

MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING AND WORK SESSION
G.L. Gilleland Council Chambers on 2nd Floor
Monday, September 22, 2025
5:00 P.M.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor John Walden called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.
2. **ROLL CALL:** Councilmember William Illg, Councilmember Caleb Phillips, Councilmember Sandy Sawyer, Councilmember Mark French, City Attorney Kevin Tallant, City Manager Jacob Evans, City Clerk Beverly Banister, Public Works Director Trampas Hansard, Utilities Director Jacob Barr, Finance Director Robin Gazaway, Director of Downtown Development Amanda Edmondson, Zoning Administrative Assistant Stacy Harris and CPL Representative Sarah McQuade.
3. **INVOCATION AND PLEDGE:** Invocation and pledge were led by Councilmember Phillips.
4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Mayor Walden announced the City is hosting a concert at Main Street Park on September 27, 2025 from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The Mayor also announced he will be holding a Chat with the Mayor event at City Hall on October 14, 2025 beginning at 6:00 p.m.; he encouraged the public to come out and talk with him about any questions or concerns.
5. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:** Motion to amend the agenda to table Item #12 ZA-C2500169 and Item #13 VAR-C2500170 to the October 20, 2025 meeting and to add Item #16a. Moonshine Festival: Request for Road Closure and Fee Waiver made by S. Sawyer; second by M. French. Vote carried unanimously in favor.

Motion to approve the agenda as amended made by M. French; second by W. Illg. Vote carried unanimously in favor.
6. **PUBLIC INPUT:** None
7. **CONSENT AGENDA:** Motion to approve the consent agenda for the following items (a, b) made by M. French; second by W. Illg. Vote carried unanimously in favor.
 - a. Approve Minutes
 - Regular Meeting held September 8, 2025
 - b. Approve 2025 Georgia Downtown Association Conference – CDP Training
8. **PRESENT DONATION TO GEORGIA STATE PATROL POST #37:** The Mayor and Council presented twelve tint meters to the Georgia State Patrol Post #37 as a donation. Two officers were in attendance to receive the donation and thanked the City Council.
9. **PLANNING COMMISSION POST #2 APPOINTMENT:** Motion to appoint Jack Eaton as the Post #2 Planning Commission member to fulfill the vacant unexpired term through December 31, 2027 made by W. Illg; second by S. Sawyer. Vote carried unanimously in favor.
10. **EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION:** The Mayor and Council recognized Amanda Edmondson as the August Employee of the Month. The Mayor and Council also recognized Tracy Smith who received her Georgia Certified Clerk certificate for the completion of 101 hours of instruction.

PUBLIC HEARING

11. **ZA-C2500171:** PR Land Investments, LLC has petitioned for an amendment to the official zoning map applicable to the properties provided below. The applicant proposes the properties be rezoned from R-1 and R-3: Restricted Single-Family Residential District and Single-Family Residential District to RPC: Residential Planned Community, for the development of 120 single-family semi-detached homes. Tax Map Parcel 093 010 (592 HWY 9 S), Tax Map Parcel 093 011 (93 Southwest Border Ave), Tax Map Parcel D02 004, and Tax Map Parcel D04 010 (416 HWY 9 S). Public Hearing Dates: Planning Commission July 14, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. and City Council August 4, 2025, at 5:00 p.m., tabled to September 22, 2025. City Council for a decision on October 20, 2025.

Sarah McQuade from CPL provided the details regarding the zoning amendment request. She also discussed some points regarding the term “semi-detached” stating a semi-detached product does allow for a higher density, however, the product being presented in their plan does not fit the description of semi-detached since their product does not include the homes sharing a common wall. She stated the staff’s recommendation is to deny the request. Mayor Walden asked if the project met

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the City's Comprehensive Plan; Ms. McQuade stated the location of the property is in a split-character area – the gateway corridor and the residential character area - providing information on both areas.

Motion to open the public hearing made by M. French; second by W. Ilg. Vote carried unanimously in favor.

