

Canton, Georgia

110 Academy Street
Canton, Georgia 30114



Minutes - Final - Draft

Thursday, January 8, 2026

6:00 PM

City Hall
110 Academy Street

City Council

1. Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was led by Mayor Grant and an invocation was given by Councilmember Yawn.

2. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Grant.

Members Present:

Mayor Bill Grant

Mayor Pro Tem Shawn Tolan

Councilmember Darrell Rice

Councilmember Dwayne Waterman

Councilmember Bryan Roach

Councilmember Travis Johnson

Councilmember Farris Yawn

Mr. Billy Peppers, City Manager

Mr. Nathan Ingram, Assistant City Manager

Mr. Bobby Dyer, City Attorney

Mr. Marty Ferrell, Police Chief

Mr. Kevin Turner, Community Development Director

Mr. Steve Green, Zoning Administrator

Mr. Tyler Peoples, City Planner

Mr. Jakob Allen, City Planner

Mr. Ken Patton, Housing Initiatives Director

Ms. Bethany Watson, City Engineer

Mr. Scott Hooper, Public Works Director

Ms. Lauren Johnson, Communications Manager

Ms. Kristin Norton Green, Theatre Events and Facilities Director

Mr. Mike Morgan, Information Technology Director

Ms. Annie Fortner, City Clerk

Absent:

None

3. Oath of Office for Newly Elected Officials

Councilmember Darrell Rice, Councilmember Bryan Roach, and Councilmember Dwayne Waterman were joined by their families and sworn in to Council by taking the Oath of Office as presented by Mayor Grant. Each Councilor emphasized the importance of listening to their constituents, being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars, and making decisions that keep Canton moving forward.

Following the Oath of Office, Council took a recess.

4. Consideration to Approve Agenda

Mayor Pro Tem Tolan made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Yawn seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

5. Guests and Visitors

None

6. Public Hearings

A. Public Hearing for Cases ANNX2509-002, RZON2509-001, MP2509-005, CUP2509-004, and VAR2509-001 - Request to annex and rezone +/- 48.21 Acres for the Purposes of Developing a Residential Subdivision and Commercial Area Along Ball Ground Highway - Zoning Administrator Steve Green

Attachments: [Ball Ground Highway Documentation](#)

Zoning Administrator Steve Green introduced the cases. Mr. Green stated that the project consists of 38.92 acres for residential development and 9.2 acres for commercial or light industrial. The applicant has proposed 194 residential units comprised of 96 single family detached homes, 77 townhomes, and 21 cottages. Mr. Green informed that the project does not match the Future Land Use Plan. Mr. Green discussed that two means of ingress/egress are required for a development with more than 125 living units. Per Mr. Jay Kula, the revised site plan does meet the fire codes with a divided boulevard entrance. An emergency exit only is shown on Thomas Drive out to Old Vandiver Road. Mr. Green stated that community input meetings were held in October and December. The applicant also seeks a buffer reduction as well as an increase in percentages for townhomes. Mayor Grant opened the public hearing and called for the applicant to present their case. Mr. Parks Huff represented the applicant. Mr. Huff spoke of the site location and surrounding zonings. Mr. Huff stated that the site is better suited for residential than commercial due to the topography on the property. Mr. Huff discussed the feedback received from the community input meetings about traffic on Old Vandiver and this was remediated by creating a boulevard entrance and an emergency gated access point on Old Vandiver Road. Mr. Huff spoke about constructing a variety of housing product types including single family homes along the periphery of the property and townhomes/cottages on the interior. Lastly Mr. Huff discussed demographics and the need for middle housing. Mayor Grant called for anyone wishing to speak in support of the applications. There were none. Mayor Grant called for anyone wishing to speak in opposition to the applications. Mr. David Collies spoke in opposition discussing concerns regarding access to the property, decrease in buffer, hours he can operate his business from the adjoining property, and drainage. Ms. Shannon Adams spoke in opposition discussing concerns regarding overdevelopment, access and fire code violations, lack of amenities, elimination of a workplace center, and if Council had any personal interests in the subject property. Mr. Harold Welchel spoke in opposition discussing concerns regarding traffic and notifications to the surrounding community of the applications. Ms. Tabitha Whitlark spoke in opposition discussing concerns regarding loss of animal habitats and environmental impacts, increased traffic, and overdevelopment. Councilmember Road made a motion to extend time by five minutes. Councilmember Waterman seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Mr. Michael Bernet spoke in opposition discussing concerns regarding safety and entrance to the proposed development and the displacement of animals. Councilmember Johnson made a motion to extend

time by five minutes. Mayor Pro Tem Tolan seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Mr. Anthony Christopher spoke in opposition discussing concerns regarding traffic, repairs needed for the current infrastructure, and overcrowding of schools. Councilmember Waterman made a motion to extend time by two and a half minutes. Councilmember Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Ms. Marcie Jones spoke in opposition discussing concerns regarding traffic. Mr. Taylor Steele spoke in opposition discussing concerns regarding overcrowding of schools and echoed the positions of the others that spoke in opposition. Mr. Huff spoke in rebuttal discussing that the entrances and drainage with comply with State and City standards, addressing school enrollment, and stating the need to provide housing for younger adults. Mayor Grant closed the public hearing. Mayor Grant noted that possible action on these cases will be on the February 5th Council agenda. Mayor and Council requested Mr. Green obtain additional information from the applicant regarding the reasoning for the request to annex, plans to address traffic and entrance safety, price points and renderings of residential units, and current infrastructure assessments.

