

MEETING SUMMARY

Members Present:

Lance Bagley
Dan Brown
Roman Gaddis
Ryan Reagin (arrived at 1:00 p.m. on March 14; not present March 15)
Ross Shirley

City of Dahlonega
City Council Off-Site Retreat
March 14 and 15, 2025
124 EE Butler Parkway
Gainesville, Georgia 30501

Friday, March 14, 2025

I. Call to Order

Mayor Taylor called the Retreat to order at 9:00 a.m. with the following Councilmembers present: Bagley, Brown, Gaddis, and Shirley; Councilmembers Ariemma and Reagin were absent.

Mayor Sam Couvillon, City of Gainesville Mayor, welcomed and addressed the Council. Mayor Couvillon spoke of Gainesville’s Tax Allocation District (TAD); walkability within the City; and, the effects of growth on a community.

II. Approval of Agenda

The Council voted 4-0-2 (Councilmembers Bagley, Brown, Gaddis, and Shirley in favor; Councilmembers Ariemma and Reagin absent) to approve the Agenda as presented.

III. City of Dahlonega PresentationAllison Martin, City Manager
Allison Martin, City Manager, addressed and provided a presentation to the Council. Ms. Martin reminded the Council that a copy of the Service Delivery can be found on the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) website.

No Council action was taken.

IV. Understanding Perspectives Activity (*Timeline Activity*)April Howard, Facilitator
April Howard, Carl Vinson Institute of Government Public Service Assistant / Meeting Facilitator, addressed the Council.

Councilmembers and staff participated in an activity titled “*Understanding Perspectives*”.

No Council action was taken.

V. Strategic Plan

a. Review Progress on Existing PlanAllison Martin, City Manager
and Team

Allison Martin, City Manager, addressed and provided a presentation to the Council.

No Council action was taken.

b. Preparing for Next StepsApril Howard, Facilitator
(*Letter to Community and Council dated March 14, 2030*)

April Howard, Carl Vinson Institute of Government Public Service Assistant / Meeting Facilitator, addressed the Council.

Councilmembers and staff participated in an activity titled “Letter to Community and Council dated March 14, 2030”, which envisioned a five-year tangible image/priority.

No Council action was taken.

VI. Strategic Priority of Managing Growth in the City of Dahlonega...April Howard, Facilitator
April Howard, Carl Vinson Institute of Government Public Service Assistant / Meeting Facilitator, and Allison Martin, City Manager, addressed and provided a presentation to the Council regarding Items listed under sections a. through c. under Agenda Tab VI. Strategic Priority of Managing Growth in the City of Dahlonega.

- a. What does “Managing Growth” mean to you?
- b. Force Field Analysis Process
 - i. Contributing Forces
 - ii. Restraining Forces
- c. Do we have consensus on how we proceed with balanced growth?
 - i. What is in the best interest of our Residents, Businesses, and Visitors?
 - ii. Guiding Principles Review

The City of Dahlonega will be an open, honest, and responsive city, balancing preservation and growth, and delivering quality services fairly and equitably by being good stewards of Dahlonega’s resources. To ensure the vibrancy of our community, Dahlonega commits to:

- i. Transparency and Honesty
- ii. Dedication and Responsibility
- iii. Preservation and Sustainability
- iv. Safety and Welfare ...for ALL!

No Council action was taken.

VII. Lunch - Welcome Honorable Sam Couvillon, Mayor of Gainesville

Councilmember Reagin arrived at 1:00 p.m.

VIII. Aligning Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles with Contributing and Restraining Forces to Inform Priorities for Managing Growth (Group Activity)April Howard, Facilitator

- a. TAD
Ariel Alexander, Downtown Development Authority Director, addressed and provided a presentation to the Council. A document titled Tax Allocation Districts Fact Sheet was distributed (a copy of this document can be found in the Agenda Folder located in the City Clerk’s Office).

The Council held a discussion.

No Council action was taken.

- b. Annexation Plan

Allison Martin, City Manager, addressed and provided a presentation to the Council; the Council held a discussion.

