



**CITY OF DAHLONEGA  
WORK SESSION  
APRIL 19, 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 Mitchell Ridley were present.

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

Department Reports:

a) Community Development/Historic Preservation Commission:

Mayor Norton praised Community Development Director Kevin Herrit for his well-defined Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes and wondered if the format could now include the status of all Members in the future; present and absent members.

Community Development Director Herrit stated that the report does include the full member roster and their status. Currently, since the Commission is short two members, one full member and one at-large member the roster is showing everyone present.

Mayor Norton stated that the Council and the Historic Preservation Commission Board should search for new members.

Council Member Gaddis reminded Council that applicants for Historic Preservation Commission had specific requirements that must be met to be appointed to the Board per the Ordinance.

Council Member Hoffman noted that two Attorneys in Dahlonega had criticized past Historic Preservation Commission Board Members who they felt were not fully qualified to be part of the board.

b) Dahlonega Downtown Development Authority

c) Finance/Administration

d) Marshal's Office:

City Manager Schmid informed Council that City Marshal Jeff Branyon is attending Chief Executive Officer training until Wednesday of next week.

Mayor Norton noted the Chief Executive Officer training was mandatory for the City Marshal and City Manager Schmid agreed.

e) Public Works:

Public Works Director Mark Buchanan informed Council that the asphalt paving project will begin in May and due to the nature of our brick crosswalks these sections will be handled differently. The road will be paved as normal, but crews will go back to the crosswalk sections and cut out a small section to replace the newly paved area with the raised brick crosswalk.

f) Water and Waste Water Treatment Plant:

Water and Waste Water Treatment Plant Supervisor John Jarrard stated that the Water Treatment Plant had been receiving Council visitors in the last few weeks and all future visitors are welcomed.

Councilmember Hardman had visited the Water and Waste Water Treatment Plant yesterday and was very impressed with the state-of-art Facility.

Mayor Norton asked Supervisor Jarrard if a Work Session could take place at the Water Facility, Supervisor Jarrard stated with some reorganization that would be fine, but the noise may be a problem.

City Manager Schmid informed Mayor Norton that Staff would plan a Work Session Meeting at the Water and Waste Water Treatment Plant as requested.

Financial Review and Assessment:

Terri Finister with Murray Barnes & Finister presented an overview of the City's Master Bond Ordinance and Series 2015 Bonds. There was a discussion about the bond covenants. Rates must be set to provide for:

- 100% of operating expenses;
- At Least 115% of the debt service requirements on the Bonds; and
- Accumulation of funds to meet the capital needs of the System.

Ricardo Cornejo and Doug Gebhardt with Davenport & Company presented a Comprehensive Financial Review. Davenport reviewed the financial health of the City and as part of their presentation they:

- Discussed key drivers to a credit rating;
- Reviewed key characteristics that constitute a highly regarded, credit worthy locality;
- Discussed comparatives with National and Georgia medians;
- Reviewed the City's financial trends;
- Reviewed the City's current debt profile; and
- Considered the impact of potential Revenue and Tax-Supported debt issuance on the City's key debt ratios.

In conclusion, the final observations were made by Davenport:

- The City's economy is anchored by the University of North Georgia;
- The City's General Fund has historically operated at a surplus before and after transfers out;
- The City's General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance is strong relative to its peers;
- Following the City's transition of paying the 2007 GEFA from the General Fund to the Utility Enterprise Fund, the City currently has no outstanding tax-support debt and has the debt capacity to accomplish its projects included in the current 5-year Capital improvement Program;
- The City's Utility Enterprise Fund has reduced its reliance on Tap Fees and Transfers where users of the system pay for the system- a credit positive;
- The City's Utility Enterprise Fund has approximately 6 months days cash on hand; and
- In order to accomplish the City's Utility Enterprise Fund Capital Improvement Programs, the City would need to increase rates to remain in the same financial position.

Ordinance Amendment Allowing Sunday Sales of Alcohol Commencing at 11:00 am: City Attorney Parks informed Council that Governor Deal had not signed the Brunch Bill as of yesterday afternoon, April 18, 2018.

Mayor Norton, Councilmembers and City Attorney Parks discussed the need to mirror Lumpkin County on this issue with an 11:00 am start time. The discussion also followed that the City would use Lumpkin County's Election process this coming Fall to make sure the City had a referendum in place once the Bill was passed.

Mayor Norton noted that the City did not need the cost of a special election at this time and we needed to stay involved with the Lumpkin County's election process.

Councilmember Gaddis stated that the current ordinance with a 12:00 pm start time should stay in place.

Review of City Noise Ordinance: The Dahlonega Square Hotel and the Shenanigans Restaurant, neighboring merchants in Downtown Dahlonega, are at odds concerning noise levels emanating from the outdoor music at Shenanigans Restaurant. Guests at the Dahlonega Square Hotel are complaining and departing the hotel due to the music playing at the restaurant's outside deck past the time allowed per the Ordinance.

