by Council Member Campbell, Seconded by Council Member Furr.
Voting Yea: Council Member Howard, Council Member Hill.

VII. PRESENTATIONS

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

IX. OLD BUSINESS

X. NEW BUSINESS

9. Approval of the revised contract from Amusement Masters for the Zip Line during Founders Day including a generator for \$6,700.00.

Mayor Dial presented that the contract before them would remain the same only with the removal of the Zoltar Fortune Teller feature.

A motion was made to approve the contract from Amusement Masters with the removal of the Zoltar Fortune Teller feature.

Motion made by Council Member Furr, Seconded by Council Member Hill.
Voting Yea: Council Member Howard, Council Member Campbell.

10. Consideration to approve a certificate of appropriateness for a proposed extended stay hotel from applicant Steve Gulas for parcel 0726 051.

Mr. Trocquet informed everyone that the Town's ordinances per Sec. 109-84 required that any non-residential development within the SR-74 overlay obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness based on *"how the proposed development relates to the surrounding environment to ensure visual continuity and how the development will if approved, be in compliance with the SR-74 Quality Growth District special requirements."* He informed Council that the SR-74 requirements had been included in the package. The applicant, Mr. Steven Gulas, had submitted conceptual information on a proposed 90-room extended-stay hotel for the property with a conceptual site plan and example images of other hotels for architectural reference.

He stated that staff performed some research on extended-stay hotels. The American Planning Association (APA) which he was a member of, defined an extended-stay hotel as different from a typical hotel in that they contain a "full kitchen facility for preparing food" and contained suites intended for extended-stay living exceeding one week. The APA also references extended-stay hotels as "Apartment Hotels" due to the inclusion of studio apartment amenities, suite design, and the length of stay which assumes a more residential function.

He added that the Town's ordinance for C-2 zoning currently did not specifically address extended-stay hotels. It defined hotels as "a building offering overnight accommodations to the public," which also encompassed motels. He shared that the property lies within the Commercial Corridor character area which encourages commercial development consistent with the Town's C-1, C-2, CMU, and O-I.

He stated that although extended-stay hotels were not considered by our ordinance, hotels were listed as a permitted use in both C-1 and C-2 zoning classifications. The property is zoned C-2.

He informed Council that the submitted conceptual site plan appeared to be generally consistent with the Town's zoning ordinance but would require a full, in-depth, site plan review by the Town's Technical Review Committee and Planning Commission. He stated that there were major considerations for the development. He shared that the neighborhood did have a large, wooded buffer and the site plan reflected the maintenance of an additional buffer along the rear of the property. Pedestrian connectivity to the Publix Shopping Center as well as the existing sidewalk network would be required.

He added that the conceptual/example structures provided indicated a building potentially meeting architectural standards but exceeded the allowable height. The Town's ordinance caps building height at three stories, but the examples show a 4-story structure.

He stated that staff determined that any hotel or structure within the SR-74 overlay must adhere to the Town's architectural standards, which include 70% Class A materials. Structures should not surpass 3 stories or 35 feet in height. The conceptual site plan showcases a 3-story building, but the images do not align with the Town's height restrictions.

Consideration of the residential nature of extended-stay hotels, as detailed above, should be investigated by the Town from a Text Amendment perspective. He added that staff concluded that a hotel could be appropriate if complied with the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.

Council Member Hill asked about the length of stay. Mayor Dial gave Mr. Gulas 10 minutes to speak.

Mr. Gulas shared that he had been a resident of Fayette County for 24 years, and he had raised children and developed in the County. He stated that his business partner Kamlesh Patel had also been a resident of Fayette County. He added that he and Mr. Patel had built the Holiday Inn Express next to Piedmont Fayette Hospital. The Candlewood Suites hotel on the agenda would have a similar daily rate. He stated that the suites also had a cooktop and dishwasher but no oven. The Candlewood Suites were 16 feet wide, all other suites in regular hotels were 12 feet wide. He answered Council Member Hill's question and stated that the average stay was five days. He added that the hotel would be next to Publix which was convenient. Mr. Gulas shared that the landlord of the Publix Shopping Center and folks at Publix corporate agreed to have Candlewood Suites at that location. He stated that Candlewood Suites were also part of the InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG).

Mr. Gulas explained that the reason an all-brick 3-story hotel was not in the packet was that IHG was unable to find an example. This would be the first mostly brick, Class A material extended-stay suites. He stated that the floor plan indicated a 3-story, 97 guest room hotel with 103 parking spots and the front would be facing Hwy 74. He added that the right and left sides would meet the overlay district requirements.

He stated that he heard what everyone said and that he was blessed that everything that he had built had been of high quality. He added that the hotel would be the only true suites hotel in Fayette County. His cost would be higher because the rooms would be 16 feet wide, not 12 feet wide. He added that it would be an investment and he was invested in Tyrone, he also owned a 5,000-square-foot building in the town. He mentioned that there was a wooded buffer and retention pond behind the location. The location was also ideal because it was close to many restaurants. He ended by stating that he was an architect and contractor by trade. He introduced Mr. Patel the hotel operator.

Mr. Patel stated that he also understood the citizen's concerns. He had three extended hotels in his portfolio. He added that 50% of his hotel by the airport was occupied by Delta employees. The reasoning behind a hotel in Tyrone would be to help out Tyrone and the movie studios as well as families with family members in the hospital.

