

City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 4, 2025
9:30 AM

Call to Order

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in regular session at City Hall on Thursday, September 4, 2025. Mayor Kim Learnard called the work session to order at 9:30 a.m. Council members attending: Laura Johnson, Suzanne Brown, and Clinton Holland.

Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Presentation

A. 2025 Community Survey Results

Noah Huber of Zencity presented the findings of the 2025 Community Survey that was conducted online from May through July. The 499 respondents were digitally recruited, he stated, and Zencity used a technique called rake weighting to ensure that the distribution of these characteristics in the final weighted sample aligned with the community's overall demographics.

The first question asked about the overall quality of life in Peachtree City, and 87% of the respondents said they had a positive quality of life, with 11% saying they were neutral, and only 2% negative. Learnard asked if this was common, and Huber pointed out that the national average was 67% and the average for cohort cities, or cities similar to Peachtree City, was 76%. Huber noted that 82% of the respondents said they were likely to recommend Peachtree City as a good place to live, far above the national average of 64% and the cohort average of 74%. Also, 74% of respondents said they were likely to still be living in Peachtree City in five years, which was also above the national and cohort averages.

In the Community Characteristics category, Peachtree City scored highest, 88%, in sense of overall safety. Other highly rated areas were reliability of waste collection services and education. Quality of roads was lower down on the list of satisfaction but was still high at 61%.

Availability of affordable housing was ranked at 40% satisfaction, but Huber said this was a nationwide issue. The availability of a variety of arts and cultural events was 54%. The availability of jobs that paid a living wage was 49%, as was the ability of residents to give input to City government.

The survey asked if residents would support a citywide trash collection and recycling program paid for with city taxes. Huber said 43% were in favor of this, with 30% against it. This was a 15% drop in positive sentiment from last year.

Another question dealt with what the City could do to increase transparency and improve citizen input in the decision-making process. The top proposal, with 51% in favor, was to implement online platforms for submitting feedback and suggestions.

About 33% supported surveys and town hall meetings as ways of citizen input.

Holland mentioned that the survey showed Peachtree City was ranked as average in arts and culture, and he had long been advocating for an arts advisory group. He noted that the survey results bore out what he had been saying.

Brown, too, supported a public arts program but wanted to make it clear she did not advocate building any type of performing arts center. The one that was being built in Trilith should be enough to serve the whole county's needs.

Brown also said she was not provided with some of the slides in Huber's presentation. She said she believed 499 respondents was not enough.

Johnson thanked Huber, saying the presentation jumped around, but she did find each page. She found the comparisons with other cities to be helpful.

Learnard remarked that she liked the idea of implementing online platforms for citizen feedback and hoped they would move forward with that.

She said she always ran an online statistical significance calculator when reviewing a survey because they needed to maintain at least a 95% confidence level. To achieve that, Survey Monkey said a sample size of at least 384 respondents was needed, and this survey had 499. Learnard then ran it for a 97% confidence level and came up with 466 as a sample size. She was confident that this sample size was statistically significant and asked Huber to speak on that.

He said the 499 respondents offered a representative understanding of the community. Most people now had access to the Internet, and Huber said he was confident the results yielded an accurate representation of what residents were thinking.

B. Micromobility Ordinance

Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) Chairman Paul Schultz and Vice Chair Keith Larson gave a presentation on the gaps and opportunities regarding micromobility devices that TAG had identified in Chapters 70 and 78 of the City Ordinance. They reviewed what TAG had been working on for the past few weeks and asked for Council's approval to continue in this direction.

Schultz said many definitions needed to be revised to include newer electric vehicles. He and Larson also reported that path rules needed clarity, and vehicle size limits should be established. They said the group also wanted to consider if low speed vehicles should continue to be allowed.

Larson explained that, if Council allowed, TAG would continue with its revisions, then present them to City staff for review and comments. After that was complete, TAG would return to a Council work session with their proposals, and Council could

proceed from there. After the revisions were adopted, Larson continued, TAG could provide assistance with public education on the changes.

