



**CITY OF MABLETON
PLANNING CONFERENCE MINUTES
FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 23 & 24, 2024**

Friday, March 22, 2024
900 Battery Ave, SE, Atlanta, GA 30339

Attendees: Mayor Owens, Councilmembers Davis, Jeffcoat, Ferguson, and Herndon. **Staff present:** Newly appointed City Manager Bill Tanks, Interim City Clerk Susan Hiott, City Attorney Emilia Walker-Ashby, Finance Consultant Frank Milazi, and Executive Assistant to Mayor Lily Smith

5:30 PM There were team building exercises at the Punch Bowl Social.

8:30 PM Adjourned for the evening.

Saturday, March 23, 2024
Doubletree Suites, 2780 Windy Ridge Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30339

Attendees: Mayor Owens, Councilmembers Davis, Oladapo, Jeffcoat, Auch, Herndon, Ferguson, City Manager Tanks, City Attorney Walker Ashby, City Clerk Susan Hiott, Executive Assistant Lily Smith, and Finance Consultant Frank Milazi

Guests: Robin Meyer

8:15 AM Breakfast / Arrival

8:30 AM Welcome/ Roll Call Mayor Michael Owens

Mayor Owens welcomed everyone and spoke about the importance of the meeting to begin other steps for the City to move forward in the transitional phase. A lot has been done, but there is more to do. There are legal requirements per the Charter regarding transitioning from the County. He recognized the citizen guest, Ms. Robin Meyers, and welcomed her to the meeting. He recognized the newly appointed City Manager, William “Bill” Tanks, and thanked him for attending.

He called the meeting to order at 8:45 p.m.

8:45 AM Brief Review of Transitional Activities City Attorney Emilia Walker-Ashby



Attorney Walker-Ashby provided a brief review of transitional activities. The Power Point presentation is available in the record.

Mayor Owens addressed how the City of Mableton being a new city needed to be part of the SDS discussions by June 2025. Mableton has an exemption per state law to not be under the mandated deadlines at this time. Mr. Tanks explained why it was important to be at the table now during the Service Delivery Strategy discussions now.

Mayor and Council discussed previous challenges with the business license portal and the transition period between the County and the City. There was a suggestion to have SLA (Service Level Agreement) on the website. Mr. Tanks added the importance of providing more information about the license renewal period in a town hall. **The council stressed they would like to have FAQs and process of the business license process.** City Attorney Walker-Ashby provided an overview of the business license process. Mayor and Council discussed how Mableton would like to have digitized electronic files during the transition of County files.

10:00 AM There was a short break.

10:15 AM Transitional Planning – Planning and Zoning discussion began. Attorney Walker-Ashby described the Active Municipality Minimum Standards. The presentation is available in the record. Cash is coming in locally so can begin the process to set up the departments (O.C.G.A. 36-30-7.1) and (O.C.G.A. 36-31-2). The Planning and Zoning will be the most work. The City should have discussions about the shape of documentation from the City. There was a review of the preliminary organization chart.

The City has powers from Charter 1.13 (23) and OCGA 36-30-7.1.

Local Planning and Zoning Codes – There was discussion about how to reconcile the Cobb County Zoning Code and the Mableton Charter. (e) Anyone can be subject to the Cobb County Code or Ordinances. During the transitional time, the City can take on the powers, but give a notice to the County. The subject matter and experts must be in place, and then can give the County the notice. Once implemented the Planning Ordinance, must have compliance. Once take over zoning, a portion of the council meetings will be designated to zoning. The legislation process was explained of zoning. The recommendation from the department and subject matter expertise (staff and Planning Commission) will be given to the council. There was discussion about how the City can have input on the current zonings. It is imperative to have contact with the Cobb commissioners and that Mableton voice their opinions. The Planning and Zoning presentation is in the record.



The City will need to have appointees to the Mableton Planning Commission. The appointees should be submitted before the planning and zoning training class. It is important to have subject expert zoning officials in place.

City Attorney Walker-Ashby stressed the Important Planning and Zoning Restriction: Per Mableton Charter 2.31 – *Neither the city council nor its members shall contact, discuss make inquiries to, or seek to influence any officer or employee, including the city manager, with regard to a potential or pending zoning or land use permit matter prior to the staff publishing their recommendations to the public, unless such potential matter involves land wholly owned by the city.* She continued to explain how processes need to be in place. She explained how the Council needs access to the documentation when on file so that they don't have to go to staff with respect to documentation.

The County-Wide GIS map is available on Cobb County's and Mableton's websites. The City boundaries are at the bottom of the Mableton website.

