City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 18, 2026
6:30 PM

Call to Order

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in regular session on Thursday, June 18, 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

Presentation

A. Commemoration of Joel H. Cowan's 90th Birthday with Online Exhibit

Library Director Jill Prouty introduced a new online feature for the Library's Joel Cowan History Room. The History Room, she explained, was started in 1987 by Library Manager MT Allen for the purpose of collecting and preserving documents related to the history of Peachtree City. They had done a lot of collecting, Prouty said, but the latest push was to make those documents accessible to the public. She thanked everyone who had been involved in launching this project. There were cards available that listed the library's digital resources with a QR code linking them.

This new exhibit was titled The Development of Peachtree City: A New Town for South Metro Atlanta. Prouty said they had tried to pare down this story to its essence, but more information would be added later. The exhibit told the story of how young Joel Cowan was hired and the efforts he and others made to build this new city from the ground up.

Prouty remarked that they were fortunate to have Cowan, still a Peachtree City resident, in attendance. The Mayor stepped forward to read a proclamation declaring June 23, 2026, Cowan's 90th birthday, Joel H. Cowan Day in Peachtree City.

B. FY2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report

David Irwin of Mauldin & Jenkins LLC presented the annual comprehensive financial report for fiscal year 2025, saying they were issuing a clean, or unmodified, opinion, which was the highest standard. This was the 37th time Peachtree City had earned this ranking. Irwin went over sections of the financial report his firm had provided, including the government-wide financial statement, general fund revenues and expenses, and the fund balance history and breakdown for the year.

He outlined reasons why it was important to maintain a strong fund balance and

noted that although Peachtree City's audit was done in September, before tax revenues came in, the City still maintained about seven months of operating expenses.

Irwin commended Council and staff, saying this kind of financial report was the result of expertise and cooperation.

Johnson said staff deserved praise, and Holland said it was indeed an impressive report. City Manager Justin Strickland noted that finance discussions would continue on Monday when the first public meeting on next year's budget was scheduled.

C. 250th Independence Day Celebration Proclamation

The Mayor noted that this was the 250th year of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. She said the Recreation staff was working hard on the City's festivities. Part of the celebration would be the dedication of the Liberty Tree, planted at City Hall in 2025 in partnership with the Sons of the American Revolution and Daughters of the American Revolution.

Learnard read a proclamation, which included the story of the original Liberty Tree in Boston, Massachusetts, saying that it "served as a gathering place for patriots advocating for freedom and self-determination and became a powerful symbol of resistance to tyranny and devotion to liberty."

The proclamation went on to say that the commemorative plaque at Peachtree City's Liberty Tree would honor the significance of this historic symbol and ensure that future generations understood and appreciated the sacrifices made in pursuit of liberty and independence.

The Mayor proclaimed July 4, 2026 as America 250 Day and Liberty Tree Commemoration Day in Peachtree City and encouraged "all residents to reflect upon our nation's history, honor the sacrifices of those who secured our independence, celebrate the blessings of liberty, and participate in activities commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America."

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

None

Public Comment

Heather Harding, president of the North Cove Community Association, expressed concern about the scale of tree removal that was occurring as a new shared use path was being built along North Peachtree Parkway. She said Public Works had told her there was no plan for replanting. She also noted the lack of a physical barrier between the road and the path, saying it was a safety hazard and also expressed concerns that

this new path would make their neighborhood a cut-thru. Harding asked Council to re-evaluate their plans as this project continued.

The Mayor assured her Council would be discussing this issue.

John Rapp of Botero Carts told Council that Botero supported efforts to improve safety on the paths, but new restrictions on carts had put a strain on their business. Rapp said a large portion of the carts sold through his industry no longer qualified to be registered in Peachtree City because they were too wide. There were just two manufacturers of six-seater carts that met Peachtree City's new standards, and only two dealers in the city that carried those brands. He said Botero had lost 20% of its business due to this issue and another 30% due to weight restrictions that applied to the brands Botero carried.

