



CITY OF MABLETON, GEORGIA

Riverside EpiCenter
135 Riverside Pkwy, Austell, GA 30168
August 27, 2025 at 6:30 PM

The Honorable Michael Owens, Mayor
The Honorable Ron Davis, District 1 Councilmember
The Honorable Dami Oladapo, District 2 Councilmember
The Honorable Keisha Jeffcoat, Mayor Pro Tem/District 3 Councilmember
The Honorable Patricia Auch, District 4 Councilmember
The Honorable TJ Ferguson, District 5 Councilmember
The Honorable Debora Herndon, District 6 Councilmember

CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Owens called the meeting to order.

2. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Hiott called the roll. Councilmember Jeffcoat was absent. Quorum was present.

3. INVOCATION

Councilmember Davis led the Invocation.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilmember Ferguson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion was made by Councilmember Ferguson and seconded by Councilmember Oladapo to approve the agenda as written. The motion passed 5-0.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

7. PRESENTATIONS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/PROCLAMATIONS

None.

8. APPOINTMENTS

a. Appointment to the Board of Zoning Appeals

Mayor Owens announced Councilmember Herndon's appointee to the Board of Zoning Appeals. He administered the loyalty oath and presented a certificate of recognition to Ms. Yolanda Bennett for her commitment to serve on the board.

(Clerk's Note: Only one motion was made for both the Board of Zoning Appeals and Ethics Board appointments.)

b. Appointment to the Ethics Board

Mayor Owens announced Councilmember Herndon's appointee to the Ethics Board. He administered the loyalty oath and presented a certificate of recognition to Ms. Angela Weston for her commitment to serve on the board.

(Clerk's Note: Only one motion was made for both the Board of Zoning Appeals and Ethics Board appointments.)

Motion was made by Councilmember Auch and seconded by Councilmember Ferguson to approve the appointments of Yolanda Bennett to the Board of Zoning Appeals and Angela Weston to the Board of Ethics. The motion passed 6-0.

(Clerk's Note: The motion was made prior to the Consent Agenda.)

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS - 2 minutes per speaker - no more than 30 minutes for all speakers. Anyone wishing to make a public comment should complete and submit the public comment card to the City Clerk prior to the start of the meeting.

Denise Woods reported there were no updates at her apartment complex. She was dealing with critters in her roof and ceiling. She was suffering and asking for help. She is asking for a push for the landlords to do what they need to do.

Michael Murphy expressed how he was moved by residents of those who came before the Council. He reminded everyone that it was not the first time. There are different people, but the same issue. It is disturbing that the issue has been going on for so long. He commented that if the political will, can get up some speed, something can be done.

Monica Delancy thanked Mayor Owens for listening to the concerns raised about the negligence of the corporate landlords of many of the apartment complexes. She addressed the ordinance on the agenda, was similar to Smyrna's, which led to the demolition of the Hickory Lakes Apartments. Families were displaced as a result, largely because there was no clear plan in place to prevent the loss of housing. The Riverside Community Business Agreement was established so if development occurs, it will not cause displacement. She continued to speak about the current condition of apartments that have deteriorated so severely, that a complete overhaul seems to be necessary. This is not a renter issue, but a community issue.

Sam Culbreth, Chair of Austell Community Task Force, on behalf of the Task Force thanked those that attended their 24th Back to School Jam. He gave a report on the event. He announced details of the upcoming Task Force meeting at South Cobb Recreation Center on Monday, September 8th at 7 pm.

Cassandra Brown who lives in District 4 provided a statement from a friend that could not attend the meeting. He was a recent resident that moved to the City in 2023. He and his wife fell in love with the Mableton community. They made frequent use of all the amazing parks. One issue that they have is that they can't walk anywhere. They have to drive wherever they go. There is zero walkability in his community. She pointed out that Cooper Lake Road between Nickajack and St. Martin's Lane does not have sidewalks and is dangerous. She continued to provide Cobb County's statistics of cars traveling and pedestrian deaths and spoke about the lack of sidewalks.

