

MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION
MAY 24, 2022 @ 3:00 pm

The Cordele City Commission held a Work Session on May 24, 2022 at 3:00 PM, Cordele City Hall Courtroom, 501 North 7th Street, Cordele, Georgia with the following present:

Joshua Deriso, Commission Chair	Vesta Beal-Shephard, Commissioner
Wesley Rainey, Commissioner	Isaac Owens, Commissioner
Angela Redding, City Manager	Janice Mumphery, Recording Secretary
Tommy Coleman, City Attorney	

STAFF PRESENT: Police Chief Jalon Heard, Alicia Odom – Administrative Assistant Police Dept., Irene Cantrell-HUA Director, Tina Bearden-Gas Superintendent, Steve Fulford-Public Works Director/Asst. City Manager.

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael Waters and Dementria Hawkins.

MEDIA PRESENT: Cordele Dispatch – Neil McGaHee.

CALL TO ORDER: Commission Chair Joshua Deriso called the Work Session to order.

INVOCATION: There was a moment of silent prayer.

PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE UNITED STATES FLAG: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Discussion Master Plan - (Via Conference Call per Commission Chair Johnson Deriso) Mr. Curtis Brown of ASD Consultants, Inc., gave a brief summary of his employment and his company's background. Mr. Brown stated he was an employee for the City of Austin, Texas for fourteen (14) years, which he was the Architect for Public Works and the Planning Department, and then he started his own company ASD Consultants, which is thirty (30) years old this year. ASD Consultants specialize in doing architectural designs, planning, and construction. ASD is currently working with Cities.

Mr. Brown shared with the Commission the services that ASD will be able to provide and where they think the city may need to start thinking about going, as far as, the City's strategic planning. Mr. Brown stated he thinks that ASD, Inc. can bring a lot of dos to a city that is trying to grow and attract new businesses.

Mr. Brown stated his thought process is to update the plans that the City already have, in certain areas, help the City focus on putting the pieces in place, i.e., personnel services, infrastructures, as far as, administrative infrastructure and in some cases, physical infrastructure in place to attract and be able to support the type of growth and attract the type of businesses that the City is looking to get. All this will start with the plans the City already have, but there is a methodology to follow and the first step is getting people in place to assist the City in doing that.

Mr. Brown gave his understanding of how the City of Cordele wants to progress; to grow, to lure new businesses, wanting to control the growth and wanting to direct the growth's path, to make the City, a pleasing City to attract the people and businesses that the City wants to come to

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Cordele. Mrs. Brown stated that ASD, Inc. has this type of experience, dealing with smaller Cities. He stated that this is an overview that he is seeing that the city might have an interest in looking into.

Question: Commissioner Isaac Owens: What was the actual numbers of growth for Austin (from one point to another) when ASD, Inc. started the process with Austin?

Answer: Mr. Brown – When he moved to Austin in 1982, the population was half million and now it is well over one million headed to two million, it is one of the fastest growing Cities in the Country. Austin is on the cutting edge as related to environmental controls and developmental controls; it is also an attractive place that appears to high-tech businesses.

Question: Commission Chair Joshua Deriso: Cordele's geographical location can be considered as a hub for commerce and business. How can your company help a City, with a population of approximately 10,000, to be more attractive to more investors and developers coming in? How can the City of Cordele start this process?

Answer: Mr. Brown: ASD, Inc. will have to clearly understand what the City wants, where they want to go and what they want to be known as; we need to understand what the City's goals are, as far as, how they want to identify themselves, when it comes to tourism. From a growth standpoint, the most important thing is to get the City in a position from a zoning standpoint, where the City can control where and what type of businesses are wanted and where, because this really helps companies to come in when they know where they are going, the town is conducive, and that the infrastructure is there and is going to be there. As far as, neighborhoods, people want to know the neighborhoods that they have (in the City), where are they, and what amenities will they have. Your zoning is going to be critical; (1) how you zone the City; and (2) environmental controls. As the City starts to get traction and people start to come in, there is no surprise to them what the expectations are for them to be able to build or develop something in the City. This come with the City's Zoning Department, Inspection Department, and Plan Review Department, analyzing, as the different areas are zoned, what are the capabilities of the infrastructure for utilities, because utilities are a big one. Once all of this is defined from your Master Plan and your Zoning, then you will start to lure people in, which may entail a City putting in infrastructure, to a certain point, so that the businesses coming in can tact on to and then it can be completed. Understand clearly, where you want to go, what type of City you want to be, what type of businesses you are hoping to lure, analyzing the zoning, and then putting in the procedures.