Attorney Walker-Ashby recommended that the City accept the County's Zoning Code initially. There was an overview of the County's Code. The County has the Sign Code within the Zoning Ordinance. This is recommended. Mayor Owens noted the City should overall take the County's Code, but there are some areas that could take practical approach and look at other ordinances to replace those of the County's Code that is not a good code. There was discussion of how to make sure if the County has a better update, that the City would know about the improvement. Council discussed the importance of having a relationship with the Cobb County Commission to know best practices. Council needs to know what they want Mableton to look like.

The City has to comply with the State Zoning Procedures Act – Title 36 – Local Government – Chapter 66 – Zoning Procedures.

12:00 PM Lunch (working lunch)

12:35 PM	Transitional Planning – Code Enforcement	Latonya Wiley, Esq. Local Government Attorney
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At 12:35 Latonya Wiley, Esq. presented. She provided background of her experience in Code Enforcement. The presentation is available in the record. The Georgia Constitution gives the City Supplementary Powers. Mandatory services required by the Constitution were shared. Mandatory services for cityhood were named. A new City must provide three services. Enforcement of Building, Housing, Plumbing, Electrical Codes and Other Similar Codes - Code enforcement is one of the three. She addressed the Hierarchy of Laws in Georgia: Georgia Constitution, Georgia Statutes, Local Legislation, and local ordinances. There was an overview of Code Enforcement Ordinance Examples in other cities. There was discussion about the



judicial enforcement process for code enforcement and the need for the City of Mableton Municipal Court.

There was a break.

3:00 PM Transitional Planning – Solid Waste Management Michael Huening, Esq.
Local Government Attorney

Mr. Huening explained under O.C.G.A. 36-30-7.1(b), to establish and maintain city hood status, municipalities must provide three of the eleven services. Solid waste management was one of the services. He continued to provide information about the types of solid waste and how it is managed. The presentation is available in the record of the City of Mableton.

Different waste management service models were explained by Attorney Huening: (1) Single Vendor (McDonough), (2) Qualified vendor list (Milton), and (3) City provided service (Roswell). Other cities' models and ordinances were discussed. Questions and discussion followed. The general consensus was the #2 Qualified vendor list process. Council discussed having an ordinance, regulating the vendors, and the importance of logging and tracking the number of complaints. If there are a certain number of complaints, they can no longer operate in the City. Also, the resident can change vendors if service is not adequate. The budget for having solid waste services was addressed.

3:55 PM There was a break.

4:05 PM Transitional Planning – Recreational Facilities Michael Huening, Esq.
Senior Director of Operations

Attorney Huening provided an overview of the Mableton area parks. There are 534.63 acres of park land and facilities in the City of Mableton.

Mr. Huening addressed the Supplementary Powers Clause, Article IX, Sec. I., PAR. III. (a) In addition to and supplementary of all powers possessed by or conferred upon any county, municipality, or any combination thereof, any county, municipality, or any combination thereof may exercise the following powers and provide the following services: (5) Parks, recreational areas, programs, and facilities. He pointed out (1) No county may exercise any of the powers listed in subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph or provide any service listed therein inside the boundaries of any municipality or any other county except by contract with the municipality or county affected. Discussion followed. Parks and Recreation is not recommended for the third leg at this time, but can consider later for the fourth leg.

Attorney Walker-Ashby stated the agenda will be rearranged to have the roadmap in the beginning of the meeting the next day. Council discussed the City was not required to have a



Other notations:

- Must consider the timeline of the build out of the building (city hall).
- Mayor Owens reminded that staff needs to meet with GovPilot for data migration, data validation and preparation for online services.
- Consider appointing a municipal judge for code enforcement.
- Discussed being proactive with code enforcement.
- Mayor Owens mentioned the need for training; the deadline to have class is June 1st
- Need to determine where class will be and when. Carl Vinson Institute wants to do a special class for the City.
- Best to do training in April and May.
- Consider moving the Planning Commission appointments up in schedule so will get training.

At 10:14 AM there was a break.