Bahiyah Graham, resident of 575 Apartments, has lived in Cobb and Mableton for almost 20 years. She previously wrote a letter to 67 elected officials and code enforcement about the condition of the 575 Apartments. She spoke about the community and that some people who do not live there have forgotten where they came from.

Patricia Moore of District 4 reported she has lived in Mableton since 2007 off the Fontaine Road area. She has been attending the meetings since the City was formed. The City is moving forward. One of the biggest issues she has is when Council members use their social media to sabotage the mayor. She asked that the Council not use their social media page to entice constituents to think other Council members are doing wrong. She asked if a council member has concerns, to meet with the other council members.

10. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Councilmember Auch and seconded by Councilmember Ferguson to approve the consent agenda as written. The motion passed 6-0.

- a. Approval of August 13, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes**
- b. Approval of August 11, 2025 Council Work Session Minutes**

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

12. NEW BUSINESS

- a. First Read of an Ordinance Updating Chapter 2, Administration, of the City Code of Ordinances; Establishing A Resignation Process for City Board, Commission, and Authority Appointees and for Other Lawful Purposes - City Attorney Emilia Walker-Ashby**

Mayor Owens announced the item and provided background. It is a general administration item to make sure that people who are appointed to Mableton Commissions, Authorities and Boards (CABS) have a process for resignation. City Attorney Walker-Ashby reiterated

the ordinance was a First Read. Mayor Owens asked if there were any questions. There was none.

b. Consideration and Approval of a Resolution Establishing the Alcoholic Beverage and Regulatory License Fee Schedule and for Other Lawful Purposes - Community Development Director Michael Hughes

Mayor Owens announced the item and recognized Community Development Director Michael Hughes. Mr. Hughes explained the Resolution is to adopt Alcoholic Beverage and Regulatory License Fees. On August 13th, the Alcohol and Regulatory Ordinance was adopted. In keeping with the current Intergovernmental Government Agreement (IGA) with Cobb County, the City will be accepting applications on September 1st.

Mayor Owens asked how the City was informing the businesses throughout the City. Mr. Hughes stated there would be a campaign, information at the Community Development Offices, and there would be social media opportunities. The fee structure is the same as Cobb County. There are no changes as to what the county was.

Councilmember Ferguson asked if everything was set and prepared to start September 1st. He asked if businesses could get information from the website. Mr. Hughes replied yes.

Motion made by Councilmember Dami Oladapo and seconded by Councilmember Davis to approve the Resolution Establishing the Alcoholic Beverage and Regulatory License Fee Schedule and for other lawful purposes. Mayor Owens asked if there was any discussion. There was none.

The motion passed 6-0.

c. First Read of an Ordinance Updating Chapter 13, Nuisances, of the City Code of Ordinances; Creating the City of Mableton Safe and Healthy Housing and Property Ordinance and for Other Lawful Purposes - City Attorney Emilia Walker-Ashby

Mayor Owens announced the item and provided background. He explained that the ordinance is a First Read for safe and healthy housing and property. He personally had been working on this for some time. Every person should live in a safe, habitual place. He referenced House Bill 404 Safe at Home Act that defined that all landlords should have habitual housing. The House Bill 404 fell short because it did not define what habitual housing was. The City's ordinance defines what habitual living means. The ordinance is specific about mold, rodent infestation, unsafe structures and other situations that affect the well-being of residents. The ordinance also gives the City staff the power to go forward and do inspections and issue violations and fines. The ordinance lays accountability clearly on those that may not be held accountable, and allows the City to go even further for repeat violations. Under the ordinance, the City has authority to place liens on properties and impose abatement costs. He continued to explain the protections under HB 404 and the ordinance. The ordinance is not about punishing the landlords that act responsibly. It is about setting a firm standard. The ordinance holds tenants accountable also. Mayor Owens continued to explain how the City continues to progress. Every time the City meets, a

policy or ordinance is placed on the table that the Council deliberates for a vote. This one has been in the works. He would love to have all of this completed and in place on day one, but this is another step of many. He reiterated that the ordinance was a First Read and asked Council if they had comments.