Rapp said Botero's future looked bleak, and closing would leave 18 employees without jobs. Their landlord would be affected by their breaking the lease they had just signed. He noted that the business's local charitable and tax contributions exceeded $2 million since they had opened, and that would be gone. He also mentioned that many customers would be unable to get their carts serviced if the selling dealer went out of business. Rapp said Botero was willing to work with the City on adopting more inclusive measures that would still promote path safety.

North Hill Homeowners Association (HOA) President Nicole Braun also wanted to talk about the path project. She said she had worked with the City engineers on the project and was told the columns and gate needed to be moved. Now, they were being told the columns might not have to be moved. She said a site visit was promised but had not occurred. Her understanding was that the columns would remain in place, and the path would pass within four feet of them. She said this posed a safety hazard, and she was concerned that carts would collide with the columns and that the new traffic pattern would lead to collisions with vehicles on the street.

Braun also mentioned the loss of the trees that formed a greenbelt between their neighborhood and the road. She said she had been repeatedly assured that there would be a landscape plan to restore the trees, but she had not seen one.

The Mayor assured her Council would discuss this issue.

Cary Cook addressed path connectivity plans being promoted by the Atlanta Regional Commission and Fayette Forward. Cook said Peachtree City's paths already had issues brought about by reckless use and congestion and did not need additional traffic. He presented a petition signed by 161 residents who were opposed to connecting to areas outside the city.

Fairy Worthem, president of Homefront Families of Military Heroes, asked Council to support the group's efforts to erect a monument to honor families of military members and respect their sacrifices.

Agenda Changes

Holland moved for immediate discussion of New Agenda item B, Resolution to introduce Local Legislation regarding LHOST. Polacek seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

City Clerk Yasmin Julio said the Georgia General Assembly had convened a special session in which they planned to consider local legislation authorizing counties to hold a Local Homestead Option Sales Tax (LHOST) referendum in November. Fayette County was considering pursuing that, and any municipality that wanted to receive LHOST revenue would have to pass a Resolution of Intent.

Holland moved to approve New Agenda item 06-26-06, Resolution to introduce Local Legislation regarding LHOST. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

A. June 4, 2026 City Council Work Session Minutes

Johnson moved to approve the June 4, 2026 Work Session minutes. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

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

Learnard said they just accepted a donation of a heavy-duty gasoline-powered golf cart, valued at $11,000, from the Rotary Club of Peachtree City. The Police Department would be using it for path patrols.

A. New Alcohol License - J. Alexander's
APPROVED 5-0

B. Donation Acceptance from Rotary Club of Peachtree City
APPROVED 5-0

Old Agenda Items

None

New Agenda Items

A. 06-26-05 Fire Station 85 - Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) Approval of GMP

Fire Chief Clint Murphy told Council they were close to having a guaranteed maximum price for the new fire station and would bring that to them for a vote at

the July 9 meeting. The initial cost estimates had shown it would be within budget and meet all the parameters set in earlier meetings.

Holland asked if this was for a manager, and Murphy said no, it was for the maximum amount the fire station would cost. City Manager Justin Strickland said this would be the last vote before construction began. A groundbreaking was scheduled for August, Murphy reported, and the fire station should be complete around May of 2027.

B. 06-26-06 Resolution to introduce Local Legislation regarding- LHOST
See Agenda Changes section

C. 06-26-07 Classification of two new part-time positions for Youth Council and Public Art Program Managers and one position retitle for the Economic Development Director

Strickland recalled that Council had recently approved two part-time positions for two new volunteer groups, the Youth Council, which also included a Youth Activities Committee, and a Public Art Group. He and Dr. Teaa Allston-Bing had created job descriptions for these two positions. The Youth Council position would be at salary grade 112, and the Art Group position would be grade 110. Because both position were part-time, there would be no cost other than the actual salary paid hourly.