10:30 AM Internal Financial Controls

Frank Milazi

Finance Consultant Frank Milazi distributed a binder for Mayor and Council. The binder and presentation are available in the record. A video was shown about the fraud case in Dixon Illinois where comptroller Rita Crundwell was convicted of stealing \$50 million from the city. Highlights of Internal Controls and Fraud Risk presentation included:

Internal Controls & Fraud Risk

- Control starts with management.
- Components of Internal Control: Monitoring Activities; Risk Assessment; Information & Communication; Control Activities
- Primary Internal Control Weaknesses
 - Improper segregation of duties
 - Lack of management review
 - Override of existing controls
 - Poor or no succession planning
 - Lack of competent personnel in oversight roles
 - Lack of independent checks
 - Lack of employee fraud education
 - Lack of clear lines of authority
- Fraud and Abuse
- Fraud Triangle – Pressures, Rationalization, opportunity
- Common Motives – Incentive; opportunity; rationalization
- Risk Categories – Operational Risk and Financial Risk
- Common Risk Areas (Payroll (Ghost Employees); Accounts Payable, Cash Collection, Travel & Expenses,



- Behavioral Red Flags
 - Living beyond means
 - Financial difficulties (borrowing from co-workers)
 - Divorce, family issues, including health
 - Addiction problems
 - Close association with vendor/customer
 - Legal problems
 - Bragging about significant new purchases
 - Refusing to take vacations
- Impact of Weak Controls
 - Higher insurance cost
 - Higher audit fees – more work for auditors
 - Difficulty recruiting
 - Downgrade on credit – more expensive to borrow
- Good Internal Control Measures
 - Proper segregation of duties
 - Transparency in decision making
 - Culture of integrity and accountability
 - Financial and succession planning for the future
 - Limited access to sensitive data and controls
 - Insurance for the unforeseen or unpredictable
 - Knowledgeable and responsible personnel
- Internal Controls – Review and assess regularly, evaluate and make needed changes, keep up with industry changes, take ownership of your area of responsibility.

At 11:51 there was a Budget Calendar Overview by Frank Milazi, Mableton Financial Consultant. The presentation is available in the record. Highlights that were addressed:

- What is a budget?
 - Operating Budget – 12 months, focuses on current operations, services, programs.
 - Capital Budget – 5+ years, focuses on projects and long-term infrastructure needs.
- There are laws that ensure compliance with sound financial management practices and generally accepted accounting principles.
 - GAAP – Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
 - Under GAAP – Balanced budget shall be adopted for: General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Debt Obligation Funds, and Capital Projects Funds.
- Budget Cycle: Goal setting; Revenue Projections & Data Analysis; Budget Development; Budget Adoption; Budget Implementation; Review and Audit and then back to Goal Setting, etc.



Mr. Milazi addressed many more facts about the budget process, laws, regulations, and principles. He pointed out the Charter requirements, duties of the Accounting Manager and Finance Department.

12:00 PM Working Lunch

Motion was made to cancel the March 27, 2024, Council meeting by Councilmember Auch. Councilmember Jeffcoat seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

12:45 PM Comprehensive Plan

Michael Owens
Mableton Mayor

At 12:45 PM Mayor Owens began the presentation on Comprehensive Plan 2045. Highlights of the presentation included:

- Mayor Owens stated great places don't happen by accident.
- Mayor Owens presented previous studies and plans for the Mableton area.
- The South Cobb Town Center – that was approved in 2011.
- Plans have been in place previously. There is still a form-based code, approved in 2013.
- South Cobb Implementation Strategy was done in 2012.
- Austell Road LCI Study was done in 2015.
- The Georgia Planning Act requires that cities and counties maintain comprehensive plans that help shape future growth.
- Comprehensive Plans allows the city to be eligible for various state-administered funding, permitting, and incentive programs.
- Key Tasks were addressed.
 - Select a company to manage the Comprehensive Plan.
 - Residents, local business owners, elected officials, and city staff served on the committee and worked together to give direction and feedback at key points in the process.
 - The committee organized monthly public meetings, and additional opportunities for public participation at other community meetings were advertised through local media outlets and on the city's social media sites.
 - A project page on the city's website was also created with a link to all the available materials and a form to submit feedback to the planning department by email.
- After the Comp Plan is complete:
 - Send a draft of the plan to the Atlanta Regional Commission for review.
 - It's the latest step needed to get the plan approved by the Mayor and Council by the end of February.
 - Following ARC review, it will be the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' turn to look over the document.



- The Mayor and Council, as well as the public, will still provide comments and suggestions on the document designated to plan the city's development for decades to come.

Mayor Owens explained the Comp Plan Score Sheet. The council will submit the Comp Plan Score Sheet. Staff are welcome to submit a score sheet if would like.

2:00 PM Adjourn

Motion was made to adjourn by Councilmember Jeffcoat and seconded by Councilmember Herndon. The meeting adjourned.

Michael Owens, Mayor

ATTEST _____
Susan Hiott, City Clerk