Council Member Hill asked what the length of stay was. Mr. Patel shared that usually, at Candlewood Suites it would be 3 to 5 days. Council Member Hill asked what the longest stay would be. Mr. Patel stated that guests could stay a year or more, however, their clientele would typically be 3 to 5 days. Mr. Patel stated that the suites cost \$119 per night, it was cost-prohibitive to stay longer. Council Member Hill shared that she worked for the film industry and that Trilith was building a new hotel with 30 long-term suites soon. Mr. Patel understood that the new Marriott would be geared more toward high-end actors.

Mayor Dial pointed out an inconsistency in the presentation packet. One portion indicated 90 rooms, another indicated 98 rooms. We need correct information in order to make a decision.

Mr. Gulas spoke from the audience (inaudible). He shared that the information in the packet was correct. Mayor Dial shared that the pictures indicated a 4-story building, not three. Mr. Gulas stated that 90 rooms would be sufficient, the 97 rooms were based on a prototype from the architect and building size. The lobby and gym could be made larger. He added that there was no example of an all-brick 3-story suite building that he could share.

Council Member Campbell stated that his issue was that residents could stay indefinitely. His second concern was the detention pond. He added that the information was vague and not as detailed as he would like. The proposal would create too many issues for the residents and the businesses in that area. Council Member Campbell added that Tyrone was quite far from the hospital and the movie industry so an extended-stay hotel was unnecessary.

Council Member Furr stated that with all due respect, if he approached Council with a proposal, his information needs to be correct. She added that professionals present accurate information.

A motion was made to deny the certificate of appropriateness.

Motion made by Council Member Campbell, Seconded by Council Member Hill.

Voting Yea: Council Member Howard, Council Member Furr.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS: *The second public comment period is for any issue. Comments are limited to three (3) minutes. Please state your name & address. Comments that require a response may not be answered during this time. The Council or staff may respond at a later date.*

Mr. Porter spoke again and thanked Council for applying their due diligence and for holding up to their word. He reminded everyone that when he was the Police Chief of Clayton County, he told his bosses not to allow that type of business.

Mr. Jackson spoke again and shared that as a resident, he wanted to leave everyone with some thoughts. He Googled and shared that since the pandemic, there had been a number of hotel closures. The hotels were situated near residential areas, not airports. He reiterated that there were hotels in Fairburn and Peachtree City. He added that even if the applicant came back with correct information the data was clear. There was a direct correlation of data for sex trafficking and Extended America hotels. He stated that the reason Tyrone was one of the safest cities in the United States was because of what we were doing here by not allowing an extended hotel that close to the airport. He thanked the Mayor and Council for what they were doing for his family and others to keep them safe.

Mayor Dial recognized and thanked Representation Jackson for attending the meeting and that everyone appreciated his service.

Ms. Whelan spoke again and thanked the Mayor, Council, and residents for reading the agenda and attending the meeting. She added that this was how it was supposed to happen, for citizens to attend meetings and to have their voices heard.

Ms. Jackson-Eatman spoke again and stated that for those of us who have served the community such as being the President of the Sandy Creek Band Boosters or the President of the Parent Teacher Association, we recognize how great our community is. She added that they know, that's why they give. She added that their sons were recognized by Council for their Eagle Scout accomplishments. She specifically thanked Council Member Campbell for saying what everyone felt. She thanked everyone again for recognizing how great the community was and thanked Mayor and Council for making it that way.

Mr. Smutherland spoke again and stated that he was on the Board of Directors of the Southampton subdivision, he thanked Council and he thanked the citizens for showing up. He thanked Council Member Campbell, Council Member Furr, and Mayor Dial specifically.

Mr. Hunter spoke again and stated that although he lived in Lake Windsong, not Southampton, he thanked everyone for their support and shared that Tyrone sticks together.

XII. STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Langford shared that staff received bids on the 2024 Sidewalk Repair project and the bids came in under budget. He added that the item would be on the next agenda.

Mr. Perkins stated that last week one of the Town's contracted engineering services announced that the GDOT was calling for the Roadside Enhancement and Beautification Council (REBC) Grant Program applications. The deadline would be December 31, 2023, and would offer \$50,000 in non-matching grant funding for landscape enhancements for Hwy 74. The funding comes from billboard fees along highways. He stated that the Town usually did not get involved with GDOT right-of ways, however, this could assist with the beautification of the two entrances into Tyrone. He added that citizens had suggested at a past council meeting that the entryways into the Town could use some beautifying. The funding could not be used for the median but could be used for the shoulders. He shared that the application would need some conceptual work. He asked Keck & Wood about the cost; they stated it would be approximately \$7,000 to \$8,000. He asked for Council's opinion on the matter. He added that if Council decided that would be something to pursue, he would come back at the next meeting with a more detailed cost estimate along with a required Resolution for approval.

A motion was made to move forward with the GDOT Roadside Council Grant process.

Motion made by Council Member Campbell, Seconded by Council Member Howard.
Voting Yea: Council Member Hill, Council Member Furr.

Ms. Beach thanked everyone for being there and reminded them that the Founders Day celebration would be on Saturday, October 7th at Shamrock Park. Mayor Dial shared that the Strongman Competition would be that Friday, October 6th, at 5:00 p.m. at Shamrock Park.

XIII. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Hill shared that in the four years she had been on Council she had never seen so many people in attendance and thanked everyone for coming out.

Council Member Campbell also thanked everyone for taking an interest and coming out. He invited everyone to all events, especially the upcoming Founders Day event along with fireworks.

Mayor Dial invited anyone to come speak with him after the meeting regarding that particular area and its future.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

XV. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn.

Motion made by Council Member Campbell.

Voting Yea: Council Member Howard, Council Member Hill, Council Member Furr.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10.

By: _____
Eric Dial, Mayor

Attest: _____
Dee Baker, Town Clerk