



**CITY OF DAHLONEGA**  
**COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**MARCH 17, 2016**  
**4:00 P.M.**

The Dahlonega City Council met in a scheduled work session on Thursday, March 17, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. at City Hall. Mayor Gary McCullough called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Council Members present were Michael Clemons, Bruce Hoffman, Ron Larson, Sam Norton, Mitchell Ridley and Mayor Gary McCullough. City Attorney Doug Parks, City Manager Bill Schmid, Planning Director Chris Head, Public Works Director Mark Buchanan, DDA Director Joel Cordle, Special Projects Coordinator Rebecca Shirley and City Clerk Kimberly Smith were present at this meeting.

**MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY SALES**

Discussion ensued regarding opening the cemetery up for sale of plots. Council Member Sam Norton said no plots have been sold in almost fifty years. Norton said there are many vacant plots as well as unused roadbeds and wooded areas that could be cleared and plotted for sale. Norton said records destroyed in a fire in the late 1960's have made it difficult to determine which vacant plots are available for sale or sold.

There was reference to costs of investigation by prodding done in the past to determine if plots with no markers were vacant. Mayor McCullough asked the legal method of notifying potential owners and asking them to come forward and claim plots. City Attorney Doug Parks stated he has researched this and there really is no "legal process" of determining if plots are owned.

Council Member Gaddis stated that two problems could arise. Plots could be sold that are already owned or a lot that was thought to be vacant could be found to not be vacant when opened.

Council Member Hoffman asked if records have been maintained since the fire? Planning Director Chris Head replied that purchasers are bound to a deed.

Mayor McCullough said the city already loses money on cemeteries, asked how many plots were available and if the city wanted to spend money to see if there are saleable plots and those plots not sell.

Council Member Norton suggested the city start selling plots where the wooded areas and unused roadbeds are currently located while trying to determine which of the other vacant plots are available for sale.

Council Member Larsen agreed with Council Member Norton and said it is time to open the door to start the process to sell plots in areas we already know are vacant and not owned by anyone.

City Manager Schmid said there are three potential areas to consider. Spaces with no grave because it is an existing roadbed, spaces that have always shown as wooded in historical photos and areas near other graves that would be suspect due to their location.

City Manager Schmid said if the wooded areas are cleared the city could consider placing precast vaults which would lower the cost of opening and closing a grave even though it would be a higher upfront cost.

Mayor McCullough said he would like to see if any of the funeral homes would have interest in collaborating with the city in the construction of a columbarium for cremains.

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City Manager Schmid said that the city could start advertising seeking to identify owners while clearing of wooded areas takes place as well as investigating undisturbed areas.

It was consensus of the council that advertising for owners of know plots and unknown plots begin for identification purposes.

Mayor McCullough asked if there are any electronic records available. Planning Director Chris Head said she has researched with the State Clerk's Authority and there are no electronic records on the existing gravesites purchased prior to 1969.

**HYDRAULIC MAPPING AND SEDIMENT SURVEY AT YAHoola CREEK**

City Manager Bill Schmid said this is a budgeted item for maintenance of the water reservoir. No other firm could be found to perform the same services for less and he will recommend approval. Schmid said the service identifies soft surfaces, hard surfaces and shows accumulation of sediment.

There was discussion regarding asking Lumpkin County to participate and the consensus was to move forward with the study and ask the county to participate in the future.

**APPARENT RESULTS OF STREETScape PHASE ONE CONSTRUCTION BID OPENING MARCH 17, 2016**

Public Works Director Mark Buchanan reported six responsive bidders submitted bids ranging from 1.3 to 2.2 million dollars. Buchanan said that Robert and Company, the consultants the hired to oversee Streetscapes will do research prior to making a recommendation for bid award.

Council Member Sam Norton asked if the issue on West Main Street completed. Public Works Director Buchanan replied that it is very close to completion. Council Member Norton commended the staff and contractors for traffic control and keeping the road open as much as possible while the project was underway.

**APPARENT RESULTS OF LOCAL MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT GRANT FOR PAVING**

Public Works Director Mark Buchanan reported that the funding has been secured for the streets recommended for paving those selected are North Grove Street, Alma Street, a portion of Barlow Road, and Azalea Trail. Buchanan recommended approval of Colditz Trucking to begin construction.

**DISCUSSION OF REVISIONS TO WATER SEWER ORDINANCE**

City Manager Schmid reported that the ordinance contains corrections to archaic language referring to meter sizes no longer used; language for a landlord agreement for multi-unit locations and language requirements for multi-tenant buildings, including a provision for landlords to have continuous service to rental units.

