



**WORK SESSION OF THE  
MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
CITY OF DULUTH, GA  
AUGUST 10, 2009**

**PRESENT: Mayor Harris, Council members Bomar, Dugan, Hall, Mundrick and Whitlock  
City Administrator, Department Directors, City Attorney**

A work session was held prior to the regular scheduled meeting to allow the elected officials to discuss and ask questions of department directors regarding the agenda items. No other items were discussed and no action was taken.

**MINUTES OF THE  
MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
AUGUST 10, 2009**

**Mayor Harris called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m.**

It was necessary to hold an Executive Session for the purpose of discussing pending/potential litigation, real estate and/or personnel matters.

**I. EXECUTIVE SESSION – REAL ESTATE, PERSONNEL, POTENTIAL/PENDING LITIGATION**

**A motion was made by Councilmember Bomar, seconded by Councilmember Dugan, to adjourn to executive session to discuss at 6:25 p.m.**

**Those voting for: Council members Bomar, Dugan, Hall, Mundrick and Whitlock  
All for. Motion carried.**

**After the discussion, a motion was made by Councilmember Mundrick, seconded by Councilmember Bomar, to return to regular session at 6:50 p.m.**

**Those voting for: Council members Bomar, Dugan, Hall, Mundrick and Whitlock  
All For. Motion carried.**

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE: Councilmember Hall**

**WELCOME RESIDENTS: Howell Woods/Willbrooke**

## II. CEREMONIAL MATTERS

### 1. RECOGNITION – MISS CINDY’S DANCE STUDIO – FIRST PLACE IN NATIONAL COMPETITION

Councilmember Hall, the Mayor and Council recognized the competition team from Miss Cindy’s Dance studio, who won first place in Junior Small Group Ballet (ages 8-11) at Dance Makers, Inc. National Dance Competition held in Myrtle Beach, SC in June 2009. Approximately 1,500 dancers from all over the United States and Canada competed. Miss Cindy's dancers won their way to nationals by placing high 2nd at the regional competition at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville in November 2008. Present were teacher and choreographer Duluth native Cynthia Jean Brown; and dancers May Phan, Rachel Rogers, Emma Taht, and Lydia Thompson.

### 2. RECOGNITION – IVY INSIDERS BRANCH MANAGER STEVEN LAU

Councilmember Dugan, the Mayor and Council recognized Mr. Steven Lau, a Duluth High School alum, for his work with Ivy Insiders, a college test prep initiative founded at Harvard University in 2003 and run by Ivy League undergraduates. Mr. Lau scored a perfect 2,400 on his SAT’s when he tested as a student. He has since become interested in helping others learn the strategies for understanding SAT materials and testing methodology, and will teach several more classes at Duluth High School before returning to his junior year at Harvard.

### 3. RECOGNITION – DULUTH 16U WILDCATS

Councilmember Bomar, the Mayor and Council recognized the Duluth 16u Wild Cats softball team, and their coach Mario Perrucci, for the outstanding 2009 summer accomplishments. The girls’ team represented the City in state tournaments, winning 1st place in the GSA State tournament, 2nd place in the USGF State tournament, and 2nd place in the World Series tournament that was held in July at Bunten Road Park. In the World Series tournament they competed against thirty teams from all over the southeast to win their place in the final game. A member of the team, Jenny Perrucci, represented Duluth at the National Pitch Hit and Throw competition during the Major league All Star game and won first place.

### 4. PROCLAMATION – HARMONY INC. CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

Councilmember Whitlock read a proclamation from Mayor Harris proclaiming August 22, 2009 as “Harmony, Inc. Day” in recognition of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. With over 80 chapters and 2,000 female barbershop musicians, the local chapter is the 15 member Atlanta Harmony Celebration Chorus who is performing at the Red Clay on August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## III. CONSENT AGENDA

### 1. APPROVAL OF JULY 27, 2009 MINUTES

**A motion was made by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Dugan, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.**

**Those voting for:** Council members Dugan, Hall, Mundrick and Whitlock  
**Those abstaining:** Councilmember Bomar  
**Motion carried.**

#### IV. PUBLIC HEARING

1. ORDINANCE TO AMEND TO DULUTH ZONING ORDINANCE - ARTICLE 19, SECTION 1901

*[Exhibit "A"]*

Mayor Harris opened the public hearing to consider an ordinance to amend paragraph five of Article 19 of the Duluth Zoning Ordinance. She explained that this amendment would ensure that the public notice guidelines are clearly defined and consistent with the State established requirements set forth in section 36-66-4 of the Official Code of Georgia. Planning staff has been working with the legal department to ensure that the City is in compliance concerning public hearings associated with zoning cases.

