

Canton, Georgia

*110 Academy Street
Canton, Georgia 30114*



Minutes - Final - Final

Thursday, October 10, 2024

9:00 AM

**Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce
Terrace Level
3605 Marietta Highway, Canton, GA 30114
Council Fall Retreat
October 10-11, 2024
City Council**

Thursday, October 10th

9:00 am

1. Welcome, Invocation, and Pledge of Allegiance**2. Call to Order - Mayor**

The retreat was called to order by Mayor Grant.

3. Roll Call - City Clerk

Present:

*Mayor Bill Grant
Mayor Pro Tem Dwayne Waterman (arrived at 10:00 am)
Councilmember Sandy McGrew
Councilmember Travis Johnson
Councilmember Shawn Tolan
Councilmember Bryan Roach
Councilmember Farris Yawn
Mr. Billy Peppers, City Manager
Mr. Nathan Ingram, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Bobby Dyer, City Attorney
Ms. Annie Fortner, City Clerk
Mr. Marty Ferrell, Police Chief
Ms. Melissa Forrester, Finance Director
Mr. Scott Hooper, Public Works Director
Ms. Bethany Watson, City Engineer
Mr. Eric Fortner, Director of Building & Safety Services
Mr. Kevin Turner, Community Development Director
Mr. Mike Morgan, IT Director
Ms. Amy Thomas, Human Resources Manager
Mr. Jeff Tucker, Deputy Police Chief
Ms. Teresa Fitts, Municipal Court Clerk
Ms. Lauren Johnson, Communications Manager
Ms. Kristin Norton Green, Theatre Events & Facilities Director
Mr. Ken Patton, Housing Initiatives Director
Ms. Brittany Anderson, City Planner
Ms. Kelly Pendley, Operations Director
Mr. Adam Dodson, Parks & Recreation Manager
Mr. Jason Taylor, License & Permit Manager
Mr. Merrick McClure, Code Compliance Manager
Ms. Donna Bell, Executive Admin. Assistant to the City Manager*

4. Overview/Logistics - Assistant City Manager

An overview of the day's agenda and a few housekeeping items were discussed.

5. Citizen Survey Overview - Asst. City Manager/Communications Mgr.

A recent citizen survey was conducted in which over 1,200 surveys were completed. The survey focused on several areas such as City amenities, City benefits, development/growth, safety/security, operations, and communications/interactions with City staff. The City will be able to distribute two (2) more surveys at a time to come in the future for additional feedback.

6. Roadmap for Success and SWOT Review - City Manager

City Manager Billy Peppers reviewed the City's Roadmap Tenets and discussed the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) responses for all eight (8) tenets that were compiled from Council comments provided ahead of the retreat. A full copy of the SWOT presentation can be found in the office of the City Clerk.

Lunch

7. Creating Great Neighborhoods

Staff and Council discussed the following project updates under the Creating Great Neighborhoods tenet:

- North Canton Cottage Village – 90% civil site documents have been completed including a landscape plan. Council would like to complete the civil site plans and have them presented at a meeting with options for moving forward with the development and a recommendation from the Housing Stakeholders Group.*
- North Canton School Site – A recommendation was presented to Council by the North Canton School Site Committee on uses for the existing gymnasium and options for the rest of the site. A full copy of the final recommendation can be found in the office of the City Clerk.*
- Historic Preservation District – An update was provided regarding the Historic Preservation Commission on expanding the district and the residential design guidelines. Council will take action on the historic district expansion in November.*
- Exit 16/Hickory Flat Highway Gateway – Staff presented the Hickory Flat Highway Study which discussed improvements for transportation, redevelopment patterns, retail and commercial uses, anti-displacement, public space, trails, public art, and events. A copy of the presentation can be found in the office of the City Clerk. A recommendation will be presented to Council from the Downtown Development Authority.*
- Etowah Shoals – This Master Plan community was approved 20 years ago. Council requested highlights of the current Master Plan and any conditions.*
- Canton West – This property is under new ownership within the last couple of years. If the owner(s) would like to build their proposed high-density development, it would have to be annexed into the City.*
- Time-Limits for Master Plans/Conditional Use Permits – Staff will work with the City Attorney regarding if Master Plans could have a reversionary condition if construction on the project does not begin within a certain timeframe. Staff will also work with the City Attorney to see if Conditional Use Permits can be specific to an applicant and if there could be an associated timeline for starting the project before the CUP expires.*

8. Celebrating the Diversity in Our Community

Staff and Council discussed the following project updates under the Celebrating the Diversity in Our Community tenet:

- *Creative District – Possible locations within the City were discussed as well as types of businesses and possible incentives.*
- *Public Art Projects – A few options for public art projects were presented. These include a living wall, sculpture along a City trail, and mixed media project along the Etowah River trail. Council agreed that a living wall is not something they would like to pursue at this time.*
- *Recognizing Historic Assets/Storytelling – The City will utilize its partnership with History Cherokee to develop a program for additional historical sign locations and videos recognizing our community.*
- *Police Department Mental Health Program – This program will allow those citizens who are facing mental health emergencies be taken to the appropriate facility and not directly to jail in order to obtain the care they need. Staff will begin creating a plan for implementation.*

9. Advancing Regional Economic Development

Staff and Council discussed the following project updates under the Advancing Regional Economic Success tenet:

- *Economic Development Manager Hiring Update – An overview of the hiring process through The Chason group was given and it was noted that a candidate has been chosen. A job offer will be given soon.*
- *Potential Hotel Sites/RFPs – A Request for Proposals was issued for the downtown hotel site and only one proposal was submitted. The Downtown Development Authority has rejected that proposal. Horwath will be issuing another RFP at their cost. Council and staff also discussed moving forward with the Lake Canton site.*
- *Canton Community Land Trust – Steps for establishing a Community Land Trust were discussed as well as possible land trust properties within the City. Staff will bring Council a plan for the creation of a Community Land Trust at a future meeting.*
- *Fairways at Laurel Canyon Golf Course – The lease for the golf course ends December 31, 2025, and the current operator interesting in purchasing the property from the City. An update on the survey will be provided in about a week.*

10. Enhancing Historic Downtown

Staff and Council discussed the following project updates under the Enhancing Historic Downtown tenet:

- *Downtown Noise Ordinance – The Noise Ordinance Committee provided Council an update on their progress to date. Staff will be providing a draft ordinance for the Committee to review and then present it to Council.*
- *Downtown Master Plan – Staff discussed major recommendations within the proposed Master Plan including the North Street Mixed-Use redevelopment, East Main Street roundabout, and realignment of West Main Street and North Street. It is hoped to have a recommendation for approval by the Downtown Development Authority presented to Council by the end of the year.*
- *Downtown Development Authority Alleyway Request – The proposed location for the alleyway project is between Bizarre Coffee/Canton Theatre and Oak House.*

- *Downtown Golf Carts – The group discussed the difference between a golf cart and a low-speed vehicle. Staff will work to determine where low-speed vehicles can be used and what safety measures are required.*
- *North Street Project Design/Collaboration Update – The first of three PATH meetings has been held. The second meeting will be held next week.*
- *Downtown Fire Station – This project will renovate the existing fire station. The City will need to deed the property to the Downtown Development Authority who will then enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with Cherokee County. The County will complete the design of the renovations with City approval through the Historic Preservation Commission.*
- *Theatre Project Updates – Upgrades to the theatre's lighting and sound systems is near completion. The City will next work towards exterior upgrades.*

Friday, October 11th

9:00 am

1. Welcome, Invocation, and Pledge of Allegiance

2. Call to Order - Mayor

The retreat was called to order by Mayor Grant.

3. Roll Call - City Clerk

Present:

*Mayor Bill Grant
Mayor Pro Tem Dwayne Waterman
Councilmember Sandy McGrew
Councilmember Travis Johnson
Councilmember Shawn Tolan
Councilmember Bryan Roach
Councilmember Farris Yawn
Mr. Billy Peppers, City Manager
Mr. Nathan Ingram, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Bobby Dyer, City Attorney
Ms. Annie Fortner, City Clerk
Mr. Marty Ferrell, Police Chief
Ms. Melissa Forrester, Finance Director
Ms. Bethany Watson, City Engineer
Mr. Eric Fortner, Director of Building & Safety Services
Mr. Kevin Turner, Community Development Director
Mr. Mike Morgan, IT Director
Mr. Jeff Tucker, Deputy Police Chief
Ms. Teresa Fitts, Municipal Court Clerk
Ms. Lauren Johnson, Communications Manager
Ms. Kristin Norton Green, Theatre Events & Facilities Director
Mr. Ken Patton, Housing Initiatives Director
Mr. Steve Green, Zoning Administrator
Ms. Kelly Pendley, Operations Director
Mr. Adam Dodson, Parks & Recreation Manager
Mr. Jason Taylor, License & Permit Manager*

Mr. Merrick McClure, Code Compliance Manager

Ms. Donna Bell, Executive Admin. Assistant to the City Manager

4. Follow Up on Day 1 Topics

None.

