

**TYRONE TOWN COUNCIL  
MEETING  
MINUTES  
November 16, 2023 at 7:00 PM**

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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

Also present:  
Randy Mundy, Police Chief

**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.*

Mollie Larsen who lives on Kellsworth Way spoke regarding what she had read online concerning the possibility of an extended-stay hotel coming to Tyrone. Through research, she discovered that they were becoming a trend in metro Atlanta due to large corporations choosing to locate here. The developments were buying up properties located in low-income areas which were also indicating an uptick in extended-stay hotels. These were replacing apartments with no required down payments or security deposits, no background checks needed, no high utility costs, no Wi-Fi or cable expenses, or waste expense. There were also discounts if you stayed longer. She shared that in 2019, in Gwinnett County 45% of the stays were booked over 30 days. The number increased to 67% in 2021. This was high-density housing that could affect our police, schools, and medical resources. Her second concern was that in 2022, the Georgia Court of Appeals ruled that people living in extended-stay hotels should be recognized as residents and covered by landlord/tenant laws, making eviction difficult. Her third concern was that after 90 days the hotel could no longer charge the occupancy tax. Her fourth concern was regarding the Hwy 74/Dogwood Trail proposed hotel. The applicant wished to also build a restaurant/convenience, store all on septic. She recalled the septic issues with Tyrone Elementary School. What would the plan be for that hotel's septic system if there were issues? Her fifth concern was the intersection and its safety. There had been fatalities at that intersection, there should not be additional traffic there unless the intersection went through an overhaul. Her sixth and final concern was that there would be four extended-stay hotels within 4.2 miles. She asked Council to please find a better commercial use without negating town resources, amenities, and property values, and to consider the future of the corridor.

Ms. Tallulakie Cosby who lives on Wynfield spoke regarding the extended-stay hotel. She and her husband moved to Tyrone in 2018. The main reason was their quality of life and that Tyrone was a safe community.

She stated that the U.S. Department of Justice deemed the possibility of extended-stay hotels becoming hubs for sex trafficking, prostitution, drug manufacturing, and sales. That was what happened when she lived in Clayton County. She shared that Gwinnett County was also trying to combat the issue and their ordinances were not tapering the crime. She gave statistics, in 2018-2019 Gwinnett had 300 misdemeanor and felony crimes within their five extended-stay hotels. In 2022, Norcross had 84% of their residents consider extended stays their home. She shared that the Southampton covenant stated that the property was not to be used as a residential use. She also stated that statically, hotels made up 10% of the industry, and over 50% of crime came from extended-stay hotels. The crimes consisted of prostitution, drug sales and manufacturing, drug overdoses, child pornography, and rape. That was an issue as she had an eleven-year-old daughter. She shared that there were other kids and the elderly living in Southampton, and building that facility would lead to the demise of Tyrone.

Ms. Troy T. McCain thanked Council for their patience and hard work in reviewing the citizen's concerns. She was thankful and grateful for all she had as a human being, able to accomplish the goals she had in many years. She had a peace of mind that money could not buy. She addressed the developer and builder; we have previously stated that we do not want this development in our community. She stated that she was offended by their comments at the last meeting by saying that the citizens were overreacting. She stated that their comments were that there would be no riff-raff because they would be priced out. Crime, drugs, and prostitution reached across all economic levels. She stated that metro Atlanta had one of the largest percentages of extended stays in the U.S. She declared that due to the change in sex offender laws in Georgia, offenders were not allowed to live near schools, and school bus stops which pushed them out of the subdivisions. That forced them to live in extended-stay hotels where the guests were not vetted. She added that sex offenders come from all walks of life and income. She stated that her brother who had a different type of lifestyle many years ago shared his experience. He stated that people who stay there, state that they were staying for 30 days but often sold their rooms. They sold their rooms to make money for drugs and prostitution, we do not want that here. She added that so much could go wrong, we have children and elderly people living here. The builder did not live here, it was not all about the money. If an extended stay was built and the crime occurred, saying sorry after the fact would not be enough.

