



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

Council Meeting - Amended Minutes

May 01, 2023, 6:00 PM

Gary McCullough Chambers, Dahlonega City Hall

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for Council meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 706-864-6133.

Vision - To 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.

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Mayor Taylor called the Council Meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Mayor Taylor recognized Ms. Mary Csukas, City Clerk, for all her hard work and dedication to the City of Dahlonega.

PRESENT

Mayor JoAnne Taylor

Councilmember Ron Larson

Councilmember Roman Gaddis

Councilmember Johnny Ariemma

Councilmember Ryan Reagin arrived at 6:23 p.m.

Councilmember Ross Shirley

Councilmember Lance Bagley

PRAYER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

Mayor Taylor requested Councilmember Ariemma lead the Prayer and Councilmember Bagley leads the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Taylor noted that councilmembers will be voting on Quataunda Armstrong as a voting member of the Cemetery Committee. They will swear her in the office at a later date.

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the May 1, 2023, City Council Meeting Agenda.

Motion made by Councilmember Shirley, Seconded by Councilmember Bagley.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

PUBLIC COMMENT – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

Blair Housley states he is representing 84 Public Square N, Dahlonega, GA 30533 business formerly known as "Capers," now known as "Dahlonega Brew Pub." He hoped that an early decision on a potential ordinance amendment would be made concerning the alcoholic beverage license ordinance.

Steve Sylvester discussed a proposed rezoning map amendment to give a parcel the accurate rezoning that already exists incorrectly for the house. This incident showed a need to review our zoning enforcement within the City.

Thomas Gordineer praised the Council for their commitment to the City shown through their level of government training. Mr. Gordineer discussed the dark sky ordinance and the need for more compliance overall in the City. He thanked the police department for their professionalism in handling the compliance of this ordinance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Taylor called a motion to approve the April 3, 2023, Council Meeting Minutes; April 17, 2023, City Council Public Hearing; April 17, 2023, City Council Work Session Minutes; and April 17, 2023, City Council Special Called Meeting Minutes. A typo was corrected in the Public Hearing Minutes before this meeting; the vote is on the updated version.

Motion made by Councilmember Gaddis, Seconded by Councilmember Larson.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

- a. City Council Meeting Minutes - April 3, 2023
Mary Csukas, City Clerk
- b. City Council Public Hearing - April 17, 2023
Mary Csukas, City Clerk
- c. City Council Work Session Minutes - April 17, 2023
Mary Csukas, City Clerk
- d. City Council Special Called Meeting Minutes - April 17, 2023
Mary Csukas, City Clerk

APPOINTMENT, PROCLAMATION & RECOGNITION:

1. Quataunda Armstrong – Appointment as Voting Member of the Cemetery Committee, Chris Worick – Chairman Cemetery Committee

Mayor Taylor praised the Cemetery Committee's dedication to beautifying the Mt. Hope Cemetery and capturing the history of so many people buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery. Recently a discovery was made of two unmarked WWI veterans' graves which the Veterans Administration will correct at no charge to ensure the correct markers are created for these veterans' grave sites.

Mayor Taylor called for a motion on the appointment of Quataunda Armstrong as a voting member of the Cemetery Committee. Ms. Armstrong is a non-voting member of the Cemetery Committee.

Motion made by Councilmember Gaddis, Seconded by Councilmember Shirley.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

Mayor Taylor stated that the swearing-in for Ms. Armstrong would happen at a later meeting.

2. District 2 Officers for 2023-2024, Allison Martin, City Manager

The proposed slate of officers from GMA for District 2 is as follows;

- President Robert (Buddy) Moore, Councilmember, Blairsville
- First Vice President JoAnne Taylor, Mayor, Dahlenega
- Second Vice President Matt Fields, Councilmember, Royston
- Third Vice President Mark C. Reed, Commissioner, Cornelia

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the slate of officers as presented and authorize the Mayor to execute the ballot and submit it to GMA.

Motion made by Councilmember Larson, Seconded by Councilmember Bagley.

Councilmember Gaddis praised Mr. Buddy Moore for his many years of service in Blairsville as a Councilmember and that he is a native of Dahlonega, GA.

Councilmember Bagley praised Mayor Taylor for her continued dedication as a member of District 2. Mayor Taylor agreed that this is an honor to represent Dahlonega and can keep Dahlonega as a vital part of District 2.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None currently

CITY REPORTS:

3. Financial Report - March 2023, Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin reviewed essential highlights of each department in the March 2023 Financial Report.

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the March 2023 Financial Report.

Motion made by Councilmember Larson, Seconded by Councilmember Gaddis.

