CITY OF MABLETON, GEORGIA

Riverside EpiCenter
135 Riverside Pkwy, Austell, GA 30168
February 25, 2026 at 6:30 PM

The Honorable Michael Owens, Mayor
The Honorable Ron Davis, Mayor Pro Tem, District 1 Councilmember
The Honorable Michael McNeely, District 2 Councilmember
The Honorable Keisha Jeffcoat, District 3 Councilmember
The Honorable Cassandra Brown, 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 at 6:43 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Hiott conducted the roll call. All were present except Councilmembers McNeely and Brown who were attending mandated training for newly elected council members. A quorum was present.

3. INVOCATION

Invocation was Led by City Manager Tanks.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Pledge of Allegiance was Led by Councilmember Ferguson.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion was made by Councilmember Herndon and seconded by Councilmember Ferguson to approve the agenda with the addition of the Resolution proposed by Councilmember McNeely at the February 11th Regular Meeting.

City Attorney Walker-Ashby requested that the item be moved to Item 18 following Executive Session, as she has an update to present to Council regarding litigation and pending proceedings related to the item. Councilmember Herndon agreed. The City Attorney also suggested a recess as an alternative option to allow the item to be discussed earlier. Upon the City Attorney's recommendation, the motion was amended accordingly and made.

Motion was made by Councilmember Herndon to approve the agenda by adding the resolution and Executive Session to have a recess before to include 11c, Executive Session for purpose of litigation, real estate, and personnel and administrative sessions, and to consider the resolution that Councilmember McNeely proposed at the last meeting. Councilmember Ferguson seconded. A vote was held and the motion failed. **Yeas: Ferguson, Herndon and Nays: Davis, Jeffcoat, and Owens**

Motion made by Councilmember Jeffcoat to approve the agenda as written. Councilmember Davis seconded. The motion passed 3-2. **Yeas: Owens, Jeffcoat and Davis and Nays: Ferguson and Herndon.**

6. **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

   a. **REZ2025-011 - Tax Parcel 18042100010 /18042000090 (Oak Ridge Commerce Way) - Request to rezone a 29.15-acre parcel to rezone from MHP to LI for A 300,000 square foot warehouse/distribution center.** ***Planning Commission Recommends Approval - Director Michael Hughes***

   Open Public Hearing
   Applicant and Speakers who are In Favor - 10 Minutes
   Opposition - 10 Minutes
   Close Public Hearing

   Council Questions and Discussion

Mayor Owens announced the item and recognized Community Development Director Michael Hughes.

(By way of background), the applicant, Alliance Industrial, is requesting approval to rezone a 21.55-acre parcel located on Oak Ridge Commerce Way from Mobile Home Park (MHP) to Light Industrial (LI) to allow for the development of a 300,000-square-foot warehouse/distribution center. The property is located in District One. Staff recommended approval of the request, and the Planning Commission also recommended approval. In addition, the Planning Commission added a stipulation prohibiting the use of the site as a data center.

Mayor Owens stated that Council would like to defer the item to the April 8 public hearing to allow for further review of infrastructure-related matters. City Attorney Walker-Ashby agreed, noting that the deferral would allow time for final due diligence.

Motion was made by Councilmember Ferguson and seconded by Councilmember Herndon to defer the item to the April 8 agenda. The motion passed unanimously, 5–0.

   b. **REZ-2025-006 – Tax Parcel 18020100030 (Old Alabama Rd) and Tax Parcel 18025800020 (Cardell Rd) – Request to rezone 22 acres from R-20/OSC to RA-6 for the development of 94 single-family detached homes. -** ***Applicant Planning Commission Recommend Deferral - Director Michael Hughes***

Mayor Owens announced the item and recognized Director Hughes. Director Hughes noted that the applicants' representative had requested a deferral of this item to April 2nd to go before the Planning Commission and April 22nd to come back before Council.