There being no comments or questions, Mayor Harris closed the public hearing and called for a motion.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Whitlock, seconded by Councilmember Bomar, to approve the ordinance to amend the Duluth Zoning Ordinance as presented.**

**Those voting for: Council members Bomar, Dugan, Hall, Mundrick and Whitlock**  
**Motion carried.**

#### V. NEW BUSINESS

1. JORDAN JONES & GOULDING PRESENTATION – RIDGEWAY EXTENSION

*[Exhibit "B"]*

Patrick Smeeton with Jordan, Jones and Goulding came forward to make a "Purpose and Need" presentation regarding the proposed Ridgeway Extension project. He explained that in 2001, a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study was completed, which studied transportation and land use in the downtown. The study was aimed at improving circulation, mobility, and economic vitality of the downtown area, and part of that evaluation recommended the Ridgeway Road extension project. He said that the next step is to further detail what the full benefits are of building this road. (Presentation attached as record for these minutes.)

Mr. Smeeton showed a map of the proposed 1,500 foot Ridgeway extension which will tie back to McClure Bridge, West Lawrenceville Street and Irvindale Road at a roundabout, providing access point to the downtown area. These improvements were suggested by applying the principles of walkability, connectivity, and land use efficiency. The roundabout also connects to the proposed hospital connector, and affects Davenport at the other end on Buford Highway. He said there are benefits for Duluth High school access, a direct route to downtown, and a better network of roadways. Accessibility would be improved as would vehicle and pedestrian safety, and would contribute to economic development and redevelopment.

Mr. Smeeton further noted that the Ridgeway extension would alleviate congestion during major events such as the Fall Festival, when some downtown roads are closed. He mentioned survey results that have studied travel on typical suburban streets, and found that "grid networks" reduced overall miles traveled by up to 57%. He further noted that safety is a big concern on West Lawrenceville; cyclists have no shoulder on and sidewalks are narrow. Ridgeway is proposed with sidewalks, no curb cuts, and therefore a safer and more attractive route than West Lawrenceville. For economic development, the extension would also provide convenient access and will increase patronage of downtown shops.

The City Administrator said that Adolpho Guzman with Clark Patterson engineering was also present and could answer questions.

Mr. Guzman felt that it was beneficial to do the Ridgeway work at the same time as the hospital connector, since one project needs approximately 50,000 cubic tons of dirt, and the other needs cuts, which would provide the materials. He also discussed the aesthetics of the roundabout, equal buffering and enhanced design, as well as having the benefit of one contractor performing the work.

Councilmember Whitlock referenced the Davenport Road realignment concerns.

Mr. Smeeton responded that the traffic study shows that a reduction of traffic would occur at the Davenport/Main intersection with the other proposed improvements. People are using it today to avoid the congestion. He said that there are short and long term alignment options available for that intersection, but that with Highway 120 improvements, West Lawrenceville traffic would be reduced. He feels that Ridgeway is more of a "back door" into downtown and the estimated daily trip count is 560 cars.

Councilmember Bomar went on record to disclose that she lives in the adjacent townhouses, owns two businesses on Main Street, and is a Traffic engineer by trade. She noted or commented the following for consideration:

1. It would first be helpful to know the impact of a change in traffic due to the hospital connector.
2. The daily congestion on W. Lawrenceville is for a very short period of time in afternoon.
3. There is a need for people to come *through* downtown to see what is offered here to continue creating a vibrant downtown. The type of traffic that would use the Ridgeway connection would bypass downtown and only see the back side of the town green.
4. If a majority of the use for Ridgeway would be local bike and pedestrian use to connect to downtown, has the option of a multi-use trail been addressed rather than a roadway?
5. Is the purpose and need of the road addressing the public interest and use of public funds?

Councilmember Mundrick questioned the map and property shown in red, and Mr. Guzman said they are "historic properties," 50 years or older.

Mayor Harris announced that she would allow public comment for 16 minutes in favor and 16 minutes against.

Troyce Jackson, landowner for several downtown properties, asked Mr. Smeeton if he felt that, with regard to improving accessibility, this project would make Duluth a better place for the majority of citizens who live in this community, and if doing the projects simultaneously was more economically feasible. Mr. Smeeton responded yes to both questions.

Downtown Development Authority member Rob Ponder, of 3146 Lakeview Drive, came forward and said he feels that having more ways for traffic to flow will definitely make the City a better place. The Ridgeway piece is part of a spoke that will help the whole area.

Ken Odum of 3597 West Lawrenceville Street, also a DDA member, said he has worked on the master plan since the LCI study was completed, and that the DDA has been reviewing these projects for over 8 years. He reported that the DDA took a recent vote reaffirming the initial vote to support the

Ridgeway project. He pointed out that he lives on West Lawrenceville, and avoids it every day when he goes to work due to congestion.

Mack Cain of JJ&G came forward and said that he was responsible for the LCI study. He said it was easier to look at the “big picture” and not take one piece of the puzzle out; the idea was to revitalize the whole area. Traffic as it stands now is choking off the downtown area. The idea is to get the momentum flowing around the town, and the intent was to give exposure to the undeveloped parts of the City.

Councilmember Bomar asked Mr. Cain if they looked at other ways to connect, not going through Ridgeway.

Mr. Cain said they explored many other options, like going straight through to McClure from Hardy Street, but that area was already fully developed residentially and it would be too expensive to acquire the properties.

Lewis Corley of 3650 Ridgeway came forward to state that he is strongly opposed to this project, and said that he had never heard anything about McClure Bridge Drive being extended for connectivity. He does not want another 560 cars in front of his house every day and sees no good outputs for traffic after reaching Hill Street. He feels people would not see the downtown from this road and is concerned that crime would increase by creating two ways in and out of the area.

