



**CITY OF DAHLONEGA
COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES**

MAY 18, 2020 4:00 PM

ZOOM MEETING PLATFORM, DAHLONEGA CITY HALL

<p>Present – Zoom Mayor Sam Norton Council Member Roman Gaddis Council Member Mitchell Ridley Council Member Ron Larson Council Member JoAnne Taylor Council Member Helen Hardman Council Member Johnny Ariemma</p>	<p>Present – Zoom City Manager Bill Schmid City Clerk Mary Csukas Director Melody Marlowe Director Kevin Herrit Marshal Jeff Branyon</p>	<p>Present – Zoom City Attorney Doug Parks Director Shannon Ferguson DDA Program Assistant Cari McDuffie Tourism Director Sam McDuffie Chamber President Robb Nichols</p>
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CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Mayor Norton called the Work Session to order at 4:03 p.m.

BOARDS & COMMITTEES:

1. Cemetery Committee - April 2020, Bill Schmid, City Manager
 Ground-penetrating radar will be a proposed budget item for the FY 2021 Budget
2. Downtown Development Authority – April 2020, Shannon Ferguson, Executive Director
 Downtown Development Authority is working on design ideas that favor both historic tax credits and other design ideas. Construction on the Head House is at least five months out, with the sidewalk project planned to run concurrently to allow for the seamless design of the project.
 - o Council Member Larson inquired into the design ideas for the Head House. Director Ferguson stated that preliminary architectural designs show DDA offices upstairs and retail or restaurant on the lower floor. DDA recommends a restaurant tenant for the downstairs space; it would be the highest and best use.
 - o Council Member Ariemma stated that owners of vacant properties in downtown need information on those potential restaurant companies vying for the Head House.
 - o Council Member Taylor asked DDA to showcase the Head House project in the newsletter.
 - o Council Member Ridley requested access to the design plans for the Head House.
 - o Council Member Hardman agrees with the recommendation of an upscale restaurant in the design process of the Head House.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

3. City Marshal - April 2020, Branyon Jeff, City Marshal
 - o The Marshal's department is back to regular enforcement as of today, Monday, May 18, 2020.

4. Community Development – April 2020, Kevin Herrit, Director
 - Online permitting now allows for open and close of cemetery plots, land development, and platting. Special events applications will be available online soon.
 - Mayor Norton asked for an update on paid parking space rentals associated with the Downtown Hotel.
 - Council Members asked that wine tastings to be allowed on our sidewalks by this fall.
5. Financial Services – April 2020, Melody Marlowe, Director
 - BS&A software training is complete. All the processes are now electronic, which required a new firewall. This firewall now allows employees to work remotely.
 - Council Member Taylor praised the finance department for the execution of the new software program.
6. Public Works – April 2020, Mark Buchanan, PW Director/City Engineer
 - Council Member Ariemma praised the public works department on the savings associated with the Dairy Queen project. This project was under budget, allowing a Savings of \$100,000, which will adjust capital improvement plans. The savings came from the use of City staff to handle the project.
 - The Mechanic street handrail project is complete.
7. Water & Wastewater Treatment - April 2020, John Jarrard, Water/Wastewater Treatment Director
 - The COVID 19 pandemic impacted our water usage with a 30% decrease in the first few months, and the summer months, which usually show less water usage, will be affected in the range of 15% decrease. The City will need to see water use improvement by Fall 2020.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

8. Municipal Judge Contract - Judge Law, Bill Schmid, City Manager

In 2016, the City Manager received approval to approve contracts, and in 2017 the Mayor was given the ability to review the approved contracts. Currently, the Council is thinking of reviewing all contracts.
9. Stormwater Management, Ed DiTommaso, Goodwyn, Mills, Cawood

Mr. Tommaso presented an update on the stormwater fee ordinance to Council for discussion:

 - Ensure that we have fair equity of stormwater fees.
 - Ensure stormwater fees assist in offsetting property taxes.
 - Possible challenges with implementing in 2021 due to significant budget cuts in many companies and agencies.
 - Stormwater utility fee programs are the only avenue to have large entities pay their fair share of the stormwater cost through this fee program.

Mayor Norton - implementation of this program in January 2021 will require an ordinance review at the June meeting. A millage reduction will also be associated with the implementation of this program. We expect to hold open meetings for the public soon and the adoption of the stormwater program in January 2021 or later.

10. July 4th Celebration, Shannon Ferguson, Director

Council discussed a possible 4th of July celebration under Main Street with a Parade, 5K Run, and Fireworks. The ongoing requirements of COVID will mandate the safety requirements of this event.

- Social distancing is a requirement for music and wine in Hancock Park.
- Determine if UNG will allow fireworks on campus; the cost is \$1000 per minute.
- Limit activity with music, wine, and food trucks.
- Small music groups throughout downtown.

Shannon requested a more definitive direction from Council, City Manager, and City Attorney on how to handle events in a pandemic environment. The Mayor advised music around town, food trucks, and wine and a discussion with the college. if fireworks are allowed at UNG.

COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

Downtown Development and Main Street Comments

- Farmers Market – The Farmers Market is going virtual as only one application was submitted for the farmers market this year. Currently, the farmers market will remain under Main Street as we look for a partner. Mayor Norton asked the DDA to find a solution for hosting the Farmers Market in Hancock Park.
- App Jam is on hold for the time being.

Tourism Director Comments

- Sam McDuffie informed Council that the Visitors Center was open on Saturday and Sunday these past two weeks, but beginning this weekend, the center will be open Friday- Monday.
- The Discovery Guide will be available this week in digital and paper form.
- We are discussing commercial options to inform visitors that the Mountains are open with a voice-over from the Mayor and new photos.

Clerk Comments - No comments

City Manager Comments

- Water usage might increase in the coming months with the reopening of Koyo.

City Attorney Comments

- We will evaluate the stormwater ordinance starting tomorrow.

City Council Comments

- The Southeastern Tourism Society marketing training program at is the Mercer University this year. Macon University has agreed to house the marketing students during the last week of July 2020. Sam McDuffie will work with the Southeastern Tourism Society to bring the marketing college training program back to Dahlonega in 2021.
- Council discussed the best format of upcoming council meetings in relation to COVID-19 restrictions.
- COVID 19 numbers are at 82 cases with one death and six hospitalized.

Mayor Comments

- The Chamblee Council met in their Chamber this week and were exposure to the coronavirus.
- A citizen is requesting that we fly the flag at half-mast for the front-line workers during this pandemic.

Mayor Norton adjourned the meeting at 6:14 p.m.