Questions and discussion ensued. Councilmember Ferguson asked if the ordinance was strong enough. He asked about addressing the ownership of the apartment complexes jumping from one to another. Mayor Owens reported that he had looked at other cities' ordinances and processes. The City should be working within the confines of the State law.

Attorney Walker-Ashby stated the ordinance also incorporates looking at case law.

Mayor Owens recognized Attorney Walker-Ashby. She explained how the ordinance incorporates a level of habitual standards as well as property care standards which allow the City to act. She addressed the issuance of a citation. She explained how the landlords expect the issuance of citations, practicing slum lording, and they have budgeted line items for expected citations. They don't care. They pay citations up to \$10,000 - \$40,000. If they can operate as a slumlord, it is cheaper to pay the City's fines. Citing is not always effective. She referenced the State Nuisance Code, and noted the City can use nuisance parameters to close the property, demolish, force sale, put liens on property, or can abate the property, self, fix issues, and put costs against property. There is a broader range going after the owner. If the landlord does not proceed to correct the issues, there can be foreclosure on the property.

City Attorney Walker-Ashby addressed the Councilmember Ferguson's question about how to combat frequent owners. The ordinance allows the City to put Lis pendens that stipulates if the owner sales, the lis pendens will attach to the property and the new owner will be subject to the costs put on the property. The lis pendens statutes are under the State Code.

Discussion and explanation continued:

- Councilmember Ferguson asked additional questions about the State Nuisance Code and asked if the lis pendens and other enforcement under the Code had been issued in the past.
- Councilmember Herndon inquired about what would happen to the residents while the landlord had renovations to their apartment. City Manager Tanks noted a person can not live in a building when it is being renovated.
- City Attorney Walker-Ashby provided examples of how other cities handle unhabitual apartments.
- Councilmember Dami Oladapo asked when the ordinance is passed, can the City make a report and data available to the residents so they can make plans as they see the inspection data. Mr. Tanks stated there would be a full report at the next work session.
- Councilmember Ferguson expressed that he didn't agree with the ordinance in totality because it does not do anything about how the City communicates to the residents. The City communicates with the landlord.
- Mayor Owens stated the communication is tilted toward landlord. The landlord should consistently communicate with the residents.

- The goal of the ordinance is to give Council the ability to cite and move past that. There are other elements that go with this, such as social service, social support and resources, but the ordinance is to make sure residents have safe and healthy housing. There are other components that are not part of the ordinance. This ordinance makes sure to hold the landlords accountable.

Attorney Walker-Ashby stated she has never used the ordinance to evict anyone. She provided an example from College Park, where there were high-priority residents—elderly and disabled individuals. She collected information, contacted the Housing Authority and Habitat for Humanity, and informed residents that they could no longer live there due to public health concerns. The City was able to work with outside agencies to help relocate those residents. Although the City has the ability to address such situations, it is not practical to use tax money to displace everyone. Unfortunately, able-bodied individuals will need to find a new place to stay within the next month or two. Most landlords, when enforcement is applied, become compliant and make necessary [repairs](#). For those who have been in the community for some time, Mayor Owens referenced the displacement of those who lived at the 2015 Magnolia Crossing. He commented how those issues are not something to sort through in this ordinance. The ordinance is directly for the landlords.

