MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION
OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF CLARKSTON, GEORGIA
HELD BY TELECONFERENCE, ZOOM AUDIO/VIDEO
IN SAID CITY ON TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2025

On the 25th day of March 2025, at 7:00 p.m., the City Council of Clarkston, Georgia met in a Work Session in-person and by teleconference, Zoom Audio/Video in said City. Mayor Beverly Burks called the meeting to order. The following members of the City Council were present: Vice Mayor Debra Johnson and Councilmembers Sharifa Adde; Yterenickia Bell; Jamie Carroll; and Mark Perkins. Absent: Susan Hood. The following City staff were present: ChaQuias Miller Thornton (City Manager); Chief Hudson (Police Chief); Richard Edwards (Planning and Economic Development Director; Yolanda McGhee (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer); Tomika R. Mitchell (City Clerk); Larry Kaiser (City Engineer); and Stephen Quinn (City Attorney).

NOTE: Items appearing in these minutes are in the order they were discussed, not necessarily in the order they appeared on the agenda.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL
   All Council were present during roll call.

   Vice Mayor Johnson made a motion to add Item 4E, to discuss a proclamation designating April 21st – 26th as Georgia Cities Week. Councilmember Bell duly seconded the motion. Mayor Burks called for the vote and declared the motion approved (6-0).

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS
   Mayor Burks read the Resident Comment Policy.

4. PRESENTATION/ ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS
   A. To discuss a proclamation designating April as "African American Women's History Month".

   Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, Yolanda McGhee presented for approval a proclamation designating April as "African American Women's History Month".

   This item will be placed on the next City Council Meeting agenda under Consent Agenda.

   B. To discuss a proclamation designating April as "National Arab American Heritage Month".

   Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, Yolanda McGhee presented for approval a proclamation designating April as "National Arab American Heritage Month".

   This item will be placed on the next City Council Meeting agenda under Consent Agenda.

C. To discuss a proclamation designating May 11-17 "Economic Development Week".

Planning and Economic Development Director, Richard Edwards stated the International Economic Development Council has designated the week of May 11-17 as "Economic Development Week" across North America. This effort is to recognize the vital role that Economic Development plays in creating a vibrant and prosperous community for the city.

Mr. Edwards announced that the city and the city's Downtown Development Authority is working with Decide Dekalb and on May 13th there will be a Business 101 session hosted by Dekalb County, focusing on Refugee and Black and African American business owners and providing them resources that the county and the city offer to those business owners.

This item will be placed on the next City Council Meeting agenda under Consent Agenda.

D. To present the upcoming Stormwater Infrastructure Improvement Project in the Market Walk and MacLaren communities.

City Engineer, Larry Kaiser of Collaborative Infrastructure gave an overview of the pipe system and presented to the City Council the scope of work for the replacement of deteriorated storm lines on Market Crescent and to rear of 3734 and 3738 MacLaren Drive. The deteriorated condition of these storm line pipes was identified when the recently replaced storm lines between and to the rear of 3731 and 3737 Market Crescent lines were replaced earlier this year. The 3734 and 3738 MacLaren Drive storm lines are connected to the same storm water network. In addition to the MacLaren Drive parcels, a cross drain under Market Crescent and in the front yard of 3737 Market Crescent will require replacement.

Mr. Kaiser stated all storm lines in this project have completely rusted and in some cases, depression exists in front yards due to the advanced state of pipe corrosion.

The projects identified above were included in the 6-Year Stormwater Capital Replacement Program provided to Finance last month. It is also noted that staff believe that a significant number of additional pipe systems in both neighborhood communities are likely in the same state of deterioration. As such, staff has programed $50,000 per year for 6 years for pipe replacements in these areas of the city. This 6-year Stormwater Capital Projects program will be presented to the Council and Mayor at the April Mayor and Council Retreat.

E. To discuss a proclamation designating April 21st – 26th as Georgia Cities Week.

City Manager Miller Thornton presented an explanation of the Georgia Cities Week proclamation.

This item will be placed on the next City Council Meeting agenda under Consent Agenda.

