



**CITY OF DAHLONEGA WORK SESSION  
DECEMBER 15, 2016, 4:00 PM  
MINUTES OF MEETING**

The Dahlonega City Council met Thursday, December 15, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Room in City Hall.

Council Members Michael Clemons, Roman Gaddis, Bruce Hoffman, Ron Larson, Sam Norton, Mitchell Ridley and Mayor Gary McCullough were present. The following staff were present: City Manager Bill Schmid, City Attorney Doug Parks, Finance Director Melody Marlowe, Director of Planning and Zoning Chris Head, Public Works Director Mark Buchanan and City Clerk Kimberly Smith. Dahlonega Downtown Development Authority staff DDA Director Rebecca Shirley, City Ambassador Nancy Lovingood, Special Projects Coordinator Danielle Bell were present at this meeting.

Mayor Gary McCullough called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Resident Earl Lawson addressed Mayor and Council regarding the recent increase in fees for Water, Sewer and Sanitation Services. Mr. Lawson said that he does not like the requirement that garbage is mandatory and a condition to get water service. Mr. Lawson referred to being a single parent and said he checked rates of private garbage vendors and they ranged between \$21.00 and \$23.00 per month. Mr. Lawson said if the City's Sanitation Department could not support itself with rates that are more reasonable, the City should consider using a private vendor for the service.

Mayor McCullough thanked Mr. Lawson for his comments and suggestions.

**Presentation from Georgia Urban Forestry Council Executive Director, Mary Lynne Beckley**

City Ambassador Nancy Lovingood introduced Georgia Urban Forestry Council Executive Director, Mary Lynne Beckley. City Ambassador Lovingood said she is very proud and excited to announce that the City of Dahlonega received the Georgia Urban Forestry Council Outstanding Greenspace Award for 2016.

Mary Lynne Beckley gave the following speech with her presentation: "Each year, the Georgia Urban Forest Council, a statewide nonprofit working to sustain Georgia's green legacy by helping communities grow healthy trees, bestows awards in various categories to individuals, organizations, and communities making great contributions to Georgia's urban forests. This year, we wanted to recognize the City of Dahlonega.

The Georgia Urban Forest Council commends the City of Dahlonega for knowing that trees, greenspaces and parks are critical elements of a healthy and vital community.

Both residents and visitors alike benefit from your preservation and maintenance of your downtown public trees, your many parks, and your walking trails. Congratulations on knowing the many environmental, social, health and economic benefits that trees and greenspace bring to your city. It's part of the reason you have nearly one million visitors to your community each year and people enjoy your many festivals, markets, and other outdoor events. Your mature downtown trees offer much

**CITY OF DAHLONEGA WORK SESSION  
DECEMBER 15, 2016, 4:00 PM  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
PAGE 2**

needed shade and cooling for the summer months, aesthetic beauty and other benefits all year round.

Kudos to Dahlonega for preserving and maintaining your 900 downtown public trees and for adopting a Tree management plan and master tree planting plan. In addition, congratulations for being named a Tree City for the 15th consecutive year. Because of your tree planting and preservation priorities and for providing greenspaces for your citizens and visitors alike, the Georgia Urban Forest Council proudly bestows its 2016 Outstanding Greenspace Award to the City of Dahlonega and Downtown Development Authority."

Ms. Beckley said the award is a print of a painting by the late artist Barry Nehr of a Sugar Maple in the fall in Gainesville Georgia.

**Update of City of Dahlonega Comprehensive Plan**

Director of Planning and Zoning Head reported that she is working with Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Comprehensive Plan for 2017 is on track for approval in February 2017.

**Parking Committee**

Dahlonega Downtown Development Authority Director Shirley gave copies of the 2010 Parking Plan to the Mayor and Council and said there were four points of discussion from the Parking Committee.

The Dahlonega Parking Committee is still discussing user fees with the focus being improvement of existing parking lots. The Parking Committee will be making recommendations to Council regarding connectivity and wayfinding. There was discussion regarding pros and cons of and funding for wayfinding signage for vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Discussion continued regarding signage at the gateways to Dahlonega informing visitors how to navigate using their mobile devices.

