

City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 17, 2025
6:30 PM

Call to Order

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in regular session on Thursday, April 17, 2025. Mayor Kim Learnard called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Council members attending: Laura Johnson, Suzanne Brown, Clinton Holland, and Frank Destadio.

Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

A. Arbor Day Proclamation

The Mayor proclaimed April 25 as Arbor Day in Peachtree City and said a sapling would be planted at each elementary school.

Public Comment

Jeff Williams commented about the amount of money players would spend in Peachtree City at pickleball tournaments if a new facility was constructed.

Steve Brown expressed concerns that documents and reference materials related to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Steering Committee's work were not readily available online. He also stated the committee operated a chat board for members that violated open records laws.

Agenda Changes

None

Minutes

Holland moved to approve the March 20, 2025 City Council meeting minutes, the March 20, 2025 Executive Session minutes, and the April 3, 2025 City Council work session minutes. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

A. March 20, 2025 City Council Meeting Minutes

APPROVED 5-0

B. March 20, 2025 Executive Session Minutes

APPROVED 5-0

C. April 3, 2025 City Council Work Session Minutes

APPROVED 5-0

Quarterly Reports

A. First Quarter 2025

Holland asked if the design proposal for the Huddleston Road sewer and path project included all the utilities that would have to be relocated, and City Manager Justin Strickland said it did. Holland asked about a timeline, and Strickland said

they should bring a bid to Council in May. Holland then asked about bids for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. Strickland said that was for the ADA transition plan now required by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to stay eligible for state funding. It was to transition roads, streets, and all facilities into ADA compliance.

Holland thanked the Peachtree Aquatic Club for its donation of \$150,000 for a boiler at Kedron. He pointed out that the quarterly report said 46% for the revenues had already come, and Strickland said that was from property taxes. Holland noted that 41% of the budgeted expenditures had been spent; Strickland stated that was on track, and there would not be a substantial amount of money left unspent.

This was third year in a row that Part 1 crimes went down, Holland stated, and noted that golf cart accidents dropped, too, but he did not know how much. Police Chief Janet Moon said she could get more information so he would have something to compare it to. Holland thanked Emergency Services for caring for him when he was ill a few weeks ago.

Holland also mentioned that there were no new home permits issued for the past quarter and wondered if that was a trend around the area. Planning and Development Director Shayla Reed said she did not know, but they could research other areas and get back to him. Strickland said there would be new homes, but developers would be pulling permits in the few remaining developments that were under construction.

Only 29 short-term rental permit applications were received, and just eight issued, in the first quarter. He remarked that Council put a lot of time into crafting an STR ordinance that was lenient towards owners. Strickland said some of the ones that were registered had decided not to file, and Reed agreed. Others were going through the process. Why did they decide not to get a permit? Holland asked, and Reed said the owners were telling her that the required inspections were a concern.

Next, Holland asked when location signs would be erected in all the villages. Strickland said there were many already in the city and more would be added as 2023 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax projects. He wanted to get the Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) involved in the design, as well as Council and citizens. They were pushing a lot of other projects, and the village signs had not been given priority by Council.

The World Cup would come to Atlanta in 2026, and Holland wanted to know if Peachtree City could accommodate the expected visitors. Strickland said the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) was putting together information about hotel packages and shuttles, among other things. Public Safety was also engaged in regional discussions.

Moon told Holland said there were 11 golf cart collisions in the first quarter of 2024, and eight in 2025, plus there were three injuries in that period in 2025 and five this year.

Brown asked why only 10.2 miles of streets were swept in the first quarter, and Strickland replied that they had just gotten a new sweeper and had not been using the old one. The numbers should go up, and the roads crew would be testing out different routes.

She also asked Moon if they could use the real numbers in the Police reports instead of percentages, and Moon said they could look at that.

Brown then asked why so many trees had been removed from the median on SR 74? Strickland said the maintenance on that median was not efficient and required shutting down lanes of traffic; it was easier to take care of them with less vegetation. They were planting native species and grass. She also noted that 38 deer carcasses were collected in the first quarter.