Holland said path safety was one of his major concerns, especially with the new vehicles that could go much faster than the 20 mph speed limit. He moved that they send this back to TAG to complete a first draft of Chapters 70 and 78 and bring it back to Council. Brown said she seconded the motion to allow for further discussion.

The Mayor asked if a motion was necessary, and City Attorney Ted Meeker said it was not, but they could vote if they desired.

Learnard went on to say she supported TAG's work 100%. She was especially interested in the definitions and in working at the State level with Go-Georgia, which Larson had mentioned.

Brown commented that she imagined all path users had had a near-miss with a speeding vehicle, so she was very much in favor of this update. She asked Schultz and Larson if TAG was prepared to create a draft ordinance, and Larson replied that they had done the research and come up with some preliminary drafts of the definitions.

Larson also added that they were sticking to path rules and regulations and were not getting into registration, even though it was also in chapter 78. Brown noted that TAG had previously made recommendations on decal placement and asked if they wanted to include the registration portion in this revision. Schultz said he believed it would be best not to take that on right now. They thought they should stick to revising the elements that would improve safety on the paths.

Brown asked City Manager Justin Strickland if they should go ahead and update the registration portion while TAG was working on safety. The registration process was not broken, Strickland told her, and they were moving forward with decal placement and also in reducing the overall size of the decals.

Assistant Finance Director Dustin Farron stated they might need to delay the registration period for a couple of months due to the changes in the decals. It was a big undertaking, he mentioned, and Finance Director Kelly Bush pointed out that City Hall would be under renovation for a few months, so it might be best to hold off on registration until that was completed.

Johnson said she was glad to see these overlaps and shortfalls in the ordinance being corrected. She noted that people were buying these devices, but they might become illegal on the paths once the ordinance was updated, so prompt approval was needed to prevent issues for citizens.

Brown asked about governors on the carts, and Larson said there were existing

parts of the code that forbade modifications, but it was difficult to enforce. They might have to pass on that this time, but maybe look at it next year.

Larson, referring back to the Mayor's comment, explained that Go-Georgia was a State consumer bicycle and pedestrian advocate funded by the Georgia Office of Traffic Safety to provide safety information and education.

There being no further comment, the Mayor called for a vote on Holland's motion to authorize TAG to proceed. It passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Denise Bell thanked Council, the Mayor, and staff for working to address deer overpopulation and suggested they also consider banning the feeding of deer in the city. She also asked them to continue addressing the deer problem in residential areas and said many citizens needed to be educated on animal husbandry.

Lloyd Smith, president of the Peachtree City-Fayette Pickleball Club, noted that Council was on the verge of voting for 18 new pickleball courts, and he had been told that Holland had promised to support 21 new courts, so approving 18 should not be a problem. Smith said there were at least two petitions in circulation asking the City to keep the courts on Log House Road. If Council decided on fewer than 18 courts, the Pickleball Club members and board would support these petitions, and Smith said he did not want to see that happen.

Sue Reed, another Pickleball Club member, told Holland and Brown that their frequent changes made it unclear how many courts they would support. She noted that it was more than two years since pickleball courts were approved as a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) project. Costs had almost doubled since then, and the number of pickleball players was increasing, too. She informed Council that 18 courts would need to be constructed if the Log House courts were removed.

Steve Brown told Learnard that her conduct at the last meeting was "combative and unprofessional." He commended Holland and Brown for pushing to reduce the reserves and roll back the millage rate. He called for transparency and said the City's playbook of increasing the number of employees and hiking fees, while ignoring needed maintenance needed to be changed. Brown also said the City would regret in the future that land designated for industrial use had been rezoned for residential. He then denounced the Recreation Master Plan, mentioning the total cost of the proposed projects.

It was untrue that Peachtree City had no travel hockey program, as some members of the community had claimed, Amanda Reiss commented. She said the Peachtree City Hockey Association had offered middle school, high school, and age-group related travel teams for as long as she had been associated with them, but it had sometimes been a haphazard system. Reiss said a new board of directors this year had put some structures in place, and she called for everyone who cared about roller hockey in

Peachtree City to work with the Association and take advantage of the improvements being made.

John Riley, a neighbor of the Braelinn (Log House) pickleball courts, said he respected the players' desire to keep these courts, but they did not consider the wildly noisy side of pickleball. He mentioned several cities that had taken action regarding pickleball noise. The Recreation Advisory Group (RAG) and the 2023 SPLOST Committee both recommended building new courts away from residential areas and closing the Braelinn courts. He urged Council to stick to the plan for 18 courts near Meade Field.

Regina Char said she was embarrassed by Holland and Brown's behavior at the August 21 Council meeting. She called it disrespectful to the Mayor and to Johnson, as well as to staff. Holland and Brown should have raised their desire for a rollback earlier in the process, Char said, adding that a rollback this year would not benefit residential property owners, only businesses. She called for public meetings on this, saying she did not support financing a rollback by taking money from reserves. Char also complimented the new bicycle stands.

Jim Forrestal wanted to update Council on the status of the new Fayette Hockey Club travel team for ages 8 through 14. He said the Club had obtained its 501 c status and had met with the Peachtree City Hockey Association and agreed to coordinate the use of the hockey rink. Three days later, Forrestal related, he received an email from City staff saying the City would not recognize their organization or allow them to use City facilities due to a long-standing policy not to sanction two organizations offering the same services.

The City Manager met with both hockey groups and told them staff believed both groups were offering the same services and that this situation existed because of a dispute between the two organizations. Forrestal said the PTC Hockey Association had not offered a travel team since 2020. They attended one travel tournament each year because two coaches took the initiative to put an all-star team together. Those teams could not compete against true travel teams, hence the call for a true travel club.

At this point, Forrestal's time to speak expired. Holland asked to grant him more time, but Learnard said that would not be fair to the other speakers who had kept their remarks within the time limits. Forrestal said he was available for questions.

Agenda Changes

None

Work Session Discussion Items

A. Council Meeting Times

City Engineer Dave Borkowski said the contractor for the City Hall renovations had provided a construction schedule calling for work to start on November 10 and continue until June 2026. Staff would be moving to alternate locations, and Borkowski said it would be best if all City Council meetings were held in the

evenings during that period.

Strickland explained they would not be working in the Council Chambers, just in the upstairs and downstairs lobbies. This meeting time switch would enable the work to continue through Thursdays of each week before stopping to enable court to be held on Fridays. The chambers would be accessed through the side door.

Learnard mused that the construction period would be a rough time to ask 13,000 people to come in and get new cart decals.

B. Tree Trimming and Removal Services Bid

Public Works Director Jonathan Miller said the tree trimming contract would end September 30, and they had received several bids. The regular hours rate determined the low bid, and this resulted in a tie between two companies. The recommendation was to go with the incumbent, Total Outdoors. This would be brought to the next Council meeting, Miller said.

This year, the City asked for a discount rate if they used the compost site but discovered that once the cost of grinding was factored in, it would be more beneficial if they did not use it. He said the price was \$3 less than in the previous contract. This service was used for jobs that the City was not capable of doing, Miller said. It was a one-year contract with the option to renew.

Brown reflected that mulch was made from pine trees that were infected with pine bark beetles and asked if that spread the infestation? Miller said by the time the beetles killed a tree, they had already moved on to other trees. Mitigation in an urban environment called for clearing all the trees within 20 or 30 feet. The City did not use the mulch around City facilities, although they did give it away. Brown said she was concerned that citizens were getting infested mulch. Maybe they needed to put out a warning? Miller said they could.

C. Master Lease-Purchase – Lease Schedule #5

Bush said that every year Council was asked to approve the financing of equipment as part of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The items were purchased throughout the year, then financed through the Master Lease-Purchase Agreement with Bank of America. This was the final year of that agreement. She would know the interest rates and have documents at the next Council meeting on September 18. Closing was scheduled for September 23.

New Agenda Items

A. 09-25-01 FY25 Budget Amendment - Insurance Reimbursement - Kedron Bridge Guardrail Replacement

The City had received \$50,000 in insurance reimbursement toward the repair of the guardrail at the Kedron Bridge, which was damaged in a motor vehicle accident, Farron said. Council had already awarded the contract for repair to Piedmont

Paving. Farron explained that this amendment would increase appropriations for bridge maintenance.

Holland asked if the replacement guardrail would be more heavy-duty than its predecessor, and Borkowski assured him that it would be.

Johnson moved to approve 09-25-01 FY25 Budget Amendment - Insurance Reimbursement for the Kedron Bridge Guardrail Replacement in the amount of \$50,000. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Council/Staff Topics

1. Motion to put Ordinance 1218 on the October 2 agenda to discuss returning it to its original form

Holland said he had had a problem with Ordinance 1218 since it was passed and moved to put on the September 18 agenda an item to restore it to its original form prior to the amendment introduced by Learnard and Johnson. He said the revised ordinance imposed unnecessary restraints on elected officials and reinstating the original version would affirm their commitment to transparency, accountability, and the democratic principle that every Councilmember must have equal access to advocate for the best interests of the voters who elected them.

Brown seconded, but said this should be put on the October 2, not September 18, agenda. Holland said he would agree with that.

The Mayor said this was the first she had heard of this and recalled that they passed the amendment in early 2024 allowing Council members to put items on the agenda if they had the support of a majority of Council. She said this was a more generous policy than most cities had, and they arrived at it through a thoughtful process that ensured they did not bring forward items that required staff time only to discover that they did not have the backing of a majority of Council. She said Council's job was to talk to each other about what was best for Peachtree City, and she did not support re-visiting this.

Johnson said she was the one who suggested the amendment that a topic be brought up in a prior meeting to give transparency and time for citizens to learn about it. There were things about the ordinance that she did not like, and it was important that they be able to go back and correct problems. She said she was willing to re-visit this in October, but she did not think she could support putting the ordinance back exactly as it was. However, it was worth discussing.

The motion carried 3-1, with Brown, Holland and Johnson voting in favor, and Learnard against.

2. Motion to move forward with the Facility Use Agreement with the Fayette Hockey Club

Brown returned to the travel hockey situation Forrestal had discussed during the public

comments. She said the travel team had obtained its 501 c as the City had instructed, but they were being denied use of the rink. She thought they had been told they would have rink time if they got the 501 c. Now they were being told they were too much like the PTC Hockey Association. Was this different from what they did with every other sport?

Meeker stated he had previously mentioned the need for an IRS determination letter before the City could contract with them.

Strickland read from an email he had sent to Council and everyone involved after he met with Forrestal and the Hockey Association to try and work out an agreement regarding the new club's access to the hockey rink. The City's long-standing practice, though not codified in a written policy, was to avoid duplication of services by not entering into agreements with multiple organizations offering the same sport. The City currently recognized the Peachtree City Hockey Association as the official partner for both recreational and travel hockey, the email stated.

Strickland said Forrestal cited that soccer and baseball were sports where the City worked with multiple groups. Two associations did exist for soccer, but they shared the same president and operated collaboratively, with one overseeing the recreational league and the other overseeing travel teams. In baseball, Little League managed both the travel all-star and recreational programs, Strickland's email continued. Other travel teams existed, but they were not under City agreements or reliant on City fields.

He said a similar request was made from a competing baseball league, and it was denied by the City, and there had been a similar split involving swimming. In each case, staff had maintained its position of recognizing only one organization and encouraging the groups to resolve their differences internally. This would remain staff's position, and the City Attorney had reviewed this. Strickland said he told Forrestal he had the right to appeal to Council.

Holland commented that these groups were not the same. One was for recreational hockey and was a teaching league, while the travel team would be for more advanced players. Holland said the recreational teams from Peachtree City that had been to travel tournaments were unable to compete at that higher level. He asked why Peachtree City would deny talented players the opportunity to get on the best team they could put together.

Brown noted that there had not been a travel team since 2020, so there was no duplication. At the meeting, Strickland responded, the Peachtree City Hockey Association said they had travel teams every year.

There was no formal written policy that said there could not be two leagues sharing spaces, Brown continued, and the travel team had its 501 c. She did not think they should force groups to work together. It was not fair to citizens or to the players. Brown stated she did not want the Recreation Department to change the policy to stop this

from happening. She said she felt strongly that they should allow this travel group, which had done what they said they needed to do, to be scheduled independently for rink time.

Learnard told Forrestal she would like to learn more and offered to meet with him the next day.

Brown then made a motion to schedule rink time for the team, saying time was of the essence. Holland seconded.

Learnard again offered to meet with Forrestal, saying she needed more information before she could decide. Johnson asked what motion was on the floor, and Brown said it was for the team to schedule rink team.

Brown asked Forrestal the name of the travel team, and he replied that it was the Fayette Hockey Club.

Meeker then suggested that if Council desired, they could direct staff to move forward with a facility use agreement. Brown withdrew her motion and Holland his second.

Brown then moved that they move forward with a facility use agreement for the new travel team. Holland seconded.

Johnson said she did not know the details, but it seemed there had been a rift. She had heard conflicting information about the existence of travel hockey in Peachtree City and the ages of the players and said she would not be confident making a decision now because she needed clarity.

Johnson asked if this was just for practice and would not conflict with the present Hockey Association. Forrestal said during the August 22 meeting with the Hockey Association they agreed that the travel team could use the rink on Thursday nights from 6:30 to 8 and on Sundays from noon to 2. He said there were 30 players from 25 families registered for age groups 8, 10, 12, and 14. They wanted a higher level travel team, although Forrestal said they supported and needed the recreation league.

Strickland noted that the president of the Hockey Association was present if they wanted to ask any questions. Brown said she did not feel that was necessary. She said Forrestal said all they wanted was three and a half hours to be dedicated to the travel team.

Learnard asked if this paralleled what they had seen with baseball or swimming. Recreation Director Harold Layton said it did. When the travel team first proposed using hockey rink time, he called the Hockey Association president and was told the travel team did not fall under their umbrella. Layton said the association agreement did not allow subletting of the hockey rink, so the travel team would either have to become an association or fall under the Peachtree City Hockey Association umbrella. Council could

decide if they wanted to allow them to become an association or require them to join the Peachtree City Hockey Association.

Strickland told Brown that staff made this decision because it was consistent with what they had done with similar situations with other associations. He talked with Meeker, and they decided to follow those precedents.

There was a motion on the floor, Brown commented, but Deputy City Clerk Stacey Collins said she did not believe a motion was necessary. Meeker stated that the travel team would have to meet the City's requirements, such as liability insurance, and he anticipated the agreement being on the next agenda. He said that was why he phrased it as "moving forward."

Meeker also noted that there was an adult league, and its rink use would have to be taken into account. Layton noted that there was only one hockey rink, so scheduling was an issue, but he said it could be worked out if that's what Council wanted.

Holland asked if Meeker recommended putting this on the next agenda, and Meeker said the proper motion had been made to move forward. Brown explained that they could move forward and if the travel club qualified with everything that was needed to be formally approved by Council, then it could show up on the next agenda. Meeker said that was correct, and Brown said she saw no reason why Council should not let them move forward, adding that she did not think they should be forcing these groups to work together.

Johnson noted that this association said all they wanted to do was practice, and she would like to take them at their word and allow them to do so. However, she wanted the facility agreement to have that restriction specifically stated. She said she could support allowing them to do what they were asking to do, which was to have practice time. If they wanted more than that in the future, they could come back to the City. She would be fine with putting it on the next agenda.

