

City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 11, 2025
9:30 AM

Call to Order

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in special called session on Thursday, December 11, 2025. Mayor Kim Learnard called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Council members attending: Laura Johnson, Suzanne Brown, and Clinton Holland.

Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

None

Public Comment

Hung Kien To said he would like to speak to a judge and went on to outline problems he had with the Police regarding, among other things, inaccuracies on an arrest document.

Kimberly Shainsky asked Council to come up with a compromise on the outdoor burning ban for people who lived on larger properties. She said she lived on a one-acre lot in Smokerise, where there were lots of trees, and the homes were far apart so smoke from other lots should not be problematic. She also mentioned the cost involved in getting large amounts of yard waste removed.

Staisha Bannerman, also of Smokerise, stated that the many trees created debris that could quickly pile up and attract wildlife. Without the option to burn outdoor waste, they had to pay to have it removed, which was an ongoing expense. Bannerman acknowledged that smoke could cause breathing problems for some people but said that should not be an issue on larger lots. She proposed Council restore burning privileges to these larger lots, with regulations including allowing small controlled free burns a few times a year.

Another Smokerise resident, Ange Maihorn, explained that her family enjoyed Georgia's lack of regulations compared to California, their previous home. She, too, asked Council to reduce the restrictions for larger lots.

Pavel Shainsky echoed these comments, noting that wood that was stockpiled became a fire hazard.

Randy Hough said he had been clearing his wooded property for the 30-plus years of his ownership, and it would be a major expense to have the debris hauled away by professionals. He asked Council to make an exception to allow burning on large lots.

Agenda Changes

none

Minutes

Holland moved to approve the November 20, 2025, City Council meeting minutes, the November 20, 2025, Executive Session minutes, and the December 1, 2025, Special Called Meeting minutes, then rescinded his motion. Brown moved to approve the minutes with the changes she had recommended to the City Clerk. Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

A. November 20, 2025 City Council Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve with changes recommended by Councilwoman Brown
APPROVED 4-0

B. November 20, 2025 Executive Session Minutes

APPROVED 4-0

C. December 1, 2025 Special Called Meeting Minutes

APPROVED 4-0

Consent Agenda

Holland moved to approve Consent Agenda items A, B, and C. Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The Mayor noted that they had just approved a \$1,000 donation of in-kind materials from Bike-Walk Fayette.

A. Storm Water Maintenance Agreement - 215 Northlake Dr.

APPROVED 4-0

B. New Alcohol License - Bicicletta, 1263 N. Peachtree Parkway

APPROVED 4-0

C. Donation from Bike-Walk Fayette

APPROVED 4-0

Old Agenda Items

A. 11-25-05 Alcohol Ordinance Amendment and Fee Schedule Update

City Clerk Yasmin Julio reminded Council that she had presented them with some options regarding amending the alcohol ordinance. One was to allow retail sales of wine at restaurants with on-premises consumption licenses. The other was to allow for sip and stroll or entertainment districts.

Johnson said she was fine with the first portion but needed more information on the second change and asked that it be tabled. Holland agreed that these were two separate issues.

Julio asked if they wanted her to phrase the motion and said it should be to amend the alcohol ordinance with the proposed amendments to sections 6-113 and 6-122 and to table the amendments to the remaining sections. So moved, said Johnson, seconded by Brown.

Brown confirmed that this dealt only with bottles of wine and meant that all restaurants with alcohol licenses could sell unopened bottles of wine.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. 11-25-08 FY26 Budget Amendment- Sprung Structure for Kedron Aquatic Center

Assistant City Manager Chris Hobby reflected that they had a good informational visit to Jefferson and Chamblee to view their Sprung Structures pool enclosures. Staff recommended awarding the contract for the design to WM2A for a flat fee of \$247,500. If this were approved today, Hobby said, the final budget for the entire project should be ready for Council approval in late March or early April, which would put them on target for a June project start.

Holland moved to approve Old Agneda item 11-25-08 FY26, budget amendment- Sprung Structures for Kedron Aquatic Center in the amount of \$247,500. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

New Agenda Items

A. 12-25-01 Extension of Mechanical Services Agreement

City Engineer Dave Borkowski requested a one-year extension of their maintenance agreement with Shumate Mechanical. He said they had contracted with Shumate for more than 25 years, and Shumate was one of the only vendors in the area that had the certifications the City required. The price of \$177,500 represented no increase since 2024.

Holland asked if this was just for service or were parts included. Borkowski said low-cost items, such as filters, were included, but major items would be purchased from Shumate.

Holland moved to approve New Agenda item 12-25-01, extension of the maintenance agreement with Shumate Mechanical in the amount of \$177,500. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

B. 12-25-02 FY26- CVB Budget Amendment- Vehicles

Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) Executive Director Tyler Runyon explained that the CVB Board voted unanimously in favor of spending up to \$100,000 for the purchase of two new vehicles and wraps. The money would come from reserve funds funding by the hotel/motel tax, not from Peachtree City residents, he pointed out. The current 2020 vehicle, leased through the City, would be turned over to Public Works.

Learnard asked why this came before Council if it had been approved by the CVB Board, and Runyon replied that the bylaws required Council approval for any

purchase over \$20,000 that was not in the original budget.

Holland asked how the vehicles would be utilized, and Runyon said the CVB would use these vehicles to escort prospective clients and also for staff travel. They would probably purchase Ford Explorers.

Holland moved to approve New Agenda item 12-25-02 FY26- CVB Budget Amendment in an amount not to exceed \$100,000. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

C. 12-25-03 Part-Time Occupant Protection Specialist - Police Department

Assistant Police Chief Matt Myers explained that the Department's long-running child seat inspection program required that officers maintain certification through a national organization called Safe Kids. There was a lot of training involved in getting the initial certification, and ongoing training was required to maintain it. They had been using an employee of the County Health Department to supervise this training, but that person was retiring, so Myers was asking Council to okay the creation of a part-time position for someone with those credentials to work about 100 hours a year supervising training and helping out with car seat check events. He said the cost would be no more than \$2,500 annually and could be absorbed into the Department's part-time salaries budget.

Brown moved to approve New Agenda item 12-25-03, part-time occupant protection Specialist for the Police Department at an unspecified dollar amount. Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

D. 12-25-04 Consider termination of easement reserved by former Development Authority on NCR property

City Attorney Ted Meeker said he hoped his memo was self-explanatory, and Learnard asked him to summarize it. In 1988, Meeker related, NCR bought property from the Peachtree City Development Authority and an easement was granted in that agreement in favor of the former Development Authority. It had to do with ingress and egress and included language related to utility easements. Meeker said he believed this easement was for interparcel access, but all the adjacent properties had now been developed, and he said he did not believe that was needed. The present property owner had requested they terminate this easement. Because the Development Authority had been dissolved, its duties passed to the City.

Holland asked if there was a cost involved, and Meeker said there was not.

Meeker offered to phrase the motion, saying it should be to approve the termination of an easement as set forth in the agenda packet subject to legal review. So moved, said Holland, seconded by Brown.

There was a blanket termination for ingress/egress and utilities, Meeker stated, and

he and the other attorney were trying to avoid unintended consequences, and there was a version of this agreement that preserved the utility easement.

Motion carried unanimously.

Learnard said she hoped that meant something exciting was coming to the NCR property.

E. 12-25-05 Burn Ordinance Amendment

Brown thanked everyone who showed up to speak about the burn ordinance and also those who had communicated about it. She said she had been thinking about the burn ordinance since Council approved it in May 2025 and now believed they did not fully explore the impact of completely banning outdoor burning. She wondered if they could minimize the impact on residents by allowing burning on lots of one acre or more.

Prior to the changes on May 15, Section 42-45 mandated a permit for each day of burning. Only yard debris (no trash) could be burned, and the pile was limited to 75 cubic feet. A permit was not required for a cooking or entertainment fire. Permits were not issued during the statewide ban period from May 1 to September 30. That ban covered 54 counties, including Fayette, and was put in place because of pollutants, not fire danger.

Before the changes, Brown continued, citizens went to the City website to obtain a permit, which stated the rules that had to be followed, and the permit had to be kept on hand. The fire had to meet the specifications on the permit and had to be attended at all times and extinguished at dark.

Brown said the old requirements said an open fire had to be at least 50 feet from any structure, and a burn barrel or container must be at least 25 feet from a structure. All fires had to be at least 25 feet from the wood line, the old ordinance dictated. Burn permits had to be obtained for each day of burning and expired at sunset. The old ordinance restricted piles to five feet by five feet and three feet high. She repeated that only yard and garden debris and brush could be burned.

The Georgia Forestry Commission stopped issuing permits for burning in 2021, and the only restrictions were now imposed by cities and counties. Brown pointed out that Peachtree City Fire Marshal Jeff Felmet told Council there had never been a burn permit fire that spread to a structure in Peachtree City.

Brown went over the data that Felmet presented to Council in May. At that time, the total number of permits issued over the past 24 months was 4,881, with 1,423 issued over the previous 12 months. Over the 24 months prior to the ban, 1,509 addresses obtained burn permits, with 542 addresses obtaining them in the previous 12 months. Half of the permits over the past 24 months, 2,440, were issued to just 137 addresses, and 57% (811) went to 135 addresses over the 12

months prior to Felmet's presentation.

Felmet offered Council two options during that May presentation, Brown remarked. Option One was a total ban on outdoor burning of yard debris within the City limits. Option Two allowed burning on large lots, with the size to be determined by Council, and banned burning on lots smaller than that size. Brown presented a square that showed dimensions of a one-acre lot but noted that probably no lot in Peachtree City was an exact square.

Peachtree City had 1,702 residential lots that were one acre or larger, plus about 20 more that were zoned Limited Use Residential (LUR), bringing the total to about 1,720, and Brown said she wanted Council to consider allowing those 1,720 lots to be able to obtain burn permits. This was a low percentage of the more than 13,000 residential lots in the City, she remarked. That could be lowered even more if they left out the LUR developments that had commercial uses within them.

She showed the top 10 addresses by burn permit count in May and noted that the top permitted address, with 1.36 acres, were not inside the city limits. Of the remaining nine lots, all but one were less than an acre. Brown said it appeared that the people with small lots were doing the greatest amount of burning, and it was no wonder that people were complaining about irritation from the smoke.

Only 542 addresses received permits in the year before Felmet's presentation—totaling 1,423 permits—and the top permit-holder was not in Peachtree City. This led Brown to question whether Council had exaggerated the issue of burning. She said continuing the ban on lots smaller than an acre would protect neighbors from smoke because the houses were further apart.

Brown urged Council to consider Felmet's Option Two, saying that restricting burning to lots of one acre or more would take away the option to burn in most neighborhoods. Reinstating burning on larger lots would allow residents to manage yard waste by burning it on site. That was cost-effective, cut down on wildfire risk, and encouraged owners to control how much debris accumulated on their property. It was not practical to expect property owners to haul large amounts of debris away themselves, and it was expensive to pay someone to haul it away.

Brown pointed out that if permits were limited to lots of an acre or more, 12.6% of all residential lots in the city would be eligible, which she said amounted to almost a complete burn ban.

She concluded by suggesting that Council amend the burn ordinance so that owners of lots of one acre or larger could obtain burn permits with the same guidelines that existed before the total ban was adopted on May 15, 2025. Brown said this would show citizens that Council acknowledged the difficulty they suffered with a total ban, while minimizing smoke issues in more dense housing areas.

She went on to say the ordinance had worked for many years. A handful of burn permits were issued in neighborhoods with small lots and that negatively impacted a few residents. Brown concluded that reinstating burn permits only for properties that were one acre or larger should work for everyone. She asked for comments and questions.

Learnard remarked that Council decided to ban burning in May after at least two City Council meetings that included pleas from parents and children who suffered from asthma. The Fire Marshal said the risk was not of the fire spreading, but from smoke, and said that even a three-acre lot would not solve the problem of smoke lofting. She felt Council had explored this issue thoroughly, listened to all input, and made a unanimous decision to ban burning.

That ban started October 1, and the Mayor said they should allow time to see how it was working before making any changes. She said one of the cardinal rules set out in the Georgia Municipal Association training they all had completed was to do a thorough investigation, make a decision based on that, and move on. She said she realized this had an impact on some citizens and that was why Council spent so much time on it. Nothing was unexplored, she remarked. The issue was smoke, she reiterated, and the Fire Marshal had made clear that larger lot sizes would not eliminate the problem of smoke lofting.

She said in the new year, when they again had a Council of five, she would be willing to discuss new implementation strategies for yard debris, but she could not support changing this after a unanimous Council vote and only two and a half months of implementation.

Johnson noted that the presentation was not in the packet, so she had not been able to review all the information. She asked Brown if she had discussed her proposal with the Fire Department. Brown said she had not; she reviewed Felmet's presentation and discovered the proposal for Option Two. Brown also stated that a lot of citizens had complained to her about the ban, and most of those had one acre or larger lots.

Johnson said she remembered that Felmet had explained that the software used for permits could not distinguish the size of the lots. They would have to come up with a way to have the GIS data identify addresses that qualified, Brown acknowledged, and they could also have a staff member look at each application to see if it qualified.

Johnson then remarked that she would like to know where these larger lots were located. They had received an email talking about people who walked around the lake and had to pass through smoke-filled areas, and Johnson wondered if there were many locations where burning could be close to public areas.

She then asked Brown if she thought people who could obtain permits should be

able to burn as many days as they wanted. Brown said it would be as many days as they wanted but only in the months when the State allowed burning. Right now, Brown pointed out, people could legally burn in a fire pit. She added that she did not want them to create a condition where people were stockpiling debris on their lots.

Johnson returned to Brown's question: Had they created a bigger issue than already existed? She did not think they had because the issue that existed was people being in their own homes unable to breathe. That was a bigger issue than debris. However, Johnson said, she could be open to tweaking this ordinance if she had more time to get her questions answered.

There were many neighborhoods where every lot was less than an acre, Brown remarked, although some had a few lots that were larger. Most of the larger lots were on the southside of the city, Brown remarked. She asked Strickland if he could generate a map showing the location of the larger lots, and he said he could.

Johnson said people had come to her thanking her for the ban, while others asked why she supported it. She thought they went through a good process to adopt this, and it should be given more time. She acknowledged that some residents had been burdened and was open to considering a change but wanted it to be a process where they all had input.

If they waited too long, Brown commented, they would be getting back in the State's burn ban period. Johnson asked if they could ask the City Manager to gather some information so they could discuss it at the Council retreat.

The Mayor said she also wanted to look at three-acre lots. Brown countered that would not help the people with one-acre lots; there were only 155 lots of three acres or more, compared to around 1,700 of an acre or larger. A cleared lot of three acres might not have a debris problem, but an acre with a lot of trees would, she remarked. Limiting burning to three acres would not solve the problem for the majority of those who were impacted.

Learnard again said she was willing to have discussion in the new year. She asked Holland for his comments. He proposed a compromise that allowed burning on the 155 lots of three acres or larger, with designated days and times. Then, they could look at lowering the threshold even more once the fifth member joined the Council. Holland added that he, too, wanted more information.

Brown said allowing burning on just 155 lots turned a deaf ear on the other 1,500 large property owners who were impacted. She also mentioned that most of these property owners had never obtained a burn permit. She asked if they could see the size lots of the addresses that obtained permits, and Fire Chief Clint Murphy said that should be possible.

Holland asked the Mayor if she would entertain a motion to allow burning on lots of three acres or larger, but she said she would not, recalling that the Fire Marshal told them that three acres did not solve the problem of smoke lofting. She did not want to revisit something that had only been in place for a few months and said they should explore other options, which they could do in the new year.

Holland asked Johnson if she would support his motion, and she replied that it would not be done that day, but she would not rule it out in the future. She confirmed with Murphy that the program used for permits could not indicate the size of lots and noted that meant they could not enforce Holland's proposal right now. If they discussed this at the retreat, maybe they could bring ideas to the February Council meeting, she said, noting that would give people a few months when burning was still allowed. Johnson said she understood the need and did not want people to have debris piling up.

Holland moved to table this item until the first meeting in February. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearings

None

Council/Staff Topics

1. Brown remarked that the Wreaths Across America wreath laying ceremony would be the next Saturday at Camp Memorial Cemetery in Fayetteville.
2. Brown gave notice that she was going to put discussion of the three-minute time limit for public comment on the January 5 agenda.

Executive Session

Holland moved to adjourn to executive session at 10:42 a.m. to discuss personnel and the sale, lease, or acquisition of real estate. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Brown moved to reconvene in regular session at 10:48 a.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 10:49 a.m.


Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary


Kim Learnard, Mayor