

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

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

OPENING COMMENTS

City Manager Bryan Lackey welcomed everyone and provided an overview of the schedule before playing a video highlighting 2020 projects completed or currently underway.

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

Accomplishments

Director of Water Resources Linda MacGregor and Asset Program Manager Chris Hamilton presented accomplishments including but not limited to successful negotiations with Georgia Power to reduce electrical cost, installation of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), the sale of 1,000+ meters, use of less water despite an increase in number of meters sold, and a report on delinquent accounts.

- Council Member Thompson inquired about battery charge in the metering system.
- Council Member Wangemann confirmed there is a program to help people who can't pay their bill.

Challenges

Director of Water Resources Linda MacGregor discussed the Lead and Copper Rule; continuous efforts to manage taste and odor using additional treatment techniques such as the Powder Activated Carbon (PAC) System Treatment process; the Odor and Corrosion Program; stormwater; and litigation matters as it pertains to the Supreme Court, water control manuals and storage contracts.

- Council Member Thompson inquired about rust in galvanized pipes and test samples.
- Council Member Brooks asked how the sample homes would be selected.
- Council Member Thompson asked about the relationship between Federal and State Government as it pertains to regulating the storage contracts.
- Mayor Dunagan inquired about water supply considering Hall County's growth rate.

Initiatives

Director of Water Resources Linda MacGregor discussed several initiatives associated with future water supply involving Lake Lanier, the Cedar Creek Reservoir and opportunities with other cities. She summarized details for implementing the sustainable 10-year water rate structure and placed emphasis on the following capital projects to be addressed during this timeframe: replacing cast iron pipe with ductile iron pipe; water treatment plants heavy maintenance; filter media replacement; regional sewer lift stations and sewer lines; the Flat Creek Water Reclamation Facility Dewatering Building; stormwater projects (seven in the design phase) and Gainesville 85 Business Park. Ms. MacGregor also highlighted safety initiatives and expressed the importance of promoting safety as employees address dangerous situations.

RECESS: 12:21 PM

RECONVENE: 1:32 PM

TRANSPORTATION SPECIAL PURPOSE LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX (T-SPLOST)

City Manager Bryan Lackey stated Hall County does not plan to place a T-SPLOST referendum question on the election ballot this year.

TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Public Works Director Chris Rotalsky provided updates on the following projects: Washington/Bradford/Spring Streetscaping, the Downtown Parking Deck, Green Street Corridor Improvements, Prior Street Intersection Improvements, Jesse Jewell EE Butler Intersection Improvements, Dawsonville Highway Corridor GDOT 3 Lane Extension, Greenhill Circle Extension, Memorial Park Drive/Old Flowery Branch Road R-Cut Intersection, City Park Roundabout, Pearl Nix Parkway Sidewalk Improvements and accessible pedestrian signals.

- Council Member Clay asked about the timeline for the downtown parking deck.
- Council Member Couvillon asked about naming the downtown parking deck plaza.
- Council Member Thompson asked about the fiber extension project.
- Council Member Brooks inquired about patchwork on Prior Street.

DOWNTOWN SOLID WASTE

Public Works Director Chris Rotalsky stated the area known as “The Moat” currently has three different types of trash removal: trash cans, manual (self) removal and dumpsters. He discussed current collection practices. Research identified eleven communities with potential options (dumpster, compactor and inground) to consider if there’s a desire to unify solid waste collections. Videos were played showing several options. The question is whether the governing body wants to make a change. If yes, what is the priority for doing so? Should there be additional property owner regulations? What is the desired collection approach/method?

There was consensus for staff to develop a plan for consolidating solid waste in the downtown area with specific focus on a blended cart corral and underground option that includes scaled pricing based on usage.

- Council Member Couvillon inquired about the timeline for addressing this issue.
- Council Member Couvillon expressed a desire to explore metered parking for downtown.
- Mayor Dunagan inquired about flippers on residential solid waste trucks.
- Council Member Couvillon asked if other Georgia communities offer twice a week garbage pickup.

HOUSING

Community and Economic Development Director Rusty Ligon discussed residential construction statistics.

New Construction	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
Single-Family	408	442	412	357	255	135	2,009
Multi-Family	24	530	92	628	270	322	1,866
TOTAL	432	972	504	985	525	457	3,875

Mr. Ligon discussed projects under development indicating 1,230 multi-family and 1,353 single-family units have already been approved and are awaiting construction. He also provided an update on Midtown Tax Allocation District (TAD) projects.

Mr. Ligon shared information from the CAFR indicating Gainesville's population increased by 27.8% and school enrollment increased by 8.1% over the last ten years. It was also noted that development takes time which offers a phased impact to the school system.

There was consensus to be selective about future annexations.

SEWER POLICY

City Manager Bryan Lackey briefly shared existing protocol and asked if there was a desire to implement a sewer policy under the same concept as the water differential for customers outside the city limits.

There was no desire to proceed with a sewer policy.

SANITARY SEWER SERVICE ANNEXATION POLICY

The Sanitary Sewer Service Annexation Policy was distributed (Business Resolution 2018-44). City Manager Bryan Lackey discussed issues and options to consider if/when sewer service is requested without annexations.

There was consensus to refer developers to Hall County to secure a land-use approval for sewer connection.