Mayor Walden conducted the public hearing. The following persons spoke in favor of the zoning amendment request:

- Ben Gilleland, 225 Whitewater Lane, Dahlonaga – He expressed the builders are providing a good quality product and providing a road from Hwy 9 to Maple Street to alleviate traffic off of the square. He stated his family has invested a lot in the community and believes this would be a positive lasting legacy. He also stated he would like the park in the community to be named after his grandparents.
- Corey Guthrie, 283 Casi Ridge, Dawsonville – As the engineer on the project, he stated he is available if there are any questions.
- Steven Jones, 1600 Parkwood Circle, Atlanta – He is the attorney for the project and stated they have provided an updated Letter of Intent which is contained in the packet. He discussed details regarding the gateway corridor area and connectivity to the downtown area by way of the Maple Street extension. He also spoke on the term semi-detached stating "the question is not whether there is a semi-detached development here, its which one of the proposed products do you as Mayor and Council deem to be semi-detached" explaining that Mr. Miller will offer a variety of connections which he believes will fit the undefined term.
- Michael Miller, 285 Parkway 575, Woodstock – He provided the history of the project development explaining various revisions based on information received from City Council, Planning Commission, and staff. He also discussed traffic concerns and explained the perceived flow of traffic stating it would not all go through the center of town. He stated their plan provides an alternative route, the Maple Street extension which they are constructing, a donation of ten acres of land to the City and designing and donating the land for the traffic circle emphasizing it is a significant piece of infrastructure which is being provided by the developer as a part of the project resulting in no cost to the City. He also discussed the density of this project and the surrounding areas.

The ten-minute allowance for Public Hearing in favor of the request had expired. Motion made by M. French to add four minutes of additional time to the Public Hearing; second by C. Phillips. Vote carried unanimously in favor.

- Mr. Miller further reviewed multiple concepts for semi-detached homes, stating the term is undefined and it is the City Council who determines the definition of semi-detached. Lastly he stated they have developed their plan according to recommendations from the City and have done everything that has been asked of them at great expense and significant delay. He believes they have been as good a neighbor as a developer can be and asked the Council to vote in favor of the project.

Mr. Jones handed out their proposed conditions to the Mayor and Council.

The following persons spoke in opposition to the zoning amendment request:

- Jack Hunt, 250 Burts Crossing Drive, Dawsonville – He stated he is opposing this project and questions the logic of building three huge subdivisions in the area of Perimeter Road, Hwy 53 and Hwy 9 South. He expressed his concern specifically regarding the intersection of Hwy 9 South at JC Burt Road stating the developments would add an approximate 1000 vehicles to the road. He restated he is opposing the request to rezone the properties.
- Kim Holt, 200 Burts Crossing Drive, Dawsonville – Ms. Holt agrees with everything stated by Mr. Hunt and told the Council she has gone door to door speaking with residents in the area and has collected a great number of signatures in a petition against this request. She believes the property should remain as R1 and R3 and would like to see homes developed

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in a more "nice, stately" manner. She stated the traffic is awful and dangerous with the current developments in place and believes the proposal is irresponsible.

Motion to close the public hearing made by W. Ilig; second by C. Phillips. Vote carried unanimously in favor.

Councilmember Sawyer asked the developer to explain their interpretation of how this meets the City's Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Jones said the Comprehensive Plan contains a future land use map but also a variety of other things as listed in their letter of intent. He stated under Community Goals in the Comprehensive Plan it says continued efforts to improve the quality and variety of housing and also under Community Needs and Opportunities it calls for an expanding balance of housing types, entry level products as well as specialized needs housing and a failure to provide these within the proximity of downtown Dawsonville will only serve to increase the cost. He further stated the section titled Maintain Housing Variety, says to increase the volumes of smaller households while also ensuring a diversity of housing conditions and programs exist. He also said regarding opportunities, street connectivity is called for and their project provides the Maple Street Extension connecting Highway 9 and Maple Street and design of the traffic circle and dedication of the land for it which improves street connectivity. He said it also calls for parks and green spaces which can be accomplished with the donation of the ten acres to the City. Lastly he stated the Comprehensive Plan encourages a variety of houses to be developed and their product is not currently represented in the City. He also explained this project is a good transition based on the density of their project property and those around it. Mr. Miller emphasized the Comprehensive Plan is meant to be accomplished overtime, not all at once in which they have been intentional in complying with the plan and providing needed infrastructure.

Councilmember Sawyer also asked how this would benefit the City and if there were any negative impacts on the City. Mr. Jones reiterated the publicly donated land and the connectivity from Maple Street to Highway 9 and the traffic circle design and dedication of land to address traffic concerns stating it's a wonderful opportunity for the City to gain infrastructure at no cost to the citizens. He stated there are no negative impacts to the City since the project is lower density than those around it.

Councilmember French stated the density increases to 4.85 with the reduction of the ten acre donation of property. Mr. Miller stated that is correct but it is not how it is calculated in the ordinance. He said they are asking the ten acres to be included in the density, otherwise, it just becomes open space the HOA would have to maintain when it could otherwise be used as a public benefit. Councilmember French restated the density still works out to be 4.85 and stating otherwise, in his opinion, is disingenuous.