(By way of background), the case REZ 2025-006, located at Old Alabama Road and Cardell Road, request to rezone 21 acres from R-20/OSC to RA-6 for the development of

94 single-family detached homes. The case was originally heard at the Planning Commission's Dec 4th, 2025 meeting and tabled to January 8th, 2026. It was then heard again on Feb 5 and will now go back to the Planning Commission on April 2nd.

Motion was made by Councilmember Jeffcoat and seconded by Councilmember Daivs to defer the item to the April 22nd agenda. The motion passed unanimously, 5–0.

7. PRESENTATIONS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/PROCLAMATIONS

a. FY 2026 2nd Quarter Financial Review - Finance Director Karen Ellis

Mayor Owens introduced the item and recognized Finance Director Karen Ellis, who presented the FY 2026 Second Quarter Financial Review. The full report is included in the agenda packet for the record.

The review covered financial activity from July 1 through December 25, representing approximately 50% of the fiscal year.

Overview:
-Revenue collections are nearly 100% of projections.
-Expenditures are just under 30% of the budget.

Variance Analysis:
-Franchise taxes appear in arrears because payments are recorded quarterly but are expected to meet projections.
-Business occupational tax revenue is expected to increase significantly due to upcoming renewals.
-Insurance premium taxes are tracking approximately 200% above projections.
-Permitting and business license revenues are trending above projections.
-Interest income is also exceeding projections.
-Risk Management is a once-a-year payment and is currently projected to come in under budget.
-The City's combined cash and investments for both the City and the Urban Redevelopment Agency total approximately $19 million.

Councilmember Ferguson asked a general question about whether it is typical for the City to receive most of its revenues by the midpoint of the fiscal year. Director Ellis explained that some major revenue sources are currently exceeding expectations, which is driving the higher average, but noted that this trend is not expected to remain. Director Ellis also provided a detailed breakdown of revenues and expenditures, noting that most departments are either below or close to budget. Risk Management is the only area appearing higher, but it is not expected to exceed its allocated amount.

Current Fund Balances:
Tree Fund: Approximately $80,000
Six Flags Special Service District: Approximately $1,135,024
Hotel/Motel Tax Fund: Approximately $241,000 coming in for the year. A portion goes to the general fund and the rest is used for marketing/DMO purposes, which are managed on

behalf of the City by Cobb Travel Tourism.
Capital Projects Fund: Approximately $1,129,171
Urban Redevelopment Agency (URA): Approximately $2,213,021

City Manager Tanks clarified that the Hotel/Motel Tax Funds are overseen by Cobb Travel & Tourism, not Cobb County Government. Mayor Owens added that Hotel/Motel tax revenues are trending closer to $500,000, consistent with initial expectations. Director Ellis emphasized that the City's conservative budgeting practices.

8. APPOINTMENTS

a. Appointment to the Planning Commission

Mayor Owens announced that Councilmember Herndon is recommending Munzir Naqvi to serve on the Planning Commission as the District 6 representative.

Councilmember Herndon introduced Mr. Naqvi and shared that he has expressed strong interest in serving the City. She stated that she was pleased to bring his recommendation forward. Mayor Owens also acknowledged Mr. Naqvi's enthusiasm and willingness to become involved.

Motion was made by Councilmember Herndon and seconded by Councilmember Fergsuon to approve the nomination of Munzir Naqvi to the Planning Commission as a representative of District 6. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Owens administered the Oath of Office to Mr.Naqvi and signed the oath for official record. Photos were taken.

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.

Monica Delancy highlighted various past events and upcoming activities within the Mableton community.
Leroy Tre Hutchins provided an update from the Cobb County Board of Education, noting the recent approval of Power Public School, the first charter school approved in Cobb County in 13 years. The school is intended to serve students in grades six through twelve in the South Cobb area. He also acknowledged the recent passing of an employee at Mableton Elementary School and asked for thoughts and prayers.
Stebe Friedman mentioned a recent blood drive hosted by the Red Cross that will be held at the Mableton Lodge from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., along with sickle cell testing. He also discussed the Georgia CHiP Program, a child identification program, and provided additional details.
China Cardriche expressed her excitement and appreciation for the approval of Power Public School, which is her dream realized. She shared her enthusiasm about launching the nation's first AI-empowered school, beginning in South Cobb. She expressed appreciation to all involved. She noted that enrollment will open in April for sixth and seventh grade.

