

Canton, Georgia

*110 Academy Street
Canton, Georgia 30114*



Minutes - Final - Draft

Thursday, March 6, 2025

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 Johnson.

2. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Grant.

Members Present:

*Mayor Bill Grant
Mayor Pro Tem Shawn Tolan
Councilmember Farris Yawn
Councilmember Sandy McGrew
Councilmember Bryan Roach
Councilmember Travis Johnson
Mr. Billy Peppers, City Manager
Mr. Jeff Rusbridge, City Attorney
Mr. Nathan Ingram, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Marty Ferrell, Police Chief
Mr. Ken Patton, Housing Initiatives Director
Mr. Kevin Turner, Community Development Director
Mr. Tyler Peoples, Planning Tech
Mr. Steve Green, Zoning Administrator
Ms. Bethany Watson, City Engineer
Ms. Brittany Anderson, City Planner
Ms. Lauren Johnson, Communications Manager
Mr. Scott Hooper, Public Works Director
Mr. Adam Dodson, Parks and Recreation Manager
Ms. Kelly Pendley, Public Works Operations Director
Mr. Mike Morgan, Information Technology Director
Ms. Annie Fortner, City Clerk*

Absent:

Councilmember Dwayne Waterman

3. Consideration to Approve Agenda

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

4. Guests and Visitors**A. Presentation from TSW of the South Canton Park Design**

Mr. David Argo with TSW provided Council a presentation that reviewed the major elements of the proposed site plan, schedule of the project, and projected costs. Mr. Argo also provided a 3D overview of the proposed park project. A video and still images can be shared with the City to be placed on the City's website. Councilmember Johnson asked about the maintenance of the turf areas, material proposed for the boardwalk, and ADA access. Mr. Argo discussed that all materials are to be low maintenance and stated the park is ADA

accessible. Councilmember Roach asked if the projected costs include the price of the land and what percentage of the park is for dogs. Mr. Argo stated the cost does not include the land and noted he will find out about the percentage designated for dogs. Mayor Grant requested a breakdown of costs be provided. Councilmember Yawn asked if dogs are allowed within the park on a leash but allowed to be off a leash within the designated areas. Mr. Argo confirmed that was correct. City Manager Billy Peppers reminded Council that the City received a \$2.2 million grant towards this project.

B. Presentation from Canton Housing Team

Mr. Leonard Akers provided Council a presentation which discussed the affordability and availability challenges for housing. Mr. Akers gave real world examples of housing costs and how the costs affect those with incomes below the Area Median Income (AMI). Mr. Akers spoke about alternative options for housing including accessory dwelling units (ADU), multiple unit homes, stacked flats, cottage courts, and mixed-use structures. Mr. Akers highlighted ways the City can positively impact housing in Canton such as participation in the Cherokee Regional Land Bank, development of the North Canton Cottage Village, and completion of a mixed-use development along North Street. Lastly, Mr. Akers reviewed the accomplishments of the Canton Housing Team. Councilmember Johnson asked where the City receives the funds for the Down Payment Assistance Program. Mr. Akers and Mayor Pro Tem Tolan discussed that those funds come from developers who build within the City.

5. Public Hearing

A. Public Hearing for Cases MPA2412-004 and CUP2412-003 - Request to Amend Certain Conditions Placed Upon Previously Approve Master Plan Amendment and Conditional Use Permit in Pod I of Riverstone - Zoning Administrator Steve Green

Attachments: [MPA2412-004 and CUP2412-003 Documentation](#)

Zoning Administrator Steve Green introduced the applications stating that the applicant seeks to change the previously approved tenant requirement from seniors to family. It is also requested to maintain the previously approved number of rental units (251) as well as all other development criteria. Mr. Green stated the applicant is further requesting the City of Canton's Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) allocation as well as financial commitment letter in the amount of \$500,000. Mayor Grant opened the public hearing and called on the applicant to present their case. Ms. Sarah Buckner and Ms. Anna Marie Fulbright with TBG Residential discussed their company's background and information about their current developments. Ms. Fulbright spoke about the site location for the Summit at Hickory Creek and provided renderings of the proposed site and conceptual plans. Ms. Fulbright stated that Phase I of the proposed development consists of 96 units. Ms. Fulbright reviewed the proposed amenities and stated the project will serve residents at 30%, 50%, 60%, and 80 % of the Area Median Income. The development will comprise of a mixture of one-, two-, and three-bedroom units. Ms. Buckner and Ms. Fulbright discussed their request for GICH support and the possibility of entering into a private enterprise agreement with the Housing Authority. Mr. Darrell Rice spoke in support of the applications stating he is in favor of workforce and affordable housing. Mr. Rice discussed the importance of the City's loan support. Mayor Pro Tem Tolan made