5. OLD BUSINESS

There were no items to discuss.

6. NEW BUSINESS
   A. To discuss a resolution awarding a services agreement to the most responsive and responsible bidder, Perez Planning + Design, LLC, for the Park & Recreation Master Plan services in the amount of $141,400 to be funded out of SPLOST II.

Parks and Recreation Manager, Michael Duncan gave a brief overview of the RFP for the Park & Recreation Master Plan and recommended approval of Perez Planning + Design, LLC for the Recreation Master Plan services.

Carlos Perez of Perez Planning + Design, LLC provided a brief overview of the master plan and the timeline.

The Council briefly discussed this matter.

This item will be placed on the next City Council Meeting agenda.

   B. To discuss the request to purchase two new 2023 Ford Interceptors from Alan Vigil Ford Lincoln Mercury, Inc. (*State Contract # 99999-001-SPD0000183-0005*) for the Police Department in the amount of $104,544.00 to be funded out of SPLOST II.

Police Chief Hudson stated the police department is requesting to purchase two new 2023 Ford Interceptors for our department. Currently, we have 14 marked patrol vehicles for 13 officers, which leaves us with only one spare vehicle to account for any unexpected repairs. By acquiring two additional vehicles, we would ensure that we have a total of three spare vehicles available if multiple vehicles require service at the same time. The total cost for both vehicles is $104,544.00.

The Council briefly discussed this matter.

This item will be placed on the next City Council Meeting agenda under Consent Agenda.

   C. To discuss the request to purchase the necessary equipment for two new 2023 Ford Interceptors from Dana Safety Supply (*State Contract # GS-07F-0512T*) in the amount of $36,674.88 to be funded out of SPLOST II.

Police Chief Hudson stated this item is a request to purchase the necessary equipment for two 2023 Ford Police Interceptors. The vehicle equipment is $18,337.44 per vehicle, totaling $36,674.88. In addition, In-Car Cameras, priced at $7,223 each (one camera per vehicle), are also part of the equipment to be purchased per vehicle. This expenditure is within the spending authority of the City Manager.

This item will be placed on the next City Council Meeting agenda under Consent Agenda.

   D. To discuss a proposed variance request from Section 540(a) of the zoning ordinance to not require a 5-foot sidewalk along a local street at 3679 West Smith Street, Clarkston, GA (18 119 05 017).

Planning and Economic Development Director, Richard Edwards stated the applicant is requesting a variance to not install a 5-foot sidewalk along West Smith Street. There are currently no sidewalks along either side of West Smith Street and the applicant is stating that there is unnecessary hardship. Staff recommended denial of the proposed variance request. The Planning Commission recommended approval of this request and recommended that City Council consider adopting a fee in-lieu program for sidewalks.

The Council briefly discussed this matter.

Mr. Kaiser of Collaborative Infrastructure provided clarity pertaining to the in-lieu of fee program.

Dean Moore presented comments on this item.

The applicant Michael Reinsel presented comments pertaining to his application requesting a variance.

This item will be placed on the next City Council Meeting agenda with a Public Hearing.

E. To discuss a resolution approving a conditional use permit to allow a drive-thru facility at 4540 East Ponce de Leon Avenue (Parcel ID: 18 142 01 089).

Planning and Economic Development Director, Richard Edwards stated this property was the old KFC/Taco Bell restaurant that closed in 2020 that had a drive-thru facility associated with the use. The current tenant, DBA Tacos and BBQ, opened in 2024 and is unable to utilize the drive-thru facility due to the nonconforming status of the drive-thru facility with the restaurant use. However, on March 4, 2025, the City Council approved a text amendment that allowed for the submittal of conditional use permits for drive-thru/drive-in facilities in the NC-2 zoning district.

The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit to allow the lessee to re-open the drive-thru facility that has been closed for over four (4) years. Staff recommend approval of the proposed conditional use permit.

This item will be placed on the next City Council Meeting agenda with a Public Hearing.