Councilmember Ilig stated commercial property is of utmost importance to him and wants to protect the commercial property zoning that exists in the City. He also stated the benefit of the road they are willing to develop is important and does increase connectivity, which he appreciates.

Councilmember Sawyer asked if there are other residential planned communities being proposed. Ms. Harris provided some current projects in the surrounding area.

Councilmember Ilig asked City Manager Evans if the City's Public Works department will be able to maintain the ten acre donation in the same manner the City maintains other properties. Mr. Evans responded in the department's current capacity it would prove to be difficult to maintain excellence, which is the City's goal.

Councilmember French complimented the developer on their proposal stating it was well put together and presented fairly.

Mr. Miller stated the ten acres they are proposing to donate is undisturbed and would stay in its current condition, which is wooded, unless the City chose to develop it. Mr. Jones said they can keep the ten acres but sees it as a benefit to donating it to the City as an opportunity for their own desired use.

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12. Tabled to October 20, 2025 (ZA-C2500169)

13. Tabled to October 20, 2025 (VAR-C2500170)

BUSINESS

14. REQUEST TO AWARD RFP #25-RFP-001:IT MANAGED SERVICES: City Clerk Banister reported on the details of the RFP and the responses. The City Council discussed the details of the proposals.

Motion to table the item to the October 20, 2025 City Council Meeting made by W. Illg; second by C. Phillips. Vote carried unanimously in favor.

WORK SESSION

15. CONSIDERATION FOR DOOR INSTALLATION BETWEEN GRANDADDY MIMMS, DAWSONVILLE HISTORY MUSEUM AND STATION HOUSE: Cindy Elliott provided information to the Council regarding a request to install internal doors from the museum to Grandaddy Mimms and from the museum into Station House. She discussed the placement of the doors and some loss of storage and space on both sides of the businesses. There is no structural issue or load bearing wall which would be affected and she is waiting to hear back from Jeff Bailey with the Fire Department. She reported Station House is on board with the request and wants to proceed, however, Grandaddy Mimms has to get approval from their Board and attorney before proceeding.

Motion to approve the installation of a door as presented between the Dawsonville History Museum and the Station House restaurant made by M. French; second by C. Phillips. Vote carried unanimously in favor. The request will have to come back before Council if Grandaddy Mimms determines they want to move forward.

16. 2026 MEETING CALENDAR: City Council will review the information and approve the final meeting calendar at the October 20, 2025 meeting.

16a. MOONSHINE FESTIVAL: REQUEST FOR ROAD CLOSURE AND FEE WAIVER: Motion to approve the fee waiver of \$275.00 and for road closures of Allen Street from Hwy 50 to Memory Lane beginning at 10:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 23, 2025 through 8:00 p.m. Sunday, October 26, 2025 made by M. French; second by W. Illg. Public Works Director Hansard recommended including Main Street North after McDonald's entrance in the road closure. The motion was amended to include Main Street North and Main Street through the park by W. Illg; second by M. French. Vote carried unanimously in favor to amend and approve the motion.

STAFF REPORTS

17. JACOB EVANS, CITY MANAGER: He reported there was one leak adjustment for the month totaling \$81.79.

18. ROBIN GAZAWAY, FINANCE DIRECTOR: Financial reports were provided to represent fund balances and activity through August 31, 2025 and stated she is now including the receipts from impact fees with her reports.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember Sawyer thanked the Dawson County Sheriff's Office for conducting a women's firearms safety course which she attended. Mayor Walden reported he spoke at the Dawson County Sheriff's Office Public Safety event; he thanked the veterans and the public safety personnel for all they do to serve the community. He also attended the Georgia Faith and Freedom Coalition event with Councilmember French. Mayor Walden thanked Will Wade and Seanie Zappendorf for the invitation and said it was a wonderful experience. Lastly, the JR ROTC at the High School held a service at Veteran's Memorial Park recognizing POW MIAs which he attended with Councilmember Illg; he appreciated the invitation to attend and is proud of the younger generation who is taking an interest in the military. Councilmember French also stated his gratefulness to be invited to the Georgia

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Faith and Freedom Coalition event and found it to be very moving. He said it was a great event with a number of speakers.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 6:23 p.m. a motion to close regular session and go into executive session for pending/potential litigation, real estate acquisition and/or personnel was made by W. Illg; second by C. Phillips. Vote carried unanimously in favor.