a motion to extend the time by five minutes. Councilmember Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Mr. Rice discussed how changing the conditions could assist more with housing needs. Ms. Deanna Gale spoke in support of the applications stating the removal of the age restriction would allow for seniors with dependents to live in the development. Mr. Chris Everett spoke in opposition to the applications discussing concerns with traffic and congestion. Mr. Everett suggested a more comprehensive traffic study be completed to include all the upcoming developments in the area. Mayor Grant closed the public hearing and opened discussion to Council. Mayor Pro Tem Tolan discussed the misconception that low-income tax credit developments have more crime than market rate developments. Mayor Pro Tem Tolan spoke about data provided by the City Police Department which does not show any more crime in these types of developments. Mayor Pro Tem Tolan reviewed the requirements from the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to qualify for attainable housing and provided positive aspects of the proposed development. Councilmember Roach discussed the possibility of another developer building market rate apartments on the site should TBG Residential not go through with this project. Mayor Grant asked if the matter before Council is only for the zoning requests and not for the GICH support which is a separate request. City Attorney Jeff Rusbridge stated that was correct. Mayor Grant asked if the loan request for \$500,000 was only for Phase I and if another request for funding will be asked for Phase 2. Mayor Pro Tem Tolan asked about the number of access points. Councilmember Johnson asked for clarification on which area is slated to be Phase 1 on the site plan. Councilmember McGrew asked about the traffic study and if it considered the surrounding developments. Mayor Pro Tem Tolan asked for confirmation of the number of units per floor in each building in Phase 1.

6. Consideration to Approve Minutes

- A. Council Meeting Draft Minutes - February 20, 2025

Attachments: [Minutes - Council Meeting - February 20, 2025](#)

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

7. Informational Items

- A. Information Only - Case MPA2502-001 - Request to Construct Two Residential Units within the Island of the Cul-de-Sac of Laurel Vista Drive in Horizon at Laurel Canyon - Zoning Administrator Steve Green

Attachments: [MPA2502-001 Documentation](#)

Mr. Green stated that the Development Agreement and zoning conditions for Pod 2 of Horizon at Laurel Canyon required that a water tank/tower be constructed. The site generally recognized for this tank/tower was the island within the cul-de-sac of Laurel Vista Drive. The City Attorney has determined that the Development Agreement has expired. Mr. Green stated that the applicant is seeking to eliminate this requirement and construct two new residential units within the island. A public hearing will be held at the first Council meeting in April.

8. Other Announcements

None.

9. Ten Minute Public Input

Mr. Chris Everett discussed concerns with the senior tax exemption, noting it has not been adjusted since it was implemented.

10. Consent Agenda

None.

11. Old Business

- A. Discussion and Possible Action on Request by Northside Hospital Cherokee to Enter Into a Road Impact Fee Development Agreement for Construction of a New Traffic Intersection at the Hospital - Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram

Attachments: [Northside Hospital Cherokee Development Agreement](#)

Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram stated that Northside Hospital Cherokee (NHC) is constructing a second entrance to the hospital campus along Northside Cherokee Boulevard just south of the current entrance. During Council's July 2024 meetings, the City approved to a 1/3 participation in the project at a total cost not to exceed (\$196,529) and to allow NHC the use of Impact Fee credits for their portion. At that time, City Management informed Council that a new development agreement would be presented later to memorialize this proposed reimbursement of NHC's 1/3 cost with Road Impact Fee credits. Mr. Ingram stated that a copy of this agreement was included in Council's agenda packet. Councilmember Roach made a motion to approve the request by Northside Hospital Cherokee to enter into a Road Impact Fee Development Agreement for construction of a new traffic intersection at the hospital. Mayor Pro Tem Tolan seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

- B. Discussion and Possible Action on a Proposed Resolution of the City Council of Canton Adopting a Vision Zero Policy - Assistant City Manager Nathan Ingram

Attachments: [Resolution for Vision Zero Policy](#)

Mr. Ingram discussed the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) program and noted that the participants are Cherokee County and all municipalities within the county. As part of the program, it is requested that all participants adopt a "Resolution Adopting a Vision Zero Policy". Mr. Ingram discussed some ways the City can improve roadway safety as looking at things such as streetlights, road signage, crosswalks, sidewalks, etc. Mr. Ingram stated that many of the recommendations made by the stakeholders go hand in hand with projects identified in the City's Transportation Master Plan. Council and staff discussed how the program and improvements made to the City's roadways is a goal to work towards as well as

allows the County and municipalities to apply for grant funding as participants in the program. Councilmember Yawn made a motion to approve the resolution of the City Council of Canton adopting a Vision Zero Policy. Councilmember Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

12. New Business

- A. Discussion of 2025 Right of Way Maintenance - Public Works Operations Manager Kelly Pendley

Attachments: [2025 Right of Way Maintenance](#)

Public Works Operations Director Kelly Pendley stated that Public Works issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the 2025 Right of Way Maintenance for City owned streets on January 23, 2025. The City received eight bids on February 20, 2025. Ms. Pendley stated the low bidder was Tri Scapes, Inc. The areas to be maintained are Highway 5 from Riverpoint to Exit 14, Bluffs Parkway, Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Reinhardt College Parkway, Reservoir Drive, Highway 20, Northside Parkway, and Northside Cherokee Boulevard. Ms. Pendley noted these areas would have bi-weekly maintenance. Councilmember McGrew made a motion to award the 2025 right-of-way maintenance contract to Tri Scapes, Inc. Councilmember Roach seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