B. Public Hearing for Cases ZCA2510-003 and VAR2510-001 - Request to Amend Previous Zoning Conditions to Allow Commercial and Office Use in Lieu of Condominiums, Eliminate Required Gates on Private Streets, and Provide Sidewalks along One Side of the Private Streets at River Green Village - Zoning Administrator Steve Green

Attachments: [ZCA2510-003 & VAR2510-001 Documentation](#)

Mr. Green introduced the cases. Mr. Green stated that a zoning condition was approved in 2021 for this pod to include townhomes, commercial, and condos. The applicant is looking to forgo condos for additional commercial. The applicant also seeks to remove gates on private streets and only require sidewalks on one side of the streets. Mayor Grant opened the public hearing and called for the applicant to present their case. Ms. Michelle Horstemeyer presented stating that retail has been very successful in this pod and provides services to the residents. Ms. Horstemeyer stated that the request to remove the gate is to provide parking for the retail spaces, however the streets are to remain private. Ms. Horstemeyer noted that the request regarding sidewalks is to move the location from the rear of the townhomes to the front. Ms. Brooke Schmidt spoke neither for or against the applications but requested additional information regarding if the townhomes in the pod will still be completed, more details about the sidewalk plan, if this approval will only be for JW Collections, what types of commercial uses would be allowed, how due will be assessed for those within this pod, crosswalk safety, and parking regulations. Ms. Horstemeyer addressed comments stating that the townhomes are to be finished within this pod, discussing sidewalk connectivity between commercial spaces and the neighborhood, noting that covenants are in place to determine allowed commercial uses, and discussing covenants and cost sharing within the pod. Mayor Grant closed the public hearing. Councilmembers requested additional information regarding an overlay of the Georgia Department of Transportation's widening plan for this area, details of how residents won't be financially impacted by this change, and what the accommodations would be should the highway widening shift.

C. Public Hearing for Case RZON2510-005 - Request to Rezone Property at 264 Marietta Highway from O-1 (Office-Institutional) to GC (General Commercial) -

Zoning Administrator Steve Green

Attachments: [RZON2510-005 Documentation](#)

Mr. Green introduced the case. Mr. Green informed that the applicant seeks to rezone the property from O-I (Office-Institutional) to GC (General Commercial) for the purpose of operating a room and boarding facility. The subject property currently has a single-family home on the site. Mr. Green stated that following the community input meeting, the applicant has indicated having 16-20 residents. A report from the community input meeting has been provided to Council. Mayor Grant opened the public hearing and called for the applicant to present their case. Mr. Brian Aicher, founder of Firm Foundation, discussed the creation of the foundation and how it serves those in the community. Ms. Allison Aicher spoke of the site location and surrounding uses. Ms. Aicher discussed the proposed layout of rooms and requirements for occupancy. Mr. Aicher detailed the process for admission to the program and requirements for residents. Mr. Thom Coughlin discussed community partnerships. Mayor Pro Tem Tolan made a motion to extend time by two minutes. Councilmember Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Mayor Grant called for anyone wishing to speak in support of the application. Mr. Chris Everett spoke in support noting that people need support, compassion, and treatment. Mayor Grant called for anyone wishing to speak in opposition to the application. Mr. Joseph Bryant spoke in opposition discussing concerns regarding process for admission and requirements for residents, traffic, property values, relapse rates, and possibility of expansion. Ms. Aicher spoke in rebuttal noting that this would be a room and boarding facility and the site would allow for up to 30 residents, however they are only requesting 16-20. Mayor Grant closed the public hearing. Councilmembers requested additional information regarding transportation, vehicles, occupancy, relapse rates, funding for the program, sobriety checks, deed restrictions, and turnover rates. Mr. Green provided a list of allowed uses for the O-I zoning district. Mayor Grant noted that a treatment facility would be allowed under the current zoning.

Council took a recess at this time.

7. Consideration to Approve Minutes

A. Council Year in Review Work Session Draft Minutes - December 12, 2025

Attachments: [Minutes - Council Year in Review Work Session - December 12, 2025](#)

B. Council Meeting Draft Minutes - December 18, 2025

Attachments: [Minutes - Council Meeting - December 18, 2025](#)

Councilmember Yawn made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilmember Waterman seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

8. Informational Items

A. Information Only - Case RZON2511-008 - Request to Rezone Property Located at 631 Marietta Road from O-I (Office-Institutional) to GC (General

Commercial) - Zoning Administrator Steve Green

Attachments: [RZON2511-008 Documentation](#)

Mr. Green provided background information on this property and application. Mr. Green informed that this was a poultry processing plant and has last been used as a church. The applicant is seeking a buffer reduction and to rezone the property for a grocery store and offices. The public hearing will be held on February 5th.

