



Mayor and City Council Work Session
February 18, 2025 at 6:30 PM
City Hall, 875 Main Street, Stone Mountain, Georgia 30083

Minutes

1 **Mayor and Council: Dr. Beverly Jones – Mayor | Post 3: Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Smith**
2 **Post 1: Council Member Anita Bass | Post 2: Council Member Mark Marianos**
3 **Post 4: Council Member Gil Freeman | Post 5: Council Member Shawnette Bryant**
4 **Post 6: Council Member Teresa Crowe**

5
6 **Staff: Shawn Edmondson - City Manager | Maggie Dimov - Assistant City Manager | Shavala**
7 **Ames - City Clerk | Jeff Strickland - City Attorney**

8
9 **Public Hearing**

10
11 Pria Patel from Jarrard & Davis presented HB 581 for citizens to opt in or opt out of. This is the final of
12 three public hearings for HB 581 and a resolution will be added to the agenda. A separate agenda item
13 will be added to the agenda to be voted on at the end.

14
15 **Opt Out:**

16 **Joan Monroe** - She mentioned how it's a lose-lose for the average citizen. Homeowners' exemption is
17 gone and senior exemption in the county and city is lost. Opting out projects the city and the average
18 citizen. Major real estate are the only ones gaining benefits from this.

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20 **Marcela Stupin** – She mentioned she doesn't know what it's about and thinks citizens should know
21 what it's about before voting. She also thinks it should be on the ballot to vote on in November before
22 opting in or out.

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24 **Rhonda Morrison** – She chooses to opt out because of not having a full understanding and it doesn't
25 seem to be in favor of the homeowners. She also wants to see real life scenarios of how they would be
26 affected.

27
28 **Jelani Linder** – He agrees with others in opting out. He thinks it negatively affects the budget due to
29 current property values. He also thinks this is a good time for the city to come together to diversify tax
30 base.

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32 **Pam Jordner** – She chooses to opt out and thinks it would be helpful to get additional information to
33 know what it's about.

34
35 **Clint Monroe** – He mentioned HB 581 was written as one size fits all for the entire state and it doesn't
36 benefit the City of Stone Mountain. He thinks there needs to be a bill crafted that works for the city.

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38 **Vanessa Wallace** – She mentioned being in favor of opting out and asked if opting out is permanent.

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40 **Opt In:**
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42 **Eileen Smith** – She mentioned 3 components: county, city, school and gave calculation of numbers of
43 how HB 581 will be a benefit if opting in for the city and county. She also mentioned opting out requires
44 the city to create their own floating homestead exemption and more cost in general.

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47 **ACTION: MOTION TO ADJOURN PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:49 P.M.**

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49 **Motion made by Council Member: Post 4, Seconded by Council Member: Post 5 Bryant**

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51 **Voting Yea:** Council member: Post 1 Bass, Council member: Post 2 Marianos, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3
52 Smith, Council member: Post 4 Freeman, Council member: Post 5 Bryant, Council member: Post 6
53 Crowe

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55 **MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY**

56 **Call to Order**
57 Mayor Jones called the meeting to order at 6:49 P.M.

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59 **Determination of Quorum**
60 PRESENT: Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Council Member: Post 2 Mark Marianos, Mayor Pro
61 Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Gil Freeman, Council Member: Post 5 Shawnette
62 Bryant, Council Member: Post 6 Teresa Crowe, Mayor Beverly Jones

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64 **Invocation and Pledge**
65 Mayor Jones led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the Invocation.

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67 **Citizen Comments** – Including comments from public/stakeholders

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69 **Citizen Comment 1: Carmen Melitzia** – Read proclamation for Rory Webb and Jeff Carrey for the
70 contribution to the Stone Mountain community and honor a day to them

71
72 **Citizen Comment 2: Joan Monroe** – decorum of Councilmembers, city of civility, discussing agenda,
73 accurate minutes, transparency, allocation of SPLOST funds, 4 Councilmembers are responsible for
74 vandalism at cemetery and give it to the general public, stop pushing worship of bigotry and treason,
75 peace for people

76
77 **Citizen Comment 3: Erin Parks** – long time resident of unincorporated Stone Mountain, long time
78 patron of incorporated Stone Mountain, appalled by use of confederate monuments to attract tourism,
79 focus on unified safe activities

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81 **Citizen Comment 4: Cheryl Dudley** – resident of unincorporated Stone Mountain, Do not place
82 Confederate sign at cemetery because of the disrespect it shows the community, read comments of
83 history of Confederates

84
85 **Citizen Comment 5: Dave Thomas** – AARF announced 7 days to 5 days starting next month; disaster
86 because revenue in January down by 30%; AARF don't feel supported by City or Administration; no
87 sense of urgency by City of Stone Mountain