The recycling fee in the past was a fixed fee-based pickup. The city's solid waste is based on tonnage.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

4. Ordinance 2023-01: Zoning Map Amendment - James and Joann Gribben on behalf of Applegate Cottages, LLC (Parcel No. D07-065), Doug Parks, City Attorney

City Attorney Parks introduced Ordinance 2023-01 (Parcel No. D07-065)

City Attorney Parks states, as you are aware, the application process to rezone involves creating a map amendment which is a map's re-classification. The zone would switch from an R1 to an R2 zone in this situation. This subject was discussed at two Public Hearings, one with the Planning Commission and the other with the City Council. The vote from Council is to vote yes or no on the change in the classification of this parcel. There will be no more audience involvement or applicant discussion this evening.

Mayor Taylor entertained a motion on Ordinance 2023-01 Zoning Map Amendment - James and Joann Gribben on behalf of Applegate Cottages, LLC (Parcel No. D07-065).

Councilmember Gaddis entertained a motion to table this matter until our zoning consultant outlines their review of our zoning ordinance. Councilmember Shirley seconded the motion.

Councilmember Larson asked about any repercuss if this item was tabled; City Attorney Parks stated no repercuss if the item was tabled.

Councilmembers Shirley asked for a time limit on this item, and City Attorney Parks stated it would be moved to the next council meeting.

Councilmember Bagley and Ariemma reiterated that tabling would not stop the use of this property as is at this time.

Councilmember Larson reminded Council that the Planning Commission did deny this rezoning request.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

5. Change to Open Container Footprint for the Dahlonega Arts and Wine Festival, Doug Parks, City Attorney, Ariel Alexander, DDA Director

City Attorney Parks informed Council that the request of the Bear on the Square committee for a change to open containers footprint is the same as allowed for the Arts and Wine Festival. Thus, it will enable festival goers to bring their alcoholic beverages from Hancock Park to the food court area across North Park Street, and it is proposed to suspend the enforcement of open containers in a designated area during the Dahlonega Arts and Wine Festival. He advises the staff to suspend the corresponding ordinances to accommodate this event.

Mayor Taylor called for a motion.

Councilmember Larson asked for a motion to suspend enforcement of the open container laws of the City of Dahlonega, including but not limited to the following: The Code of the City of Dahlonega, Georgia, Chapter 22, Article II, Section 2232, Section 22-33, Section 22-34, Section 22-35, within the geographical area set aside for alcohol sales and consumption within that specific festival special event permit application granted by the City to the Dahlonega Arts and Wine Festival organizer, the duration of the suspension to run concurrently with the duration of the permit granted and seconded by Councilmember Shirley.

The council discussed additional signage for Hancock Park, which the festival organizer will handle.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

CONTRACTS & AGREEMENTS:

6. Project #2023-004 Mechanicsville Road Curb and Gutter, Vince Hunsinger, Capital Projects Manager

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the bid from Legacy Design & Development of \$101,325.00

Motion made by Councilmember Bagley, Seconded by Councilmember Shirley.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

7. Project # 2023-006 Telescopic Boom Lift, Troy Armstrong, Streets, Parks, and Cemeteries Supervisor

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the purchase of the Telescopic Boom Lift from M&R Rental.

Motion made by Councilmember Gaddis, Seconded by Councilmember Larson

Councilmember Ariemma states that this Telescopic Boom Lift will be a great idea for the City Staff with proper training.

Councilmember Bagley feels this will be a great addition to the city despite the significant cost of the Boom Lift, as it will help with big festivals, Dahlonega Christmas, etc.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

8. General Services Agreement – Wiedeman and Singleton, Inc., Allison Martin, City Manager, and Mark Buchanan, Public Works/City Engineer

City Manager Martin states that the city is seeking a General Services Agreement by Wiederman and Singleton, Inc. to solidify our relationship with professional engineering

services in the city. They are going to be working strictly with items listed in the contracts. It is important to note that the city owns the work products created under this agreement.

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the General Services Agreement and authorize the Mayor to execute the contract.

Motion made by Councilmember Reagin, Seconded by Councilmember Shirley.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

9. TSW Proposal – City of Dahlonega Zoning, Allison Martin, City Manager

Mayor Taylor reminded the Council to review our current zoning ordinances and make changes to reflect our current growth needs and the future assessment made through our housing study. The current zoning ordinances reflect language from as far back as the 1950s. No changes would be made without public recommendations through public hearings.

City Manager Martin states that the city has received a proposal from TSW. The proposed project approach would allow the council to take care of recommendations from the housing study and complete the necessary changes to the ordinance. Work could begin at the end of April and should take about eight months.

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to accept the proposal submitted by TSW and authorize the city manager to coordinate the work start date with the firm.

Motion made by Councilmember Gaddis, Seconded by Councilmember Reagin.