Along with these changes, Strickland recommended retitling the Economic Development Director position to Destination & Economic Development Director. They had explored the idea of having an Economic Development Director but decided that those duties could be done in conjunction with the existing position of Convention and Visitors Bureau Executive Director, currently held by Tyler Runyon. Strickland said if this was approved, Runyon would assume the new title the following Monday, handling tourism and also serving as the point man for economic development.

Strickland read the motion: to approve the classification of two new part-time positions and retitling of the Economic Development Director to the Destination & Economic Development Director as presented. So moved, said Holland, with Polacek seconding the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearings

A. 06-26-08 Text Amendment to the Sign Ordinance, specifically Chapter 66, to allow halo-lit (reverse channel/backlit) wall signs

Planning Director Shayla Reed said this text amendment was initiated at a February Council meeting. The Planning Commission discussed it in April and

voted to send it on to Council on June 8. She showed photos of these types of signs.

The sign ordinance was in Chapter 66 of the City's Code of Ordinances and said illuminated signs were prohibited. However, staff had identified several locations where reverse channel illuminated signs had been permitted and installed through the Master Sign Plan program in specific business developments. She displayed a list of these developments, saying they had to be multi-business areas and the plan must have been approved by the City.

Staff had talked with businesses that already had these halo-lit signs to get specific details that would help them if they decided to amend the codes. She had added a proposed definition of halo-lit signs and language to allow for these types of signs. Staff also proposed adding language to specify what color and temperature would be allowed. They looked around the city and talked with one business that had an attractive sign. Staff then contacted the company to get specifics and decided that would be maximum allowed, which was 6500 Kelvin and 9112 Lumens.

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

Brown asked about the proposed requirement that signs could be no more than 15 inches from the wall. Shayla said that was pre-existing language and kept the signs from projecting too far from the building.

Holland asked about the photos of halo-lit signs, noting that this type of sign was common. City Attorney Ted Meeker noted that their sign ordinance had not kept up with technology. Someone applied for one of these signs, he reported, and he and Reed had a discussion about why they were not permitted and decided it was time to propose an amendment. Strickland pointed out that there were already hundreds of them in the city. Meeker noted this would simply close a loophole and allow halo-lit signs in areas that did not have a Master Sign Program.

In the photos, Johnson noted, one sign had a warmer light and the other looked cooler. Would both be allowed? Reed said the maximum requirement matched the lumens used by Chick-fil-A to get a soft look. The other photo was just an example of a halo-lit sign.

Strickland pointed out that some existing businesses had these signs with colored lights. They would be grandfathered in, but if the existing business closed, the new owners might not be allowed to put the colors back. Reed noted that there might be a sign program that allowed colored lights. Changes made in the sign ordinance would not apply to areas with sign programs. Meeker remarked that warm white, cool white, and natural white would be allowed, as long as the Kelvins did not exceed 6500.

Holland moved to approve Public Hearing item 06-26-08 Text Amendment to the

Sign Ordinance, specifically Chapter 66, to allow halo-lit (reverse channel/backlit) wall signs. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

B. 06-26-09 Variance request from stream setback and buffer, 435 Seabiscuit Walk

This property was in the Mill Farm subdivision, zoned Limited Use Residential (LUR-21). The applicant was asking for a variance to allow encroachment into the stream buffers, specifically the 50-foot undisturbed natural vegetative buffer and the additional 25-foot impervious cover setback. They would remain within the State buffers, but encroach on City buffers, and Reed indicated this on a site plan of the lot.

When the subdivision plat was approved in 2024, Reed stated that the developer indicated they had a house footprint that would fit on the lot without encroaching into the designated stream buffers. She had provided Council with both site plans as well as information the developer had provided to claim hardship if this variance was not granted.

Attorney Steven Jones, representing Jeff Lindsey Communities, and Engineer Matthew Gray of Moore Bass Consulting spoke on behalf of the applicant, Redwine Development. Jones said they had mitigation credits to build the road over the stream, then they pushed the stream further south.