Question: Commissioner Wesley Rainey: Have you looked at information on the City of Cordele? Or you haven't looked at any information? Or is this just a presentation to us of your business?

Answer: Mr. Brown: I have done some research online, looked at the demographics, tourism areas, looking to see if it is something that we are comfortable with or think would have an opportunity to be successful. But we have not analyzed to a point where we are looking to be hired or hired to do something, but we have done some background information to have some familiarity with the City.

Commissioner Rainey asked if they can help the City with annexation of property into the City? In his opinion, the City of Cordele has a huge annexation and zoning issue, basically trying to get

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property inside the City Limits is one of our largest problems facing us now, because the medium household income of the City of Cordele is \$21,350.00, that is less than Vienna to the North, less than Rochelle to the East, it is less than any City around Cordele. We have a disproportionate level of low-income housing to single family homes and we have a large amount of higher ending residential subdivision that are barely on the outskirts of Cordele that are not inside the City limits that are contributing to our medium household income issue. Our medium household income issue is what's keeping a bunch of restaurants out of Cordele. What we are experiencing is a growth of a business plan that looks at Cordele from transient traffic, not as local, this is not helping the City to bring restaurants, like a Kroeger, Publix, Applebee's. We need a way to boost our medium household income to make the City more presentable. Cordele does have a tremendous stock value, we have a large number of hotels, we have a real good tourism base. There is no town South of Atlanta that have the infrastructure that Cordele has, if you can help the City with the annexation and zoning.

Answer: Mr. Brown responded, yes, they can help with these issues. The annexation will help the City by pulling those properties into the City's taxable area. The only downside to this is the infrastructure is not there, such as, the EMS, Fire Station to support.

Commissioner Rainey stated the City has something called a Mutual Aid Agreement that we have with the County, it is an Auto-Mutual Aid Agreement, not just a Mutual Aid Agreement, all the areas that we are referring to should be within five miles of a Fire Station and should not be a problem for that infrastructure, EMS and Fire are with the Auto-Mutual Aid in place.

Commission Chair Joshua Deriso relayed to Mr. Brown that the Commission voted on the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan 2022-2026; the plan brings out a lot of factors, especially environmental factors and with climate change being a real issue, it highlights a couple of things the City needs to do. Right now, we are one of the deep last remaining heavily agriculture base City. However, the Mitigation Plan, kind of caution against that because with the climate changing and the disaster that can come from that, the first thing that becomes an issue is agriculture. That was one thing that got attention, as to, how would the Master Plan work with that situation.

Mr. Brown stated that the pieces are in place, but the City needs the expertise to join them together and adjust them and factor in the city's current desires, make sure the City has someone that can clearly articulate and give the Board the information to make informed decisions.

Question: Commission Chair Joshua Deriso: If we decide to go forward, what would be the City's commitment and the team members? Will you please paint a picture, to see what it would look like? What will we commit to?

Answer: Mr. Brown: The City would commit to hiring ASD, Inc. to represent the City and to bring on ASD expertise and to bring on any other expertise that we see we may need to help the City to achieve the goals, but the beauty of it is, it is just a contract and the City is not in a long-term relation, like an employee. ASD comes in and fulfill all those roles, just like planning or zoning, the company will set that up for you, with our staff. As the City grows and get your feet under you, then the City will staff people and phase out ASD, Inc. Mr. Brown stated that ASD, Inc. will bring a lot of the expertise to the table to set the City up and work with the City and get the City going, and as the City see fit, they can hire their own staff.

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The Conference call ended and there was discussion among the Commissioners.

Commissioner Rainey stated that the Commission needs to see how much it will cost to get started with ASD, Inc.

Commissioner Owens stated that he liked the fact that Mr. Brown was not against looking at what the city has and attempting to incorporate and it would not completely phase out, it is viable.

Commissioner Shephard concern will be with ASD, Inc. coming from Austin, Texas, do we have another company in Georgia to do the same services, in our area?

Commission Chair Deriso stated that their team (ASD) is nationwide, he works in southeastern states. It is offering planning more than anything else, than actually coming in and being an architect for the city.

Commission Chair Deriso asked the Commission, what is the next step after this presentation? The Commissioners agreed to find out cost for ASD, Inc services. City Manager Angela Redding stated she would like more information on the company, like a brochure, speak with other clients and look at the cost; there might be a threshold so the city will have to put it for bid. Commission Chair Deriso told City Manager Angela Redding that she is the contact person, to get all information and bring back it to the Commission.