Sam Culbreath spoke on behalf of the Austell Community Task Force and shared a little about the organization. He also shared details about the upcoming general meeting and composting event they will be hosting.
Denny Wilson gave a shout-out to Councilmember Herndon for speaking out about the recent increase in gas prices with Austell Gas and expressed her appreciation for the community coming together on the issue.
Patricia Auch expressed her frustration over the denial of a resolution proposed by two Councilmembers to be added to the agenda. She emphasized that no issue is more important to the community than service delivery with the County and highlighted the upcoming Cross-Over Day.
Adam Matz — (The comment card was initially overlooked and not shared during the meeting; however, it is being added to the record.) The speaker was invited to share his comments at the next Council meeting if he wishes. His remarks concerned the Concord and Hicks intersection, specifically the lack of left-turn access for north and southbound traffic, as well as the recent increase in Austell gas prices.

10. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Councilmember Ferguson and seconded by Councilmember Jeffcoat to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried 5-0.

a. **Ratification of Council member approved landscaping plan - 6470 Mableton Pkwy, PIN 18029700400**

b. **Approval of the recommendation for appointment of Gerald Geeter to the Planning Commission**

c. **Approval of the recommendation of reappointment of Clyde Ward to the License Review Board**

d. **Approval of February 9, 2026 Work Session Minutes**

e. **Approval of February 11, 2026 Regular Council Meeting Minutes**

f. **Authorization for the Mayor to negotiate and execute in substantial form a Verkada Security System Installation and Licensing Agreement with Knine All Systems, Inc. for Mableton Municipal Court ($88,509.38 + $9,817.76)**

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. **REZ2025-009 - Tax Parcel 18039000110 (6671 Mableton Parkway) - Request to rezone a 2.33-acre parcel to rezone from R-20 to NRC for a commercial development. - Director Michael Hughes**

Council Questions and Discussion

Mayor Owens introduced the item and recognized Deputy Community Development Director Tina Garver, who provided background information and delivered a presentation. The presentation is included in the agenda packet for the record.

Mrs. Garver stated that the request is for the rezoning of 6671 Mableton Parkway and noted that the application was previously deferred to allow Council time to review the case. The request seeks to change the zoning designation from R-20 (Single-Family Residential) to NRC (Neighborhood Retail Commercial). She explained that staff recommends denial of the rezoning request but approval of a Temporary Land Use Permit with stipulations. She added that the Planning Commission made the same recommendation, including additional stipulations.

Mrs. Garver provided a detailed timeline and history of the property, including the following:

-Early 1970s: Cobb County established the property's zoning as R-20.
-1996: The current owner obtained a Certificate of Occupancy for a hair salon business.
-2003: The current owner purchased the property from Marathon Oil Company.
-2023: The last recorded payment of personal property taxes was made to the County.
-September 2024: A new applicant applied for an Occupational Tax Certificate and was denied.
-November 2024: An application was submitted to rezone the property to NRC.
- January 2025: The Planning Commission heard the application and recommended that the Council approve a Temporary Land Use Permit.

Mrs. Garver also provided additional clarification on the following:

-The establishment of a nonconforming use
-The distinction between tax classification and zoning categories
-The deed restrictions

She reviewed the zoning map, future land use map, zoning case history in the surrounding area, the Mableton Parkway Design Standards adopted by Cobb County in 2017, and the site layout. She further clarified staff's recommendations regarding site improvements and removals.

Councilmember Jeffcoat asked about the difference between a Temporary Land Use Permit (TLUP) and a Special Land Use Permit (SLUP). She noted that a TLUP requires renewal every two years, whereas a SLUP allows for a four-year renewal period, and asked why the SLUP was not considered a viable option.