- B. Discussion of the Proposal to Create the Cherokee Regional Land Bank and the Resolution of Intent to Create the Cherokee Regional Land Bank - Housing Initiatives Director Ken Patton

Attachments: [Cherokee Regional Land Bank](#)

Housing Initiatives Director Ken Patton discussed that the City and Cherokee County began communicating about the possibility of creating a land bank to assist with attainable housing. The City had Chris Norman, Executive Director of the Metro Atlanta Land Bank come to Canton and present a training session on Land Banks for the Canton GICH Housing Team as well as Councilmembers and Cherokee County Board of Commissioners in 2022. Mr. Patton noted an informational sheet and draft regulations have been prepared and submitted to the cities and Cherokee County for review and comment. These documents have been included in Council's agenda packet. Mr. Patton stated the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners adopted a Resolution of Intent to Create the Cherokee Regional Land Bank on February 18, 2025. Mayor Grant asked if it is required that the County and at least one municipality pass the resolution to create the land bank. Mr. Patton confirmed that to be true. Mayor Grant asked if all municipalities were considering participating in the creation of the land bank. Mr. Patton stated yes.

- C. Discussion of Change Order 1 to J.S. Haren Company for Canton Water Treatment Plant Raw Water Intake Improvement Project in the Amount of \$32,509.73 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [J.S. Haren Company - Change Order 1](#)

City Engineer Bethany Watson discussed that during the construction of the Water Treatment Plant Raw Water Intake Improvement Project, a number of unforeseen conditions and changes have occurred resulting in three items that

will require a Change Order. These items include improvements to the intermediate floor at the intake, patching the clearwell ceiling and cutting an abandoned pipe, and a new slide gate. Ms. Watson informed the original contract has an allowance of \$35,000 which will be used to cover a portion of the items listed. The remaining \$32,509.73 will require a Change Order to the original project amount.

- D. Discussion of the Award of the Water Treatment Plant Filter Media Replacement Project to W.L. Griffin Company, LLC in the Amount of \$186,922.34 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [WTP Filter Media Replacement Project](#)

Ms. Watson stated that every four to seven years the water filter media at the Water Treatment Plant needs to be replaced. The last time this was done was about nine years ago. Ms. Watson stated bids were received on February 18, 2025, and six general contractors placed bids on the project. W. L. Griffin Company, LLC was the low bidder. Ms. Watson noted that reference checks were made and she received good comments regarding the contractor.

- E. Discussion of the Renewal of the Task Order Agreement Contract for Professional Engineering Services to Practical Design Partners - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [PDP Task Order Agreement](#)

Ms. Watson stated that Practical Design Partner's (PDP) current task order agreement expires in April 2025. The renewal will be for three years from the date of approval and does not have any monetary value. Ms. Watson stated the agreement allows PDP to submit Task Order proposals as requested by the City.

- F. Discussion of Street Acceptance for City Maintenance for Streets in Great Sky Pod 6B Phase 2 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Great Sky Pod 6B Phase 2](#)

Ms. Watson stated that staff has inspected the streets and they are ready to be accepted for City maintenance.

- G. Discussion of Street Acceptance for City Maintenance for Streets in Great Sky Pod 6B Phase 3 - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Great Sky Pod 6B Phase 3](#)

Ms. Watson stated that staff has inspected the streets and they are ready to be accepted for City maintenance.

- H. Discussion of Street Acceptance for City Maintenance for Streets in Towne Mill Pod N Phase II - City Engineer Bethany Watson

Attachments: [Towne Mill Pod N Phase II](#)

Ms. Watson stated that staff has inspected the streets and they are ready to be accepted for City maintenance.

- I. Discussion of a Memorandum of Understanding Between the City of Canton and the Cherokee County Board of Tax Assessors to Implement Procedural Property Tax Changes Outlined in HB581 - City Manager Billy Peppers

Attachments: [MOU - Cherokee County Board of Tax Assessors](#)

Mr. Peppers stated that upon the approval of a constitutional amendment by Georgia citizens in November 2024, the implementation of HB581 institutes a property assessment cap program for homesteaded properties. Mr. Peppers discussed that the Memorandum of Understanding outlines that the Board of Tax Assessors (BTA) will provide the City an estimated digest by April 1st. The City will then provide an estimated rollback millage rate to the BTA by April 15th. Should the City fail to provide the BTA with this estimate, the BTA will utilize the previous year's millage rate as the rollback rate shown on the property assessments. Mr. Peppers stated the agreement was drafted by the Cherokee County Board of Commissioner's Staff Attorney and will be executed by all taxing bodies within Cherokee County.

13. City Manager's Report

Mr. Peppers stated Council's retreat will be held March 13th-15th at Lanier Islands Legacy Lodge with site visits in Gainesville and Sugar Hill. The retreat agenda is posted on the City's website.

14. Council Introduced Items

None.

15. Mayor's Report

None.

16. Adjourn

Councilmember Yawn made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Roach seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Bill Grant, Mayor

Attest:

Annie Fortner, City Clerk

Dates Minutes Approved by Council