Joy Belyeu who lives on Brookfield Court stated that she had lived in Tyrone for 28 years and had seen a lot of changes. She stated that the previous ladies gave them everything they needed to know including a lot of information from research. She added that common sense says that we do not want to develop this way. We have children and grandchildren, the sex trafficking in Georgia is horrible. The citizens would appreciate Council saying no to the development.

Linda Conley who lives on Brennan Drive shared that she was previously on record, however, she wanted to say more. Through research, she found an article in the New York Times, titled "When No Landlord Will Rent to You, Where Do You Go? How extended-stay hotels and motels became the last housing option for thousands of low-income Americans". She stated that it spoke for itself. She added that she visited areas with extended-stay hotels including the Candlewood Suite in Newnan and they were in heavy business and commercial areas. They were not placed next to a \$650,000 subdivision or supermarket.

The hotels could accommodate 4-5 people in a room. The costs were \$77 to \$100 per night. She shared that Tyrone was located near Interstate 85 and the Truckstop in Fairburn. She told a story about a friend. During COVID a lot of businesses were closed, however, there were many cars in the parking lots. It did not make sense. Human Trafficking was very prevalent in Atlanta. She stated that Tyrone was one of the safest cities in Georgia and it needed to stay that way. There would be no benefit to her for an extended-stay as a citizen, nor the Ritz Hotel being built there. She stated that Tyrone was not much bigger than Mayberry and the citizens liked that. Her mother used to tell her children, that if you go to someone's house and they were leaving or eating, you need to take your cue and come home. She then told the applicant to take his cue and go home we do not want the hotel.

## **V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made to approve the agenda.

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

## **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 the November 2, 2023, meeting minutes.

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda.

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

## **VII. PRESENTATIONS**

## **VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

## **IX. OLD BUSINESS**

2. Review and Consideration to Approve Landscape Plans for the Town's Roadside Enhancement and Beautification Council (REBC) Grant Application. - Brandon Perkins, Town Manager

Mr. Perkins stated that on October 5, 2023, Council approved staff to engage with the engineering firm Keck and Wood to pursue \$50,000 in REBC grant funding for landscape improvement around the Town's Highway 74 gateway signs. He added that a kickoff meeting with the team was held on October 11th to discuss the project and design ideas and conceptual plans were delivered to the Town on October 31st.

He stated that the REBC application deadline was December 1st and the last action required by the Town before the application was approval of those plans.

The goal of the project was to enhance the aesthetics of the Town's north and southbound gateways and draw attention to our existing signage. They were difficult to see, and the additional landscaping would draw more attention. He stated that staff believed the plans provided by Keck and Wood would accomplish that goal if the grant was awarded to the Town. He recommended approval and added that a single grant was awarded to include both sites.

He described a mulch island with bushes, and flowers, first for the southbound entrance. He stated that he was asked, what the maintenance cost would be. He shared that it would be approximately \$3,000 to \$5,000 a year but would be part of the ongoing contract with Aabby. He explained that the northbound layout would be more elaborate, having a different layout with the same vegetation.

Council Member Campbell asked about the easement for the northbound space. Mr. Perkins stated that it was in GDOT's right-of-way and it was under their grant. Mr. Perkins added that Aabby and Public Works would partner with the maintenance. A contractor would perform the initial installation. The grant was for \$50,000 and the cost estimate was \$48,717 which included the installation.

A motion was made to approve the landscape plans for the Town's Roadside Enhancement and Beautification Council Grant application.

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

## **X. NEW BUSINESS**

3. Consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness and conceptual site plan from applicant Steve Gulas for parcel 0726 051. Phillip Trocquet, Community Development

Mayor Dial stated that Certificate of Appropriateness was a unique term, it was not a rezoning or a variance. He asked Mr. Davenport to explain to Council what they would be considering. He asked him to explain what a Certificate of Appropriateness was and how it related to their consideration for number 3 and 4 on the agenda.

