

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Danny Dunagan, Zack Thompson, George Wangemann, Sam Couvillon, Barbara Brooks, Juli Clay

STAFF PRESENT: Bryan Lackey, Angela Sheppard, Jeremy Perry, Chris Rotalsky, Rusty Ligon, Linda MacGregor, Don Dye, Amy Bennett, Myron Bennett, Denise Jordan

City Manager Bryan Lackey called the retreat to order and discussed the format for this meeting.

SESSION 1: MULTI-YEAR ACTIVITIES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Assistant City Manager Angela Sheppard, Public Works Director Chris Rotalsky, Community and Economic Development Director Rusty Ligon, Engineering and Construction Services Division Manager Myron Bennett and Department of Water Resources Deputy Director Don Dye discussed a wide variety of projects that are either completed or ongoing. Updates were presented on projects in the following areas: downtown, midtown, Queen City/Jesse Jewell Parkway, Limestone/Jesse Jewell Parkway, the West Side, Thompson Bridge Road, 129 South, 85 Gainesville Business Park and Lee Gilmer Memorial Airport. There was also an update regarding the ITS Transportation Operations Center and gateway signage.

RECESS: 11:58 AM

RECONVENE: 1:22 PM

SESSION 2: UPDATE OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – FUTURE VISIONING

City Manager Bryan Lackey introduced the session and encouraged input from the governing body. Staff discussed the following topics:

Downtown

- Washington/Bradford/Spring Streetscaping
- Jesse Jewell Parkway, W Academy Street, Broad Street/Maple Street: Staff will release a Request for Proposals to develop the lot.
- Poultry Park: The poultry community is interested in upgrading the park. Staff is working to identify options for the space. The Public Art Committee will be part of the process.
- Spring Street Pocket Park: Staff is evaluating the design and exploring all possibilities.
- Downtown Parking Deck: Discussed developing a design that incorporated restaurant/retail space, a rooftop experience and a transformative space. This is a SPLOST project to be developed on the Turner, Wood & Smith lot.
- Midtown Tax Allocation District (TAD) Sunset: Historical information was presented noting there have been 12 requests.

Midtown

- Midtown Greenway Trail: It was reported the next section of the trail could be developed using local dollars.
 - There was consensus to proceed at the most reasonable cost.
- Midtown Greenway: Proposed improvements were presented.

Park Hill & City Park (North)

- Old Fire Station 2, 310 Piedmont Road: A private party is interested in converting the station into a restaurant.
 - There was consensus to issue a Request for Proposals for a restaurant concept.
- Parkhill Drive Neighborhood Plan: Committee meetings are occurring to vet ideas and provide recommendations.
- Green Street Pool Area: There was discussion about how to reactive this space.

Limestone/Jesse Jewell

- Lake Lanier Olympic Park: The history of how the park became city property was presented noting it operates under the direction of the Convention and Visitors Bureau. There was discussion about renovating the boathouse.

RECESS: 3:13 PM

RECONVENE: 3:30 PM

SESSION 3: WATER RESOURCES UPDATE

Litigation

The Supreme Court is moving through its process. A decision on the case may be available in June 2021 but that may not end the litigation. Updates to the Water Control Manual are under appeal. This manual allows the Corp of Engineers to issue water supply contracts to those who use Lake Lanier. Gainesville's contract is under negotiation.

Water Use

Gainesville still does not use as much water as in 2006 thanks to water conservation efforts. Lake Lanier's water level is 1074 (above full pool). The department is constantly monitoring the lake.

World-Class Utility 10-year Plan

The City owns \$650 million in utility assets. They are growing in age, number, value and complexity. Customer demands are increasing due to population growth and expectations beyond existing regulations. There was emphasis on the importance of caring for these assets.

Council Member Wangemann reported complaints about odors in the area around the Flat Creek Water Reclamation Facility. He asked if an environmental engineer could be hired to diagnose the problem. He is concerned about the way people feel about the odor problem. It was noted that industries in this area also sometimes contribute to the odor problem.

What does it mean to be a world-class utility? Ms. MacGregor summarized this into four areas: workforce development, infrastructure optimization, financial viability and customer satisfaction. Financial assumptions indicate there will be growth in customers, water use, revenue and operating expenses.

There was discussion about the strategy for addressing power increases.

City Manager Bryan Lackey stated effective July 1, 2020, Hall County will no longer accept drinking water sludge at the landfill. Staff is researching options. This is a statewide issue. Council Member Wangemann suggested getting the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission involved.

The Department of Water Resources is considering a multi-year management plan to address revenue stability for the utility, rate stability for the customers, affordability, and other updates.

Capital Projects

Over the last few years, the department spent over \$20 million per year on capital projects. Financial modeling shows this will continue over the next few years. A robust capital program will ensure assets are maintained and strategic growth can occur.

Branding

Staff has been working on new branding for several months. The inspiration for the new design came from the mountains, the lake and the “G” in Gainesville. The new logo was presented with examples of how the logo would look on signage, shirts and vehicles. The tombstone crest will remain as is. The Public Relations Manager will maintain a style guide.

RECESS: 4:57 PM
RECONVENE: February 8, 2020, 8:38 AM

Future Sewer Growth

There was discussion about future growth/sewer service extensions while proposing the following:

- A new Sanitary Sewer Pump Station in the Gainesville 85 Business Park.
- A new Sanitary Sewer Pump Station at Athens Highway/Gillsville Highway.
- A new Sanitary Sewer Pump Station to service Gold Creek Foods Facility and the Candler Road.
- A replacement Sanitary Sewer Pump Station to serve the Squirrel Creek area.

Transportation Update

Public Works Director Chris Rotalsky presented updates about the following:

- Green Street Corridor: Staff worked with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to develop a plan to improve traffic flow. Recent discussions with DOT indicate concerns about the proposed plans. Based upon concerns about the plan, staff worked with the consultant to develop alternate options to discuss with DOT.
- Dawsonville Highway Corridor: Several state projects are proposed for this area.
 - Improve turn movements at each intersection from Ahaluna Drive into downtown.
 - Install a signal at McEver Road/Publix Drive.
- GreenHill Circle Extension: Design plans are being revisited after discovering approximately 40 burials. The new plan will connect to Shallowford Road but requires acquiring some property.
 - There was consensus to proceed with acquiring property to support the relocation.
- Memorial Park Drive/Old Flowery Branch Road: Staff proposed a Restricted Crossing U-Turn (RCUT) to remove the four-way stop and additional turn lane stacking to improve traffic flow. It was noted Hall County has not agreed to provide funding for this project.
- City Park Roundabout: The project was mentioned to determine if there was any interest in addressing this area. Moving forward requires the relocation of a water main and stormwater drainage improvements.

RECESS: 9:45 AM
RECONVENE: 9:49 AM

FINANCIAL SERVICES

City Manager Bryan Lackey stated the City's financial status is good. Revenues are up except for the car tax fees, which is the result of a change in state law. The Georgia Municipal Association is working on the problem. He also provided a brief SPLOST update noting more discussion will occur at the March 13 retreat.

Park and Recreation Millage Rate

There was discussion about FY2021 priorities for the Parks and Recreation Agency. There was also discussion about additional operating and maintenance cost.

Miscellaneous

The budget schedule was presented.

The State of the City will be presented at the March 17 Council Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: 10:16 AM

/dj

C. Danny Dunagan, Jr., Mayor

Denise O. Jordan, City Clerk