

Hoschton Council Retreat  
March 26, 2024-March 28, 2024  
Hoschton Community Center  
65 City Square, Hoschton



## DRAFT MINUTES

Tuesday, March 26<sup>th</sup>

9:00am-11:30am – Council Issues/Relations

11:30am-12:30pm – Lunch break for Mayor, Council & Consultants

12:30pm-1:30pm – DCA (Department of Community Affairs)

1:30pm-2:30pm – GMA (Georgia Municipal Association)

2:30pm-3:00pm – Break

3:00pm-4:00pm – Wrap up / Final Reflection of day

Executive Session (if needed)

*9:00am—Call to order by Mayor Martin.*

*9:01am—Motion to go into executive session to discuss litigation and personnel by Sterling, seconded by D. Brown, and all in favor.*

*10:04am—Motion to come out of executive session by Courter, seconded by D. Brown, and all in favor.*

*City Manager Jennifer Harrison gave a presentation discussing city-owned rental properties, the Mulberry Park project, a future parking deck, the upcoming public works building, the cemetery, and the new basketball court. She also discussed the collection and purpose of stormwater fees, impact fees, property taxes, SPLOST, and LOST.*

*Harrison asked Council for their thoughts on what to do with the 20-year-old playground equipment currently located near the Depot and also sought Council input on what to do with the Darby building regarding location. Mayor and Councilmembers unanimously decided that the Darby building would be best seen and appreciated by Citizens if moved to the new Mulberry Park.*

*City Attorney Abb Hayes explained the role and powers of the City Council, highlighted policies and procedures, and discussed the importance of behaving ethically.*

*[Council chose to continuing working as they ate lunch]*

*12:17pm—Motion to go into executive session to discuss real estate by D. Brown, seconded by Lawson, and all in favor.*

*12:30pm—Motion to come out of executive session by Courter, seconded by D. Brown, and all in favor.*

*Beth Eavenson, Region 5 Representative for the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, explained the many program, grant, and loan options available to the City.*

*Sherri Bailey, Member Services Consultant from the Georgia Municipal Association, explained the programs and services offered to cities by GMA.*

*Mayor and Council discussed changing the number of planned members of the Planning & Zoning Commission back to 7, instead of 5 (as discussed at the last council meeting). All agreed that 7 would be best since there were so many quality applicants.*

*3:30pm—Motion to adjourn by D. Brown, seconded by Sterling, and all in favor.*

Present:

Debbie Martin, Mayor  
David Brown, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Christina Brown, Councilmember  
Scott Courter, Councilmember  
James Lawson, Councilmember  
Fredria Sterling, Councilmember

Also Present:

Abbott S. Hayes, Jr, City Attorney  
Jennifer Harrison, City Manager  
Jen Williams, Assistant City Clerk

Absent:

Jonathan Jackson, Councilmember

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27<sup>th</sup>

9:00am-11:30am – DDA (Downtown Development Authority)  
11:30am-12:30pm – Lunch break for Mayor, Council & Consultants  
12:30pm-2:30pm – City Planning for present and future  
2:30pm-3:00pm – Break  
3:00pm-4:00pm – Wrap up / Final Reflection of day  
Executive Session (if needed)

*9:00am—Call to order by Mayor Martin.*

*Hoschton Downtown Development Authority Chair Tracy Jordan began by emphasizing that the DDA's role is to serve as a bridge between the government and private sector/businesses. The DDA will focus on using real estate to accomplish its goals. The DDA and the City will be the most productive if they can trust one another.*

*Co-Chair Dr. Sri Kumar explained the need to develop 3-, 5-, and 7-year plans. The DDA will hold a half-day retreat in July to brainstorm and establish these plans, perhaps using the UGA design charette completed two years ago as a starting point. The planning stage of the GDOT lifepath project has been on hold waiting on go-ahead from the City. Once completed, it will provide great connectivity to downtown businesses from all over the city.*

*DDA Board Member Dr. Marsha Hunter also serves on the Historic Preservation Committee (which falls under the DDA umbrella). She is excited about using the new archive catalog software to begin organizing Hoschton's historical artifacts.*

*Consultant Gary Fesperman shared that the relationship between the DDA and the City Council is key in taking the vision from inception to implementation. He gave examples of how a DDA can use*

*real estate acquisition to further business development and to generate funds that will build up the DDA bank account. Fesperman emphasized that it will be difficult to accomplish large projects without a paid staffer; DDA could consider use of interns, donors, and fundraising to offset the cost. He further suggested narrowing the initial focus to the immediate downtown City Square area to generate the biggest impact.*

