

Minutes
EPD Committee Meeting
November 2, 2020
1st committee meeting

Meeting Location: City Hall Upstairs Conference Room

Members present: Chairman Taft Matney, Committee members Jason Kraeling and Diane Kuzniar. Van Broad, Community Development Director and Brandon Madden, City Administrator were also present.

1. Call to Order- Chairman Taft Matney

2. Public Comment

Robbie Kellett: I am here today to see what the City's plan is with the club next door to me. There was a shooting Friday night. I was actually in the parking lot when it happened. There may have been another shooting about an hour and a half later. The first one happened about 12:00 a.m. The subject was chased across the road and detained and about thirty to forty-five minutes later a gunshot wound victim showed up. Around 1:30 a.m., another fight broke out and officers were called back out. I don't know if there was a shooting, but there was a presentation of a gun.

Here is how it started Friday night. It started out with me looking at video of cars doing doughnuts in my parking lot. We have already had an incident where one of my vehicles was struck and it cost me about \$4500 to repair that vehicle because it belonged to a customer. It was t-boned, and I have video of that in case anyone wants to see it. Mr. Madden has seen it. That car belonged to Green Light Motors and it cost me \$4500 to repair it. That is real money to me. There is no profit, it is just money going out the door.

We continue to have trash in the parking lot. I am not asking the Council to shut the club down, but there is going to have to be some consensus on who can do something. If it is the police department, then they are going to have to have more staff and put more officers out. Either that, or the club needs to come out of pocket and secure every lot and parking lot and report any incidents in their lot or any lot that they are using.

We, as the business owners on North Main, have come to a consensus that we are going to get together, hire an attorney, stop paying business licenses, and stop paying the City our hospitality taxes. We will keep that money and hire private security, go to Greenville County Sheriff's Office and hire 3-5 officers per night and we will spend \$500-600 a night for security for all our parking lots to arrest or detain someone. This is the only way to end all of this. Each of us is having damage to our property, not everyone every night, but it is consistently happening every single night.

I have been dealing with this for four years and I am here to ask this group what is the plan from the City to manage what is going on? I respect small business; it is a struggle and hard to do and hard to stay in business. I am not asking for the club to be shut down or their business license revoked, but I want the bar to do their part. If they are not going to do their part, then we need a go-between from the City to talk to the bar to decide how they are going to handle it. If they don't, the business owners feel like we are going to have to handle things ourselves. I don't mean that as a threat, it is just that

is a fact that we are going to have to hire private security.

I have a letter here from John Collins who has provided pictures of his location and I am glad to read his letter. His property, he has chained it, two weekends in a row, the chains have been moved and people have parked cars there. There was a cable with a padlock chained to a post, that has been cut and people were actually standing in the streets with a flashlight flagging people in there. To add insult to injury, if you think it was a patron the cut the cable, that is one thing, but for there to be parking attendants flagging people in, that tells me it was not a patron, and tells me someone else cut the cable and decided to park cars there. I will read you John's letter real quick. It is addressed to Van Broad, but he brought me a copy. It says, "I am very frustrated by the lack of attention and assistance I have received to address the trespassing and illegal parking on my property. I have sent numerous texts and left messages. I need help. Who should I contact? As you know, I have invested over \$1.2 million in the purchase and upfits to my building to attract a great Corporate team, Stevens Aviation. They do not want any cars parking in their lot on the weekends and I am obligated to honor their request. Stevens is tired of putting up the wire every Monday morning and no one, including myself, is interested in the liability issue if something or someone is injured or hurt on my property. I have had a conversation with Senator Karl Allen about policing my lot after contacting the local club and made it clear that my lot was not available for parking.

I have left messages for Senator Allen this morning to make him aware of the situation and to ask him for suggestions. The trespassing and illegal parking returned to our lot over a month ago and my tenants have already complained and become genuinely concerned over the events of the past few weeks. Friday, a chain with no parking and no trespassing signs was removed, cars were parked there, there was trash in the parking lot, and people were seen on video urinating on the building.

On 10/24, the tenant reconnected the chain with signage and it was removed and cars parked on the lot. The tenant called the police department around 9:00 p.m. and was told by Stephanie that nothing could be done. On Friday at 10:30 p.m., there was a larger cable put in with signage, and the cable was cut with a bolt cutter and the parking lot was full of cars. The lot was trashed, and tire marks of doughnuts and reckless driving were left on the lot that we just spent thousands of dollars to seal stripe. Is there no respect for other people's property?

On Saturday, 10/31, a pickup truck came in across the driveway and gave people access to the lot. The questions I have are very simple. How can the City help us? What is the purpose of a business license fee if the City won't do anything, and what portion of the property tax I pay to Greenville County goes to the City of Mauldin and what it is used for?