Originally there were plans to construct a home outside of the impervious buffer, but purchasers came along that loved this lot and wanted a larger home there. Jones said that left them with two options: one was to reduce the impervious buffer and setback, while option two would be to go into the buffer further with additional mitigation credits to cut the stream down and impact the wetlands to the south, which would be more environmentally intrusive.

Jones said their Land Disturbance Permit allowed them to disturb the area within the buffer, but they left the stream untouched because they did want to intrude into the wetlands. They just cut the stream back and piped it to the extent necessary to put the road in. But now the purchasers had selected a plan that would not fit within the existing buffers, Jones said they needed this variance. The alternative would involve moving the stream and further impacting the wetlands. He described it as a "regulatory fix" versus a "land development fix."

Gray used the site plan to illustrate the already disturbed areas. He said this was permitted, and they obtained mitigation credits through a lengthy process with the Army Corps of Engineers. He said the site would not need any additional grading for a house of this size to be constructed. Gray explained that he was not involved in the mitigation credit process, and they did not realize the house area was in the buffer until later.

This was not an undisturbed stream buffer now, Gray noted. It had graded slopes per the erosion control plan. He showed where the wetlands would be disturbed if the variance was not granted and where the buffer would be. In order to move the buffer and avoid this variance process, they would have to do another set of plans, with additional Army Corps permitting and going through the City to get new construction plans approved. Jones clarified that the buffer could be pushed back, but it would require additional disturbance in the wetlands.

The prospective property owner, Ms. Patel, spoke, saying she and her husband loved this lot and wanted to build their "forever home" there.

The Mayor opened the public hearing. No one wished to speak either in favor or in opposition to this request, and she closed the hearing. Learnard asked if Council had any questions.

Brown mentioned that at the 2023 hearing to rezone this development from R-12 to LUR to reduce the setbacks, the Planning Director presented a list of recommended conditions. Brown thought the most important was "The location of all flood plains, wetlands and associated buffers shall be field located and surveyed. None of these areas shall be located within the buildable envelope of a lot." She said the word "shall" was legally binding, adding that this condition was not removed or amended during that hearing. She asked Jones if they had complied with this condition.

Jones said they did, claiming that what they were talking about now were stream buffers and setbacks, not the flood plain and wetlands mentioned in that condition. Learnard asked him to repeat that distinction. Jones did, adding that the stream could be piped back further, but the variance request was an attempt to avoid intrusion into those environmentally sensitive areas.

Learnard asked by what authority the stream could be relocated or paved over? The Corps of Engineers would have to permit it, Jones stated. Gray said the issue of the buffers came up at the final plat, when the City Engineer said the buffers would still apply. It had been their understanding if they graded and put in silt fence, the lot would be allowed, he continued, but they learned they could not do that during the final plat approval process. Jones said the point was that the lot had been pad-graded. They relocated the stream, then the buffer went on top of the lot. Jones described it as a regulatory stream buffer that was imposed on a lot that was already developed.

Learnard asked if the slab was poured, and Jones said it was pad-graded. Gray said all the lots were pad-graded and ready for construction to begin.

The Army Corps of Engineers issued the mitigation credits, using a complex formula, Gray stated. Was the City involved in that decision, Learnard asked, and Gray said they might be involved, but it was primarily through the State and Army Corps of Engineers. Of course, Jones said, the Land Disturbance Permit was

issued by the City.

Holland wanted to know where the downstream water went from this lot. Gray said water went into the detention basin, then into the lake, and eventually to a tributary and the Flint River. Holland noted there were seven and a half miles of the river that were protected because water was drawn off for drinking water. Gray said that was handled in the approved hydrology plan for the entire development.

Learnard said it would be an understatement to say she was not prepared to approve this. She was concerned about the claim that without this variance they would have to move the stream and further the environmental impact. She said the last thing Council wanted to do was exacerbate what looked to be a difficult situation. Did they need to learn more before they made a decision?

