



CITY OF MABLETON, GEORGIA

Riverside EpiCenter
135 Riverside Pkwy, Austell, GA 30168
August 11, 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 WORK SESSION MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Owens called the meeting to Order at 6:37pm.

2. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Hiott called the roll and a quorum was present. Councilmember Ferguson was absent.

3. INVOCATION

City Manager Tanks led the Invocation.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Owens led the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. AGENDA ITEMS AND DISCUSSION

a. CDBG Program Overview - Dr. Kimberly Roberts, Ph.D - Managing Director of Cobb County CDBG & NSP Program Offices

Mayor Owens mentioned the poor acoustics in the room before introducing the agenda item and recognizing Community Development Director Hughes. Director Hughes introduced Dr. Kimberly Roberts, Managing Director of the Cobb County CDBG Program Office. Dr. Roberts presented an overview of the CDBG Program via PowerPoint, included in the agenda packet.

Key points presented:

- The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program was established under the Housing and Community Development Act.
- It is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), with funding appropriated by Congress.
- Allocations are awarded to cities and counties that meet population thresholds set by Congress.
- Cities with over 50,000 people and counties with over 200,000 can qualify as

entitlement communities and receive automatic HUD funding.

- The next CDBG program cycle will begin in 2026.
- In order to participate, the City must receive and formally accept a letter of invitation from HUD.

Further explanation was given on the following components of the CDBG Program:

- CDBG Purpose – To develop viable urban communities through housing, a suitable living environment, and economic opportunities, primarily benefiting low- and moderate-income individuals.
- Grant Stipulations – Funds must be used in accordance with federal requirements and serve eligible populations.
- Consolidated Plan – A five-year planning document identifying local needs and priorities (must be submitted to HUD)
- Annual Action Plan – Outlines specific projects and funding allocations for each year (must be submitted to HUD)
- Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) – An assessment of barriers to fair housing and strategies to address them.
- Statutory and Regulatory Requirements – Compliance with all applicable federal laws and HUD regulations is required.
- CDBG Project Fundability – all activities must be eligible for funding and meet a national objective.
- Eligible & ineligible project activities - according to Housing and Community Development Act (HCDA) Section 105 (a).
- CDBG National Objectives – All activities must meet at least one of HUD's national objectives: to benefit low- and moderate-income persons, prevent or eliminate slums or blight, or address urgent community development needs.

Additional key points were presented:

- Monthly reporting requirements and annual monitoring by HUD
- Expected spending timeline: 6 years to spend funds
- Record retention requirement: records must be kept for five years after the close of the program year in which funds were expended
- Explained the funding process for the program, including the reimbursable grant structure.

Councilmember Auch asked about the timeliness requirement, Councilmember Herndon asked about programs supporting low-income families, and Councilmember Jeffcoat asked about a specific housing rehabilitation qualifier. Director Hughes addressed concerns related to annual audits and accountability for ineligible spending. Dr. Roberts addressed each question with additional context.

Following the presentation, City Manager Tanks stated that the City now plans to pursue CDBG funds and emphasized the importance of understanding the process to ensure the best allocation opportunities.

Dr. Roberts presented an alternative option for the City to receive funding through Cobb County's CDBG allocation or pursue funding independently. She noted that Cobb County receives approximately \$3.5 million, which is distributed among its fair share portion. Dr. Roberts stated that the City will likely see the proposed figures by November, providing a clearer idea of potential funding. She cautioned that the current administration is attempting to eliminate programs. Lastly, she emphasized the importance of ensuring proposed projects are "shovel-ready" when submitted.

City Manager Tanks reiterated that the purpose of the presentation was to inform Council that the City would be moving forward in pursuing CDBG funding with Director Hughes as the lead.