Downtown Development Authority Director Shirley said the Dahlonega Parking Committee recommends changing three hour parking at the Choice Street Lot to Monday thru Thursday to accommodate overnight visitors that will be coming into Dahlonega on Friday and to keep street side parking at three hours. There was discussion regarding parking in other areas of the City and if it should all be regulated the same.

Council Member Larson said that in the fall of 2017 University of North Georgia classes would be Monday thru Friday and evenings. Discussion continued regarding class days and times changing and construction of the parking deck completing prior to that time.

Downtown Development Authority Director Shirley said the Parking Committee has discussed the current parking requirements for service, retail and lite restaurant as being unfavorable. Council Member Hoffman asked for a definition of lite restaurant. Ms. Shirley suggested a lite restaurant is a food service establishment that has minimal preparation such as a coffee shop, tearoom or bakery. The Parking Committee has suggested looking at the ordinances regarding parking with Planning and Zoning.

There was discussion regarding businesses that see the Council as not being pro-business.

**CITY OF DAHLONEGA WORK SESSION  
DECEMBER 15, 2016, 4:00 PM  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
PAGE 3**

**Pedestrian Wayfinding**

Downtown Development Director Shirley said the Parking Committee discussed working on pedestrian wayfinding at the staff level seeking a solution to direct visitors to businesses that are one block or more off The Square.

**Christmas in Homestead**

Downtown Development Authority Director Shirley said the film industry in Georgia is a seven billion dollar industry that employs 78,000 people. *Christmas in Homestead* has been viewed over 30,000 times on YouTube and was the subject of articles in *The Gainesville Times*, *The Dahlonega Nugget*, on *Access North Georgia* and been the cause of participation in a panel discussion with the *Atlanta Business Chronicle*. The panel discussion will be in an article in the *Atlanta Business Chronicle* January 17, 2017.

Council Member Clemons asked if anyone knows the economic impact of filming of *Christmas in Dahlonega*. Downtown Development Authority Director Shirley said that the tax document that the film company had to file with the State for tax purposes reflected \$360,000.00 in economic impact to Dahlonega.

DDA Director Shirley said that a survey was sent to the Downtown database maintained by the DDA and 33 responses were received as follows: 21 retail, five restaurant, one property owner, five service/other and one lodging facility. The reactions were as follows: 60% general reaction positive, 30% general reaction neutral, 10% general reaction negative, 28% business impact positive, 24% business impact neutral, 48% business impact negative. With the general themes – timing, communication, and business impact. The recommendations were as follows: Have DDA Board Chairman participate in permit review and offer suggestions (also bridges the gap with merchants); consider posting “unavailable” filming dates on film website; present film request at Work Session if timing allows and request to call a Special Called Meeting if no Work Session date is available and if Council email approval is not considered sufficient.

DDA Director Shirley said she would like a permit approval process put into place that would include at least two Council Members.

City Manager Schmid told the Council that they had given him authority to approve film permits with an approval process to Council, understanding, however, the process is changing as we learn more and the approval process may need to change as well as we find a balance of how to go through the permitting process.

**Upcoming Small Filming in Dahlonega**

City Manager Schmid said that staff recommendation is to deny this permit due to the dates of December 21 & 22, 2016 interfering with functions of Downtown during the peak holiday season. The requester of the permit have been asked to consider alternative dates after the peak holiday season.

**2017 Municipal Election**

City Clerk Smith discussed the possibility of Dahlonega contracting with the Lumpkin County Board of Elections. There was discussion regarding suggestion or this option in the past, current State law and requirements for certification for City Election Superintendent and the need for additional information prior to a decision. City Clerk Smith said she would research further and get back with Mayor and Council

**CITY OF DAHLONEGA WORK SESSION  
DECEMBER 15, 2016, 4:00 PM  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
PAGE 4**

**Service Delivery Strategy**

City Manager Schmid said there is no further discussion at this point regarding Service Delivery Strategy; the item was on the agenda as a placeholder.

