



**WORK SESSION NOTES  
MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
CITY OF DULUTH, GA  
MAY 22, 2023**

**PRESENT: Mayor Harris, Council members Harkness, Thomas, Doss, Graeder, and Whitlock, City Manager, Department Directors, City Attorney**

**Mayor Harris called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.**

**I. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Rob Froehbroht came forward and thanked the city for allowing him to serve as the facilitator for the annual strategic conferences since 2011. He commended staff and the elected officials for the progress that Duluth has made over the last 12 years. He said he is cutting back on the amount and type of work but always be available.

Council expressed appreciation for the partnership over the years to ensure that city leadership created goals and implemented strategic visions.

Mayor Harris also thanked the City Manager and Economic Development Director for working over the weekend, meeting with members of the community.

**II. DISCUSSION ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS/UPDATES**

**1. ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT PRESENTATION**

City Auditor Josh Carroll with Mauldin and Jenkins presented the City's annual FY22 audit report, which includes the city as a whole, including the Downtown Development Authority and the Urban Redevelopment Agency. He said that the audit confirms the city's financial statements were prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). The city received an "unqualified opinion" or "clean audit;" in the independent auditor's judgment the City's financial statements are fairly and appropriately presented and in compliance with GAAP.

Mr. Carroll noted that segregation of duties still prevents some level of risk, but mitigating efforts have been initiated. From a cost benefit standpoint it's likely not worth hiring a new person since other internal controls are in place. He also highlighted some of the new services offered by Mauldin & Jenkins; Governmental advisory service, cybersecurity services, and additional free training classes for clients.

Mr. Carroll also said that upcoming new GASB pronouncements will have significant changes to the financial statements in the coming years.

*Staff was authorized to place acceptance of the FY22 Audit Report on the next Council consent agenda.*

## 2. 2023 PAVING & PRESERVATION UPDATE

Public Works Director Audrey Turner came forward to present information regarding upcoming High Density Mineral Bond and 2023 LMIG paving bids. This is first year for Duluth to use HDMB as a preservation technique. Ms. Turner gave an overview of the process, which has been in use for approximately 15 years, but mostly out on the west coast. It is more beneficial for environmental purposes, expected to have a 7 year life span, and much more cost effective. For this project, there will be 19 streets improved at an estimated cost of under \$200,000. In comparison, there were 9 streets paved last year using a different method at a cost of \$2.75 million.

Council asked questions about mitigating the effect on the residents of those streets, how to communicate with residents, and what the overall product would look like.

Ms. Turner said it would be daytime work, starting in the morning and opening up in the evening. The work is performed while school is out but some home deliveries, etc. may be affected. They are very enthusiastic about using this new technique and the products and she showed examples of before/after photos. They are starting with smaller neighborhoods to minimize the impact on parking.

In neighborhoods such as Baxley Ridge, they may use the "one side per day" approach but that is not as cost effective for the subcontractor and won't work in larger neighborhoods. Staff plans to communicate with their HOA but will also use door hangers for notification. The color of the pavement will look a bit dark like new paving, but there will be some fading similar to regular asphalt. Anticipated bid award is set for the June 12 agenda.

## 3. TITLE VI UPDATES

{A}

City Engineer Margie Pozin explained that each year, the City is required to submit annual reports to Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) specific to Duluth's Title VI Program. The program prohibits discrimination and seeks to ensure equal treatment in any program or activity.

She updated Mayor and Council on this year's annual reporting and presented the highlights of the submission, covering annual accomplishments such as providing comprehensive translation services, outreach and events to attract diverse populations, etc. The plan also notes areas for improvement. The full package will be presented to Council in June to allow staff to submit the package to GDOT prior to June 30, 2023.

*Staff was authorized to place this item on the next Council consent agenda.*

#### 4. 2017 and 2023 SPLOST CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE

{B}

Asst. City Manager/Finance Ken Sakmar provided a financial update relating to final collections on the 2017 SPLOST and outline short term pending projects planned for the 2023 SPLOST. To summarize, the following category expenditures are as follows:

- Transportation 46.17%
- Recreation Facilities 18.29%
- Public Safety 13.97%
- Parking Facilities 2.54%
- Sewer 10.16%
- Administrative Facilities 7.65%
- Cultural Facilities 1.22%

Projects currently budgeted and funded with the 2014 and 2017 SPLOST will continue to move forward. Several projects are currently in design or conceptual design and will likely require funding with 2023 SPLOST funds. This includes the WP Jones retaining walls, Bunten Road Park walking trail, sewer expansion, and the Bunten Road Park pickleball courts.

Regarding on-going projects, should council choose to move forward with Phase II of the Main Street sidewalk project, funds will need to be set aside for the 19% matching of county funds or 100% city cost should the county fund be exhausted.

### III. MATTERS FROM COUNCIL

Councilmember Whitlock mentioned that the butterfly event was extremely popular. He also gave an update on the affordable housing meeting he attended, which focused on intentionally planning to include housing close to transit hubs and work opportunities. Issues with Splitpad/multi-tenant single family homes were also discussed. There are no firm plans on the County level as of yet .

Councilmember Harkness said that he has one more class to finish tax credit housing certification. His company is working on 14 housing conversions to create affordable housing throughout nine states, and they are also building two from the ground up.

Councilmember Whitlock also questioned Duluth's standard for tree canopies and said he had been asked about Atlanta's 50% tree canopy requirements. Duluth has tree protection regulations in place but there are no canopy percentage requirements. He also mentioned the residents of the Pine Needle Drive area wanting to start organizing their neighborhood block parties, which they are free to do without any sort of city approval once the cul-de-sac is completed as long as they are not posing a safety hazard.

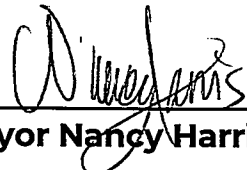
Councilmember Graeder reported on completing a negotiation class and offered to share some pertinent reading material. He also asked the Chief if anything could be done about loud mufflers or cars without them. Chief Carruth confirmed that it is a noise violation, but said it would be very difficult to catch anyone unless it's a known local or a neighbor in a particular area.

Councilmember Thomas mentioned putting concerns on the Next Door platform. She said that people often make complaints about city happenings, such as the responses to the recent parking ordinance, but was pleased to see several people mention that the city does a great job communicating and with enforcement, and confirming that public safety is the focus. She also mentioned seeing a "playable" tree (similar to what has been chosen for the Taylor Park playable art) in a mall in Denver, and noted it was very popular.

#### IV. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:10pm.

Approved this 12<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2023.

  
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Mayor Nancy Harris

ATTEST:

  
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Deputy City Clerk, Kristin McGregor