- Mayor Dunagan inquired about expanding the sewer district.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Community and Economic Development Director Rusty Ligon stated the five-year update of the Comprehensive Plan must be adopted by June 30, 2022 to establish a blueprint for the next twenty years. He summarized the process and shared accomplishments from previous plans.

US 129 SOUTH CORRIDOR STUDY

Community and Economic Development Director Rusty Ligon stated this project is underway. He displayed several short-term concepts for the 2.5-mile study area.

RECESS: 3:40 PM
RECONVENE: 4:12 PM

MIDTOWN TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICT (TAD)

Assistant City Manager Angela Sheppard showed diagrams of development projects. She also showed a chart of approved TAD Projects and commented on projects under discussion, including but not limited to The National, Pepper’s, Solis Phase II and The Chair Factory. Staff anticipated that if these projects were awarded TAD funds, the obligations would be completed in 2038. When is the right time to no longer consider a TAD request?

There was consensus to sunset TAD opportunities in 2040.

There was an update on negotiations associated with potential future TAD projects.

REDESIGN DOWNTOWN

Assistant City Manager Angela Sheppard shared history about the current design of the downtown square implemented in the 1990’s. It is showing its age and there are areas needing improvement. There is also a desire for more space. She presented concepts of how the square could look based on design images from consultant TSW. Staff requested increased greenspace and changes that activate the area. Inspiration was gathered from creating family space with a water feature. The table below compares the downtown square of today with the vision for the future.

TODAY	TOMORROW
Viewing gallery	Link city green spaces
Small separate spaces	Reconnect retail and dining to the square
Completely passive	Honor historic curb
Doesn’t support retail/commercial activity	Activate with variety of flexible spaces/uses
Disconnected	Universal access

Ms. Sheppard discussed ideas and concepts for the redesign of the downtown square.

There were compliments and there was consensus to proceed with developing a design.

- Council Member Thompson asked about funding.
- Council Member Couvillon expressed concerns about maintenance for the water features.

DEVELOPMENT/DRINKS/DESIGN

Downtown Dining District

Assistant City Manager Angela Sheppard stated the existing district is in The Moat area and was established in 2017. Developments outside the district have asked for this ability. It is anticipated that others will make similar request. Is it time to expand the district? Should the district be site specific? Should the district be along/adjacent to the Greenway? There was discussion about expanding the dining district and the best way to do so.

There was consensus to expand the district to the pedestrian bridge.

- Council Member Couvillon asked if businesses should apply for this approval.
- Council Member Clay asked what other communities are doing.

Alcohol Boards/Committees

City Manager Bryan Lackey commented on inconsistencies associated with alcohol violations. He asked if there was a desire to form a board/committee to provide recommendations when violations occur offering the violator the option to accept the recommendation or appear in Municipal Court. Rome, Lilburn and Gwinnett have similar bodies addressing these matters.

- Council Member Couvillon was not in favor of adding another layer of government.

Old Fire Station Two

City Manager Bryan Lackey requested guidance on what to do with this property noting there have been several inquiries.

Community and Economic Development Director Rusty Ligon reported there is community interest in transitioning this space into a business.

There was consensus to evaluate the space to develop a list of issues/concerns to share with interested parties while discussing investment opportunities.

RECESS: 5:32 PM
RECONVENE: 8:30 AM, SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2021

RECAP

City Manager Bryan Lackey summarized the following directives:

- Develop a blended downtown solid waste proposal.
- Minimize multi-family annexations.
- Refer developers to Hall County to secure land-use approval for sewer connection.
- Be selective about future housing projects.
- Evaluate old Fire Station 2 to identify issues/concerns to share with interested parties.
- Sunset Tax Allocation District Projects in 2040.
- Work through consultant TSW to develop a downtown square design with minimal changes to the concept plan and adding the solar system into the design.

FINANCE

Bond Rating

Chief Financial Officer Jeremy Perry provided an update on efforts to improve the City's bond rate noting information had been presented and the supplemental request had been addressed. A decision was expected in the near future.

Financial Update

Chief Financial Officer Jeremy Perry displayed charts/graphs showing:

- Diversified revenue sources from the FY2021 General Fund Budget

- General Fund Transfers (operating and capital transfers) from FY2013 to present including projected totals for FY2021 and recommended totals for FY2022
- Local Option Sales Tax Revenue from FY2011 to FY2020 with projected totals for FY2021 showing increased revenue
- Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax Revenue for the last and current fiscal years revealed a consistent revenue stream
- Parks & Recreation Revenue for Recreation and Facility Services for the last and current fiscal years displayed a significant decrease in FY2021
- Parks & Recreation Revenue for the Frances Meadows Aquatic Center for the last and current fiscal years revealed significant decreases from April thru September
- Hotel/Motel Tax Collections for FY2021 to date are comparable with FY2020 collections

American Rescue Plan Act

Chief Financial Officer Jeremy Perry stated the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provides direct funding to governmental entities. Gainesville is slated to receive \$11.98 million and will have until December 2024 to spend these monies. Reporting to the US Department of Treasury is required.

City Manager Bryan Lackey shared community comments on the Cares Act funding and the justification for how those monies were spent. There was discussion about how to expend the American Rescue Plan Act funds.

OTHER

State of the City

Mayor Dunagan anticipated this presentation would occur at the April 20, 2021 Council Meeting.

Compliments

The governing body complimented staff for preparing a very informative retreat.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:26 AM

/dj

C. Danny Dunagan, Jr., Mayor

Denise O. Jordan, City Clerk