Additional discussion followed:

- Councilmember Ferguson addressed the next steps. The City was moving expeditiously, by having court personnel in place and making appointments. The second step is to sit with code enforcement, prioritize which communities are priority for the City to address. There will be permission from the Council as it does make a cost commitment.
- Mayor Owens noted the ordinance applied city-wide. The ordinance is not just limited to one area. There may be other apartments in the City.
- Attorney Walker-Ashby remarked that the ordinance is not limited just to multi-family. Given the severity of the issue, the City can implement against single-family homes, also.
- Mr. Tanks reported there will be a report from Code Enforcement at the September 8th work session.
- Mr. Tanks explained that the strategic discussions would require sitting down and discussing at a planning conference.
- Councilmember Ferguson pointed out that the ordinance refers to the public officer or at least five city residents. He asked who is the deciding factor for the ranking of the cases. City Attorney Walker-Ashby says most cases would be decided by the city manager in conjunction with the department delegated for the abatement.

The Second Read will be at the next regular council meeting.

13. OTHER BUSINESS/DISCUSSION

None.

14. CITY MANAGER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS

City Manager Tanks announced the upcoming 4P Community Meeting—bringing together Pastors, Public Safety, Principals, and Partners—to foster collaboration and build a stronger Mableton. It will be held on Thursday, September 18, 2025, at the Cobb Police Academy. While the meeting is not directly open to the public, he still wanted to make the public aware of the event. He noted that although the City has its limitations, it can always bring people together to create solutions and leverage the collective strength of the community.

He also shared that the City’s new Court Administrator, Mallory Minor, has been nominated as the 2025–2026 Secretary of the Georgia Council of Court Administrators—the only nominee from Cobb County.

15. CITY ATTORNEY/CITY CLERK/STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS

None.

16. MAYOR AND COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS

Councilmember Davis congratulated Councilmember Jeffcoat on joining Leadership Cobb. He welcomed the new appointees to the Ethics Board and BZA. He also highlighted his upcoming Housing Forum on September 6 at the South Cobb Rec Center. He thanked Councilmember Oladapo for partnering with him on this effort 2 years in a row. He explained that the goal of the forum is to explore strategies to increase the City’s housing stock. He noted that district-specific updates will be shared and emphasized the need to address each district’s unique challenges. He stressed the importance of the community being engaged and informed. He closed by wishing everyone a safe and happy Labor Day.

Councilmember Oladapo stated that housing remains a significant challenge in both her and Councilmember Davis’ district, and they are actively exploring solutions. She thanked the Mayor, Council, and City Attorney for their efforts in developing the Nuisance Ordinance and noted that it was a step in the right direction. She mentioned the efforts she, Director Ferrell, and the Code Enforcement team have made to tackle issues affecting the apartment complexes in her district. She encouraged residents to continue to extend grace and patience as the City is making progress.

Councilmember Oladapo announced the District 2 “Walk and Talk Trash” cleanup in partnership with Keep Cobb Beautiful. She highlighted the Riverside Elementary beautification event on September 13th, and thanked the Mayoral Impact Fund for its support for that project. Lastly, she encouraged residents to reach out with any questions or to get involved.

Councilmember Auch thanked Mayor Owens for bringing forth the Safe and Healthy Housing Ordinance, also noting that it is a step in the right direction. She highlighted the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Tunnels to Towers Veterans Village, which will help to address housing gaps for veterans. She acknowledged the concern about sidewalks on Copper Lake and noted that the issue had recently been discussed as a potential SPLOST initiative. She highlighted that Mayor Owens also agreed that it is an issue that needs to be addressed.

Councilmember Auch responded to the accusation of disclosing Executive Session

information on social media. She stated that was not true and agreed that "mudslinging" does not serve the City well. She explained that when she chooses to post on social media, it is typically because she feels an issue has not been adequately heard. She thanked the resident for voicing her concern. Councilmember Auch reviewed the Open Meeting Act's exemptions for Executive Sessions. She concluded by posing the question: "Is it acceptable for public officials to use City branding to promote private fundraising initiatives?"