**Chamber Contract Revisions**

City Manager Schmid said the City has enjoyed a long good relationship with the Chamber. The terms of the upcoming contract are in negotiation and should be on the January Work Session for discussion and the February 6, 2017 council meeting for action and approval retroactive to January 1, 2017.

**Possible Purchase of Equipment for Sheriff's Office**

City Manager Schmid said when the City was researching the possibility of a Police Department for the City tag readers were an item researched. Then during the budget process, there was consideration for purchasing equipment for the Georgia State Patrol and Lumpkin County Sheriffs' Office and funds were budgeted to do so.

City Manager Schmid said he and Sheriff Stacy Jarrard have discussed the City purchasing a tag reader for the Sheriff's Office and which model the Sheriff's Office would prefer. Sheriff Jarrard said that he would like to demo several models of tag readers prior to choosing a particular brand and model.

There was discussion regarding data received from other Police Departments regarding the benefit of using tag readers; different models and importance of their ability to interface with other law enforcement agencies; potential revenue from use of tag readers; and the possibility of grant funding being available to assist with purchase of a tag reader.

Discussion continued regarding when to purchase a unit for the Sheriff's Office; tag readers being fixed equipment on a vehicle; and purchase now with the stipulation that when the City contracts with the County for a Sheriff's patrol vehicle to be used in Dahlonega that the tag reader be on that vehicle.

**City Manager Comments**

City Manager Schmid said the schedule of changes in garbage and recycling pick-up and dates of closure for City Hall for the upcoming Holidays are on the city website and printed on utility bills.

City Manager Schmid referred to a memo from Public Works Director Buchanan regarding purchaser of water and sewer lines for installation by city staff prior to construction commencing for Street Scape Lite.

Public Works Director Buchanan said the revenue to purchase the pipe is connection fees revenue received in excess of the amount budgeted. Potential savings will be over \$200,000 by doing this now.

City Manager Schmid said Street Scape Lite plans have gone to the Department of Transportation for approval. Once approved the plans will then go to the Environmental Protection Division for approval with a target date for approval by E.P.D. of June 2017.

**CITY OF DAHLONEGA WORK SESSION  
DECEMBER 15, 2016, 4:00 PM  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
PAGE 5**

City Manager Schmid said that design is complete for Skyline Drive water line replacement and the project will be ready for bid in January or February 2017.

City Manager Bill Schmid reported pump repair estimate for Wimpy Mill pump Station is \$400,000. There is \$100,000 in the current budget so the City will be applying to Georgia Fund for both the Skyline Road line replacement and the Wimpy Mill pump repair.

**Mayor Comments**

Mayor McCullough wished everyone Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and said he enjoyed working with everyone this past year.

**City Attorney Comments**

None

**City Council Comments**

Council Member Larson asked at which meeting are financial reports typically reported. Finance Director Melody Marlowe replied at the regular Council meeting at the beginning of the month.

Council Member Ridley said some businesses have requested that Christmas Lights remain on for weekends until Valentine's Day. Downtown Development Authority Director Shirley stated that all funding for Old Fashioned Christmas comes from fund-raising events and there is no budget for the lights.

There was discussion regarding leaving the lights on thru the end of January as opposed to leaving them on thru Valentine's Day, cost of doing so and research by the Chamber to determine, if they would be willing to cover the cost of leaving the lights on longer.

Dahlonega-Lumpkin County Chamber & CVB President Amy Booker said she agrees with leaving the lights on through the end of January, but there would need to be research regarding the impact of leaving the lights on longer.

Council Member Ridley asked Dahlonega-Lumpkin County Chamber & CVB President Booker if she could poll the merchants regarding covering the cost of leaving the lights on past January.

City Manager Schmid asked that research concerning merchants being willing to pay the lights to stay on be completed in time to report at the January 5, 2017 Council meeting.

Mayor McCullough stated there being no further business the meeting will stand as adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly A. Smith  
City Clerk