Mrs. Garver explained that a SLUP is intended for specific uses identified in the zoning code's use chart, while the code provides greater flexibility through a TLUP. Councilmember Jeffcoat then asked whether provisions could be made to allow for a different approach. Mrs. Garver confirmed that provisions could be made; however, any such change would apply to all permit applications submitted to the City.

Councilmember Ferguson asked about the possibility of updating the SLUP chart. Mrs. Garver confirmed that it was an option but noted that any such update would apply to all permit applications submitted to the City going forward.

Councilmember Jeffcoat highlighted the extenuating circumstances associated with this case. Mrs. Garver explained that a SLUP would run with the property and would not provide the two-year touchpoints with the property owner that a Temporary TLUP allows.

Councilmember Jeffcoat mentioned the consideration of the City's interim Comp Plan vs the Mableton 2045 Comprehensive Plan when considering future land use.

City Manager Tanks reminded everyone that the governing body has the final authority, and that the staff's role is to provide the Council with the information needed to make a well-informed decision.

Councilmember Jeffcoat expressed appreciation for the thorough background information and stated that she would like the Council to consider a text amendment to allow the renewal period to extend up to four years for the applicant.

Councilmember Ferguson asked about the approval process for required permits and licenses once the TLUP is granted. He also inquired about the timeline for the applicant to complete the necessary steps to satisfy the proposed stipulations, noting that the City currently lacks sufficient information to accurately assess the completion timeframe. Mrs. Garver provided an explanation from the staff's perspective.

Councilmember Ferguson expressed concern about placing undue pressure on the applicant for a situation that had not previously been an issue. He noted that the timeline also includes periods when the City was undergoing transitions.

City Manager Tanks reminded everyone that the Council had approved three opportunities for extensions on business license renewals during the transition period. He asked the Council to be mindful that staff is operating within the parameters established by the Council through ordinance and code. Councilmember Ferguson agreed for a deferral of the case to allow the Council to review further and emphasized that the Council's responsibility is to the citizens.

Councilmember Herndon emphasized the urgency of reaching a timely decision to assist the applicant within the period allowed by the deferral.

City Attorney Walker-Ashby stated that she had committed to the applicant's attorney to defer the matter to the April 8th meeting, allowing time to consult with staff, City leadership, and the applicant to reach an agreeable solution.

Motion was made by Councilmember Jeffcoat and seconded by Councilmember Herndon to defer the item to the April 8th agenda. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Second Read - An Ordinance Updating Chapter 1, Article 1, General Provisions, of the City Code of Ordinances, Authorizing Interim Appointments to Boards, Commissions and Authorities; and for Other Purposes - City Attorney Emilia Walker-Ashby

Mayor Owens announced the item and recognized City Attorney Emilia Walker-Ashby, who noted that there were no changes made since the First Read.

Motion was made by Councilmember Jeffcoat and seconded by Councilmember Davis to approve the Ordinance as written. Motion passed 5-0.

12. NEW BUSINESS

a. Resolution Establishing the Excise Tax Rate for Alcohol Wholesalers and Dealers - Deputy Community Development Director Tina Garver

Mayor Owens announced the item and recognized Community Development Deputy Director Tina Garver, who provided background. She explained that this item establishes an excise tax for alcohol wholesalers and dealers conducting business in the City of Mableton. She noted that while the Alcohol Ordinance already established an excise tax, she noted that it referenced a fee schedule that would be set by this resolution. She also presented the fees permitted under state law and also those charged by other local jurisdictions.

Councilmember Ferguson asked for clarity concerning the uniformity in the language and structure of the added clauses. City Attorney Walker-Ashby responded.