*Downtown beautification ideas: corner directional signs displaying City Sq. business names, uplighting, rooftop lighting, and murals.*

*DDA wants to bring back the newsletter used to feature Hoschton businesses and advertise events. Previously, it was sent out with water bills; might move it to electronic format.*

*[Council chose to continue working as they ate lunch.]*

*Dr. Jerry Weitz, Consulting City Planner, joined the Council for the afternoon to talk about impact fees, potential changes to PUD zoning requirements, slow-to-start rezoned projects, and the comprehensive plan.*

*According to the annexation agreement with Jackson County, Hoschton will be collecting the road impact fees imposed by the county on the development. These impact fees will be spent by the county for the benefit of Hoschton. The Council will need to decide how to direct that spending, which must increase capacity and cannot be used for maintenance of existing roads. Ideas mentioned: 53 Bypass (Hwy 60 to Hwy 332 to Jackson Trail), widen Peachtree Rd, purchase of right-of-way/property for roads, corridor map roads. (For example, these fees are not to be used to re-route school traffic.)*

*The Council would like to tighten the requirements for PUD rezoning applications. They would like to see the zoning classification used for true mixed commercial and residential developments (live, work, play communities) instead of high-density residential with commercial thrown in as an afterthought. On a related note, Dr. Weitz recommended making the “mixed-use” zoning classification inactive.*

*Discussion was had regarding properties that have had rezoning applications approved, but with no work started. Council would like to initiate a limit on the amount of time allowed to pass with no work started. It is difficult to plan for water/sewer capacity timelines with these potential projects lingering.*

*2:53pm—Motion to adjourn by Lawson, seconded by D. Brown, and all in favor.*

Present:

Debbie Martin, Mayor  
David Brown, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Christina Brown, Councilmember  
Scott Courter, Councilmember  
James Lawson, Councilmember  
Fredria Sterling, Councilmember  
Jonathan Jackson, Councilmember (10:51am-12:00pm)

Also Present:

Dr. Jerry Weitz, Consulting City Planner  
Jennifer Harrison, City Manager  
Jen Williams, Assistant City Clerk

**THURSDAY, MARCH 28<sup>th</sup>**

9:00am-11:30am – EMI (Engineering Management, Inc)

11:30am-12:30pm – Lunch break for Mayor, Council & Consultants

12:30pm-2:30pm – EMI (Engineering Management, Inc)

2:30pm-3:00pm – Break

3:00pm-4:00pm – Wrap up / Final Reflection of day

Executive Session (if needed)

*9:04am—Call to order by Mayor Martin.*

*Jerry Hood and Chip McGaughey from Engineering Management, Inc gave a detailed presentation on the status of water and wastewater in Hoschton.*

*Water: Hoschton is well-positioned to have a lot of redundancy in its water supply, meaning the City will have plenty of water from multiple sources. Along with its own wells, Hoschton has purchase agreements in place with Jackson County and Braselton, and is close to finalizing an agreement with Barrow County.*

*The new booster pump should be online by Winter and will enable the new 500,000 gallon North water tank to be filled. The recently approved 750,000 gallon South water tank should be constructed 2024-2025.*

*Hoschton scores well on its water loss audit, but there is some room for improvement. Consider having a leak detection survey performed to identify leaks in city water supply; Georgia Rural Water could be a cheap option.*

*Wastewater: The Council is expected to award the construction of the wastewater treatment facility expansion (Phase 2) at its April meeting. The expansion to .95MGD will enable the City to treat 950,000 gallons of wastewater daily. A later Phase 3 will increase wastewater treatment capacity to 2,000,000 gallons per day.*

*Stormwater: Short- and long-term plans and improvements*

*Future Projects: Mulberry Park, Public Works Building, Proposed Parking Deck*

*2:38pm—Motion to adjourn by Courter, seconded by C. Brown, and all in favor.*

Present:

Debbie Martin, Mayor

David Brown, Mayor Pro-Tem

Christina Brown, Councilmember

Scott Courter, Councilmember

James Lawson, Councilmember

Fredria Sterling, Councilmember

Also Present:

Brett Day, Director of Utilities

Jennifer Harrison, City Manager

Jen Williams, Assistant City Clerk

Jerry Hood, EMI

Chip McGaughey, EMI

Absent:

Jonathan Jackson, Councilmember

Approved:

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Debbie Martin, Mayor

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Date

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Jennifer Williams, Assistant City Clerk