Mayor Owens thanked Dr. Roberts for her presentation. He reaffirmed his support for the CDBG program and expressed hope that it will continue in the future. He mentioned previous conversations he held with other elected officials to advocate for the continuation of the program. Mayor Owens asked Director Hughes if additional resources would be required to support the program. Director Hughes responded that, initially, no additional resources would be needed. He added that HUD will visit to provide guidance to the City when ready. Mayor Owens emphasized the importance of exploring all that HUD has to offer.

b. Economic Development Update - Economic Development Director Artie Jones

Mayor Owens introduced the item and recognized Economic Development Director, Artie Jones. City Manager Tanks provided context, reminding the Council that this presentation directly addresses their request for more education on the economic development tools that were discussed during the spring planning conference.

Director Jones began by defining economic development and outlining the core responsibilities of the department. He explained that the presentation is an update on current departmental efforts and to preview potential program considerations. The full presentation is available in the agenda packet.

Director Jones presented the following updates to the Mayor and Council:

City's Economic Standing

- Estimated Population: Approximately 78,368 residents
- Business Presence: 2,131 registered businesses operating in Mableton
- Median Household Income: \$78,429
- Unemployment Rate: 5.5%
- Top Business Revenue: The 20 largest businesses in Mableton generate a combined revenue of nearly \$850 million

Director Jones mentioned that his team conducted a preliminary housing survey, and identified a significant gap in workforce housing and affordability around the City. He shared that there are approximately 10,000 jobs in the Six Flags area and only 55 of those

employees currently reside in Mableton. He assured that his team plans to conduct a more in-depth study to assess the issue and propose solutions.

Business Retention and Expansion Visits (BRE)

Director Jones stated that staff from Economic Development, Code Enforcement, and Community Development will begin quarterly visits to Mableton businesses to build relationships, raise awareness of the City's licensing requirements, and address any needs or questions.

RFP for the City's retail development services

Director Jones stated that there will be a number of public meetings held to gather residents' retail ideas and address existing retail gaps. He noted that an RFP was issued in mid-July. He plans to contract with a development firm by September. The goal will be to identify existing retail businesses, determine if the City is receiving its fair share of revenue, and pinpoint retail leakage.

Tax Allocation District Requirements (TAD)

Director Jones outlined the typical two-to three-year process required to establish a TAD and presented a plan to expedite this timeline. He noted that the TAD would end up on a ballot for residents to vote on and emphasized the City's need to initiate this tool this year.

Establish a Development Strategy Plan

Director Jones highlighted the importance of creating a strategic economic development plan for the City and stressed the critical need to establish one in the next 12–18 months. He mentioned that the document would incorporate input from the community, elected officials, and stakeholders.

Establish a Housing Authority

Director Jones reiterated the City's workforce housing gap and proposed establishing a housing authority to address it. He also outlined the necessary steps to create the Authority.

Councilmember Jeffcoat asked if his team had considered implementing inclusionary zoning. Director Jones responded that it would be addressed in the City's upcoming strategic plan. She also asked whether this plan would align with the City's Comprehensive Plan. Director Jones confirmed that it will be incorporated into the final Comp Plan.

Councilmember Oladapo expressed concern about potential disruptions to businesses during the BRE visits and suggested notifying businesses in advance. Director Jones responded that, although the visits will be unannounced, their purpose is to build relationships and inform business owners that the City will now manage business licenses, while also educating them about the process.

Director Jones confirmed that the 20 largest businesses will receive a scheduled 1–2-hour visit and be provided with a detailed questionnaire. He noted that the respective Councilmember, as well as Mayor Owens, would be notified in advance and invited to attend.

City Manager Tanks explained that the effort is intended to prevent potential rezoning issues that could come up if businesses allow their licenses to expire. He explained that

some businesses are grandfathered under county zoning and risk losing their current zoning classification—and possibly the ability to operate—if owners fail to stay current with City requirements.

Councilmember Jeffcoat asked how the "grandfathered-in" concept works. Director Hughes explained that the "general commercial" zoning category has been phased out, but businesses that were already operating under it are allowed to continue through the process of grandfathering. However, if a business closes or allows its license to expire, it will likely lose its current zoning status and may be required to comply with the updated zoning designations. Councilmember Herndon asked about support for business owners who consider transitioning their businesses to better align with community needs or current zoning regulations.