There was discussion regarding administrative charges to turn water on and off; requirements for master meters vs. individual meters; prevention of master meters on multi-unit buildings and meter requirements; tap fees being driven by bond covenants that require rates to generate enough revenue to pay bond payments and tap fees should cover cost of impact to the system.

City Manager Schmid said you can give discretion to a developer to install individual meters or a master meter, but the tap fee for a multi-unit building should be the same regardless of the meter choice. Example a building with 16 units and 16 individual meters should have the same tap fee as a building with 16 units and one master meter, because tap, or impact fees are supposed to pay for impact on the system.

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There was discussion regarding Bellamy Student Housing and Hawks Nest Student Housing that when constructed, were supposed to put up a bond or letter of credit due to having master meters in lieu of large tap fees. City Manager Schmid said this type of language is in the proposed ordinance, but he is not aware of letters of credit for Bellamy or Hawks Nest if they are in place.

**DISCUSSION OF FILMING ORDINANCE**

City Manager Bill Schmid said this ordinance, modeled after the same one used by the City of Atlanta needs to be in place for future productions companies that may want to film in Dahlonega.

City Attorney Parks noted modeling this ordinance after Atlanta's was intended so the process of permitting for filming will be seamless for production companies that have filmed there that may want permitting to film in Dahlonega.

There was discussion regarding notification to Lumpkin County once the ordinance is passed because they may want to adopt something similar; insurance requirements being minimum. Approval would also give the City Manager authority to negotiate on the city's behalf.

**AUDIT SERVICES PROVIDED BY GEORGIA MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION**

City Clerk Kimberly Smith reported to Mayor and Council that Georgia Municipal Association does provide lodging tax and mixed drink tax audit services.

Mrs. Smith said the last time Dahlonega used the service for lodging tax auditing was in 2004, no facilities were under reporting and one facility was refunded tax of \$37.46. The current cost for lodging audits is \$500.00 per lodging facility.

Clerk Smith said the last time Dahlonega used the mixed drink tax audit service provided by G.M.A., in 2007 it was not completed because required information was not provided for the audits, but no fee was charged for the uncompleted audits. The current charge from G.M.A. for mixed drink audits is \$125.00 per hour and take approximately six hours to complete.

Clerk Smith said that G.M.A. currently does not provide audit services for compliance with 50% food service requirements; however, there are auditing firms that would provide those services.

There was discussion regarding the need for audits of food service establishments that serve alcohol to ensure the 50% food sale requirement is being satisfied and that the audits should include purchase invoices as well as sales reports.

**CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:**

**A. SAMPLE PROPOSAL FOR OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE WITH SIDEWALK REPAIR**

City Manager Schmid reported that the cost for outside assistance to correct sidewalk issues that are outside of the scope of what city staff can currently handle, is a budgeted item and he will recommend approval.

**B. TREE REMOVAL OF PECAN TREE AT FUDGE FACTORY**

City Manager Schmid reported that the tree is buckling the sidewalk because the roots are expanding. An arborist and two foresters have determined if the roots causing the sidewalk to buckle are removed the tree will die within eighteen months and fall into the street. Mr. Schmid said his recommendation is to remove the tree and replace

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it with a Lace Park Elm of a specific variety cultivated at the University of Georgia, a Sangria Red Leaf Nutall Oak or Mushshino Columnar Zelkova that grows tall but not wide and has roots that grow downward instead of spreading.

**C. REPLACEMENT OF SOUTH SQUARE TREE BLOCKING SAFETY LIGHTING WITH SHRUB**

City Manager Schmid reported that this tree is in front of Gustavo's Restaurant and blocks 80% of the light from the streetlight there. Mr. Schmid said his recommendation is to replace this tree with a low growing Japanese Maple that will never grow high enough to block the light.

City Manager Bill Schmid told Mayor and Council due to administrative oversight regarding the official award of a contract to Grizzle Grading for sewer line replacement there is still need for official motion, second and vote on the contract award. Mr. Schmid said the contract was before the Mayor and Council at the work session December 17, 2016 and a change order for this contract was approved February 18, 2016 at a special called meeting.

Council Member Ridley asked if the contract with Grizzle Grading can be approved at the special called meeting following this meeting. Mr. Schmid replied "yes, since it was an administrative oversight and has been in front of Mayor and Council twice already."

City Manager Schmid said the budget process will begin for fiscal year 2017 and each will soon receive a one page document regarding the budget process.

Mr. Schmid reported filming of a pilot for a one half hour comedy. The filming will close some streets on the north side of the square; Deputies will be on hand for traffic control and there will be signage as well. Mr. Schmid reported that there will be one hundred forty to one hundred fifty crew as well as approximately two hundred extras on the square. Mr. Schmid said if the show is picked up there will be twelve scripts shot at once for the first season of the show.

The work session was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly A. Smith  
City Clerk