This is the letter to Van Broad. I have some pictures. We are in the same situation again. I know I have talked to you about several incidents that have gone on there. Again, John or I are not asking for you to close the business down, but we are asking for some type of relief. This is a letter from Carter Insurance who wants to inform the City leaders of their problems as well. They say they have been forced to collect beer cans, articles of clothing, used condoms, and are weary of our City leaders turning a blind eye to the situation the citizens are forced to live with on a weekly basis. They are asking what can be done and where we can go at this point. We have hired a Mauldin police officer at one point. This past Friday night in my lot, they were trying to keep people out of my parking lot, on Saturday night, they filled my gravel lot with over 100 vehicles. I went there and took pictures. I counted vehicles; there was at least five rows of cars parked two wide. They filled the entire parking lot of Dollar Tree and the Tire Exchange. I had someone come Sunday morning and clean up the entire

parking lot. That is an expense for me that I normally wouldn't have to incur, that I am having to incur.

I would be anxious to hear an answer from you or Brandon as to how you will be able to address this and what you will do to give us some relief from this, whether it be through the bar, or through us in retaining our business license and hospitality tax money.

I do have one other thing that I would like to address, that I don't understand. When John called and they said they couldn't do anything, and I have called saying there are people parking here, and I have been told there is nothing they can do. On Friday, I heard there was going to be a Trump rally on Sunday in front of my business. I did not facilitate that, nor did anyone at my business. I did not offer my property for that rally, however, when I came there at 2:00 p.m. to see what was going on, I was expecting about 30 people because I saw something on Facebook. I came there, and there was probably about 300. My problem is there were four officers in cruisers to tell them to leave. I did not call and tell them to do that. I appreciate them asking them to move along, but I have a hard time understanding why, when I call as a property owner, and request action to be taken, there is no action, but if someone else deems that action needs to be taken, then it gets done. I know that you can't answer in this session, but I do not understand why when I pay taxes and do what I am supposed to do, I can't get a response, but someone else can get a response of four officers. I don't understand how that works. If someone wants to contact me, I would be more than happy to hear the reasoning for that.

Again, I understand you cannot answer me now, and I don't expect you to, but I would be anxious to have a lively conversation. At this point, I, the Tire Exchange, Ms. Ann Henderson, the insurance company are on board with doing the same thing. We will be contacting an attorney to find out about our legal obligation.

3. Reading and Approval of Minutes

- a. EPD Committee Meeting: October 5, 2020

EPD Special Called: October 19, 2020

**Action: Councilwoman Kuzniar made a motion to accept both sets of minutes.
Councilman Kraeling seconded the motion.**

Vote: The vote was unanimous (3-0).

4. Reports or Communications from City Officers

- a. Department Reports

Community Development Director Van Broad

Budget Review

Mr. Broad reported the department is under budget. Moana opens this Friday for the next two weekends. Keira Heider goes out on maternity leave this week.

- b. East Butler Road Corridor Project Update

DOT is using ICE as a consultant and they have proposed a preliminary design in order to improve East Butler Road, Bridges, and Corn Road intersections. They are getting ready to start the public input process. They are asking the City what information we would like to have to help spread the word. \$17 million has been allocated for the project. The additional left turn lane at Butler and Bridges Road is no longer an option. They are only going to repave the intersection. DOT also understands that trust is an issue, and this will need to be open to the public and as transparent as possible. There was a meeting held with the Legislative Delegation, County Council members, and DOT on this process last week in which concerns were aired regarding the project and the transparency to the public.

Councilman Kraeling said he would like to know specifically the codes and standards that were quoted for the line of site 90-degree angles at traffic lights.

5. Unfinished Business- None

6. New Business

Chairman Taft Matney

- a. Motion to enter into Executive Session to Consider Contractual Matters related to Project Pickle and Project PB as allowed by State Statute Section 30-4-70 (a)(2) (Pages 8-14)

Action: Councilman Kraeling made a motion to go into executive session with Councilwoman Kuzniar seconding.

Vote: The vote was unanimous (3-0).

- b. Possible action on items discussed in executive session

Chairman Matney reconvened the meeting.

Councilwoman Kuzniar reported no decisions were made and no action taken.

Action: Councilwoman Kuzniar made a motion to move Project Pickle and Project PB to Council. Councilman Kraeling seconded the motion.

Vote: The vote was unanimous (3-0).

7. Public Comment- None

8. Committee Concerns

Chairman Matney said having heard from Mr. Kellett and other business owners, they have been told they need to put out signs. The onus has been put on the property owners and it shouldn't be. We shouldn't have business owners cleaning up waste, used contraceptives, clothing, etc. He doesn't think we should accept this type of behavior especially when it infringes on property owners' rights. He needs this stopped. Councilman Kraeling said he saw the cars parking in the lot and flashlights waving cars in at least two times. Chairman Matney asked if the Governor's order is still in effect for 11:00 p.m. alcohol shut-off. He was answered yes. Chairman Matney asked why people were still in the parking lot at 1:00 a.m. Councilman Kraeling also is concerned about exceeding the fire code for occupancy.

9. Adjourn- Chairman Matney adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Miller

Municipal Clerk