Mr. Davenport informed everyone that the safest place to begin would be the code section itself. He read from Chapter 109, Article III, Division 2, Section 109-84, *Prior to the first submission to the planning commission, for any development located within the 74 Quality Development Corridor the developer must first submit a concept of the proposed development for review and approval by the town council. The developer should provide sufficient information to show 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 74 Quality Growth Development District special requirements as contained in the town zoning ordinance.*

Mr. Davenport stated that the section introduced the corridor. He then went to Section 113-191 which was the Quality growth development district requirements.

He read (8) Location *The location of the SR-74 Quality Growth overlay shall apply to buildings and sites within 800 linear feet of SR-74 right-of-way and to buildings and sites that are part of a common development where any part of said common development is within 800 linear feet of SR-74 right-of-way. This area extends from the northern limits of the town to the southern limits.*

Mr. Davenport shared that both parcels on the agenda were in that area. He then referenced Section 109-148, General requirements. If parcels were not located within the overlay corridor, petitioners would be asked to submit a site plan to the Planning Commissioners for review. Being that both properties were in the overlay district, the submission came straight to the Council for review. Along with Council approving the Certificate of Appropriateness, they would also review a conceptual site plan. He shared that those elements could be found in Section 109-116, which included 22 items for Council to review. He reiterated that the Certificate of Appropriateness and the conceptual site plan only went to the Council for review. All items from the site plan had to be met to issue the Certificate of Appropriateness. He stated the location, the site plan, and finally the compliance of the zoning ordinance. He referred to Section 109-84... *development will if approved be in compliance with the 74 Quality Growth Development District special requirements as contained in the town zoning ordinance.*

Mr. Davenport stated that the section of the ordinance contained eight different sub-parts dealing with special requirements for the Quality Growth Overlay, such as walls, landscaping, the size of the building, etc. He stated that the developer was within that overlay. He stated that the next item asked, how was the developer going to provide the concept plan. He directed everyone to Section 109-116 which contained the list of what a concept plan should contain. He shared that the third item was, could the develop show compliance with the special requirements of the overlay zone. He then directed everyone to Section 113-191 which indicated all requirements. He added that all requirements were what Council needed to consider before issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Mayor Dial clarified that the overlay was created to preserve the integrity of the aesthetics and traffic for the Highway 74 Corridor.

Mr. Trocquet added that the background of the Certificate of Appropriateness along with the ordinances were rooted in the Town's Comprehensive Plan. He added that parcel number 0726051 was within the commercial corridor character area of the Comprehensive Plan which encouraged commercial development consistent with the C-2 zoning classifications. It required a high standard of architectural landscaping, and sign controls, and also accommodated pedestrian and traffic circulation among other requirements.

Mr. Trocquet informed Council that staff had noted the following items regarding the submission based on ordinance standards at the time of submission for the application.

The conceptual landscaping areas did not detail how they were to be in conformity with the standards of the SR-74 Quality Growth Overlay District, they were labeled but with no detail. No submission of architectural renderings signed by an architect or other appropriate professional were submitted that clearly indicated the following: exterior elevations are drawn to scale with color rendering, proposed colors, materials, and textures for structures, locations of all exterior utility facilities including any rooftop units, proposed signs, and locations including size, color, and material.

Mr. Trocquet stated that given that no rendering had been submitted for the proposed project, staff did not have enough information to recommend approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness Application.

Applicant Steve Gulas shared that he was at the last public hearing on November 2, 2023. He explained that the public hearings consisted of definitions for extended-stay hotels, changing permitted to conditional uses. He explained that their site plan and Certificate of Appropriateness was submitted on August 31<sup>st</sup> and heard on September 21<sup>st</sup> it was then denied. He then resubmitted for October 19<sup>th</sup>. The original plat had a PUD with no buffer. It was signed by the Mayor, Engineer, and the Clerk. He was told that he needed to indicate a 75' buffer, it was changed to C2 zoning. He added that the property already had a residential buffer. The buffer was up to 450'. He explained that he had made great strides to fit in a 75' buffer. Staff would not take it because there was no time to review it so he reapplied again. He added that at that point tens of thousands of dollars had been spent on the project.