2. Discussion – E911 Services

City Manager Angela Redding stated that the E911 2006 Agreement was sign and approved by the Commission, but the 2016 Agreement was not accepted by the City. The County reached out and wanted to meet to discuss the services, where we are in terms of the City's portion of E911. Mrs. Redding stated that she met with the County Administrator, The Sheriff, EMS Director and Cordele Police Chief Heard, Alicia Odom-Police Administrative Assistant, Sherry Evans-County Finance Director and Elaine Kent-City's Financial Consultant to discuss the services.

Mrs. Redding stated that E911 is looking at a significant increase in their services. The City has been paying \$261,979.80 per year, since 2018; the County is looking at an increase in their budget. The County is wanting to discuss the City's contribution to E911, in regards to the budget. With the current budget, the City's portion 2021 was 37%, the county's contribution was 63%; with this fiscal year's budget 2022, we are at 70%, 30%, based on the County's increase in their budget, this upcoming fiscal year, the percentage will be County 73%, City 27%, but looking at the information, EMS is included; we discussed moving EMS because this is not something we provide, and once the 15% was taken out, just looking at the numbers it will be 24% increase for the contribution, this will be an additional \$62,875.20 a year, which divided by 12, it will be an additional \$5,239.60 per month, this will bring the City's portion, what we currently pay \$261,980.00 to \$267,219.60 a year. There was some additional information because we are meeting with the Provider of the 311 service, we are paying 311 for a service that the City is not getting a lot of usage. The City has a meeting with 311 this week, based on their contract, the City is paying approximately \$5000 a month, if the service is not conducive to the

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City, this is money that can be utilize for E911. One of the services 311 list that is provided to the city is the

calls regarding police, water and gas. The City needs to look at, if we need the 311 services. There is an overlap of service between E911 and 311. Mrs. Redding stated that the City does not have an executed agreement with E911 because it was not signed by the City. We had a meeting with E911 on April 7, 2022.

Police Chief Heard recommended keeping E911 and not keeping 311. Commission Chair Deriso stated there are three options: (1) stay with E911, (2) hire another company, (3) City get their own E911. Police Chief Heard stated with the equipment that E911 has, it is best to stay with them. Commissioner Rainey stated that E911 has to give the City credit for county taxes collected, everything needs to be equal. City Manager Angela Redding stated after she get the tax information from the County, she will let the Commission know of her findings.

Commissioner Shephard asked if the City will renegotiate with E911 and sign off on the contract? City Manager Angela Redding stated the city need to because we are operating without an agreement.

3. Discussion – Development at the Industrial Park

City Manager Angela Redding stated that the City is experiencing a lot of development in the Industrial Park. One of the companies that are building out there, the infrastructure cost is \$300,000 plus. Tina Bearden-Gas Superintendent and Steve Fulford-Public Works Director will let the Commission know what services this company has and the services that they are requesting.

Tina Bearden and Steve Fulford is bringing a proposal from Griffin Grading and Concrete Asphalt to extend a natural gas main at the City's expense. Mrs. Bearden stated that the City currently has a 460 lb., 4' steel pipeline in the Industrial Park, which is supplying Stella Jones, it is on the westside. Griffin Concrete Construction, they are building an asphalt plant. Griffin Concrete is requesting the city to supply the natural gas, the pipeline. The city is looking at about 4,000 linear ft. of pipe, and will have to install a regulator station. One company gave the City's bid on a plastic pipe, maximum allowed on that pipe is 100 PSI, they also gave the City a bid on 4" steel, which will allow us 460 PSI, which gives us a larger opportunity to supply future request. Steve Fulford stated the gas line Griffin Concrete is requesting the City to pay for, will cost the City approximately \$322,000.00 to extend this line to their property. Mr. Fulford stated that he told Griffin Concrete this proposal will have to get the Commission approval.

Commissioner Rainey stated it is the City's responsibility to provide the infrastructure, the property is inside the City Limits. Commissioner Rainey also stated that he thinks the City should have a policy to run up to a certain size pipe and anything above will be at the company's expense.

Mr. Fulford stated that to his understanding it will bring 200 jobs that are outside the city, inside the city.

The Commission agreed to place this proposal on the City Commission Meeting Agenda for June 7, 2022 for approval. Commission Chair Deriso stated that the Commission needs to entertain

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the Master Plan because he thinks the Master Plan can save the city money. The Master Plan will be on the Agenda for June 7, 2022 also.

ADJOURN: Commissioner Rainey moved to adjourn at 4:48 p.m.; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Commissioner Owens moved to approve the Work Session Minutes of May 24, 2022; seconded by Commissioner Rainey; the Minutes were approved by the Commission.