88
89 **Citizen Comment 6: Rev. Orea Parker** – Black History Month – read excerpt by Dr. Michael W.
90 Waters

91
92 **Citizen Comment 7: Janette Miles** – resident since 1999; against Confederate recognition for
93 cemetery; recognize honoring deceased; signs disrespecting all City of Stone Mountain

94

95 **Citizen Comment 8: Jelani Linder** – agrees with those speaking against signs, plagued by perception
96 and work on perception, diverse council, diverse community, City of Stone Mountain needs to get to a
97 place of healing and unity; propose something for City of Stone Mountain to be diverse and inclusive
98

99 **Citizen Comment 9: Clint Monroe** – no reason to honor empty graves of Confederate soldiers;
100 symbol of Confederacy tourism not a viable business plan; sanitation issue; remove brass plaque
101 monument
102

103 **Review of the Journal**

104 1. Consideration of an action on a request to approve February 4th, 2025, City Council Meeting
105 Minutes, requested by City Clerk Shavala Ames.
106

107 **ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE FEBRUARY 4TH, 2025 CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**
108 **AS PRESENTED**

109 Motion made by Council Member: Post 1 Bass, Seconded by Council Member: Post 2 Marianos
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111 **Voting Yea:** Council Member: Post 1 Bass, Council Member: Post 2 Marianos, Mayor Pro Tem:
112 Post 3 Smith, Council Member: Post 6 Crowe
113

114 **Voting No:** Council Member: Post 4 Freeman, Council Member: Post 5 Bryant
115

116 **MOTION PASSED**
117

118 **Reading of Communications**
119

120 **IX. Adoption of The Agenda of The Day**
121

122 **ACTION: MOTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA OF THE DAY**

123 Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 2 Marianos
124

125 The City Attorney requested consideration of an action to add to the agenda a consideration to
126 adopt a resolution to opt out of HB581 Resolution under New Business. Council Member Crowe
127 requested to remove the item about Confederate sign at the cemetery from the agenda and to
128 move Executive Session to City Manager's Report.
129

130 **ACTION: MOTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA OF THE DAY**

131 Motion made by Council Member: Post 6 Crowe, Seconded by Council Member: Post 2
132 Marianos
133

134 **Voting Yea:** Council Member: Post 1 Bass, Council Member: Post 2 Marianos, Mayor Pro Tem:
135 Post 3 Smith, Council Member: Post 6 Crowe
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137 **Voting No:** Council Member: Post 4 Freeman, Council Member: Post 5 Bryant
138

139 **MOTION PASSED**
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141 Mayor Jones confirmed the new agenda as requested.
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143 **ACTION: MOTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA OF THE DAY AS AMENDED**

144 Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 1 Bass
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146 **Voting Yea:** Council Member: Post 1 Bass, Council Member: Post 2 Marianos, Mayor Pro Tem:
147 Post 3 Smith, Council Member: Post 6 Crowe
148

149 **Voting No:** Council Member: Post 4 Freeman, Council Member: Post 5 Bryant

150 **MOTION PASSED**

151 **X. Committee Discussion Items**

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153 **1. Stone Mountain Community Garden**

154 Jackie Marshall reviewed the submitted SMCG report.

155 **2. Planning Commission**

156 None

157 **3. Historic Preservation Commission**

158 None

159 **4. Parks and Recreation Committee**

160 Reverend Orea Parker reported out regarding Parks and Recreation Committee - met on February
161 10th and voted to change the meeting date to 2nd Monday of the month. Discussed Parks and
162 Recreation is an advisory group and do not make decisions. The committee discusses ideas and
163 recommendations that were submitted to the council last year of 2024. There was a proposed
164 soccer field development. Currently several parks need maintenance (Kaboom). The parks should
165 be on maintenance schedule and there is flooding at Leila Mason. The community is not satisfied
166 with restrooms. All parks need signage.

167 **XI. Staff Reports**

168 **1. Public Safety- Police Chief – James Westerfield Jr.**

169 Reviewed submitted report.

170 **XII. City Manager Report**

171 City Manager Shawn Edmondson presented a comprehensive review of both the City Manager's
172 and Administrative reports, providing key insights into ongoing projects and developments. Council
173 Member Bryant inquired about the status of the red striping on Main Street, prompting Assistant
174 City Manager Maggie Dimov to explain that new red paint was required to restore the markings. In
175 response to a question about parking, Council Member Freeman was informed by City Manager
176 Edmondson that a variance would be necessary to move forward with the plans. The governing
177 body also requested updates on several pressing issues, including the enforcement of CSX parking
178 tickets, further beautification efforts downtown, the installation of digital signage, street paving
179 projects, and the possibility of a larger and more prominent welcome sign to greet visitors on Main
180 Street.