Councilmember Ariemma and Mayor Taylor discussed the need to use caution with this eight-month process to update the zoning ordinances.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

10. Selection of Website Design Firm, Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin received multiple proposals, from the request for proposals on redesigning the city website. In 2022, a committee was created to review the proposals, including city staff, elected officials, and a citizen of Dahlonega. The committee recommends that the city enters into an agreement with Planeteria to design, implement, host, and maintain a new city website.

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to accept Planeteria's proposal for a new website and authorize the mayor to execute any needed documents related to this project.

Motion made by Councilmember Shirley, Seconded by Councilmember Larson.

Councilmember Bagley inquired into any issues of hacked websites designed by this company. City Manager Martin stated that none were disclosed during this process. The timeline is expected to be six months.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley

OTHER ITEMS:

11. Options for Community Development Services, Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin stated that the needs of this department are currently being handled by city staff, GMRC officials, and Doug Park's office. City Manager Martin reviewed multiple options for Community Development Services; we have four possibilities:

1. Refill the position with a qualified Planner.

2. Contracting locally for an Intake Clerk in the office to handle day-to-day operations
3. Contract with a firm to have someone at City Hall full-time and on-call while we explore options.
4. Contracting with a firm with multiple Planners on staff to work with the intake clerk. The firm must specialize in municipal zoning

Mayor Taylor informed the Council that this item would be covered in our next work session.

12. Requests from Business Owners to amend Alcohol Ordinances/ Zoning Ordinance

Allison Martin, City Manager

City Manager Martin informed Council that the Chamber of Commerce, whose mission is to support businesses, approached the City to assemble a delegation to attend meetings they would facilitate with local business owners to discuss issues real and perceived in our existing zoning and alcohol ordinances.

There was a need to understand which items could be brought to Council by the staff for change. The City Manager, Police Chief, Downtown Development, and two Councilmembers attended the meetings. The idea was to participate in the first meeting, listen to the concerns, and re-group after the issues were brought to City Hall for further discussion. Listed below in no order were issues addressed:

- ❖ Sip and Shop Event
- ❖ Growlers to sell a single selection of beer
- ❖ The inability of the Owner of two establishments in one building could not transport the product between the establishments.
- ❖ The inability of a manufacturer or brewer in the downtown area.
- ❖ Look at the 50-50 rule
- ❖ The Chamber felt an entertainment district in the downtown area would be a good tool for restaurants with long wait times to entice people to stay there.

Education of the Sip and Shop event was resolved for that business owner by Ariel Alexander using a special event permit.

We asked the Chamber to research the impact on the city for an entertainment district through the budget, police staffing, other business owners not selling alcohol, and other city residents that did not live in the downtown area.

The Chamber and City shared each other's research on the impact of the entertainment district in the downtown area at the second meeting:

- ❖ Our police department failed compared to other jurisdictions with open container laws. The compromise was suspending the open container laws for the festival's footprint, allowing the city time to gather data on this process in Dahlonega.
- ❖ Path forward for Mr. Housley's request for a manufacturing or brewer license is a process that will take time.
- ❖ The under-one-roof is a state issue and would not be allowed.
- ❖ The Growler issue has a conflict with zoning requirements
- ❖ All met the requirement of the 50/50 rule at the meeting, so there is no need to change this rule.
- ❖ We discussed the city accolade for being a family-friendly destination and the impact an entertainment district would have on other businesses and residents in Dahlonega.

We continue working with Doug's office to find other paths forward, and we do not recommend an entertainment district currently. The research will continue with both positive and negative impacts from other jurisdictions.

The council commended this committee on the open dialogue with the Chamber of Commerce and UNG on this complex matter with an entertainment district and the five issues under discussion.

COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

Clerk Comments – Ms. Csukas thanked everyone who recognized City Clerk Week.

City Manager Comments - City Manager Martin thanked all councilmembers who completed the retreat surveys for our upcoming retreat on May 19th and 20th in Canton, GA.

City Attorney Comments – no comments

City Council Comments:

Councilmember Shirley stated it was a busy weekend in the community, with many tourists in town. He reminded the council to stay current with our alcohol ordinance. It is good to be cautious, but we must keep looking forward to the future.

Councilmember Ariemma – no comment

Councilmember Gaddis – no comment

Councilmember Larson – no comment

Councilmember Reagin apologized for being late to the meeting.

Councilmember Bagley congratulated the Water Facility on the 2022 Water Quality Report.

Mayor Comments - Mayor Taylor gave a key to the City of Dahlonega to outgoing Lt. Colonel Chris Green during the change of command at the Ranger Camp Open House. The mayor pointed out local businesses with On Job Training and the beginning of the Farmers Market and Appalachian. Jam starts Saturday, May 6, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve adjournment at 7:02 PM.

Motion made by Councilmember Larson, Seconded by Councilmember Bagley.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Larson, Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley