

City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 16, 2026
6:30 PM

Call to Order

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in regular session on Thursday, April 16, 2026. Mayor Kim Learnard called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Council members attending: Laura Johnson, Suzanne Brown, Clinton Holland, and Michael Polacek.

Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

None

Public Comment

James Clifton said he had obtained the calendars of Peachtree City Council and staff leading up to the Kennesaw retreat where the Fayette County Development Authority (FCDA) spoke. He said he believed this information pointed to a plan for annexation of 1,500 acres in Coweta County with the intention of constructing a data center and extending TDK Boulevard.

He stated that on January 22, the Mayor and Holland attended an FCDA meeting, and the Mayor met with FCDA President Niki Vanderslice on January 27. Vanderslice made a presentation at the Council retreat on January 29 in which she discussed the revenue a data center could produce. She also mentioned a proposal for a flight training school west of the airport in Coweta County. The discussion then turned to the Crosstown TDK extension, and she confirmed that the developer wanted the extension as part of the deal. Clifton said the recording of the meeting showed that Councilwoman Brown voiced opposition to the extension.

Learnard then had asked Vanderslice what would be the next step for City Council in this process? Vanderslice stated that they should seriously consider annexing the property and tying it into a light industrial portfolio. The Mayor asked if there was time for an annexation study. The recording showed that City Manager Justin Strickland suggested two by two meetings with Council. Strickland met with Planning and Development Director Shayla Reed on February 2 in a meeting titled Annexation Plan, and the two by two meetings were held on February 9, with Holland paired with Polacek at 9 a.m., and Strickland meeting with Johnson at 10:30. The Mayor and Brown met with Strickland at noon. Clifton asserted that the meetings were planned to pair members in favor of the plan with those who might have reservations. The vote at the February 12 Council meeting was 5-0 to proceed with the annexation plan. Clifton stated that using two by two meetings to build consensus ahead of a vote was a violation of the Georgia Open Meetings Act.

He commented that there were many victims here, including three Council members that he said were kept in the dark about this plan. The fourth victim, Clifton concluded,

were the people of Peachtree City.

Shahzad Pirani, owner of a business in The Avenue, asked Council to vote in favor of creating entertainment districts, saying anything that encouraged people to linger would help local businesses.

Reshard Snellings with the Mark Baker for Georgia campaign urged everyone to be aware of the upcoming elections. He mentioned some of Dr. Baker's qualifications and asked that citizens consider him when voting for State Representative.

Agenda Changes

None

Minutes

Holland moved to approve the April 2, 2026 Work Session minutes and the April 2, 2026 Executive Session minutes. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

A. April 2, 2026 City Council Work Session Minutes
APPROVED 5-0

B. April 2, 2026 Executive Session Minutes
APPROVED 5-0

Consent Agenda

Holland moved to approve Consent Agenda item A. Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

A. FY2026 Budget Amendment — Recreation Department
APPROVED 5-0

Old Agenda Items

**A. 03-26-07 Budget Amendment and Purchase of Property at 107 Guthrie Way
— Parcel No. 0614 078, 1.03 acres**

City Attorney Ted Meeker told Council he believed they had negotiated a fair price, and the furniture would be included. Council members and staff had inspected the building, and Meeker said it was a great structure.

Holland moved to approve Old Agenda item 03-26-07, Budget Amendment and Purchase of Property at 107 Guthrie Way, Parcel No. 0614 078, 1.03 acres for \$3 million. Polacek seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

New Agenda Items

A. 04-26-03 Fire Station 85 – Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) Procurement

Fire Chief Clint Murphy introduced Project Manager Tim Symonds, who said they had issued a request for proposals (RFP) in March to find a construction manager at risk for the Fire Station 85 project. Fifteen contractors showed up for the pre-proposal meeting, and 14 submitted qualifying proposals. A six-member evaluation committee independently evaluated and scored each proposal, and the financial aspect was scored independently. From that, they determined that MEJA Construction was the clear frontrunner. Symonds said the recommendation was to award the contract to MEJA in the amount of \$422,500.

Brown asked Symonds if he would be staying on to oversee the entire project, and he said that was correct.

Holland moved to approve New Agenda item 04-26-03 to award a contract for Construction Manager at Risk for the Fire Station 85 project to MEJA Construction in the amount of \$422,500. Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

B. 04-26-04 North Hill Path

City Engineer Dave Borkowski was asking Council to award a contract for path construction between the two entrances of the North Hill subdivision. They received six bids and recommended Backbone Enterprises with a bid of \$943,416. Backbone did not have the lowest bid, but Borkowski said they submitted the lowest responsive bid. The low bidder, Corbett Group, did not meet the requirement for Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) pre-qualification. Borkowski said they interviewed Backbone Enterprises and checked their references before making this recommendation.

Holland asked when construction would start and finish? Borkowski replied that it would be discussed at the pre-construction meeting but estimated this would be about a six-month project.

Johnson moved to award the North Hill Path Project to Backbone Enterprises in the amount of \$943,416. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

C. 04-26-05 Drake Pavillion Additional Repairs

During the repair work on Drake Pavillion for the rotted wood that was previously discovered, more rot had been revealed, this time in the roof truss facing the lake.

Borkowski said this was not seen during previous investigations because the beams were covered by paint. The best plan would be to replace the whole truss, which would involve removing and replacing the roof in that area.

These large beams were specialty items that would take approximately six weeks to fabricate and arrive on-site. Borkowski said the lakeside portion of the pavilion would be barricaded until the repairs could be completed.

Brown asked about the amount of the current contract, and Borkowski said he did not remember.

Holland noted that this repair would add 63 days to the construction time and wondered if this would be finished before the Fourth of July festivities. Borkowski said that was the goal, but the pavilion would still be usable with just the one arm blocked.

Johnson asked how many trusses there were. Borkowski said there were at least four in that one section. Why did these beams rot and not the others? Johnson continued, and Borkowski said his best opinion was because this area faced the lake and was more subject to moisture. He said they looked at all the other beams, and they were fine.

Brown said this was \$43,000 to pay for remediations because a previous Council chose to use a lower grade of wood. It was frustrating, she remarked.

Holland moved to approve New Agenda item 04-26-05, change order to Willow Dell for Drake Pavilion repairs in the amount of \$43,140. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

D. 04-26-06 Alcohol Ordinance Amendment and Fee Schedule Update

Learnard asked City Clerk Yasmin Julio to outline the updates that Council would be voting on. Julio said she understood that the intention was not to include mixed-use properties, so the words "mixed-use" were removed from the ordinance in three sections, which she read. Learnard said Council all had copies of the revised ordinance.

Holland thanked Julio for making those changes because they needed clarity that this was for commercial locations only. He also noted that all applicants would still have to get approval from Council. He pointed out that this was a one-year trial, and Council would evaluate how well it worked after that year.

Brown read a statement. She said cities that allowed open containers and public consumption of alcohol could be less safe for minors because of easier access to alcohol, open container areas, normalized public drinking, and increased opportunities for minors to obtain alcohol through adults, older peers, or lax vendor

enforcement. She said there could be a higher chance of unsafe situations caused by public intoxication that raised the risk of accidents, violence, and impaired judgment.

Brown went on to say that Peachtree City had always embraced family values with green spaces, parks, recreation and shared-use paths. She stated that those who wanted to change this ordinance were minimizing the potential negative impacts. She said other commercial areas probably would make some modifications to qualify as entertainment districts, which she believed would move Peachtree City toward being a party city instead of a family-oriented community.

A \$500 fee had been proposed to cover additional costs to the city, but Brown stated that would barely be enough to cover the cost for staff to investigate a permit application. It did not take into account the daily Police coverage that would be required in the entertainment district.

Brown remarked that she was bothered by people who moved to Peachtree City then wanted to change it into something else. She said she could not support this as a Christian conservative grandmother of three teens who lived in Peachtree City. She stated that she wanted Peachtree City to remain the city that stood apart from all the other cities and urged anyone who wanted a party city to move elsewhere.

At the last Council meeting, Brown commented, she and Johnson were the only members in opposition and also were the only two who had teenage children or grandchildren living in Peachtree City. She said they were fighting to protect the families, while the three who spoke in favor didn't have teens here.

Johnson wanted it to be clear that Councilmembers might vote the same way on an issue, but for different reasons. She said she agreed with some things that had been said but not with others. Safety was her biggest concern, because The Avenue's parking and pedestrian areas were not well-separated. Johnson added that she would not tell anyone to move out of Peachtree City, but remarked that they could drive to another area if this was the environment they would like. She again said she was not in favor of entertainment districts here.

