

MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL RETREAT
Professional Development Center
28 Main Street, Dawsonville, GA
Friday, February 20, 2026
9:00 A.M.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor John Walden called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.
2. **ROLL CALL:** Councilmember Caleb Phillips, Councilmember William Illg, Councilmember Sandy Sawyer, Councilmember Mark French, City Manager Jacob Evans, City Clerk Beverly Banister, Public Works Director Trampas Hansard, Utility Director Russ Chambers, Finance Director Robin Gazaway, Director of Downtown Development Amanda Edmondson and Planning & Zoning Admin Stacy Harris.
CPL staff included Sarah McQuade, Dana Spayde and Gillam Sinharoy
3. **INVOCATION AND PLEDGE:** Invocation and pledge were led by Councilmember Phillips.
4. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:** Motion to approve the agenda as presented made by W. Illg; second by C. Phillips. Mayor Walden requested to have Council add Public Input, however, Council did not amend the agenda because no members of the public were in attendance. Vote carried three in favor (Illg, Phillips, Sawyer) with one opposed (French).
5. **MISSION, VALUES, GOALS FOR THE RETREAT, SCOPE AND TIMELINE:** City Manager Evans provided an overall view of the mission statement for the City. Department Heads provided their individual mission statements for their departments. Discussion occurred regarding the over arching City statement and how it can be changed to reflect a collaboration of all the department's mission statements.

City Manager Evans provided the goals for the retreat in updating the zoning ordinance to be simple, consistent, easily updated and to ensure the City is set up for future success.
6. **PROJECT INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW:** CPL staff introduced the project and provided an overview.
7. **MAJOR UPDATES:**
 - **FLOODPLAIN CONSTRUCTION:** Recommended additions provided; discussion held. Council agrees to adopt State/Federal guidelines with additional recommendations from CPL and staff.
 - **WETLANDS:** Definition, impacts and recommendations provided; discussion held. Council agrees to stay consistent with State guidelines.
 - **TREE ORDINANCE:** Description of City's current ordinance provided; discussion held. Council agrees to consider other ordinances from local municipalities to add simple requirements and consider buffer requirements for replacement trees.
8. **FIX IT LIST BEST PRACTICES:** Brief review of a centralized land use table included place of assembly definition and recommendations to address inconsistencies. Also reviewed Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU); Council would consider it in specific zonings. Best practices recommendations include creating a unified general provision or "residential zoning district regulations" article, creating a retired/legacy zoning district article and creating one consolidated definitions article. Brief overview of best practices in the Downtown Area to utilize the Downtown Comprehensive Strategic Plan for architectural requirements, building location/orientation, massing and style variation.
9. **CHAPTERS 101 – 105:**
 - **GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS – CHAPTER 101:** Reviewed best practices and recommendations. Council agrees to split Performance Security and Construction and Acceptance and Warranty into two sections and set construction hours to be 7:00 am – 7:00 pm, Monday through Saturday with no construction allowed, inside or outside, on Sundays. Council agrees to leave Section 101-3 as residential only.
 - **BUILDINGS AND BUILDING REGULATIONS – CHAPTER 102:** Reviewed best practices and recommendations. Council agrees to utilize the most up to date building codes from the State but also consider more stringent restrictions on higher density. Brief discussion on supplemental regulations (102-56) to allow short term rentals.

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- **CHAPTER 103** – Reviewed under Major Updates
- **HISTORIC PRESERVATION – CHAPTER 104:** Reviewed best practices and recommendations. Council would like the Historic Preservation Commission to review the same before amending.
- **SIGNS – CHAPTER 105:** Reviewed best practices and recommendations. Discussion of clarification on violations, temporary signage and non-conforming signage. Council agrees with creating a subsection for murals and/or public art requiring their approval.

10. CHAPTERS 106-109:

- **SOIL EROSION, SEDIMENTATION AND POLLUTION CONTROL – CHAPTER 106:** Reviewed common terms, best practices and recommendations. Discussion held; Council agrees with most recommendations. Discussion on disturbed acreage caps; Council would like to look at peer communities' ordinances and talk with engineer before updating. Also noted was a preference to clarify soil and erosion bonds at \$3,000 per acre. Additional discussion regarding specific areas in Section 106-4 that needs to be cleaned up.
- **STORMWATER MANAGEMENT – CHAPTER 107:** Reviewed common terms, best practices and recommendations. Council prefers to keep as is or CPL's engineer can better explain and make recommendations catered to our area. Additional discussion on various sections throughout the chapter that needs to be reviewed and cleaned up.
- **ANNEXATIONS – CHAPTER 108:** Reviewed best practices, legal considerations in the annexation process and recommendations. Short discussion held.
- **STREET STANDARDS – CHAPTER 109:** Reviewed common terms, best practices and recommendations. Discussions included clarification of section 109-2, requirements of traffic impacts/traffic studies for residential and commercial properties and length and width of driveways to accommodate more vehicles in order to avoid street parking issues.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4:31 p.m. a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by M. French; second by W. Illg. Vote carried three in favor (French, Illg, Sawyer) with one opposed (Phillips).

Approved this 2nd day of March, 2026

By: CITY OF DAWSONVILLE



John Walden, Mayor



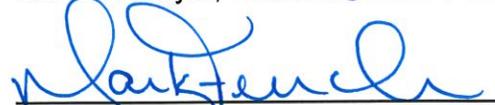
Caleb Phillips, Councilmember Post 1

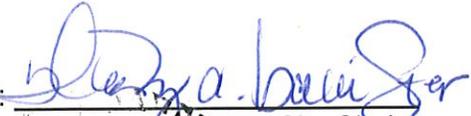


William Illg, Councilmember Post 2

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Sandra Sawyer, Councilmember Post 3


Mark French, Councilmember Post 4

Attested: 
Beverly A. Barister, City Clerk