F. To discuss a resolution approving a change order to the Magnum Paving Resurfacing contract for additional resurfacing of three roads approved by the Georgia Department of Transportation, Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant 2025 program in the amount of $187,071.88 to be funded out of SPLOST II.

Mr. Kaiser of Collaborative Infrastructure presented to the Council the cost benefits of utilizing the current unit prices in the Magnum Paving contract as opposed to advertising to-bid the relatively small resurfacing project. The cost savings utilizing the asphalt and milling unit prices in Magnum Paving's contract will save the city approximately 30-40%. Staff recommends approval of the change order in the amount of $187,071.88 to be funded by the SPLOST II.

The Council briefly discussed this matter.

This item will be placed on the next City Council Meeting agenda under Consent Agenda.

G. To discuss a resolution authorizing an Interlocal Agreement between the Dekalb County Housing Authority and the City of Clarkston for the joint provision of affordable housing services in the City of Clarkston.

H. City Attorney, Stephen Quinn gave an overview of the proposed agreement and stated this item traced back to the approval from the City Council for a project at 1086 Montreal that was financed by the Dekalb County Housing Authority. The Housing Authority has jurisdiction in unincorporated Dekalb County and with the city's consent, within the cities of Dekalb. The request was made for the city to consent, and a concern was raised at the time of the financing method that the housing authority uses, making the property untaxable for a period of 15 years. The Mayor negotiated with the executive of the housing authority and it was agreed that the housing authority would pay the city $90,000 per year into the city's existing Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Mr. Quinn stated this agreement with Dekalb County Housing Authority will jointly provide affordable housing services in the City of Clarkston, administered by the city through the existing Trust.

The Council briefly discussed this matter.

This item will be placed on the next City Council Meeting agenda under Consent Agenda.

H. To discuss establishing a truck route ordinance.

Councilmember Perkins presented a brief background of this item stating there had been several incidents in a few of the neighborhoods where semi-trucks have gone done residential streets and knocked out power, internet, phone infrastructure, and utility poles. Councilmember Perkins stated the draft ordinance had been left open for discussion.

Mr. Kaiser from Collaborative Infrastructure provided additional information and clarity on truck route restrictions throughout the city.

Staff will work with the City Attorney to discuss conditions for the proposed truck route ordinance.

The Council briefly discussed this matter.

This item will be placed on the next City Council Meeting agenda.

I. To discuss requiring the city to have an option to receive all payments electronically, and to have an option to make all payments electronically by July 1, 2025.

Councilmember Carroll stated this item originated from a particular incident with a citizen not being able to pay the city electronically. Currently, the city requires at least some payments to be made by check and makes many payments by mailing checks. This causes delays in making and receiving payments, and several businesses have complained that there is not an electronic option to make some payments, which in at least one case has held up receipt of bond payments. Therefore, I recommend that the city be required to have an electronic option to make and receive all payments by July 1, 2025. This will give staff time to set up electronic payment systems.

City Manager Miller-Thornton provided information regarding the city currently not having the software infrastructure to put electronic payments and systems in place, but staff will be consulting with the city's financial software provider, RDA, to see if the software the city currently has will allow for this form of application. Additionally, if the current software does not have the capability, it can integrate with another platform we can engage with. The goal is not to have multiple systems in place across the organization and consolidate processes and capabilities across different departments.

The Council briefly discussed this matter.

Ms. Miller-Thornton stated staff will meet with RDA to discuss this matter and stated another consideration is whether any change in software has been made, so staff will need an opportunity to make sure of the route to take and any associated costs.

Susie Keys, Municipal Court Clerk, presented public comments.

Ms. Miller-Thornton stated staff has identified some of the things that need to have in place, like a purchase order system and committed to at the April Work Session staff will have a plan forward.

This item will be placed on the next City Council Meeting agenda.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Carroll made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Perkins duly seconded the motion. Mayor Burks called for the vote and declared the meeting adjourned (5-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

ATTEST:

Tomika R. Mitchell

Tomika R. Mitchell
City Clerk

Beverly H. Burks

Beverly H. Burks
Mayor