Motion made by Councilmember Herndon and seconded by Councilmember Davis to establish the Excise Tax Rate for Alcohol wholesalers and dealers. Motion passed 5-0.

b. Amendment of Lease Agreement between Vishal Hawthorne and City of Mableton for Suite 30, 1245 Veterans Memorial Highway, Hawthorne Plaza - City Attorney Emilia Walker-Ashby

Mayor Owens announced the item and recognized City Attorney Walker-Ashby, who provided background. The City Attorney explained that the request is to authorize the Mayor to extend the lease, granting the City up to five additional one-year options to remain in the facility. The extension would not obligate the City to stay but would provide flexibility in light of the substantial improvements and upgrades planned for the property.

Mayor Owens noted that, at the Council's request, this item allows for transparency regarding the City's significant investments into Hawthorne Plaza, which houses the Municipal Court and the City's administrative offices. The lease extension would help to protect the City's investments.

Councilmember Ferguson asked for clarification regarding the specific action language included in the memo. The City Attorney explained that the vote would authorize the Mayor to facilitate, negotiate, and execute an addendum extending the lease for up to five additional years. She also noted that the matter was originally intended to be discussed in Executive Session. Mayor Owens asked Councilmember Ferguson whether he would feel more comfortable voting on the item following Executive Session, and he agreed. No action was taken at that time.

c. Second Read - An Ordinance to be Known as the Mableton Crown Act, Creating Article 3, Crown Act, of a New Chapter 15, General Offenses, of the City Code of Ordinances to Prohibit Discrimination Based on Protective and Cultural Hair Textures and Hairstyles and for Other Lawful Purposes - City Attorney Emilia

Walker-Ashby

Mayor Owens announced the item and provided background. He highlighted that the ordinance was intended to prohibit discrimination based on protective and cultural hair textures and hairstyles. He noted that this was the second reading and referenced an article on the cover of the *Marietta Daily Journal* that covered the City's proposed ordinance and emphasized its importance to the community. He acknowledged that this was not the first ordinance of its kind in the State of Georgia. He also mentioned that Councilmember Jeffcoat had asked for the item to be brought forward specifically during Black History Month, noting that the timing was quite telling of the significance of the ordinance.

Motion was made by Councilmember Jeffcoat and seconded by Councilmember Ferguson to approve the Ordinance known as the Mableton Crown Act, Creating Article 3, Crown Act, of a New Chapter 15, General Offenses, of the City Code of Ordinances to prohibit discrimination based on protective and cultural hair textures and hairstyles and for other lawful purposes. The motion passed 5-0.

13. OTHER BUSINESS/DISCUSSION

N/A

14. CITY MANAGER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS

City Manager Tanks shared that the City's Municipal Court had successfully held its first court session. He stated that the virtual court session took place on February 19th and acknowledged the hard work that went into reaching that milestone. He recognized Court Administrator Minor, as well as the judge, solicitor, and the code enforcement team, for their efforts. He noted that the City now has a functioning court process in place, which will help address some of the concerns expressed by the Council. He also shared that he would be taking a much-needed weekend vacation to attend a wedding in Jamaica. He added that he asked Director Hughes to monitor City matters on his behalf.

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

No Comments.

16. MAYOR AND COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS

Councilmember Davis thanked everyone for attending and noted that as Black History Month concludes, it is important to recognize that Black history is an integral part of American history and central to the nation's greatness. He also urged everyone to stay safe and cherish their loved ones. Lastly, he reminded everyone that we only have one life and should strive to live it fully and intentionally.

Councilmember Jeffcoat thanked everyone for attending and addressed earlier claims that the council is delaying the service delivery strategy. She stated that the council is fully committed to achieving the best outcome for residents but emphasized that such significant, long-term decisions must be thoughtful, thorough, and fully vetted—not rushed or incomplete. The goal is not to delay, but to make sure it is done the right way through careful planning and collaboration.

She celebrated the recent approval of Power Public Schools, praising the leadership and vision behind the initiative and calling it a historic step for South Cobb. She also highlighted the city's Arbor Day tree planting, thanked staff for sustainability efforts, and encouraged residents to participate in a local blood drive.

