



**CITY OF DAHLONEGA WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 16, 2017, 4:00 P.M.
MINUTES**

The Dahlonega City Council met Thursday, February 16, 2017 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 Director Rebecca Shirley was present at this meeting.

Mayor Gary McCullough called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and thanked everyone for attending.

Nugget Statue

Michelle Codrington and Attorney John Roberts were in attendance to discuss the Nugget Statue proposed at the Work Session August 18, 2016.

Council Member Hoffman asked what the total height will be of the statue including the rock base. Ms. Codrington said the total height will be 33 inches.

Mayor McCullough reminded everyone that the Council previously turned down the Sons of the Confederacy's request for a statue of a confederate soldier in Hancock Park. Allowing this statue there could set precedent.

Council Member Ridley said there has been discussion about a pet cemetery at either Mt. Hope Cemetery or Memorial Gardens. This may be a nice and fitting place for a statue to honor Nugget.

Ms. Codrington said the project came to fruition after Nugget passed away and people were offering condolences, some who never even knew the dog. The memorial is not just to honor the dog, but also the memory of what the city did for the dog and what the dog did for the city. The statue would be more for the people of Dahlonega.

Mayor McCullough said if Council let everyone that made change put up a statue in the park, we would end up with a park full of statues.

There was discussion regarding the dimensions of the statue and if it would or would not contain some sort of water feature.

Council Member Hoffman said he agrees with the history and story of Nugget, but would not want the statue placed in any grassy areas. He would be open to the statue being in a mulched area or near the Diving Bell.

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Discussion continued regarding features of the statue, funding for the statue and maintenance and the need for a rendering of what the finished statue would look like.

Mayor McCullough asked if everyone was aware of the offer made by Ms. Ruby Gooch. The offer is to place the statue on private property owned by Ms. Gooch at the corner of Grove Street and North Main Street.

Council Member Gaddis said he felt it would be better if the statue were on private property. Council Member Gaddis said he agrees with the Mayor regarding the Council denying the request from the Sons of Confederacy's request to place a statue in Hancock Park especially since Hancock Park is near to and may have been a part of the Mustering Grounds.

City Manager Schmid said a lot of jurisdictions have dealt with issue similar to this and, as a result have set policy and criteria for gifts. The criteria set by some jurisdictions are consideration of the implications for the gift. Council may want to use this as an exercise for developing policy and procedure.

Council Member Ridley said the space being offered by Ms. Gooch is a more prominent space than in the park.

There was discussion regarding landscaping extending beyond the Square in an effort to entice tourists to walk beyond the boundaries of the Square. The discussion included the possibility of the landscaping being extended to the corner of Grove Street and North Main Street to compliment the statue if it were placed there.

Council Member Larson said he is torn due to the history. It is a strong emotional story and positioning the statue near the Diving Bell is not out of the question, though he would like the option of placing the statue in a pet cemetery or on private property to be considered.

Mayor McCullough asked Ms. Codrington if she would talk with Ms. Gooch about the offer to place the statue at the corner of North Main Street and Grove Street. Ms. Codrington indicated that she would.

Council Member Ridley said there is greenspace in front of the County Building near the Holly Theatre Annex that is owned by the County that may be a possible place for the statue.

Council Member Norton asked how fundraising is proceeding. Ms. Codrington replied that there has been no fundraising, waiting to see if the city would approve placement of the statue. Attorney Roberts said funding is no issue, if the statue is approved the funding is just the stroke of a check.

Dahlonega-Lumpkin County Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Report

Tourism Director David Zunker reported year end statistics for the Chamber regarding festival events, editorial placements, publication and circulation, number of walk-in visitors at the Visitor's Center, number of hits on their website, followers on social media, advertising efforts, amount of return on advertising compared to dollars spent and lodging tax revenues increases.

Mr. Zunker said that the Dahlonega Plateau Wine Region is a huge draw to the area for visitors that have interest in local wines and explained a new program at the Chamber named On the Wall, where local art is displayed and offered for sale.

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Vice President of Operations Stephanie Logsdon reported that the Eggs and Issues Legislative Breakfast was well attended, the Chamber's Annual Banquet had good attendance and the second annual I Do Dahlonega will be held April 2, 2017. There are more than 500 weddings per year taking place in the community and the I Do Dahlonega event is a way to assist brides-to-be by getting them face to face with the services and products they need.

Council Member Norton asked how the wedding parties are affecting lodging for other visitors. Vice President Logsdon replied that it is an issue and some lodging facilities block off rooms for leisure travelers.

Ms. Logsdon said Small Business Week is the first week in May. An Awards of Distinction Luncheon will be held during the Small Business Week and hopefully that week will also include a Job Resource Fair.

Ms. Logsdon reminded everyone that graduation from Leadership Lumpkin is May 11, 2017.

Mayor McCullough said during meetings with the University of North Georgia, the university offered training and interns to the Chamber. Mayor McCullough encouraged the Chamber to explore this offer.

Mr. Zunker said there will be a solar eclipse on August 21, 2017 and the college is holding seminars about the eclipse.

Council Member Larson suggested the Chamber coordinate with the college for events for parents during the times the college has open house. Director of Tourism Zunker said that he spoke to groups at the college twelve times last year and he always brings up how close downtown is to the college.

Council Member Larson suggested possibly a tour or event in the park to get the parents of students into downtown so they will know what is here.

Council Member Norton suggested events at the Holly Theatre or in Hancock Park for parents of students during open house at the College.

Ms. Booker said she has met with Andy Nebolowski who is a facilitator for Towns and Gowns about events that could be beneficial during open houses at the University.

Mayor McCullough said when the University Convocation Center opens all U.N.G. graduations will be in Dahlonega.

Council Member Clemons said the dates to remember that the Chamber sent did not include concerts. Ms. Booker replied that this was just a reminder of events hosted by the Chamber and did not include events promoted by the Chamber.

Mayor McCullough asked that the Chamber mention what is going on with the streets in downtown. The water and sewer lines are being replaced because they are eighty years old and needed to be replaced prior to the paving that will take place later this year.

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Discussion of Purchasing Policy

City Manager Schmid said this was discussed at the retreat and changes to the policy will continue for approval if the Council is not in objection.

Council Member Clemons said he is fine with the process.

Finance Director Marlowe said the purchasing policy will address ethics, specific responsibilities from staff to Council and Mayor. The policy will describe quotes, bids and who has the decision control at which level of purchasing as well as exemptions for items such as dues, land and other items that cannot be purchased competitively. The level of responsibility is tiered with a progressive method of procurement. Currently items over \$25,000 are put out for bid. The new policy will increase to \$30,000. Currently Council must approve purchases over \$15,000 and the suggestion will be to increase that amount to \$50,000. Finance Director Marlowe said the policy will still include procedures such as verification by the Finance Director that there is cash availability for purchases.

City Manager Schmid said the policy, still in development, is intended to replace the policy approved in 2008.

Resolution 2017-02 a Resolution of the City of Dahlonega, Georgia for Final Budget Amendment for Fiscal Year 2016

There was no discussion regarding this proposed amendment.

Resolution 2017-03, a Resolution of the City of Dahlonega, Georgia for First Quarter Budget Amendments for Fiscal Year 2017

There was no discussion regarding this proposed amendment.

Council Member Larson said he met with Finance Director Marlowe and City Manager Schmid Monday and he is very impressed with the detail of work that is being done. All of the budget adjustments appear to be in order.

Mayor McCullough said there being no further business for discussion, the Work Session would stand adjourned.

Adjournment was at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Smith
City Clerk