A representative from each establishment voiced their opinion concerning noise and the Noise Ordinance.

The Dahlonega Square Hotel representative, Catherine Arriema stated that lack of enforcement on the part of Shenanigans to follow the Noise Ordinance is the issue for the Hotel. Ms. Arriema stated that normally she will call Ms. Rowe the owner of Shenanigans to voice her concerns with the noise levels and receive no follow through on the part of the restaurant staff.

The Shenanigans Restaurant representative stated that enforcement is taken seriously but, on this night, it was Saint Patrick's Day and the Band played later than normal. The bands at the restaurant normally stop playing at 11:00 pm.

Council and Mayor Norton agreed that the issue was not the current Noise Ordinance but the enforcement of the Noise Ordinance in its present form.

Mayor Norton asked procedurally how the public reported a noise complaint and Councilmember Hoffman, Larson and Gaddis all agreed that the public did not know the method to call for issues with noise in the downtown area.

City Manager Schmid informed Council that the City Marshal is the point of contact for complaints and the number is advertised through the DDA and the City's Social Media Post.

Mayor Norton stated that we need to give the City Marshal the opportunity to respond to calls concerning Noise Ordinance issues at this time.

Mid-year Budget Amendment: Finance Director Marlowe stated this was the Resolution to adopt the Budget Amendment that included Attachment A, the adjustments, and Attachment B, the impact on the financial side of the budget.

Building Heights: Mayor Norton informed Council that reviewing the building heights in Dahlonega was a topic of discussion at the Lagrange Council Retreat and currently the City of Dahlonega has one set of building heights in all Zoning Districts.

Community Development Director Herrit stated that Staff recommended raising the heights as follows: Zone B2 raise the height to 65 feet, Zone R3 raise the height to 55 feet, Zone OI raise the height to 65 feet and all other zones heights stay the same.

City Manager Schmid and Councilmember Gaddis asked if anyone had knowledge of the tallest building in the City of Dahlonega. Community Development Director Herrit and other Councilmembers agreed after a short discussion that one of the parking decks associated with the University of North Georgia probably was the tallest building in the City of Dahlonega.

City Manager Schmid informed Council that a need existed to determine how to measure the heights of buildings in any of the Zones as currently some lots slope and others are uniform.

Mayor Norton agreed the City needed to allow growth in some Zones of Dahlonega and an increase in the height of a building would attract new business such as a Hotel. Currently the University of North Georgia is under no obligation to adhere to building heights, so the City of Dahlonega should not have our growth hampered by such limitations.

Councilmember Gaddis and Larson asked for a map showing the overlay of each District in the City and Community Development Director Herrit stated he would secure a zoning map for Council review. Mayor Norton asked Director Herrit to be sure to distribute the map to Council before the next council meeting.

Councilmember Gaddis pointed out that one unintended consequence for allowing raised building heights in certain districts would be obstruction of views for some property owners.

Downtown Banner Design Presentation:

Downtown Development Director Jan Harris presented Council with two banner ideas slated for Downtown Dahlonega as replacements for the existing banners that are in disrepair. Director Harris explained that the idea was to update and modernize the look of the banner to attract tourists to Shop, Dine and Stay. Director Harris expects a few small changes in the color scheme and shape of the mountains once a design is chosen, then the next step would be vendor pricing and finally production.

Councilmember Hardman and Councilmember Taylor agreed a more authentic color scheme was needed to reflect the colors of the Dahlonega City Logo, as these current designs reflect the colors associated with University of North Georgia.

Councilmember Gaddis stated that of the two designs the banner with the prominent white outline would be a wash out but the banner with the yellow and blue color scheme had a retro look reminiscent of Dahlonega's past.

City Manager Schmid presented the current banner that showed gold as one-color design, the one-color design is more cost effective. The question at hand is to either change the design completely or just reorder the current banner.

Councilmember Hardman stated the banners should reflect some of the colors on the design wall currently in place on Georgia 400 and Highway 60 at the entrance heading into Dahlonega.

Discussion:

Councilmember Ridley asked about the progress of Airbnb in Dahlonega. City Attorney Parks stated that we were not restricted by the legislature. A meeting has been planned for May 1, 2018, with Staff to discuss this issue.

City Attorney Parks stated that nothing would stop the Council from allowing open containers of alcohol in Hancock Park during a festival.

Council and Mayor, after an open discussion, agreed to use the Arts and Wine Festival in Hancock Park as a test for the use of open containers with alcohol at a Festival. The sponsor of the festival will be responsible for collateral security to ensure that festival goers with open containers with alcohol will remain in Hancock Park.

The Work Session Meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Mary Csukas  
Assistant City Clerk