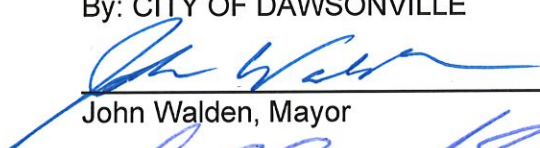
At 8:14 p.m. a motion to resume regular session was made by W. Illg; second by M. French. Vote carried unanimously in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

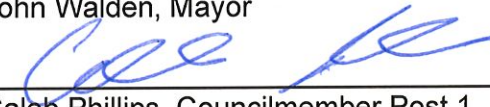
At 8:15 p.m. a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by S. Sawyer; second by W. Illg. Vote carried unanimously in favor.

Approved this 20th day of October, 2025

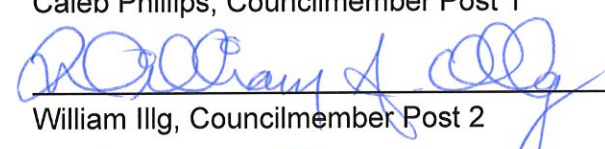
By: CITY OF DAWSONVILLE



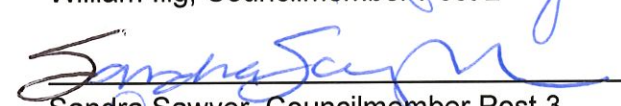
John Walden, Mayor



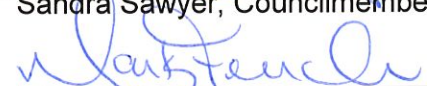
Caleb Phillips, Councilmember Post 1



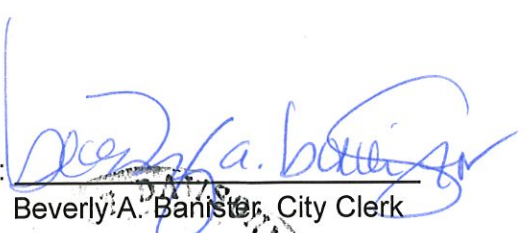
William Illg, Councilmember Post 2



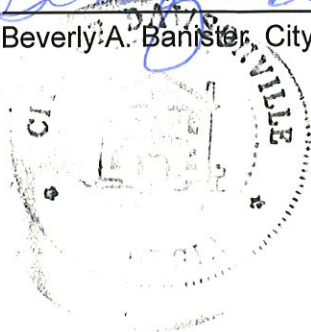
Sandra Sawyer, Councilmember Post 3



Mark French, Councilmember Post 4

Attest: 

Beverly A. Banister, City Clerk



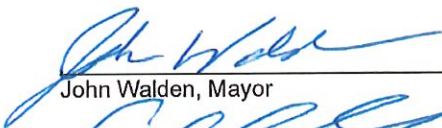
STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF DAWSON

AFFIDAVIT OF THE CITY OF DAWSONVILLE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

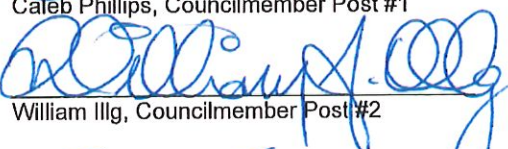
Mayor John Walden, Councilmember Caleb Phillips, Councilmember William Ilg, Councilmember Sandra Sawyer and Councilmember Mark French; being duly sworn, state under oath that the following is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief:

1. The City of Dawsonville Council met in a duly advertised meeting on September 22, 2025.
2. During such meeting, the Board voted to go into closed session.
3. The executive session was called to order at 6²³ p.m.
4. The subject matter of the closed portion of the meeting was devoted to the following matter(s) within the exceptions provided in the open meetings law: (check all that apply)
 - ☒ Consultation with the City Attorney or other legal counsel to discuss pending or potential litigation, settlement, claims, administrative proceedings, or other judicial actions brought or to be brought by or against the City or any officer or employee or in which the City or any officer or employee may be directly involved as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(1);
 - ☐ Discussion of tax matters made confidential by state law as provided by O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(2) and _____;
 - ☐ Discussion of future acquisition of real estate as provided by O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(1);
 - ☒ Discussion or deliberation on the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a City officer or employee as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(2);
 - ☐ Other _____ as provided in: _____.

This 22nd day of September 2025; By the City of Dawsonville, Mayor and Council:


John Walden, Mayor

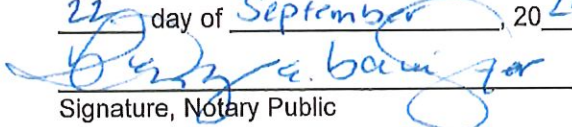

Caleb Phillips, Councilmember Post #1


William Ilg, Councilmember Post #2


Sandra Sawyer, Councilmember Post #3


Mark French, Councilmember Post #4

Sworn to and subscribed before me this
22 day of September, 2025.


Signature, Notary Public

My Commission expires: Feb 18, 2028