Councilmember Ferguson noted that the Nuisance Ordinance has been a long time coming and stressed the need to clearly communicate the City's progress, current efforts, and future plans to address ongoing concerns. He announced a men's mental health workshop, hosted in partnership with T2S and the Cobb Collaborative, on September 6th at The Green Room Restaurant. He noted that women are welcome.

Councilmember Herndon thanked attendees and acknowledged the 12 online viewers. She expressed appreciation for ongoing efforts to address constituent concerns and congratulated her board appointees, Ms. Bennett and Ms. Weston. She mentioned that she plans to prioritize community engagement in her next term and invited input from District 6 residents on the future of the City and their district. She wished everyone safe travels.

Mayor Owens emphasized the importance of the safe and healthy housing ordinance. He stated it is about doing the right things for the right reasons and as the city's capacity grows to do those things, it will. He acknowledged that there is still plenty more to be done around the housing effort.

Mayor Owens mentioned that he looks forward to joining Councilmembers Oladapo and Davis, at the housing symposium to discuss things going on locally, statewide and nationally. He hoped to further discuss the legislation coming out of Washington and its local impact on the City. He reminded that housing decisions are ultimately made at the local level.

He announced the First State of the City Address that will be held on Sep 9th at the Riverside Epi Center where there will be a sharing of the City's history, currently and where we plan to go in the future. He acknowledged the 700 individuals that have registered thus far and encouraged others to register. He addressed the technical difficulties that occurred with the Eventbrite and those that may have not been able to register properly.

Mayor Owens mentioned that as banks are moving into the City, he had a chance to meet with some of the banking leaders, including the president/CEO of JP Morgan Chase to speak about the City and some of its challenges. He was surprised to hear that she knew specifically about the branch opening in Mableton and noted that others around the country were paying attention. Mayor Owens welcomed the banks into the community but stressed the importance of elevating the community overall. He highlighted conversations with these leaders about the financial literacy workshop, homeownership pathway & will/estate planning for senior residents. He expressed support for the banks' presence but emphasized the need to hold them accountable for contributing to the City's improvement.

Mayor Owens shared that he recently met with the new Operations Manager of Six Flags to

discuss the park's role as a continued partner of the City. He hoped that residents would take pride in having Six Flags within the City limits. He also confirmed that Six Flags plans to remain where it is despite rumors.

Mayor Owens announced that he has worked with Google to update the map to reflect the City's correct boundaries and continues to work with other elected officials to update mailing addresses. He clarified that the issue with Mableton addresses lies with the U.S. Postal Service. However, Mayor Owens stressed that the City is here to stay and that a permanent resolution is needed. He noted that discussions with Google have been productive and hopes of a valuable partnership with the City.

Mayor Owens reiterated the recent grand opening of Tunnels to Towers and shared additional details about the facility and its services for veterans in need. He expressed appreciation for the effort put into the project and their responsiveness to community concerns. He expressed hopes to see Tunnels to Towers become a strong partner to the City as well and acknowledged the veterans on Council who are committed to its ongoing support.

Mayor Owens emphasized the importance of supporting local schools and highlighted the upcoming beautification effort at Riverside Elementary. He recognized the impressive abilities of the students and teachers, which often go unacknowledged. He stated that the City plays a vital role in the Mableton school system and noted that his public charity will continue to help direct funds to where they are needed most.

Lastly, he highlighted that every Saturday is "Small Business Saturday" in Mableton, emphasizing that small businesses are the backbone of the City. The goal is to support and strengthen these businesses.

17. EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF NEEDED) FOR LITIGATION (O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(B)(1)(A) REAL ESTATE (O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (B)(1)) PERSONNEL (O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (B)(2)) AND MISC. EXEMPTIONS (O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (B)(4)&(5))

Executive Session was not needed.

18. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Oladapo and seconded by Councilmember Ferguson to adjourn. The motion passed 6-0 (Approximately 8:50)

Dr. Michael Owens, Mayor

Susan Hiott, City Clerk