



**CITY OF DAHLONEGA WORK SESSION
NOVEMBER 17, 2016, 4:00 PM
MINUTES OF MEETING**

The Dahlonega City Council met Thursday, November 17, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Room in City Hall for their Work Session meeting.

Mayor Gary McCullough called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Council Members Michael Clemons, Roman Gaddis, Bruce Hoffman, Ron Larson, Sam Norton, Mitchell Ridley and Mayor Gary McCullough were present. City Manager Bill Schmid, Public Works Director Mark Buchanan, Planning Director Chris Head and City Clerk Kimberly Smith were present.

Historic Preservation Commission

Mayor McCullough thanked Dahlonega Historic Preservation Commission Members Bebe Blount, Mary Owens, Larry Grimsley and Chris Worick for coming to the Work Session. Mayor McCullough said that he and the City Council all greatly appreciate the service of all of the Historic Preservation Members and feel that the job they do is very important to the City. Mayor McCullough said that appealing to the Council is the final chance for anyone to appeal a decision made by the Historic Preservation Commission.

There was discussion regarding the letter from the Historic Preservation Commission to the Mayor and Council dated September 30, 2016.

HPC Member Worick said that the HPC would like to hear the reason when the City Council overturns a decision made by the HPC.

There was discussion regarding motions approving appeals of decisions by the HPC to contain language regarding the basis for approval of the appeal. Historic Preservation Commission Guideline Ordinance states: "The Dahlonega City Council may approve, modify, or reject the determination made by the Commission, if the governing body finds that the Commission abused its discretion in reaching its decision, or may return the matter to the Commission for further consideration for any reason the City Council finds pertinent."

HPC Member Bebe Blount said the city might want to use the Planning and Zoning Commission Guidelines as a working model for the Historic Preservation Commission.

Mayor McCullough emphasized that the Council is very pleased with the operations of the Historic Preservation Commission and does not want to change the constitutional model currently used for the HPC.

HPC Member Worick said he does not want the public or applicants for HPC actions who are not happy with the decision of HPC feel that they can just apply for an appeal and it be granted without reason by the City Council.

Council Member Hoffman said in one instance of appeal granted by the Council, the Council had more information than the HPC, which made Council feel the appeal, was warranted.

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Council Member Clemons said two of the appeals granted were due to the issues being in litigation. The HPC may have not been aware of the litigation at the time.

Mayor McCullough said that in the future reasons for any appeals of HPC decisions granted by the Council will be communicated to the HPC.

Council Member Norton said that the HPC is a very necessary and the function they provide to the City is very important. The HPC and City have the same end goal, but may have different missions. The Council does need to inform the HPC better of the reasons for overturning their decisions.

Council Member Gaddis said the motions by Council should state the reason and finding of fact before HPC decisions are overturned.

HPC Member Owens read from the letter to Mayor and Council dated September 30, 2016: The HPC Ordinance, (98-3, as amended) provided for applicants to appeal determination of the HPC to the City Council. The Ordinance specifies that the "Council may approve, modify, or reject the determination made by the Commission, if the governing body finds that the Commission abused its discretion in reaching its decision..." In recent history there have been several COA decisions rendered by the HPC that have been overturned by the Council without any finding by Council that the Commission abused its discretion. The most recent of these appeals was decided by Council on September 5th, 2016. In no instance has Council indicated that HPC had exceeded or overstepped its authority.

HPC Member Owens said she was in attendance September 5, 2016 and even though she voted against the decision made by the HPC, she was astounded that there was no discussion by the City Council prior to their vote to grant the appeal.

Council Member Hoffman referred to the decision regarding demolition of the Parks building and explained that the Council often has discussion at Work Sessions so decisions can take place at Regular Meetings without the need for extra discussion.

HPC Member Owens said if for no other reason than public record, City Council motions overturning HPC decisions should be documented with a reason or abuse of power should be stated.

City Manager Schmid said that the Historic Preservation Commission cannot be reconstituted similarly to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Guidelines for demolition and painting of brick structures that are changing from residential to commercial need modification.

Council Member Norton said that the City Council would approve any changes to the Historic Preservation Commission Guidelines presented by the HPC.

Mayor McCullough thanked the Historic Preservation Members for attending and said the Council will include either a reason or cite abuse of power in all future motions that grant appeals of decisions made by the HPC.

Dahlonega Lumpkin Chamber of Commerce Third Quarter Report 2016

Tourism Director David Zunker, President Amy Booker and Vice President of Operations Stephanie Logsdon were present from the Dahlonega-Lumpkin Chamber of Commerce to give the third quarter 2016 report.

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Tourism Director David Zunker played a video of reactions from participants in the Six Gap Event held in September. Director Zunker said that three areas of tourism that are popular are culinary and vendor arts, experiential and historical events and outdoor adventure. The Chamber will be expanding on outdoor adventure tourism as the other two categories are well covered.

Tourism Director Zunker detailed statistical information of bed tax increases, increases in walk in visitors to the visitor's center, increases in followers on Twitter, increases in likes on Facebook, increases in motor coach visitors and events held or hosted by the chamber in the third quarter of 2016.

Events detailed by Tourism Director Zunker and President Booker were Six Gap, Fourth of July "better-than-ever" Independence Day Celebration, Welcome Back Students Block Party, Wedding Expo, Dahlonega Wine Trail and Wine Walk.