181 **XIV. Unfinished Business**

182 **1. Executive Session**

183 **ACTION: MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE AT 8:18 P.M.**

184 Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 2 Marianos
185 seconded

186 **Voting Yea:** Council member: Post 1 Bass, Council member: Post 2 Marianos, Mayor Pro Tem:
187 Post 3 Smith, Council member: Post 4 Freeman, Council member: Post 5 Bryant, Council
188 member: Post 6 Crowe

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MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)

ACTION: EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION AND RECONVENE WORKSHOPS SESSION AT 9:06 P.M.

Motion made by Council Member: Post 3: Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 1 Bass

Voting Yea: Council member: Post 1 Bass, Council member: Post 2 Marianos, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith, Council member: Post 4 Freeman, Council member: Post 5 Bryant, Council member: Post 6 Crowe

MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)

XIII. Council Policy Discussion Topics

1. Discussion: Request of a new local auditor to audit all SPLOST 1 & 2 – requested by Councilman Gil Freeman

Council Member Freeman requested an updated from Whitaker regarding audits of requested to SLOST I and II.

City Manager Edmondson assured the governing body that Mr. Whitaker will be invited to a council meeting to give a briefing once he is available.

2. Discussion: Downtown Development Authority – Councilman Gil Freeman

Council Member Freeman stated that he is pleased with some of the changes that have been happening with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and will postpone the discussion on the DDA to the next meeting.

XV. New Business

1. Consideration of an action on a request to appoint Jackie Marshall to the Stone Mountain Community Garden Board – requested by Mayor Dr. Beverly Jones

Ms. Jackie Marshall gave an overview of her background as it relates to the Stone Mountain Community Garden Committee.

ACTION: MOTION TO APPOINT JACKIE MARSHALL TO THE STONE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY GARDEN BOARD

Motion made by Councilmember: Post 1 Bass, Seconded by Councilmember: Post 4 Freeman

Voting Yea: Councilmember: Post 1 Bass, Councilmember: Post 2 Marianos, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith, Councilmember: Post 4 Freeman, Councilmember: Post 5 Bryant, Councilmember: Post 6 Crowe

MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)

2. Discussion/Action: Move forward with Attorney Walker as the assistant attorney – Mayor Dr. Beverly Jones

Ms. Emilia Walker Ashby to discussed the proposed contract for Assistant City Attorney services. City Manager Edmondson recommended moving forward with the contract if necessary on an as needed basis, while City Attorney Patel proposed revising the language to clearly designate the City

257 Manager as the primary point of contact when utilizing Assistant City Attorney services. After some
258 discussion, it was agreed that the contract would be updated and revised with this adjustment
259 before proceeding with approval.
260

261 3. HB 581 Opt Out Consideration: City Attorney gave overview of HB 581
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263 City Attorney reviewed the subject of HB 581 and the necessary steps the city would need to take if
264 the choose to opt out.

265 **ACTION: MOTION TO OPT OUT OF HB 581**

266 Motion made by Councilmember: Post 4 Freeman, Seconded by Councilmember: Post 2
267 Marianos
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269 **Voting Yea:** Councilmember: Post 1 Bass, Councilmember: Post 2 Marianos, Councilmember:
270 Post 4 Freeman, Councilmember: Post 5 Bryant
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272 **Voting No:** Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith, Councilmember: Post 6 Crowe
273

274 **MOTION PASSED**
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276 XVI. **New Ordinances and Resolutions**
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278 1. Consideration of an action on a request to approve the Mardi Gras Resolution
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280 **ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE MARDI GRAS RESOLUTION**

281 Motion made by Councilmember: Post 2 Marianos, Seconded by Councilmember: Post 1 Bass
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283 **Voting Yea:** Councilmember: Post 1 Bass, Councilmember: Post 2 Marianos, Mayor Pro Tem:
284 Post 3 Smith, Councilmember: Post 5 Bryant, Councilmember: Post 6 Crowe
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286 **Voting No:** Councilmember: Post 4 Freeman
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288 **MOTION PASSED**
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290 **[Due to the adoption of Resolution 2024-14, the meeting will end at 10:00 p.m. and any**
291 **remaining items will be moved to the next available meeting]**
292

293 **Adjournment**
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295 **ACTION: MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 10:06 P.M.**

296 Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 5 Marianos.
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298 **Voting Yea:** Council Member: Post 1 Bass, Council Member: Post 2 Marianos, Mayor Pro Tem:
299 Post 3 Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Freeman, Council Member: Post 5 Bryant, Council
300 Member: Post 6 Crowe
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302 **MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)**
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Dr. Beverly Jones, Mayor

City Clerk, Shavala Ames