9. Other Announcements

None

10. Ten Minute Public Input

None

11. Consent Agenda

None

12. Old Business

A. Discussion and Possible Action on the 2025 Safety Action Plan Grant - Laurel Canyon Parkway Guardrail - Public Works Director Scott Hooper

Attachments: [Laurel Canyon Parkway Guardrail](#)

Public Works Director Scott Hooper noted that this item came before Council at the last meeting in December. There is existing wooden guardrail that needs to be replaced. Staff recommends approval of the contract with Gracie Gray Contractors to replace the guardrail. Councilmember Johnson made a motion to approve the contract with Gracie Gray Contractors not to exceed \$180,000. Councilmember Roach seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

13. New Business

A. Discussion and Possible Action on Appointments of Judges, Solicitors, and Public Defender for Municipal Court - Municipal Court Clerk Teresa Fitts

Attachments: [Municipal Court Appointments](#)

Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram stated that the appointment of court officials is a Charter task of the Mayor and Council. Municipal Court Clerk Teresa Fitts has provided a list of recommendations. Mayor Grant requested that Council review this information and that appointments be placed on a later meeting agenda for action.

B. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the Proposal from Bunker Design House for Canton Theatre Restroom Renovations - Theatre Events and

Facilities Director Kristin Norton Green

Attachments: [Theatre Restroom Renovations](#)

Theatre Events and Facilities Director Kristin Norton Green discussed that the project includes modernization of the men's and women's restrooms including vanities, toilets, improving ADA compliance, new flooring, sinks, lighting, mirror upfits, paint, wallpaper, and labor. Staff recommends moving forward with Bunker Design House at a cost of \$49,610.50 which includes project design and a 1% contingency. Staff is requesting potential action to start the project since January and February tend to be lighter schedule months for productions. Ms. Norton Green discussed that there will be three weeks of downtime during construction and reviewed the breakdown of costs. Councilmember Roach made a motion to approve the proposal from Bunker Design House for the Canton Theatre Restroom Renovations not to exceed \$50,000. Councilmember Waterman seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

C. Discussion of Engagement with Granicus to Upgrade the City of Canton Website Platform - Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram

Attachments: [Granicus Proposal](#)

Mr. Ingram discussed that the US Department of Justice is requiring that public entities make improvements to websites to provide additional compliance with ADA regulations. The City has until April 26, 2027 to come into compliance. Mr. Ingram stated that Granicus is the City's current platform vendor and did the last major update in 2020. IT and Communications staff recommend moving forward with an upgrade through Granicus which includes modernization. Mr. Ingram noted that the cost of the upgrade is \$30,513 and will take 9-12 months to complete. Mr. Ingram informed that currently the City pays around \$25,000 per year in maintenance fees, however after the upgrade will be closer to \$40,000.

14. City Manager's Report

City Manager Billy Peppers thanked the Canton Police Department for their work on the recent arson cases which led to an arrest. Mr. Peppers informed that health insurance renewals will be coming soon. It is hoped that have that be approved in February ahead of open enrollment. Mr. Peppers spoke of a recent meeting regarding the North Street Gateway Project that discussed parking. Mr. Peppers discussed a recent supposed crime committed at the Publix near Laurel Canyon. Mr. Peppers confirmed that no crime had been committed and that Canton is a safe place to shop.

15. Council Introduced Items

Mayor Pro Tem Tolan discussed improving pedestrian safety along East Main Street and requested that Mr. Peppers ask staff to bring back recommendations on sidewalks and crosswalks as once studied.

16. Mayor's Report

A. Board and Commission Appointments

Mayor Grant appointed Farris Yawn as Mayor Pro Tem for 2026. Councilmember Roach seconded the appointment, and it was approved unanimously.

Mayor Grant made the following board and commission appointments:

*Board of Appeals –
Reappoint Jeff Adams*

*Canton Main Street Board –
Reappoint Dana Cox
Reappoint Erick Garrison
Reappoint Jennifer Hughes*

*Downtown Development Authority –
Reappoint Ashley Carlile*

*Historic Preservation Commission –
Reappoint Lee Oliver
Reappoint Victoria Stanton*

*Canton Tourism Board –
For Councilmember Rice – Reappoint Kirit Patel
For Councilmember Roach – Reappoint Dana Cox
For Councilmember Waterman – Sabrina Kaylor*

*Cultural Arts Commission –
For Councilmember Rice – Reappoint Elaine Federico
For Councilmember Roach – Reappoint Todd Baker
For Councilmember Waterman – Reappoint Theresa Shampine*

Mayor Pro Tem Yawn seconded the appointments and they were approved unanimously.

17. Adjourn to Executive Session to Discuss Litigation and Personnel

Councilmember Tolan made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss litigation and personnel. Mayor Pro Tem Yawn seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Bill Grant, Mayor

Attest:

Annie Fortner, City Clerk

Dates Minutes Approved by Council