Contracting for Pre-Demolition Asbestos Removal at Kindergarten Building

Discussion ensued regarding bids for demolition of the Kindergarten building being due tomorrow and asbestos removal request for proposals being advertised separately from demolition. City Manager Schmid said after the demolition bids are received he will know what to recommend at the December 5, 2016 meeting. City Manager Schmid said the Parking Committee recommended demolition of the building to provide additional parking, however the parking issues that typically occur with return of students was not as bad as expected due to assistance by UNG.

Council Member Norton said he would like to hold off on demolition of the building until the parking need is more urgent.

Council Member Larson said he would like to see the city move forward with demolition as it may make the property more attractive for sale.

Mayor Gary McCullough asked if demolition of the building is a budgeted item. City Manager Schmid replied that it is not.

Council Member Larson asked if demolition would be an expense or a capital expenditure. City Manager Schmid replied that it would be a capital item.

Council Member Larson said he would like the city to proceed with obtaining the costs to demolish the building.

Council Member Ridley said he agrees with going forward and obtaining cost to demolish.

Annual appointment of Jane Tolbert, Resident Board Member to Dahlonega Housing Authority

Mayor McCullough directed this item to be on the consent agenda December 5, 2016.

Bid Review of bids received for Local Maintenance Improvement Grant Installing Safety Items on Various City Roads LMIG02-187 LUMP-COD

Public Works Director Buchanan said his recommendation is to award to Parker Traffic Markings who were the low bidder with a 10% contingency built in to the amount approved.

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City Manager Schmid said this was budgeted at \$15000 and the City's exposure will end up being approximately \$9,000.

Mayor McCullough directed this item to be on the consent agenda December 5, 2016.

Proposed Changes to Parking on Martin Street

Public Work Director Buchanan proposed changing Parking on Martin Street from Park Street to Grove Street to no parking due to the road being too narrow for parallel parking on either side and because the shoulders of the road that used to be grassed are not bare dirt.

Public Works Director Buchanan proposed changing parking on Martin Street between Meaders and Park Streets to parallel parking on the south side of the street only with signage for no parking on the North side of the street.

There was discussion regarding both options. Council Member Gaddis suggested letting the residents on the block between Park and Grove streets have a say in the matter due to the drive ways at some of those homes only having room for one vehicle.

There was discussion regarding making more one-way streets, which will require studies to determine traffic flow and directions of adjoining streets; notification to residents in the areas and a possible public hearing prior to changes being made to the block between Park and Grove Streets.

Council consensus was to move forward with parking changes on Martin Street on the block between Meaders and Park Streets and to get more information regarding traffic flow and resident options before making any changes on the block between Park and Grove Streets.

Dates for Regular and Work Shop Meetings of Mayor and Council for 2017

City meeting dates presented were discussed and it was decided that the regular meetings for January, July and September 2017 would not be the first Monday of the month due to holidays. The Regular Meeting for January will be Tuesday, January 3, 2017, the Regular Meeting for July will be Tuesday, July 11, 2017 and the September Regular Meeting will be Tuesday, September 5, 2017.

City Manager Bill Schmid said the other meeting date change is the Historic Preservation Commission will begin meeting the third Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. instead of the third Wednesday of the month.

Mayor McCullough directed approval of meeting dates and times be on the agenda December 5, 2016.

Proposed Changes to Meeting Schedules and Retention Time for Meeting Recordings

There was much discussion regarding holding two Regular Council Meetings per month with one or both meetings including an item for Work Session Discussion. Items discussed were proper noticing of meetings, publication and posting of agendas in a timely manner and reasons for two Regular Meetings including movement of decisions being swifter and the need for fewer Special Called Meetings.

There was discussion regarding retention of meeting recordings for longer than one year. An item of concern were issues in the past when the recordings were necessary to prove how an issue was brought to Council and decided upon.

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City Clerk Smith suggested holding recordings for one year then destroying them. It was decided that more research on legalities was necessary.

City Clerk Smith asked for permission to destroy some degraded cassette tapes of meetings from prior years. No recommendation for this request due to the actual dates of the meeting not being readily known.

Amendment to Local Sediment and Erosion Control Ordinance

Planning Director Head said adoption of this ordinance is necessary to bring the City into compliance with State and Federal Regulations.

Mayor McCullough directed the ordinance to be on the December 5, 2016 agenda.

Amendment to Local Building Code Ordinance to Adopt State Building Codes by Reference

Planning Director Head said adoption of this ordinance is necessary to adopt the most recent State Building Codes by reference.

Mayor McCullough directed the ordinance to be on the December 5, 2016 agenda.

Resolution for 8% Hotel/Motel Tax

City Manager Schmid said this resolution was not omitted from the packet intentionally. It had merely been communicated to Mayor and Council earlier.

There was discussion regarding how the process will flow with the Resolution being the first step, then it will go to the General Assembly for recommendation as legislation, then come back to Mayor and Council for adoption as an ordinance.

City Manager Schmid said if passed the new tax rate would not show additional revenue until FY2018.

Dahlonega-Lumpkin County Chamber of Commerce Contract Renewal

City Manager Bill Schmid said there was no information regarding this contract in the agenda packet. It was brought as a point of discussion and he will be meeting with Chamber President Amy Booker for information gathering and negotiation.

Mayor McCullough asked if there was any further discussion on any items. There being none the meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Smith
City Clerk