Mayor Owens noted that while there is a vision for the future of Mableton's retail, it's important to remember that each current business represents an income for a family. He urged everyone to be mindful of that reality and encouraged a thoughtful approach during the BRE visits.

City Manager Tanks noted that Director Jones serves as a liaison between business owners and the City to help guide conversations about the future of their businesses in Mableton. He emphasized that Director Jones' team aims to educate and empower business owners. Director Hughes added that his team will provide updated zoning information to help business owners explore viable options.

Councilmember Jeffcoat asked how many businesses could potentially operate under grandfathered zoning. City Manager Tanks noted that the City has already encountered this issue with a business owner and warned that it could become a larger problem if not addressed. Councilmember Davis asked how business owners are notified of a rezoning. Director Hughes responded that zoning allocations are outlined in the Future Land Use Map, which is updated periodically and approved by the Board of Commissioners. He added that public hearings are held as part of the rezoning process.

Mayor Owens asked if efforts had been made to collaborate with the Mableton Development Authority and SelectCobb. Director Jones confirmed. He also advocated for the MDA to be managed by the local governing body. Mayor Owens asked if there were any more questions. There were none.

City Manager Tanks summarized that the goal of the presentation was to obtain direction from the Council. He is prepared to have Director Jones initiate the Tax Allocation District process for the upcoming September session and plans to have Director Hughes begin the CDBG funding process on behalf of the City.

Councilmember Jeffcoat confirmed that both presentations will be available for review. Councilmember Auch asked about the determination of the boundaries for the TAD. City Manager Tanks responded that redevelopment powers will need to be established first. Director Jones noted that the identification of redevelopment areas is expected between April and May, by which time the Georgia Legislature is also expected to have approved the TAD. Mayor Owens urged expedited execution of both CDBG funding and TAD initiatives.

c. Municipal Court of Mableton 30 Days in Review, Court Administrator Mallory Minor

Mayor Owens introduced the item and recognized Court Administrator Minor, who presented a 30-day review of the Municipal Court's pre-implementation phase. A formal presentation letter and PowerPoint are included in the agenda packet.

Key points from the presentation included:

Procedural Development and Foundational Planning

- -Developed departmental procedures and policies
- -Selected a court management software system
- -Established a separate mailing address for all court correspondence
- -Set up a dedicated payment P.O. Box at the Mableton USPS

Staff Hiring and Training

- -Prepared for the appointment of a Chief Judge and City Solicitor
- -Hired all essential court personnel

Securing a Facility

- -Identified a facility that meets both operational and accessibility standards
- -Renovations are currently underway

Technology & Software Implementation

- -Implemented a case management system
- -Ensured GCIC compliance: a request has been submitted to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) for an ORI number.
- -Plans in place for robust security measures
- -JustFOIA selected for managing Open Records Requests

Community Engagement

- -Issued public updates via the City's official legal organ, The Marietta Daily Journal (MDJ)
- -Developed educational materials to help residents access court services
- -Highlighted the Georgia Municipal Court Clerks for the launch of the Certified Municipal Court Clerks Training, now free for all Municipal Court Clerks in Georgia. She has the privilege of instructing a course within the program.

Budget and Financial Planning

- -Submitted a funding request to support the appointment of a Public Defender
- -Identified sustainable funding sources, including court fees and city allocations

Commitment to Justice and the City Mission

- Dedicated to upholding a vision of "One Community. One City. One Court."

Councilmember Jeffcoat acknowledged Administrator Minor for her efforts thus far and asked about the timeline for an active court. Administrator Minor responded at the latest November 1, with the option to begin virtually. Councilmember Herndon asked about the necessary purchases needed for the court facility. City Manager Tanks explained that the court facility must meet specific setup and security requirements as outlined by the Georgia Supreme Court. He noted that most of the capital improvement funds for renovations that were approved in last year's budget have been allocated for the courts' construction.

Administrator Minor stated that contracts for court software and private probation services will be brought before the Council at the next meeting. She has also prepared a proposed Municipal Court fee schedule and mentioned plans to later include a technology fee. To close, she mentioned upcoming plans for a strategic planning roundtable, the development of a court logo, and the implementation of SMART goals to guide court progress.