Johnson asked about the STR permits, and Reed said there were rules about fire extinguishers that were holding up the applications in process. Reed said two owners had applied, then decided not to move forward because they could not comply with the rules.

Consent Agenda

Holland moved to approve Consent Agenda items A-E. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

- A. Police Department evidence storage solution - SPLOST
APPROVED 5-0**
- B. Police Department digital radio replacement - SPLOST
APPROVED 5-0**
- C. Merrywood Lane stormwater pipe lining
APPROVED 5-0**
- D. FY25 Budget Amendment - IT Software consolidation
APPROVED 5-0**
- E. Resolution to call for special election
APPROVED 5-0**

Old Agenda Items

None

New Agenda Items

- A. 04-25-03 Station 85 Project Manager**

Fire Chief Clint Murphy explained this was part of 2023 SPLOST Project 10, the construction of Fire Station 85. Staff recommended contracting with Morgan Mill Consulting as a project manager in the amount of \$102,000. He said they contacted multiple firms but only received two proposals with pricing. Morgan Mill was the lowest bidder and had extensive experience with these types of projects. Murphy said he met with the manager and called some references and was pleased with what he heard.

Holland moved to approve New Agenda item 04-25-03 Station 85 Project Manager in the amount of \$102,000 to Morgan Mill Consulting. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearings

A. 04-25-04 Variance Request to allow a 6-foot fence in front yard, 422 Daker Drive

Reed said this request was to allow a six-foot fence in a front yard, which would require a two-foot variance on the four-foot height limitation for fences facing a right-of-way. Code Enforcement visited the property and issued a notice to the homeowner for erecting a fence without a permit.

Photos showed how the fence protruded to the left of the home. The Code required that any fencing along a right-of-way could be no higher than four feet. It could be six feet high if it aligned with the boundaries of the home, but once it stuck out, it could be no more than four feet. Reed also showed the criteria Council must consider when deliberating on a variance.

Attorney Rick Lindsey represented the applicant. He noted this was a corner lot, so while technically they were talking about front yard, most people would say it was the back yard. The homeowner did not cause this problem, the fee she paid the contractor included a permit fee for the fence, Lindsey said. She needed a taller fence because her dog could jump higher than four feet. The fence was on top of a hill so it did not cause a nuisance or a safety hazard. They had letters of support from neighbors. Lindsey said he felt this met the criteria for a variance because the homeowner would have to incur the cost for someone else's mistake.

The Mayor opened the public hearing. No one wished to speak either in favor or in opposition, and she closed the hearing.

Brown asked if the six-foot fence would be permitted if it was moved to the line Reed had indicated, in alignment with the house. Reed said it would. Brown said the homeowner had to go back to the contractor and try to get him to do it; if he would not, then move the fence.

Destadio said he agreed, adding he was tired of seeing people putting up fences without getting permits, then coming back to ask for variances.

Was opacity an issue? Johnson asked, but Reed said that only became an issue close to the street. Johnson commented there was a record that a permit was paid for, but it was not included in the documentation. Lindsey said he must have omitted it, but he had seen the paperwork where the homeowner paid the contractor \$200 for a permit.

After Code Enforcement came out, Reed added, the contractor applied for a permit. So there was a permit application on record, but the permit was not granted.

Destadio asked why the contractor did not fix this, and Lindsey said the homeowners decided to ask for the variance, and he had not contacted the contractor. He again said it was easy to get a judgement, but difficult to enforce it.

Brown again said the homeowner could solve this by moving the fence. Holland noted that this was a civil matter between the homeowner and the contractor; it was not the government's role to solve this problem.

Holland moved to deny Public Hearing item 04-25-04, variance request to allow a six-foot fence in front yard, 422 Daker Drive. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Council/Staff Topics

1. Georgia Cities Week April 21–26, 2025

Strickland noted that April 21-26 was Georgia Cities Week, and there were activities planned for each day.