Doug Tiberghien of 3701 West Lawrenceville Street said that most of Ridgeway is in his back yard. He does not feel it makes sense to bring Hwy 120 traffic through downtown, and felt that Hill Street was never widened like it should have been. Since the opening of Sugarloaf and the improvements to Pleasant Hill Road have been completed, he contends that it has not been bumper-to-bumper in front of his house. He said we should repair what we have, put more lighting and repair sidewalks on West Lawrenceville, but don't add another road.

Jack Eder of 3647 Ridgetown Drive said his home faces Ridgeway. At the last meeting where this was discussed, he had taken a petition of the residents who face the road and all residents voted no to the extension. There were 17 people who did vote for the extension in their neighborhood but all of them did not own property adjoining Ridgeway. He noted that traffic dead-ends into building, and asked where it would go. He said he is vehemently opposed.

John Sukroo of 3256 Heatheridge, President of McClure Woods HOA, was concerned about runoff to their detention ponds. He said that building a road for only 560 cars doesn't seem worth it, and that he hasn't heard any mention of the time scale with the whole rest of the downtown improvements would happen.

Jay Brooks of 3592 Parkridge Point, also a board member of the HOA, said he understands that fill dirt needs to be made for the Ridgeway project, and while it would be good to take it from the hospital connector, he felt it would be wiser to wait until after the Hwy 120 and other improvements were completed and consider the options to see if they were sufficient before putting the Ridgeway piece back in the plan.

Charles Dean of 3710 Montrose Pond Walk questioned the trip count and felt that it was reported differently in December 2005. He remembered hearing that estimates of traffic flow were at 9,600 cars by the year 2010.

City Administrator Phil McLemore responded that he recalled 14,000 trips on West Lawrenceville and 12,000 on Hwy 120.

Richard Daneke of 3940 Bridlewood Drive is concerned that the study is outdated, as it was completed when the Gwinnett Place area was still vibrant and Davenport was a back road to get there. He feels that the economic picture has since changed, traffic patterns have changed dramatically by Sugarloaf and Pleasant Hill Road, and said that Ridgeway looks like the first piece to cut out which would have the least impact on the area.

Councilmember Mundrick said there were some interesting comments that he would like to think about a bit longer; how this project is done-- if it's done-- would be of utmost importance to the whole area. He would prefer not to vote tonight on this matter.

Councilmember Bomar agreed and noted that while it is important to look at this in today's perspective, it is part of Council's responsibility to make solid long term decisions. She would like to review how things have possibly changed and if there are alternatives for connectivity that could accomplish more of what the LCI study recommended, including creating energy at the end of town that has yet to be opened up.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Mundrick, seconded by Councilmember Whitlock, to postpone the Ridgeway Extension project indefinitely.**

**Those voting for: Council members Bomar, Dugan, Hall, Mundrick and Whitlock**  
**Motion carried.**

*Councilmember Mundrick further stated that he believes a definite decision needs to be made on this, that it should not wait forever; there is a reason why this was put into place a long time ago and the funding had been set aside for several years while this is pending. He would like to see it back on the agenda before too long.*

## **VI. MATTERS FROM CITIZENS**

### **1. STATUS OF OLD METHODIST CHURCH**

Lewis Corley of 3650 Ridgeway came forward to ask about the status of the old Methodist church. Councilmember Mundrick replied that it has been finished thus far, but is a "casualty of the budget" process at the moment. Staff and Council have had to prioritize with limited revenues and no work is budgeted for this coming year.

## **VII. MATTERS FROM COUNCIL/DEPT HEADS/CITY ATTORNEY**

### **1. APPRECIATION FOR SUMMER DAY CAMP**

Councilmember Hall commended the Parks and Recreation for a successful summer day camp program and thanked Parks Director Kathy Marelle and her staff for providing a fun, safe place for the children.

2. APPRECIATION FOR PLANNING STAFF

Councilmember Mundrick explained that in the redevelopment of older areas, it is common to find interesting things. The City discovered there was contamination in the soil of a downtown property slated for redevelopment that was going to be very expensive to fix. Planning Director Cross met with the potential developer, and contacted the Environmental Protection Agency, and got the EPA to agree to perform the cleanup. This means that no city funds will have to be spent on this project.

3. HISTORY MUSEUM OPEN

Councilmember Bomar reported that the Duluth History Museum is now open Thursdays through Saturdays, and they have done a wonderful job adding to their collections. She also said that a family had come by her building on Main Street and had photos of a house that used to be on that property. She hoped that Duluth could also have "placards" on the buildings or relevant sites from the past that were the way that Lawrenceville does.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**A motion was made by Councilmember Bomar, seconded by Councilmember Whitlock, to adjourn at 8:25 p.m.**

**All for. Motion carried unanimously.**

***Mayor Harris announced that there will be a work session held after the meeting in the Main Street conference room, and that the public was invited to attend.***

Approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Nancy Harris

ATTEST:

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City Clerk Teresa S. Lynn