



**CITY OF DAHLONEGA  
WORK SESSION  
MARCH 15, 2018, 4:00 P.M.  
MINUTES**

Mayor Norton called the Work Session to order at 4:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Mayor Sam Norton and Councilmembers Helen Hardman, Bruce Hoffman, Ron Larson, Roman Gaddis, JoAnne Taylor and Councilmember Ridley were present.

**Staff Present:** City Manager Bill Schmid, Finance Director Melody Marlowe, Community Development Director Kevin Herrit, and Assistant City Clerk Mary Csukas were present. Downtown Development Director Jan Harris was present. City Attorney Doug Parks was present.

**Department Reports**

1. Community Development
2. Finance / Administration
3. Public Works: City Manager Schmid discussed the Streetscape project. Currently, work is being completed on the storm water line and a fiber optic conduit in front of the Fudge Factory. Last year, in this same area, work was completed on the water line project. Since these conduits are a different foot print this project needed to be completed separately to minimize the impact on the Square. The contractor is working from 3:00 am to 12:00 pm to minimize the impact on the Merchants in the Square.

Councilmember Gaddis inquired if Merchants were notified of this work and timeline. City Manger Schmid stated they were notified on more than one occasion.

Mayor Norton commented on the efficiency of the Contractors completing the work. A curb was in place, in front of Woody's Barber Shop, when he left work at 5:00pm last night. When Mayor Norton arrived at work this morning, the curb had been removed. In further observation, by 10:00am this morning the curb was back in place with green concrete. In the Mayors belief, this could not have been done more efficiently, and he praised the contracting team.

Councilmember Larson noted that this work is completed by city employees and outside contractors. City Manger Schmid agreed with this observation.

4. Dahlonega Downtown Development Authority
5. City Marshal's Office
6. Water and Waste Water Plants

### **Resolution 2018-03 Opioid Crisis**

Mayor Norton stated that this resolution was passed at our last Regular Work Meeting to bring awareness of the seriousness of the epidemic as it ravishes communities, such as our own. We have had a few opportunities to join with neighboring communities and municipalities, in class action suits against the pharmaceutical companies. The suits are to seek some justice for the lack of regulations in the control of these drugs. The issue at hand, for our city, is the lack of crisis centers or programs to claim standing. To join these class action suits with, larger cities we must have these programs in place.

While this may be true, Mayor Norton stated, we need to bring attention to the public of this epidemic. Mayor Norton noted that Councilmember Gaddis, at our last meeting, stated this epidemic deserves some time and efforts in public forum. The communities need to be aware of the impact and damage this epidemic is having on families and communities; it is the reason for the placement of this item on the agenda.

Councilmember Taylor asked if Lumpkin County had undertaken this issue to hand. The County is operating the Mt Sinai Center and the drug treatment wing at Chestatee Regional Hospital. The County may be interested in some joint effort.

Councilmember Hoffman stated that this issue was not prompted on a local level, but if we track the original source we may find out if the county is interested.

City Attorney Parks stated that the awareness came through the GMA legal counsel to his attention. A request had been made to join the litigation of this epidemic, but we may not be positioned to join a suit at this time. City Attorney Parks expanded on the issue, that other things could be done to assist in this epidemic crisis in our area.

Councilmember Hoffman reiterated that if the county was not aware, then they may not be interested.

Councilmember Larson stated that it may be worth sharing this information with Lumpkin County, and they may be interested in partnering with the City on this issue.

City Attorney Parks stated that the basis of this awareness from GMA is to build awareness across the state. GMA is hoping to lay the foundation for further legislation in the next session of the General Assembly, and to build assistance and recovery from GMA.

Mayor Norton asked the City Clerk to transmit Resolution 2018-03 Opioid Crisis to the City Clerk at Lumpkin County, hopefully this will build awareness of this issue and find out if a joint effort is possible to combat the epidemic.

### **Wimpy Mill Park**

Mayor Norton asked City Manager Schmid if staff had any updates on the Wimpy Mill Park project. City Manager Schmid stated that he was not aware of any, at this time. Mayor Norton asked that Council be given an update at the next Work Session Meeting.

Councilmember Gaddis stated that a naming contest, for the Wimpy Mill Park, with public involvement would be a good idea.

Councilmember Hoffman stated that keeping the name Wimpy Mill Park, allows familiarity with the location and the history of the park. The addition of possible signage or historic marker at the park with background information would be advised.

Mayor Norton likes the idea of a contest, that will allow community involvement and interest from the public in their park. Mayor Norton also stated that he is not opposed to having the name stay Wimpy Mill Park. Mayor Norton asked for ideas on a platform for a contest.

Councilmember Larson stated that the Downtown Development Authority would be a good source to manage the contest.

City Manager Schmid stated the process for the contest would be to choose names one week and then conduct a vote on the next round.