Holland agreed, saying he wanted to leave wetlands and undisturbed buffers alone.

Brown wanted to know Meeker's opinion because she interpreted the original condition for rezoning to mean that this lot should not have a house inside the parameters of the buffer. Meeker asked her to read the condition again and said the "associated buffers" language spoke to buffers beyond the wetlands. The wetlands were a Federal jurisdiction more than a City one, he continued, but the language associated with buffers was what they were there to decide. Learnard said this was a stream buffer, which Meeker again noted was an associated buffer.

There was a significant portion of this lot where no structure was allowed, Brown commented, asking why it was not divided or merged with another lot or deeded to the HOA. Gray again stated that this was first brought up on the final plat, and they had previously thought the mitigation had negated the original buffers.

Meeker remarked that there was discussion about this lot and what could be put there during the approval phase in 2023. There was the concept of a smaller house (1,200 square feet) that would fit within the buildable envelope, but that was not what the buyers wanted or what was consistent with the rest of the development.

Holland said he did not like the idea of intruding into buffers and wetlands. He recalled that in 2023, they were careful to create the correct lot sizes to avoid issues like this.

Brown said she believed the house could be made larger and still fit on the lot without encroaching on the setbacks.

The applicant had said they would have to move the stream if the variance was not granted, and Learnard asked if the City could control that. Meeker said they would go through the Corps for permission to move the stream, then back to the Planning Commission to approve the new plat. It would not come before Council again. Interim City Manager Jonathan Miller said they might have to buy more mitigation

credits. Approval would be up to the Army Corps of Engineers.

Holland noted that the City had no jurisdiction if they pursued this path. Learnard said she could not approve the variance.

Brown again stated that a flaw with the original design plan put this lot next to this stream buffer, and the resolution would be to construct a home within the buildable area. Since there was a solution to put a house on that lot, she could not support this variance.

Johnson said she was not inclined to approve this because there were other avenues that could be pursued. Polacek agreed.

Holland moved to deny Public Hearing item 06-26-09, variance request from stream setback and buffer, 435 Seabiscuit Walk. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Council/Staff Topics

1. Budget Presentation

Learnard stated that the City Manager would begin the budget season on Monday June 22 with a presentation at 5 p.m. It was open to the public.

2. Naming of the Library

Holland said he felt it was time for Council to again discuss renaming the Library. He read a list of the many City facilities that had been named in honor of past leaders, mostly men, and said it was time to rename the Library for M.T. Allen, 40-year library manager and first female City employee. He suggested they put this on a Council agenda in August.

Polacek said he liked the idea, and Johnson said she had a few questions, such as cost. Brown said she did not support it. Johnson wondered if there would be donation from the family to offset the cost of changing the sign and re-printing documents.

Holland said he was talking about naming it the M.T. Allen Memorial Library. Prouty stated that using the word "memorial" was traditional for libraries.

3. Scout troop

Learnard commended the Boy Scout troop in attendance.

4. July Council meeting

Julio said there would be only one meeting in July, on July 9.

5. City Offices closed

All City offices would be closed on June 19 for the Juneteenth holiday, Julio added.

6. North Hill path project concerns

Polacek said he had received many calls about the North Hill path projects, which was a 2017 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) project. He recalled that there had been a discussion of replanting the trees, and he would support tapping into the Tree Fund to plant mature trees.

Strickland said he and Miller would be talking to the HOAs on June 22. He said Polacek's comments were accurate, and he wanted the HOAs to have input into the tree planting. Polacek said the concerns included the lack of a barrier, and Strickland said he would investigate all potential safety issues.

Executive Session

Johnson moved to adjourn to executive session at 8:37 p.m. to discuss pending or threatened litigation and the sale, lease, or acquisition of real estate. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Holland moved to reconvene in regular session at 9:14 p.m. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

Holland made a motion to deny the claim by Julie Lincoln as presented. Polacek seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary

Kim Learnard, Mayor