CITY OF MABLETON, GEORGIA

Riverside EpiCenter
135 Riverside Pkwy, Austell, GA 30168
April 23, 2025 at 5:15 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 WORK SESSION MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Owens called the meeting to order at 5:28pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Deputy City Clerk Alison Benson called the roll. It was noted that Councilmembers Davis, Oladapo, and Ferguson were absent, as well as the City Attorney. City Manager Tanks was tardy, and Community Development Director Michael Hughes filled in on his behalf. City Clerk Hiott is out of the country and Deputy Clerk Benson filled in on her behalf.

3. AGENDA ITEMS AND DISCUSSION

Mayor Owens skipped this item.

4. PRESENTATIONS

a. Special Service District Presentation by Jason Gaines & Dana Johnson - Artie Jones, Economic Development Director

Mayor Owens introduced the item and recognized Jason Gaines, Chair of the Mableton Development Authority; Dana Johnson, Executive Director of the Mableton Development Authority; and Artie Jones, Mableton's Economic Development Director.

Mr. Gaines reviewed the agenda, stating that he and Mr. Johnson would cover the history of the Six Flags Special Service District (SF SSD), provide background on other revenue-generating tools, and discuss the pros and cons of each.

Mr. Johnson explained that, in preparation for the SF SSD, efforts were made to engage commercial property owners in order to gather data and gain support for the use of the SSD as a revenue-generating tool. He noted that the revenue would support a $10 million bond for improvements in the area.

Mr. Johnson explained that a revenue bond is an effective tool for targeted investment initiatives such as public safety, tourism, and redevelopment. He noted that the bond would support various beautification and redevelopment efforts within the SF SSD, including the purchase of properties and the installation of welcome signage along I-20.

Mr. Johnson mentioned that an SSD is established through legislative action, noting that the Six Flags SSD creation was approved by the Cobb County Board of Commissioners. However, both the MDA and the Cobb Commissioners approve bond use.

Mr. Johnson explained that since the incorporation of the City of Mableton, the County has received a legal opinion rendering the SF SSD as null and void. He mentioned that under SSD law, the closest level of government to the people, holds ultimate taxing authority, meaning the county can no longer collect revenue.

Mr. Johnson shared that the issue has been resolved between the MDA and the County. He mentioned that the MDA still has access to $750,000 in bond funds and is actively working on development projects for some of the previously purchased properties. He mentioned the plan is to use the remaining funds for other property purchases and update the welcome signs with the City's branding.

Mr.Gaines went into detail about the different taxing districts as a means of economic development tools, including:

- Special Service districts (SSD) – designated geographic areas where specific services are provided and funded through tax assessments or fees. Created to ensure that those within the district receive services that are not otherwise provided.

- Community improvement Districts (CID) – special districts where property owners agree to impose a tax or fee on themselves to fund public services and improvements within the boundaries.

- Tax Allocation Districts (TADS) - allow flexible use of bond proceeds for infrastructure supporting public or private development. They can also fund affordable housing or other capital projects (excluding maintenance). A URA plan guides fund allocation and requires approval from all taxing entities. Tax increments vary with market conditions.

Councilmember Auch asked if the boundaries could be amended and if the available funds could be used for new boundary areas. Mr. Johnson provided clarification. Councilmember Ferguson inquired about any remaining opportunities that may not have been addressed. He shared concerns raised by his constituents and asked whether the City's needs have been thoroughly assessed.

Mr. Gaines stated that additional areas have been considered for the potential implementation of the discussed tools. He emphasized that the MDA's role is to support City staff and Council as they fully assess the City's needs.

Director Jones stated his intention is to return to Council with recommendations on where specific tools should be applied, including areas not previously considered. He expressed interest in meeting with Councilmembers individually to discuss district priorities and noted that, while he will collaborate closely with the MDA, he plans to lead the City's strategic implementation efforts with the assistance of staff. Director Hughes reminded everyone that the City's Comprehensive Plan will help identify key focus areas and the appropriate tools for each.

The Mayor Pro Tem asked how the City determines which taxes are levied. Mr. Johnson outlined the process, noting that while there is some flexibility, the City must carefully evaluate and determine the appropriate size and rate.

Councilmember Herndon asked for clarification on the first steps of this process. Mr. Gaines referred to the City's Comprehensive Plan, explaining that it defines the City's vision and guides staff on how to allocate the funds under the City's control.

Councilmember Oladapo asked for advice on implementation methods that would minimize disruption to residents. Mr. Johnson suggested some non-controversial options.

Clerk Notes:
5:51 Councilmember Ferguson arrives (Tardy)
5:53 City Manager Tanks arrives (Tardy)
6:02 Councilmember Oladapo arrives (Tardy)
6:23 City Attorney arrives (Tardy)

5. PRE REGULAR MEETING AGENDA REVIEW

Councilmember Auch requested to remove the 2025 Planning and Zoning Calendar from the Consent Agenda and move under New Business.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

7. 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))

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Jeffcoat to Adjourn. Councilmember Herndon seconded. The motion passed.

Mayor Owens adjourned at 6:23pm.

Dr. Michael Owens, Mayor

Susan Hiott, City Clerk