Mayor Norton like that idea, stating that the Council would conduct the vote, and keep the option open of the name Wimpy Mill Park.

DDA Director Harris was asked to accept the responsibility of the Contest. Director Harris agreed on behalf of her team.

Councilmember Hoffman stated that Chris Worick would be available to assist DDA Program Director Bell in the responsibility of the contest

### **Ordinance Amendment Allowing Sunday Sales of Alcohol Commencing at 11:00am**

Doug Park updated the Council. Senate Bill 17 has passed both the House and Senate and is awaiting the Governor's signature. The referendum requirement is still intact in the Bill, which allows increments of 30 minutes starting at 11:00 am. The requirements related to the referendum question are not known at this time. A voter referendum will be required to change the time.

Mayor Norton asked to move the Ordinance Amendment Allowing Sunday Sales of Alcohol Commencing at 11:00am to the next Work Session Meeting on April 19, 2018, awaiting the ruling of the referendum.

### **Hancock Park Design Proposal**

Councilmember Gaddis stated that at the last Council Retreat a proposal to place a Playground in the Northeast corner of Hancock Park was discussed. Mayor Norton asked Councilmember Gaddis to work on the design proposal for the Playground.

Councilmember Gaddis, through contact with members of Connectibility, Ms. Jackie Daniels and Ms. Laruen Stephenson, found Mr. Dustin Grahams from Great Southern Recreation. Mr. Grahams was asked to give a design proposal for the Playground in Hancock Park.

Mr. Dustin Graham's presentation gave three options for the Council to review, which included musical, nature and inclusive play ideas for the park. These three options involve the idea of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) options, which is a learning playground. The design options all included a mulch surface for the playground. The design options can be created in steps: start with a few pieces of equipment, with a gradual increase in equipment over time. The design options - musical, nature or inclusive - can be mixed to compliment the needs of the Council. Councilmember Hardman asked if these design options would qualify for a STEM grant. Mr. Grahams stated portions of his design would qualify.

Mayor Norton inquired if a list of completed playgrounds was available for the Council's review. Mr. Graham stated he would supply this list to the Council.

The Council agreed, that an engineered surface was needed in the design. Other points outlined in the discussion by Council included benches, parking and fencing to be included in the overall park design. This overall project is to bring a special children's attraction to downtown Dahlenega.

Mayor Norton inquired if the proposed Hancock Park design would be a viable option for the use of the 3% Hotel-Motel Excise Tax. Councilmember Gaddis agreed that the tourism attraction aspect of this proposal would allow for the use of the 3% Hotel-Motel Excise Tax to be part of the parks funding.

Mayor Norton gave staff direction to move forward with the research on a proposed park in the northeast area of Hancock Park. The Council has the desire to create a project the community as a whole can use and to bring tourism to Dahlenega. Staff needs to be give logistics to the Council at the next Work Session Meeting on April 19, 2018.

City Manager Schmid agreed with Mayor Norton. The city understands the footprint of park design to include a barrier, benches and a solid surface that is wheelchair accessible. The funding cap is \$200,000.00

**2018 LMIG Paving Project – Award of Contract**

City Manager Schmid stated, that staff recommendation is to award the LMIG Project. This project includes all of Happy Hollow Road. Mayor Norton stated that this item will be revisited at the Special Called Meeting.

**Potential Uses for Additional 3% Hotel-Motel Excise Tax**

Mayor Norton asked staff to provide a recommendation for the use of the Excise Tax. Councilmember Larson added to this request and asked for a review of the original proposed list from the conception of this additional 3% Hotel-Motel Excise Tax.

City Manager Schmid stated that a broad range of projects were proposed. The original list included the renovation of the bathrooms at the Visitors Center, a feasibility Study for a Hotel Conference center, and demolition of the old school. City Manager Schmid stated the funds could be divided, use part in the current year and the remainder to roll over into the next year. This expected revenue, for the year, would be in the range of \$150,000.

Councilmembers agreed, that the proposed Hancock Park design, would fall under the tourism attraction component of the 3 % Hotel-Motel Excise Tax. The Hancock Park proposal is a tourist attraction to bring more tourist downtown Dahlongega and would be ideal for the use of these funds.

**Resolution 2018-\_\_\_ Policy Regarding Alumni Association of the University of North Georgia Dahlongega Campus and Alcohol Regulations of the City of Dahlongega**

No comments. This is will be revisited at the Special Called Meeting.

Councilmember Hardman proposed a discussion to rename the Historic Downtown District to the Heritage and Arts District. Mayor Norton agreed that this idea, while a major change, warrants further discussion in the future.

Mayor Norton called to order the Special Called Meeting of the Dahlongega City Council.

The Work Session Meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm to the Special Called Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Mary Csukas  
Assistant City Clerk