Additionally, she shared information about an upcoming town hall hosted by a local business, encouraged attendance at upcoming SPLOST engagement meetings, invited residents to subscribe to city newsletters, and announced the next work session dates.

She concluded by honoring civil rights leader Jesse Jackson, who recently passed. She reflected on his legacy and message of lifting others up.

Councilmember Ferguson thanked everyone in attendance and acknowledged that the past few weeks have been challenging as the Council has worked through important decisions. He expressed that it is disheartening to hear concerns suggesting that the Mayor and Council are not acting in the best interests of the citizens of Mableton.

He emphasized the importance of establishing Mableton as a home for his family and the importance of bringing the knowledge and experiences gained throughout life back to serve and strengthen your community. He stated that he will continue to ask questions to ensure he fully understands the matters before the Council and stressed the importance of making thoughtful, well-informed decisions rather than rushing the process. He expressed appreciation for the dedicated City staff, along with the Mayor and Council, recognizing their continued hard work and commitment to the community. He also asked that their efforts be met with respect.

Lastly, he spoke further about the importance of men's mental health. He announced an upcoming fireside chat on March 12 focused on encouraging men to support and uplift one another. He reiterated his message to not allow fear to override obedience.

Councilmember Herndon highlighted the 14 online attendees. She congratulated her appointee to the Planning Commission. She also announced her upcoming Litter Clean-Up event along the East-West Connector on February 28.

Mayor Owens addressed the recent rate increase from Austell Gas, explaining that it is a municipal gas entity owned by the City of Austell, which operates differently from private gas companies. He acknowledged that some of their customers are constituents of the City of Mableton and noted that he has reached out to Mayor Clemmons to discuss transparency and notification procedures so that Mableton City leadership can be informed about changes affecting their constituents. He clarified that the City's franchise agreement with Austell Gas did not influence the rate increase and assured residents that the City will continue to provide updates as information becomes available.

Mayor Owens also provided an update on ongoing negotiations with Cobb County regarding service delivery and outstanding intergovernmental agreements (IGAs). He emphasized that the City is advocating for its residents based on financial tax equity, meaning residents' tax contributions to the county's general fund should be recognized when calculating payments for services. He clarified that the issue is not the amount proposed for the county's service, but rather that the City seeks credit for taxes already paid.

He acknowledged that a one-year agreement for an extension is in place, but discussions are now moving toward mediation. Mayor Owens stated that unless tax equity is recognized, the Council can not agree. He highlighted that decisions are made democratically by the Council and confirmed that they are diligently advocating on behalf of Mableton residents.

He acknowledged the May 31st deadline but noted that further discussion is still needed. He stated that no mediation date has been scheduled but confirmed that the DCA deadline remains in effect. Mayor Owens emphasized that significant work is ongoing behind the scenes to ensure residents' voices are represented at the negotiation table. The City is seeking a solution that is fair and practical. However, with active negotiations and the potential for litigation, the Mayor and Council must proceed thoughtfully and deliberately while continuing to advocate strongly on behalf of the community.

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))

Motion was made by Councilmember Jeffcoat and seconded by Councilmember Herndon to go into Executive Session for litigation, real estate, and personnel at 8:55 p.m. The motion passed 5-0. Yeas: Davis, Jeffcoat, Ferguson, Herndon and Owens

Motion was made by Councilmember Ferguson and seconded by Councilmember Herndon to close Executive Session at 11:15 p.m. The motion carried 5-0. Yeas: Davis, Jeffcoat, Ferguson, Herndon and Owens

Motion made by Councilmember Jeffcoat and seconded by Councilmember Ferguson to authorize the Mayor to execute, in substantial form, the lease addendum to 1245 Veterans Memorial Highway, Suite 30. The motion passed 5-0.

18. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Jeffcoat and seconded by Councilmember Herndon to adjourn. The motion passed 5-0. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:16 p.m.

Dr. Michael Owens, Mayor	Susan Hiott, City Clerk