He stated that Candlewood Suites was a nice upscale hotel, it cost \$129 per night to stay, which would be too expensive to live there. Mr. Gulas stated that he and his business partner built the Holiday Inn Express in Fayetteville and he also lived in Fayetteville. He also stated that he was on a Planning and Zoning board for three years. He explained that the proposed hotel had mostly different colors of Exterior Insulation and Finish System (EIFS) with some brick. It would have 70% Class A materials such as brick, glass, stone, and aluminum composite materials. He added that the back facing the forest would be EIFS. He stated that he wanted to respect that Council wanted to see building elevations, however, usually that process would go through the Planning Commission. They were trained to know what to look for. He took the four-story prototype and made modifications to show what a three-story would look like. He brought it with him to show Council, it was a work in progress. He understood that there was not much time to review it and he asked that the item be tabled to the December 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. If tabled, he could still maintain the 750' buffer that he had been relying on and spent money for the development. He asked again if Council wished to see the renderings that he brought with him.

Mr. Davenport clarified that what he stated was all in place before the amendment existed, nothing related to the new language. He added that Section 109-116 and Section 113-191 were guides for Council to determine if the information was sufficient. He stated that it had no relationship at all to the amended language two weeks prior.

Mr. Trocquet added that his report was also based on previous language.

Mayor Dial stated that Mr. Gulas made mention of the timing, which was objective. Requested information always needed to be submitted by a certain time before meetings.

Mr. Gulas stated that during the fourth hearing on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, a bullet list of items was added. The lists may have been in Municode. He shared that he went by the provided list required for the Certificate of Appropriateness. He added that a lot of times they could work with staff to make adjustments to elevations, site plans, and landscape plans. He asked again to table the meeting for December. The additional 100' buffer was very difficult to create.

Council Member Campbell addressed Mr. Gulas and stated that they appreciated that he wished to create another business and that he spent tens of thousands of dollars on the preparation. He added that after three times coming to Council, an architectural rendering still had not been submitted. He stated that Council was still being handed drawings of other locations and given descriptions of what it would be like. After coming three times and spending tens of thousands of dollars, the money could have funded a rendering that would have fit that particular spot. He added that he was disappointed that he had not completed all that was required.

Mr. Gulas stated that the first thing that he accomplished was soil reports for both lots. Then engineering was involved regarding the soil. A cost estimate was needed to ensure the cost of the foundation. Next was a hydrology report. The Town's ordinance was very detailed regarding stormwater and volume. Most of the money went toward those studies. He stated that the elevations became a moving target. In the beginning, there was no buffer, then there was a 75' buffer, which affected parking. He stated that now, there was a potential 100' buffer. Every time they would want to start drawing elevations, it would change. The goalpost kept moving.

Mayor Dial stated that to Council Member Campbell's point, at no meeting had Mr. Gulas offered Council items that were required for a determination. There were no landscape plans, no architectural specifications, or topography. It was not a matter of any changes that Mr. Gulas recognized; it was that none of the items were ever submitted. It was not how much money he had spent; it was what was not received by Council.

A motion was made to deny the Application of Appropriateness for parcel number 0726051.

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

4. Consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness and conceptual site plan from applicant Steve Gulas for parcel 0736 038 off Dogwood Trail. Phillip Trocquet, Community Development.

Mr. Trocquet stated that given that no rendering had been submitted for the proposed project, staff did not have enough information to recommend approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness Application.

Mayor Dial invited Mr. Gulas to speak if he had anything unique information regarding that particular parcel.