Mayor Owens highlighted that everything the City has built thus far has been in line with the Criminal Justice Information System Policy that the State upholds. Administrator Minor acknowledged the groundwork laid prior to her arrival. She recognized IT Director, Frantz Francois, and noted that he has completed the required certifications and will serve as the Municipal Court Local Agency Security Officer (LASO).

Councilmember Oladapo asked about the option for virtual court. Administrator Minor stated that the City must secure an ORI number first and then GCIC compliance as the next major requirement. She also noted that even if the City holds court virtually, the citizens retain a constitutional right to appear in person, and that option must also be available. She is hopeful virtual court can begin in 30 to 45 days, with an in-person date also in place for those who need it.

City Manager Tanks commented that the City hired a subject-matter expert and strong lead in Court Administrator Minor. He expressed confidence in her leadership and thanked her for ensuring the City establishes a sound court system. He highlighted that Code Enforcement will be able to issue retroactive penalties and address concerns about the City's ability to hold violators accountable.

6. PRE REGULAR MEETING AGENDA REVIEW

Mayor Owens led the review of the upcoming Regular Meeting Agenda. Community Development Director Michael Hughes reviewed the public hearing section of the regular meeting agenda. Details below:

Item 6a - OZI-2025-001: The request was to amend the County's adopted stipulations to allow for a liquor store on the property. Mayor Owens opened the public hearing and asked for comment. There was none. Mayor Owens closed the public hearing. (Clerk's note: The public hearing was held due to an advertisement in the Marietta Daily Journal.)

Item 6b - Case # V-2025-01: The applicant is seeking approval to modify the existing requirement regarding the division of property to allow for the construction of an additional single-family detached residence. There was no discussion.

Item 6c - Alcoholic Beverages Ordinance: City Clerk Hiott noted there was a public hearing held at the July 16 meeting. Discussion followed about alcoholic beverages at open City events. City Attorney Walker-Ashby addressed sections 5.4.11 and 5.4.14. She will make changes to add special events as authorized by the code or by the Mayor and Council for City events.

Item 6d - Taxes, Fees and Assessments Ordinance : City Clerk Hiott noted an email about the secondary effects was sent to the Mayor and Council. The effective date for regulating businesses is September 1st.

Item 6e - Subdivision Ordinance: The Community Development department is to look at detention pond language to make it tighter. The request is to adopt the Ordinance. City Attorney Walker-Ashby explained that the Code of Ordinances always evolves, and the ordinances should align closely with the climate of the City of Mableton.

Mayor Owens reviewed the New Business items:

Item 12a - Agreement with the City and Trees Atlanta: Mayor Owens stated he had begun conversations with Trees Atlanta previously. Sustainability, Waste and Beautification Director, Emily Groth, has continued the conversations, and there is a contract ready for adoption. Also, Finance Director Karen Ellis has reviewed as well.

Item 12c - Six Flags SSD: The SSD mirrors Cobb County's, with the same boundaries and tax rate.

Item 12d - Police SSD - Mayor Owens noted the item was removed from the agenda. There have been a lot of discussions about the proposed SSD. There was a town hall meeting. The City does not have the details of what the SSD will look like. There have been discussions with the County about using the tax assessor's office to collect. The City is still negotiating with the County about the Police Services. There was a meeting previously with the County. The goal is to have the County and City engaged and do what is best for the residents.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

8. 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 to enter into Executive Session for litigation, real estate, personnel (at 8:39 pm). Councilmember Auch seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0. **Yeas:** Owens, Davis, Oladapo, Jeffcoat, Auch, and Herndon

Motion was made by Councilmember Oladapo to close the Executive Session. Councilmember Herndon seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

Yeas: Owens, Davis, Oladapo, Jeffcoat, Auch, and Herndon (10:18 pm)

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Jeffcoat and seconded by Councilmember Auch to Adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 6-0.
The meeting adjourned at 10:19 pm.

Dr. Michael Owens, Mayor

Susan Hiott, City Clerk