Brown remonstrated that she did not want anything added to this agreement that wasn't in every other facility use agreement, saying it wouldn't be fair.

Learnard she was in favor of moving this forward but noted that did not mean they would approve it. Brown asked if the travel team could schedule practice time in the interim, and Learnard told her they could not. Holland asked why, and Meeker said getting a use agreement in place had to be the first step, although they could go ahead and negotiate a schedule for practices so they could be ready to go as soon as the agreement was signed.

The Mayor called for the vote to move forward with the facility use agreement, and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Motion to amend the ordinance to ban the feeding of wildlife

Brown moved that they look into an ordinance amendment to ban feeding of deer, although she realized enforcement would be difficult. Holland seconded.

Hobby said many communities had ordinances that banned feeding. Enforcement was an issue, although they could respond to complaints from neighbors.

Learnard said she would support this, and Brown said she would like to see sample ordinances from other cities. They would have to look into enforcement, and Meeker said they could make it a violation and set a minimum fine.

Hobby suggested they expand the ordinance to include all wildlife, such as raccoons and foxes.

The motion was to move forward with an ordinance that prohibited the feeding of wildlife, Brown reiterated. It carried unanimously.

4. Hunting on greenbelts near large private lots

Brown asked that they consider allowing people who owned property that abutted City green belts to hunt small areas into those green belts. She said they would probably have to look at each request on a case-by-case basis. She offered to sit down with Hobby and discuss this.

Learnard thought it best to wait and get the pilot program under their belts this year. Brown said the first hunt was not where the deer posed the worst problem. She knew of quite a few properties where there was an adequate greenbelt that the City could grant permission to hunt. The deer season lasted through January, and Brown said they could reduce the population substantially in residential areas if this was allowed. Learnard said she was concerned about the staff time the request reviews would consume.

Brown asked how many people had applied for the first weekend of the hunt at Flat Creek, and Hobby said it was around 100. The lottery would give preference to Peachtree City residents, and anyone not selected for the first weekend would be rolled into the larger lottery to cover the next 11 weeks. Hobby said 96 hunters would be authorized in total. This level of interest showed that they needed to expand the program, Brown remarked. Hobby said he would take a look at what expansion would entail.

5. Common Misunderstandings

The Mayor said she had the authority and responsibility to share factual information, and she wanted to clear up some misunderstandings. One regarded reports of a \$10 million backlog in maintenance of city facilities. In 2023, she reported, Bob Curnow came in as City Manager and discovered a sizable maintenance backlog from previous administrations. Two new maintenance technicians were hired, and the backlog had been eliminated.

Learnard inquired about this, and Strickland explained that American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds allocated for a fire station on MacDuff were reallocated to City renovation and maintenance projects including what they were about to do at City Hall, a new roof at Kedron, work at the Tennis Center, lighting at the ball fields, fixes to the Flat Creek boardwalk, and other projects. The 2023 budget added two new maintenance technicians for a total of five.

Strickland said he and staff were happy with the status of ongoing maintenance items. Most of the remaining projects were for bigger ticket items, such as covering the Kedron pool. They also had doubled the amount in the budget allocated for maintenance, so things could be taken care of immediately.

At the August 21 meeting, Learnard said, it became apparent that two Councilmembers had been meeting together or meeting with the City Manager behind closed doors, and she wanted to make it clear that was not against the law. As long as there was not a quorum present, Meeker stated, there was no violation of the Georgia Open Meetings law or City ordinance. There could be no more than two Councilmembers present.

Learnard said she just wanted to make it clear that two Councilmembers going behind closed doors to talk about the budget was not a violation of the law.

Executive Session

Holland moved to adjourn to executive session at 11:42 a.m. to discuss pending or threatened litigation. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Holland moved to reconvene in regular session at 11:50 a.m. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

Motion to deny the claim by Mr. Alex Barnard as presented

APPROVED 4-0

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

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary

Kim Learnard, Mayor