Mr. Gulas stated that he and his wife had owned the property for approximately ten years. The hotel was not an extended-stay, it was a True Hilton product. He added that the closest one would be in McDonough and with no kitchenettes. It was surrounded by C-1, and E-I properties, with no residential. The property was 800 feet long, on 4.7 acres. His plan would be to build a hotel and quick service restaurant. He added that hotels help existing businesses. He added that there were no adjoining residential properties so there would be no need for an additional buffer. Mr. Gulas stated that he did have full elevations and a landscape plan for the 3-story hotel that he brought with him. He stated that he would like for Council to review them and that he could hand them out because he worked very hard on them. He added that the building met the 40' height requirements.

Mayor Dial asked if the renderings were part of the submitted packet. Mr. Gulas stated that they were not included in his submission on October 31<sup>st</sup>. He asked that Council table the item to give them more time to review them. He added that the property did not have a buffer issue. He stated that on November 2<sup>nd</sup> it was passed that a hotel had to be on 3 acres. A typical True Hilton could be on 1.5. Mr. Gulas wished to use 2.5 acres to include the septic system and two additional septic spaces if needed. The restaurant or coffee shop would help the hotel and contrariwise. Mr. Gulas stated that he would like for Council to review his renderings, he spent a lot of time on them. He asked again for the item to be tabled and stated that the hotel was not an extended-stay hotel.

Council Member Furr asked where the septic system would be located. He indicated where all three could go. He also indicated the space for a coffee shop and its septic location. He stated that Fayette County Environmental Health looked at the plans with him. He asked Council to look at the plans because he had worked on them for days.

Mayor Dial stated that he saw an example of a 4-story hotel. Mr. Trocquet stated that a 3-story example was given. Mr. Gulas stated that the only rendering of a True Hilton was that of 4 stories but the length was that of a 3-story. He indicated two versions and added that the building became longer when the top floors were taken off. Mr. Gulas asked Council again if they wished to see the drawings that he brought.

Mr. Perkins stated that Mr. Gulas had a deadline to submit a complete application. He recalled Council Member Furr asking him at the last meeting to be sure to submit a complete packet next time.

Mayor Dial stated that he appreciated that it was not an extended-stay hotel. However, Council did not have everything they needed. Mayor Dial added that applicants must submit everything to staff for Council to make a proper determination. Mr. Gulas asked again to table the item. Mayor Dial stated that procedurally, that determination should have been made early on in the process.



A motion was made to deny the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for parcel number 0736038.

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

Mayor Dial thanked Mr. Gulas for wanting to invest in the Town.

**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.*

Ms. Christa Kiggungu who lives on Village Green Circle stated that she appreciated that the applicant spent a lot of time and tens of thousands of dollars and understands that his frustration. She shared that the applicant mentioned that the hotel would be upscale, however, his partner stated at another meeting that the Tyrone location would not be as upscale as the Fayetteville location. Secondly, she stated that the price for the hotel stay would be \$129 per night. She added that as the property owner, he could make his own price. Southampton residents had no assurance regarding the price per night. Lastly, she stated that every time he had presented before Council, he was unprepared. It was difficult to trust what he had to say about his plans when he showed up unprepared. Would he be prepared to build the hotel?

**XII. STAFF COMMENTS**

Mr. Perkins reminded everyone about the annual Christmas Tree Lighting program on November 26th at Shamrock Park from 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Perkins announced that the Library was hosting a Red Cross Blood Drive on November 28<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

He also announced that over the next few weeks, Recreation was a drop-off spot for Toys for Tots and they also had an Angel Tree for the public to participate in.

**XIII. COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Council Member Campbell congratulated Jessica Whelan and Dia Hunter on their wins for Council and looked forward to working with them in January. He also wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas.

**XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion was made to approve the November 2, 2023 Executive Session minutes.

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

**XV. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made to adjourn.

Motion made by Council Member Furr.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Eric Dial, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dee Baker, Town Clerk