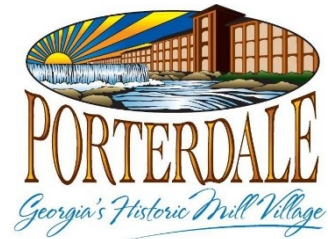


## Porterdale Steering Committee Meeting #4

10-13-2020



**Attendees:** Josephine Kelly, Mark Beatty, Jon McBrayer, Michael Patterson, Lowell Chambers, Willie Milligan, Mayor Arline Chapman, Kay Piper

**Start Time:** 9:10 AM

### Agenda:

1. Update on Surveys
2. Housing
3. Financial Management
4. Local Government Transparency
5. Community Work Program

### Survey Responses / Photo contest:

- 37 total responses (Closed on 10/07/2020)
- 3 submissions for photo contest
  - Submission period closed on 10/5/2020
  - Josephine has put together a team of judges
  - Winner will be announced on city's social media page and newsletter
  - Winner will receive \$100 gift card to local hair grooming business

### Online Survey

- Survey results were limited to 37 responses
  - There were very mixed opinions of the status of several city services and operations.
  - Survey provided important feedback to contribute to the work program and goals of the local government.
- A brief, general overview is outlined below. Mark B. will forward results to Josephine K. to distribute for review:

*Are streets adequately maintained?*

- No = 85%
- Yes = 15%

*Are there any persistent public safety issues?*

- Sanitation / Trash Collection / Littering / Illegal Dumping / Open Hoarding

- *Plant overgrowth into ROW*
- *Major lack of lighting after dark*
- *Car Speeding / Drivers taking residential streets to avoid traffic lights*

*Rate Water/Sewer Service:*

- *Poor = 29%*
- *Average – Excellent = 71%*

*Rate Police Service:*

- *Poor = 23%*
- *Average – Excellent = 77%*

*Rate Internet Service:*

- *Poor = 21%*
- *Average – Excellent = 79%*

*Rate Leisure/Recreation Service:*

- *Poor = 42%*
- *Average – Very Good= 58%*

*You should know \_\_\_\_\_ about this community:*

- *Many delays in city addressing resident concerns*
- *Older residents feel unrepresented*
- *Angst toward how the city functions*
- *That there is much potential to be realized*
- *The city is progressing*
- *Issues with leadership*

*List three small actions the city could do to improve quality of life:*

- *Address poor water quality*
- *Code enforcement*
- *Facilitate local businesses*
- *Issues with City Council*
- *Issues with Police force*
- *Improve physical advertisements for public meetings and community events (e.g. marquee)*
- *Landscape maintenance*
- *Many stated the need for the public works department to be back*
- *Improve recreational opportunities*
- *More family friendly events*

## **Housing:**

### *Maintenance*

- Clear titles (Property heirs) were a major issue in previous years.
  - Mayor Chapman indicated that is being continuously addressed through renovations of local housing stock.
  - Mark B. offered services/contact information for the Georgia Property Heirs Law Center in case the city decides to approach them for services regarding property heir assistance throughout the city.
- Grants available for rehabilitation (CHIP, CDBG):
  - Before any grants for private housing rehab are approached, the city needs to obtain a clear understanding of their overall property heir status throughout Porterdale.

### *Litter*

- During NEGRC site visit (10/9/2020), trash was a significant issue.
  - Litter along ROW, exposed on private property, and illegal dumping in wooded areas was observed throughout the city.
  - Willie M. stated that the city plans to get back to normal operations for trash collection within the following two weeks. There will be a bulk waste service offered to residents so that those who cannot physical or financially remove bulk items in yard can take part. Costs are to be determined.
  - Willie M. stated the city could coordinate more amnesty days with the solid waste department.
  - Mark B. will follow up with the city in November for status update.
- Community Clean-up day (Social Circle is a good reference for community clean-up events):
  - Porterdale citizens (including Kay P.) previously helped to facilitate and organize community clean up events such as Old Fashioned Town Meetings, monthly “Clean It Up Saturdays”, and the “Kudzu Club”. Additionally, volunteers from the County’s churches who came out to do yard work, home repairs, and even painted the houses of some of the indigent elderly homeowners with paint that was donated. These efforts have not been active for the past several years. There is a possibility of restarting the events in the near future.
  - City hosts annual Great American Cleanup event, annual Bulk Waste Amnesty event, and the Main Street Street Sweep Cleanup event. Participation has been approximately 45 volunteers and below each year. City staff and council members would like to continue these efforts and try to increase the amount of local participation each year. Greater City Council member presence at these events was noted as being a need. Local churches normally provide heavy support.

- Every year the city participates in the Great American Clean up, but this year it was postponed because of COVID. It is on the DDA agenda, but a date has not been confirmed.