2. Chris Hobby, ICMA Credentialed

Strickland commended Assistant City Manager Chris Hobby for earning the International City/County Management Association Credentialed Manager designation.

3. Transparency

Brown commented she felt they were failing to communicate and be transparent with the public, and the most recent example was that the UDO agenda packet included only the minutes of the prior meeting. The public did not have access to the slides presented at the meeting, and resource materials were not available. Citizens were told they had to pay for documents requested through the Open Records process. She asked that this situation be corrected.

Learnard said they were following the law, and City Attorney Ted Meeker agreed, but added that, while a packet was not required, there were typically items to go with the agenda.

Brown asked about the UDO chat board, saying it was a way to communicate with each other through a "back channel." Strickland replied that the committee was allowed to have written communication with each other as long as it was held in storage to provide

to anyone who requested it.

What did Brown mean by a “back channel?” Learnard asked. Brown said she meant a forum that was not open to the public where decisions were being made before it was even brought to the public’s attention. They had a group they posted in, Strickland said, and Reed said there was no conversation between the members, just notifications and information. There was no voting or conversation, Strickland added, saying he had reviewed it. There were files that were available to anyone who requested them.

Meeker suggested they put the discussions up where people could see them. He noted that Council had discussions between each other on email. Putting the Committee’s discussion into a public forum would solve the transparency problem. The UDO Committee had met with him the other week to ask for a website to post everything, Strickland noted.

City Clerk Yasmin Julio said the UDO section on the City website would be ready soon. She added that the first 15 minutes of staff research time was free, so documents that were readily available should almost always be free to the public.

4. Administrative Variance Communication

Brown said a woman who was an administrative variance applicant was upset because she was not notified of a time change, and she missed her hearing. Strickland said that hearing had been rescheduled, and they had made sure the miscommunication issue had been resolved.

5. Drake Field Pavillion

What was the situation with the Drake Field Pavillion? Brown asked. Borkowski said the structural engineer had inspected it and would return with a plan for shoring it up to get them through the summer. A more permanent plan would be considered then.

Brown noted this was the second time in six years that the pavilion needed major repairs. She said there were two options: tear it down and build a new pavilion or continue with repairs on a defective structure. She acknowledged they would have to find money for that. Holland suggested they build a new pavilion and use the existing foundation as a stage.

Strickland said he was glad to hear Council was open to alternatives regarding Drake Field.

6. Hockey Rink

Holland wanted to make sure the HVAC system could handle the enclosed hockey rink being used year-round. Strickland said they would be looking at it.

7. Combining of Precincts for Elections

Brown noted that the Fayette County Board of Elections had scheduled public hearings regarding polling places in Peachtree City. One was to combine the Wingate and Camp

Creek Precincts that both voted at Evergreen Church. Even when combined, this precinct would be well below the 5,000 maximum voters. The other hearing regarded moving voting for the Braelinn Precinct from Braelinn Elementary to Oak Grove Elementary for student safety reasons. Brown thought they should combine the precincts rather than have both voting in one location. She urged citizens to attend these public hearings and voice their opinions. Both these moves would save money, although the exact amount was difficult to determine.

She also suggested Council recommend the Board of Elections combine the Aberdeen and Shakerag West precincts and split the Kedron and Sandy Creek. She suggested splitting Kedron and Sandy Creek precincts. Kedron had more than 6,800 voters, which sometimes resulted in long lines on election day, and that could discourage voters. Learnard said she would like more information on this.

Brown then added there is also Public Service Commissioner election this year, in addition to the municipal election, so all precincts would be voting. We need to be able to know which precinct to tell our voters to go to, either their municipal precinct or their general election precinct. For over 2,480 of our citizens their municipal precinct is not the same as their general election precinct.

Holland asked Brown to get them more information on the precincts, and Brown requested that Julio do so.

Executive Session

Holland moved to adjourn to executive session at 7:52 p.m. to discuss the sale, purchase, or lease of real estate. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Brown moved to reconvene in regular session at 8:12 p.m. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Brown moved to adjourn the meeting. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary

Kim Learnard, Mayor