Polacek said he wanted to address some of the concerns he had heard regarding this ordinance change. His statement began by saying he respected the perspectives and views of his peers and had listened to every concern that came forward. He had looked at the data and talked to stakeholders who had implemented these policies. He said he would review a few of these common themes. He also reiterated that they would be testing this for 12 months to see if it would be a good fit for Peachtree City and The Avenue.

One of the first concerns Polacek said he heard was that just because other cities were doing this did not mean Peachtree City should. He agreed that they should not follow trends blindly, but other suburban communities had adopted these

districts because they worked as a way of supporting small businesses and creating safe, vibrant public spaces. When businesses succeeded, the city would benefit, he stated.

He disputed the statement that this would turn Peachtree City into a “party city,” saying he doubted that anyone would drive across Atlanta so they could party at The Avenue. Allowing responsible adults to carry a drink within a defined area would not change the character of the community, Polacek remarked, adding that this ordinance would enhance a specific commercial area to make it more walkable and enjoyable for residents and more revenue-generating for businesses.

Underage drinking was already illegal and would remain illegal. He said he found no credible evidence or data from comparable cities that showed that open container districts led to increased underage drinking. One piece of research showed that having activity concentrated in a defined area made oversight easier, not harder. He said he found no evidence that having these districts led to more crashes, fights, and strain on the Police and noted that Peachtree City’s Public Safety officials had reviewed the ordinance and shared no concerns either. He said that was the most important endorsement when considering this policy.

There had been statements that this abandoned Peachtree City’s family values, and Polacek strongly disagreed with that perspective. Many of special events that already incorporated open container, whether concerts, festivals, or Drake Field events were overwhelmingly family-friendly, he said, and mentioned that just the previous week, The Avenue successfully hosted its First Friday concert with no issue.

Polacek said there had been comments about pedestrian safety due to the setup of The Avenue, and that was something he was eager to see tested during the trial. However, he was comfortable supporting this because there had been no problems during special events at The Avenue.

He said he believed they could maintain the character that made Peachtree City special while also supporting small businesses. Polacek stated that he learned during his campaign that folks of all generations wanted more opportunities to gather. He predicted this 12-month trial would be successful, but if it did not work out, they had the ability to revisit it.

Meeker noted there had been a few references to 12 months and wanted to clarify that alcohol licenses were issued on a calendar year basis, from January 1 to December 31. That meant this was, in essence, a 7.5-month trial period. There would not be any automatic continuation for a period of 12 months. The license would expire and must be renewed in January. Council could revisit this at the end of the year, he stated, or in five years, because once they adopted the ordinance, it was in the books for as long as Council wanted.

Polacek asked if seven months was sufficient to get the data they wanted?

Strickland noted that they would not be getting the permit that night. They would have to apply, which took time. If the Council wanted 12 months, they could review the data and decide if they wanted to renew the permit in January and look at it again when it hit the 12-month mark. Council could change ordinances at any time, Meeker remarked.

Polacek said he was open to amending this to put in a sunset clause if that made the other Council members more comfortable, but Learnard said she was sure they would revisit this. Holland said he wanted a review at the end of the year and at the end of 12 months.

Holland moved to approve New Agenda item 04-26-06, Chapter 6-Alcohol Ordinance and Fee Schedule amendment with changes as presented. Polacek seconded. Motion carried 3-2, with Holland, Learnard, and Polacek voting in favor, and Brown and Johnson opposed.

Public Hearings

None

Council/Staff Topics

1. Drake Pavilion

Strickland had the numbers on the Drake Field Pavilion that Brown had requested earlier. The original award was \$119,405. The change order was for \$43,140, bringing the total cost of the repairs to \$162,545. The original cost of the pavilion in 2018 was \$187,620, only \$25,000 more than the cost of these repairs. Of course, Johnson pointed out, that was not what a new pavilion would cost now.

2. Liberty Tree Dedication

Holland asked if there were plans for a dedication for the Liberty Tree? Recreation Director Harold Layton said they would do that during the afternoon festivities on the Fourth of July.

3. Arts Council.

Strickland noted that they usually called for applications to volunteer boards in July. Was Council okay with waiting until then to take applications for the newly created arts group? They said they were fine with that. Julio said it worked well to have all the City's volunteer positions open at one time so people could choose between them. Some applied to several groups.


Executive Session

None

Adjourn

There being no further business, Holland moved to adjourn at 7:14 p.m. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.


Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary


Kim Learnard, Mayor