5. Sustaining Our Natural Environment

Staff and Council discussed the following project updates under the Sustaining Our Natural Environment tenet:

- Tree Removal Requests – Staff discussed the current permitting process, hazardous trees vs. specimen trees, and permitting for single residential lots vs. clearing for development. Staff will provide a summary and FAQ for residents discussing this information.*
- Stormwater Fees – Staff questioned if the City should continue the stormwater tax as a stand-alone utility or roll it into the General Fund. It was also discussed whether this tax should be placed on the property tax bill. Staff will investigate options to provide back to Council.*
- Water System AMI Update – To date, all but three AMIs are up and running. Two of the three locations need signed easements and the remaining location may need to be relocated.*
- Updates from Sustainability Efforts – An update from the Environmental and Sustainability Advisory Board was provided. The Board is currently working on a mission statement, updating the City's tree ordinance, and brainstorming of ways to educate the public on a variety of sustainability initiatives.*
- Sanitation Renewal with Waste Pro – The current contract with Waste Pro ends September 30, 2025. Waste Pro has requested to extend their contract by two years. They are proposing to hold the current rate steady at the end of the current contract and year 1 of their renewal.*

6. Connecting Citizens to Parks and Recreation

Staff and Council discussed the following project updates under the Connecting Citizens to Parks and Recreation tenet:

- Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Staff reviewed the major priorities from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for capital development and operations.*
- South Canton Park Design Update – TSW provided slides for the Fall 2024 Design Development Update. Staff reviewed the projected schedule and estimated costs. A copy of the presentation can be found in the office of the City Clerk.*
- Reservoir Boat Ramp Fees – Staff recommends eliminating fees as of January 1, 2025. Staff will create a list of any rules/regulations that need to be posted and ensure security cameras and lighting are in place.*
- Etowah River Pedestrian Bridge Update – Drawings for the pedestrian bridge are 50% complete and should be done early next year.*
- Canton Creek Bridge Update – Staff provided an update on timeline and budget.*
- Camera Infrastructure Project – Staff discussed the installation of park cameras and how they will integrate with the City's existing cameras.*

7. Improving Infrastructure for Future Demands

Staff and Council discussed the following project updates under the Improving Infrastructure for Future Demands tenet:

- *Water Pollution Control Plant Update – Staff updated Council on the schedule and potential change orders due to delays.*
- *Water Treatment Plant Expansion – Staff provided options for the expansion of the Water Treatment Plant based on the Feasibility Study presented by Black & Veatch. Staff will bring a final evaluation to Council at the beginning of the year.*
- *SR 140 Projects Update – Staff provided expected completion times and cost estimates for the SR 140 at Marietta Highway/Riverstone Parkway and SR 140 at Reinhardt College Parkway projects.*
- *Traffic Signal Projects Update – The signal at Reservoir Road at Hickory Log is complete but is having radar issues. The Reservoir Road at Reinhardt College Parkway signal is under construction and waiting on Georgia Department of Transportation approval to change from radar to loops. The signal at Prominence Point Parkway is in design.*
- *Laurel Canyon Parkway Projects – Staff discussed potential projects as paving Laurel Canyon Parkway with high-friction material on the large hill, having an arborist evaluate the trees in the beauty strips, replacing supports for the guardrail along bridge, and researching options for speed signs.*
- *Paving for 2025 – Staff provided a list of streets to be paved in 2025. The City will partner with Cherokee County again for this.*
- *Facilities Update – Updated schedules for the solar tree at Etowah River Park, the solar project at City Hall, and the streetlight audit were discussed. Also mentioned were the statuses of the elevator at City Hall and construction at the Public Safety Building.*

Lunch

8. Leading with Excellence

Staff and Council discussed the following project updates under the Leading with Excellence tenet:

- *Board Vacancies for 2025 – A list of all upcoming board vacancies and who has appointing power were provided. It is hoped to have all vacancies will be filled by the December 19th Council meeting.*
- *Tax Allocation District Agreements with Cherokee Board of Commissioners and Board of Education – A draft agreement is being completed and sent to the County Staff Attorney and Cherokee County School District Chief of Staff for review.*
- *Police Foundation – Staff discussed the purpose of creating a Police Foundation and noted it will support the Canton Police Officers by helping to fund special events, formal education, equipment, technology needs, and support officers and staff in times of illness or injury. Staff will provide Council a template for the creation of a board to include the board bylaws and articles of incorporation.*
- *Police Ambassadors Program – This program benefits both the community and the Canton Police Department by increasing presence in the City, assisting with accidents, creating pathways for recruitment, and multiplies the force for the Police Department. Staff discussed the costs for implementation and training.*
- *Police Department Impact Fees – Upgrades to the Public Safety Building are needed and these funds could be used to complete these projects.*
- *Forfeited Assets/Evidence Disposal – It is requested to have evidence disposal through an auction. Staff will bring this request to Council for*

approval.

Adjourn

*Mayor Pro Tem Waterman made a motion to adjourn the retreat.
Councilmember Roach seconded the motion, and it was approved
unanimously.*

Bill Grant, Mayor

Attest:

Annie Fortner, City Clerk

Dates Minutes Approved by Council