No Council action was taken.

April Howard, Carl Vinson Institute of Government Public Service Assistant / Meeting Facilitator, divided the Council and staff into three groups to discuss within the City of Dahlonega: Tax Allocation Districts (TADs); Zoning and Annexation; and, Parking and Utilities. Groups provided a summary of what was discussed during the breakout sessions.

The Council held a discussion.

Without exception, the Council agreed to remain interested in a potential TAD if the County and Chamber of Commerce were leading the process and if an adequate education plan for citizens is developed.

No Council action was taken.

Without exception, the Council agreed to authorize the City Manager to continue with efforts to hire a Planning and Community Development Director.

No Council action was taken.

Without exception, the Council agreed to authorize staff to review the results of the Parking Study (when complete) and return to a future Council meeting to present the Study's findings. The Council is aware that the presentation may include a proposed Parking Ordinance.

No Council action was taken.

c. Utilities

d. Zoning

e. Parking

f. Staffing

Allison Martin, City Manager, and Mayor Taylor addressed the Council regarding Items i. through iii. under Item f. Staffing.

The Council held a discussion.

i. Assistant City Manager

ii. Public Works Director

iii. Planning Director (bring function back into the City)

No Council action was taken.

g. Alcohol Licensing and Management

Allison Martin, City Manager, addressed the Council.

The Council held a discussion regarding Alcohol Licensing, which included holding special events with live music allowing beer and wine to be served.

No Council action was taken.

h. Existing Contracts and Renewals

Allison Martin, City Manager, addressed the Council; the Council held a discussion.

Without exception, the Council agreed that contracts should be presented annually.

Manager Martin stated that she and Rhonda Hansard, City Clerk, would work together to determine the best time to present contracts to Council and will place the presentations on a future Agenda.

No Council action was taken.

IX. Addition of Another Foundational Strategic PriorityAllison Martin, City Manager
Allison Martin, City Manager, addressed the Council regarding Items a. and b. under Agenda Tab IX.
Addition of Another Foundational Strategic Priority; a discussion was held.

a. Is it time?

b. What would the Council choose to add?

Without exception, the Council agreed that the Items discussed during the day's activities should remain as the City's focus and that no additional priorities should be added at this time.

No Council action was taken.

X. Recess

The Council voted 5-0-1 (Councilmembers Bagley, Brown, Gaddis, Reagin, and Shirley in favor; Councilmember Ariemma absent) to recess the Retreat until March 15, 2025 at 5:26 p.m.

Saturday, March 15, 2025

I. Reconvene

The Council voted 4-0-2 (Councilmembers Bagley, Brown, Gaddis, and Shirley in favor; Councilmembers Ariemma and Reagin absent) to come out of recess and reconvene the Retreat at 9:01 a.m.

II. Updates from Department DirectorsApril Howard, Facilitator;
Allison Martin, City Manager; and, Department Directors

a. Utilities

Allison Martin, City Manager, addressed and provided a presentation regarding LCRR Deliverables; the Council held a discussion.

No Council action was taken.

b. Zoning

Allison Martin, City Manager, addressed the Council; a draft amended Zoning Ordinance was displayed. The Council held a discussion.

No Council action was taken.

c. Parking

Discussed with previous Item (b. under Agenda Tab II. Updates from Department Directors).

No Council action was taken.

d. Alcohol

Ariel Alexander, Downtown Development Authority Director, addressed the Council regarding the Development Authority's upcoming *2025 First Friday Concert Series*; the Council held a discussion.

No Council action was taken.

III. Next Steps

The Council held a discussion, which included the request to receive zoning information in a timelier manner and the request to discuss options for recycling during a future Council meeting.

Members of the Council thanked April Howard for her attendance during the Retreat; thanked staff for hosting a successful meeting; and, thanked staff for their hard work devoted to the City each day.

IV. Adjournment

The Council voted 4-0-2 (Councilmembers Bagley, Brown, Gaddis, and Shirley in favor; Councilmembers Ariemma and Reagin absent) to adjourn the Retreat at 10:55 a.m.