### *Historic Preservation*

- Status of HPC?
  - City submitted their completed survey in early 2020 and is awaiting a response.
  - City staff recently presented the council on the new guidelines for the Rose Hill Neighborhood. This is awaiting review.
  - The upcoming November meeting of HPC and City Council will be reviewing the commercial guidelines for the historic district
  - The city went through a secondary intensive review process with the HPC and City Council in 2018-19 to address the fine details and user friendliness of the local historic design guidelines. The response has been very positive with residents and City Council. No major amendments or issues need to be addressed at this time.
  - The HPC has done extensive reviews and continues to update/upgrade their process. Property owners submit Certificate of Appropriateness application to HPC first. After approval, the zoning commission reviews the project. Finally, City Council approved if recommended.

### *Zoning Amendments*

- Two potential work program items are listed below:
  - Develop design guidelines for multi-family housing - 2023
  - Determine which zoning ordinances are needed for new development and infill, to ensure quality design and construction – 2021-2023. This line item would require the city council to discuss the implementation of several new ordinances that have been discussed during input meetings and the previous comprehensive plan, including:
    - Conditional zoning ordinances to local code regarding zoning applications to enable time limits on rezoning applications
    - Add steep slope ordinance to local code regarding new development
    - Consolidate zoning ordinance with development regulations to improve accessibility for staff and private sector
- New construction has a quality control ordinance that was enacted in recent years to ensure quality of the construction.

## **Financial Management:**

*What is the city currently doing to address debt service?*

- “We will have this ironed out in less than 5 years” – Mayor Chapman
  - A document is being developed to assist the city with financial management by experts in the field and the current interim city manager, Frank Etheridge.
  - Document is a work in progress and there isn’t a specific date on when the document will be complete.
  - Mark B. will follow up with Frank E. to discuss the status of the document and implications it will have on the city’s budget over the next few years.
- Does the city have SPLOST?
  - Yes, the city’s SPLOST funds will not be affected by any debt servicing.
  - Also, a new T-SPLOST is being voted on in the next Newton County ballot (November 2020). If passed, it will generate over \$1 million in TSPLOST funds dedicated to the City of Porterdale.
    - This would help significantly with street and sidewalk maintenance
    - Rural transit is also on the ballot and will potentially offer demand-response transit service to Porterdale residents
    - Mark B. will follow up on results of 2020 TSPLOST results
- Does the city have a plan to address checks and balances regarding spending?
  - Yes, the team working on the financial document will put in place a better system.
- A permanent city manager is to be determined. Currently that role is being satisfied by Frank Etheridge.

## **Local Government Transparency:**

- Update on city website
  - Website will be implemented in a few months. Budget concerns and new staff have delayed the rollout of the new website.
  - The minutes and agendas will be accessible on the new website via a dedicated tab on the main page.
  - A new city clerk will allow for improved transparency and regular updating of information.
- Recommended to reference Newton County website:
  - Has a “Transparency” tab with the budget, minutes, and agendas.

- What is the process for public meeting advertisements?
  - Post on the website, social media, and newsletters. There is not a physical sign to advertise public events/meetings. Discussions have occurred in the past and the city has yet to determine the most appropriate and attractive sign format. Also, a location for the sign would need to be determined. In front of City Hall and in front of the Porterdale Gymnasium were mentioned as potential sitings.
  - The need for a physical sign along a visible corridor such as Hwy-81 was mentioned in a couple of online survey responses.
  - The need for a consistent city design guide for signs, landscaping, etc. is identified as a work item. This would assist the city in determining the format/design of a marquee sign on Main Street. Comments included:
    - Would have to follow the sign ordinances (no digital signs)
    - Brick sign/bulletin board maybe near Gym
    - Sign needs to be consistent
- Are there any other efforts to improve transparency?
  - The city has been very transparent on the methods used to get back on track since experiencing budget issues.

### **Community Work Program**

- 5 year list of Projects for the city to complete
- Several carry over projects from previous comprehensive plan. Roughly half of the list will be carry over items from 2016 Comprehensive Plan.
- Status updates are reported through Report of Accomplishments (ROA) section. Josephine will update ROA list in November.

### **Sections of Community Work Program include:**

- Economic Development
- Cultural and Historic Resources
- Natural Resources
- Community Facilities and Service
- Housing
- Transportation
- Land Use
- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Broadband Services (new)
- Financial Management (new)
- Government Transparency (new)

### **Work Program Comments**

- The city will still apply for grants to fund city projects in the future. No specific grant opportunities have been identified for the city to apply for as of this meeting. Mark B. will discuss the city's financial ability to provide a local match for grants with Frank Etheridge.
- Josephine K. stated that the city does have \$30,000 set aside for the White Water Overlook project for matching funds to whichever grant is deemed most appropriate for the project.
- Lowell C. stated the need for the city to apply for a grant to upgrade the water system within the next five years.
- Mark B. will include three work items in the Broadband Services section including adopting the state model ordinance, applying to be a Broadband Ready Community, and locating a publicly accessible Wi-Fi hotspot. City Council will review these items and determine if they will remain in the work program.
  - Mark B. will forward the Georgia Broadband Initiative Program (GDBI) presentation to Josephine K. to distribute to City Council.
- Mark B. will forward the first draft of the Community Work Program to Josephine to distribute for review to Steering Committee and City Council by October 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Comments:**

- No additional comments

**Meeting End: 10:41 AM**

