



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

Council Work Session Minutes

March 20, 2023, 4:00 PM

Gary McCullough Council Chambers, Dahlonega City Hall

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for Council meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 706-864-6133.

Vision - To be an open, honest, and responsive city, balancing preservation, and growth, and delivering quality services fairly and equitably by being good stewards of Dahlonega's resources.

OPEN MEETING

Mayor Taylor called the City Council Work Session to order at 4:04 P.M.

PRESENT

Mayor JoAnne Taylor
Councilmember Ron Larson
Councilmember Roman Gaddis
Councilmember Ryan Reagin
Councilmember Ross Shirley
Councilmember Lance Bagley

ABSENT

Councilmember Johnny Ariemma

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the City Council Work Session agenda.

Motion made by Councilmember Larson, Seconded by Councilmember Shirley.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

BOARD & COMMITTEES

1. Cemetery Committee—February 2023, Chris Worick, Committee Chairman
2. Downtown Dahlonega – February 2023, Ariel Alexander, Downtown Development Director
Director Alexander discussed the need and process for an intern at the Head House.
3. Tourism Quarterly Report - 1st Qtr. 2023, Sam McDuffie, Director of Tourism
Director McDuffie advised council members of monthly updates. He mentioned the number of people who have entered the Visitor Center as of March 20, 2023, and reported that the Chocolate Crawl was a huge success this year.
Councilmember Bagley asked for information on the subject matter under publications 150 Small Towns; Director McDuffie states it is under the publication Family Destinations.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS AVAILABLE AT: <https://dahlonega.gov/category/department-reports/>
APPOINTMENT, PROCLAMATION & RECOGNITION: (Vote at Council Meeting)

City Clerk Csukas states that the appointment for Awtry Moore will be held at the special called meeting.

PRESENTATION

4. 147 N. Park Street Proposal, Ariel Alexander, DDA Director

The council thanked Director Alexander for her efforts in working towards development at the 147 N. Park Street site.

5. 2023-2026 Downtown Development Authority and Main Street Program Work Plan, Ariel Alexander, DDA Director

DDA Chairman Thrailkill reviewed the 2023 Strategic Work Plan with City Council members.

Mayor Taylor thanked City Manager Martin for all her hard work in beautifying our downtown, especially now that the Master Gardeners are assisting our staff with more natural plantings that require less maintenance.

Councilmember Larson congratulated Chairman Thrailkill on the work put into the 2023 Strategic Work Plan, a detailed living document.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS

6. Change to Open Container Footprint for the Bear on the Square Mountain Festival, Doug Parks, City Attorney, Ariel Alexander, DDA Director

City Attorney Parks reviewed the proposal to suspend the enforcement of open containers in a specific area at the Bear on the Square Mountain Festival so that festivalgoers may carry their alcoholic beverages from Hancock Park to the auction and live music tent across the street.

7. Zoning Changes Pursuant to HB 1405, Doug Parks, City Attorney

City Attorney Parks presented key issues for Council consideration regarding the zoning changes outlined in HB 1405. These changes should be effective by July 1, 2023.

CONTRACTS & AGREEMENTS

8. Amendment to Professional Services Agreement for WSP USA Environment & Infrastructure Inc., formerly known as Wood Environmental and Infrastructure Solutions, Inc, Doug Parks, City Attorney

Director Buchanan states this is an extension into the already presented contract. This extension will go into late 2024.

The council discussed with Director Buchanan the location of the pedestrian bridge.

9. Reinstatement and Termination of the City of Dahlonoga's participation in GMA's 401(A) Defined Contribution Plan, Doug Parks, City Attorney

City Attorney Parks stated they had identified that plan of enrollment. The DC Plan does not currently have any assets; therefore, the termination of the City's participation is recommended. However, there must be an update to current standards before termination occurs. Thus, we will need to restate first and then terminate.

10. Project # 2023-003 Hancock Park Dumpster Pad Enclosure, Vince Hunsinger, Capital Projects Manager

Capital Projects Manager Hunsinger states that the scope of work on the dumpster project has changed to a complete re-do with concrete rock walls, metal and wood slated gates, conduits, lighting, cameras, and a roof enclosure. The original bid was set at 25k to do the project, but the current rebuild bid is \$75,000; the extra funds are available in the sanitation fund.

The council discussed the 200% increase in the new Hancock Park Dumpster Pad Enclosure. Council thanked Capital Projects Manager Hunsinger for working towards improving Hancock Park by adding a Dumpster Pad Enclosure.

11. Project 2023-005 North Square Sidewalk Replacement, Vince Hunsinger, Capital Projects Manager

Capital Projects Manager Hunsinger discussed budgeting costs for Project 2023-005.

A discussion was had about how wonderful this project will be once complete; Capital Projects Manager Hunsinger hopes this project will be done by Summer 2023. Council requested renderings of the project.

OTHER ITEMS:

12. Insurance Options – Elected Officials, Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin states that the city's health insurance plan historically allowed elected officials coverage. City Manager Martin spoke with GMA, and elected officials should obtain health insurance. We must execute a new declaration and set a future effective date. GMA recommends that you do this with your plan year and discuss the enrollment process. The elected official chooses the cost of the premium.

13. Dark Sky Ordinance Enforcement Review, Allison Martin, City Manager

The city has been receiving complaints and concerns about lighting. City Manager Martin is working with Chief Albert and code enforcement to address these concerns through our Dark Lightening Ordinance. We can review and enforce areas of concern using defined quadrants and testing meters.

Council discussed the process for enforcement of the Dark Lightening Ordinance.

14. Discuss Complaints Related to Rental Home Activity in Residential Neighborhoods, Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin stated that we historically responded to these complaints, and now that we have code enforcement under our Chief of Police, these issues will be addressed accordingly. We plan to revamp our operation under our new police department by working with citizens' complaints through the Fire Marshal about live safety and UNG concerning students' housing issues and landlords with frequent violations. The idea of word of mouth will help curb problems such as parking and right-of-way disturbance with respect for each other in the neighborhood; four unrelated people may live in rental properties. We hope that as we begin this phase, reporting to City Hall is understood by the citizens so that concerns and complaints are handled promptly.

COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

Clerk Comments - No comments were had at this time.

City Manager Comments -City Manager Martin reminded Councilmembers of the groundbreaking ceremony on Friday, March 24, 2023, for the new Lumpkin County Recreational Aquatic Center on Pinetree Way.

City Council Comments:

Councilmember Shirley thanked staff for their diligence in reporting to Council at the work session and citizens for attending meetings.

Councilmember Gaddis, no comments were had at this time.

Councilmember Larson, no comments were had at this time.

Councilmember Reagin, on the City Website, we should promote the sidewalk project that extends from the Walmart Intersection to the boat ramp at the Zwerner Lake.

Councilmember Bagley said Dahlonega received a tremendous compliment as the best small town in Georgia in the 2023 Southern Living article. This happened through a group effort from City and County organizations and elected and appointed officials.

City Attorney Comments - No comments were had at this time.

Mayor Comments - Mayor Taylor agreed that the Southern Living article promoting Dahlonega as the 4th best town in the Southeast and as our town as the 12th best family vacation destination in the United States shows efforts being made to make this all happen.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to adjourn the City Council Work Session at 4:42 P.M.

Motion made by Councilmember Gaddis, Seconded by Councilmember Reagin.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley