

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Newnan, Georgia was held on Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at 6:30p.m. in the Richard A. Bolin Council Chambers of City Hall with Mayor James Shepherd presiding.

PRESENT

Mayor James Shepherd: Council members present: Scott Berta, Jim Thomasson, Jennifer Morrison, Cynthia Jenkins, Paul Guillaume and Dustin Koritko. Also present: City Manager, Cleatus Phillips; Assistant City Manager, Hasco Craver; Assistant City Manager, Meg Kelsey; City Clerk, Megan Shea and City Attorney, Brad Sears.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Shepherd called the meeting to order. Reverend Dr. Melvin Brittian delivered the invocation.

READING OF MINUTES

A. Minutes from the Regular Meeting on February 10, 2026

Motion by Councilman Guillaume, seconded by Councilman Koritko to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting on February 10, 2026 and adopt them as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

B. Minutes from the Work Session on February 10, 2026

Motion by Councilwoman Morrison, seconded by Councilman Koritko to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Work Session on February 10, 2026 and adopt them as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Youth Council Attendees

Councilwoman Jenkins read the names of the Newnan Youth Council members who were in attendance. Adlyr Mol and Kate Sears.

C. 1 Appointment - Christmas Commission, 3-year term

Continue to next agenda.

D. 1 Appointment - Development Authority, 4-year term

Continue to next agenda.

E. 1 Appointment – Ethics Commission, 2-year term

Motion by Councilwoman Jenkins, seconded by Councilman Thomasson to appoint Evette Jones to the Ethics Commission.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

REPORTS ON OPERATIONS BY CITY MANAGER

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM MAYOR

Mayor Shepherd thanked Jason Kanner for speaking at the last meeting regarding the proposed alcohol ordinance amendment. He said it is helpful for Council when citizens come and explain things in ways they may have not thought about them. He encouraged anyone to come and speak about an item or reach out to Council ahead of the meeting. It is important to have citizen involvement.

NEW BUSINESS

F. Public Hearing – City of Newnan’s Comprehensive Plan Update 2026-2046, first of two

Chris Cole, Senior Planner, explained that the City of Newnan has initiated the process to begin a full update of the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the public hearing is to brief the community on the process to be used to update the plan, opportunities for public participation and to obtain input on the proposed planning process.

Staff plans to engage with residents and other stakeholders, in locations around the community and through digital platforms. They will also gather data through surveys. A steering committee will help lead the city through the process. A second public hearing will be held once the comprehensive plan is drafted and made available for public review. The plan update will allow the city to maintain its qualified government status and therefore be eligible to obtain state grant funds, loans and permits. The due date for the update is October 31, 2026. A draft schedule was included in the agenda packet.

Councilwoman Jenkins asked if the schedule was complete and Mr. Cole said no, it is just a starting point. Any other groups that want to have a pop-up event can contact the Planning Department to be added to the schedule.

There were no public comments. No action needed.

G. Public Hearing – Request by Owner to Demolish Structure at 42 Wilcoxon St.

Bryan Partin, Chief Building Official, said that the house was built in 1905 and is historic due to its age. It is also located in a historic district. There was a study done in the 90’s and the house was deemed to have architectural value but unfortunately it has been significantly damaged.

Ms. Stephanie Newell said this house was her grandmother’s rental property in Cole Town. The house was boarded up but then the wall was ripped out by homeless people, and they caused a fire in

February 2025. It was not deemed an arson by the Fire Marshal, since the people who broke in were just trying to stay warm.

Councilman Thomasson asked what they plan to do after the demo. Ms. Newell said they will probably put a duplex there, that will match with the other houses in the neighborhood. She said her grandmother never changed the aesthetics of the house, in keeping with the look of the neighborhood.

Mayor Shepherd closed the public hearing.

Councilman Koritko asked what the timeline is for demolition? Ms. Newell said they have had multiple bids, but they haven't accepted one yet because the range in pricing is so ridiculous.

Councilman Thomasson asked if there is a design overlay since this is in a historic neighborhood? Mr. Dean Smith, Senior Planner, said it will come to the Planning Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness for architectural design.

Motion by Councilman Koritko, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to approve the request as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

H. Public Hearing – Request by Owner to Demolish Structure at 247 & 249 Greenville St.

Mr. Partin said that this is a duplex structure that has not been occupied for a while and was built in 1960. It is not in a historic district.

Mayor Shepherd opened the public hearing. No one spoke for or against. Mayor Shepherd closed the public hearing.

Motion by Councilman Koritko, seconded by Councilman Thomasson to approve the request as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

I. Consideration of adjustments to Building Department Fees and Creation and Implementation of a Master File Plans Program

Mr. Partin said this is to get Council feedback and then a resolution would be needed to move forward. The fee changes are to make things more equitable for all, to include fees for some specific projects and to clarify some ambiguous language.

A residential master file plans program is also proposed and fees associated with that. The master file plans program would apply to detached single-family residential, duplex and townhouse units. It is intended for builders who construct significant numbers of structures using house plans on a repetitive basis. This will help reduce review times for building department staff. Participation in the program is voluntary.

Councilwoman Jenkins asked what the impact of the fee changes would be? Mr. Partin said it will make the permits less expensive and help streamline processes. Council expressed concern that the master file plans would encourage builders to use the same plan repeatedly. Councilman Thomasson asked how often Mr. Partin sees the same plan being used? He said there is one builder that he knows uses the same 8 plans repeatedly.

Councilman Koritko asked what a code cycle is? Mr. Partin said that the Georgia Department of Community Affairs adopts a new code book every 6 years so that is how often plans may need to be changed and the new cycle just started.

Mr. Craver clarified that if Council feels the changes are appropriate then staff would work with the city attorney and bring this back to Council to adopt. He said the impetus for this was time saving and not to incentivize "cookie cutter" developments. Councilwoman Jenkins asked that Mr. Partin come back with options that would address the unintended consequence of incentivizing based on this program. Councilman Thomasson asked if language could be added to say that the master file plan program only apply to planned developments. Mr. Phillips commented that Mr. Partin does not have the authority to limit the duplication of house types, that lies with Council and the review of rezonings and annexations.

Mayor Pro Tem Berta asked if this program would make sense for projects such as the Murray St. houses or Chalk Level houses to be built, would it be beneficial for those to help deliver a lower cost home? Mr. Phillips said that NURA is looking into a program already that would deliver plans permit ready so that a builder or owner would not have to go through the process.

Motion by Councilwoman Jenkins, seconded by Councilwoman Morrison to direct staff to move forward with the feedback provided.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

J. Consideration of 2025 Budget Amendment Year End per Audit Purposes

Ms. Kelsey said there are amendments to the General Fund in both revenue and expense line items for fiscal year 2025. These amendments are required to ensure Council approves all appropriations per GASB standards. The total amendments are \$856,500.00.

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilman Koritko to approve as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

K. Public Hearing – Rezoning Request RZ2025-10 by Melissa D. Griffis, on behalf of Woodlands Acquisitions, LLC for 13.55 + acres at 699 Newnan Crossing Bypass (Tax Parcel #086-5021-002); From CGN to MXD for developing 12 townhomes, 272 multi-family apartments and 7,500 sq ft of commercial space

Chris Cole, Senior Planner, explained that with MXD zoning, the density is not pre-determined but contingent on the overall master plan. The proposed density for this project is 20.96 dwelling units per acre. The entire site is developable. The unit breakdown would be 166 one-bedroom apartments with 786 sq ft and cost \$1,750/month, 106 two-bedroom apartments with 1,170 sq ft and cost \$2,050/month and 12 three-bedroom townhomes with 1,637 sq ft and cost \$2,450/month. This would also have a master amenity area and amenity courtyard. The applicant intends to create circular pedestrian access between the LINC trail and Wood Partners site to the north. There would be 505 parking spaces.

Mr. Cole gave an overview of the rezoning standards. The proposed use is suitable in view of zoning and development of nearby property. The proposed use will not adversely affect the existing use or usability of nearby property. The subject property could be used as currently zoned. The proposed use would cause a burdensome use of public facilities or services. The proposed use is not compatible with the purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Plan; however, it is consistent with the purpose and intent of the proposed zoning district. There are no new or changing conditions that would impact the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed project would reflect a reasonable balance between public health, safety, morality or general welfare. The project meets 5 of the 8 standards.

The applicant proffered two conditions as follows:

1. The applicant shall pull a permit for building the proposed retail use at the same time as the multi-family permit.
2. Any and all documents submitted with the application and any additional documents presented by the applicant evidencing plans, profiles, elevations, architectural standards, landscaping, exterior and the materials presented shall be used in this development.

The Planning Commission recommended denial 5-0. Staff recommended, that if approved, the project be consistent with the application and that approval of the Zoning Master Plan does not relieve the applicant from meeting the requirements of the City's Tree Preservation and Landscape ordinance. Additionally, the applicant should pay all costs associated with the installation of a traffic signal on Newnan Crossing Bypass. This condition was added after the work session and only pertains to the southern entrance.

Mayor Shepherd opened the public hearing.

Applicant:

Melissa Griffis asked that all application materials, including proffered conditions and summary report be made a part of the public hearing. She said the property is adjacent to the Wood Partners project that was approved MXD a few months ago. Also, the current zoning of CGN allows for commercial uses that would cause more traffic than what is being proposed. The current Comprehensive Plan says that "mixed use development should be encouraged increasingly as a way to improve overall quality of life, increased housing opportunities and traffic improvements", and that is what this project will do. They would like the traffic light to have a CO within 6 months. Ms. Griffis asked to save time for rebuttal if necessary.

Bennett Wooten with Woodlands Apartment Communities, went over highlights of the project. Mayor Shepherd clarified that this project is heavily residential with only 2.6% being commercial. Mr. Wooten said it is a small commercial component, but it would allow for a restaurant and maybe 3-4 small shops/boutiques. Residents also have easy access to Ashley Park, only a half mile away. Mayor Shepherd asked if they considered a different zoning other than MXD? Mr. Wooten said yes but they think MXD fits with the Wood Partners project and their retail component. Mayor Shepherd asked Staff to clarify the mix of uses required for MXD zoning. Mr. Craver stated the ordinance does not specify percentages, just that there are 3 uses. Councilman Guillaume said that the retail component seems like an afterthought just to qualify and that maybe they need to look at the MXD designation more closely.

Mr. Wooten said since this is a rental community, success depends on resident satisfaction and retention, and this is in an opportunity zone. He showed some renderings of the property. Councilman Koritko asked how long Woodlands typically holds on to a complex? Mr. Wooten said they have not sold any as a collective.

Mayor Shepherd commented that he likes mixed-use when it's truly mixed-use and this seems to achieve that on a technicality. Ms. Griffis said that there is no specific ratio requirement in the ordinance, you just must have more than one residential component. They have worked with Staff from day one to ensure this meets all the requirements. No one would want to live in a single-family home in this location.

Councilman Koritko asked if there were any updates since the work session on traffic warrants. Mr. Vern Wilburn, Traffic Engineer, said a formal warrant study was not done, as it is difficult since they would be future estimations. There are 7 different warrants, so it is complicated. Councilman Guillaume asked for clarification about commercial generating more traffic and the need for a light no matter what. Mr. Wilburn said there is reliable data that gives rates to apply based on size and that will give pretty accurate estimates of traffic. Anything commercial on this site would generate a lot more trips than residential.

No one spoke for or against. Mayor Shepherd closed the public hearing.

Ms. Griffis gave rebuttal and said they are asking Council to compare this project based on the current MXD zoning and Staffs assessment with 5 of the 8 standards being met.

Motion by Councilman Guillaume, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to move into Council discussion.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

Councilman Thomasson commented he does like the LINC connection with this project, but what concerns him is the number of units already approved and not built yet. He thinks they should wait until all of those go up and see how they lease. He said Newnan has always been a center for commercial/retail/healthcare and so he doesn't want to give up all the land that can be developed as commercial. Councilwoman Jenkins agreed and said the future land use map shows this as business/office and there is an opportunity for that. There is not that much developable land left and they need to prioritize what to hold for the future of the community.

Councilman Guillaume commented that if they wait for all approved developments to be built, they'll be waiting a long time. Anything they do will affect growth and services. The city needs people to generate revenue. He said they probably need to look at the balance of growth.

Councilman Koritko asked about sufficient garage size for larger vehicles and if there would be any issues with emergency services getting in. Mr. Wooten said everything will be built to international fire code so there would be no issues with emergency services. Mr. Joseph Price, civil engineer for the project, said that the parking spaces are 9ft x 18ft, which is common across all the Atlanta municipalities and can accommodate an average-sized truck.

Mayor Pro Tem Berta said he agrees that this does not seem to be mixed use, but the applicant's plan is allowed under current mixed-use standards. He commented that the estimated property tax income from this would be around \$61,000 and that would not cover what PD and Fire said they would have in additional costs. He also expressed concern over the rental costs.

Motion by Councilman Koritko, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to accept the report from the Planning Commission.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Berta, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to deny the rezoning request.
Opposed: Guillaume.

MOTION CARRIED. (6-1)

L. Public Hearing - Rezoning Request RZ2025-08 by Steven L. Jones, on behalf of Parkland Homebuilders, LLC for 32 + acres on Celebrate Life Parkway (Tax Parcels 086-5053-002 and 086-5044-002); From CCS to RMH for developing a 220 unit multi-family rental project

Dean Smith, Senior Planner, stated that the applicant did submit a request to continue this hearing until March 24, 2026. City Attorney commented that the applicant should agree to pay the costs for re-advertising.

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilwoman Morrison to accept the continuance until March 24, 2026 with the applicant paying associated fees.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

M. Request from Sandra Strozier, President/CEO of the Newnan Housing Authority, to waive the 2025 PILOT payment to the City of Newnan

Ms. Sandra Strozier, said she sent Council an email with additional information regarding her request. Mayor Shepherd asked Staff how this would affect the budgeting process. Mr. Phillips said this payment is for the 2025 budget and that budget is getting ready to close out. The general fund is looking to have a positive balance so this would not affect anything. The 2026 budget did calculate the PILOT. If Council decides to set the milage rate to zero, which has been discussed, then the Housing Authority would not owe the tax in 2026.

Mayor Shepherd asked for clarification, that this is just an agreement between governments entities and moving money from one side of the balance sheet to the other. Mr. Phillips said yes, the agreement was formed in 1962 and was for services the city would provide for a certain project. He said it may be a good idea to review the agreement.

Mayor Pro Tem Berta asked how the fee is calculated. Ms. Strozier said it's based on rental income and used to be around \$40,000 but has gone up in the last few years. Ms. Strozier said that the Housing Authority of Newnan is a high performing organization and received a HUD score of over 90. That score allowed them to participate in a Moving to Work program, they were the only housing authority in the state of Georgia to receive that. That program means the majority of the residents work, they are encouraged to work, and the authority assists them with that. Because of that the PILOT went from \$40,000 to \$106,000.

Ms. Strozier said the trash costs went from \$80,000 to \$200,000. Councilman Koritko asked for details regarding how many trash cans or dumpsters per unit and how could costs be cut. Ms. Strozier said they would have to put that out to bid for dumpsters and the properties are scattered around the city. There are 470 units but scattered across Newnan and the dumpsters might not look good. Councilman Koritko asked about residents with back door service. Ms. Strozier said if they want to, they must provide a medical letter from their doctor, but the housing authority pays the trash bill, not the residents.

Mayor Pro Tem Berta asked if, for example, an area where there are 10 units, could bulk trash be consolidated and then only pay one fee and not 10. Councilwoman Jenkins commented that yards are small and bulk trash can pile up, block sidewalks and look unsightly.

Councilwoman Morrison said that for back door service, if a medical letter is provided then AmWaste waives the fee. Councilman Guillaume asked who monitors the medical letters and who is receiving back door service? Ms. Strozier said they had not been monitoring that and are looking at that currently, she thinks they were being charged for some that they shouldn't have been.

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilwoman Jenkins to waive the PILOT tax of \$106,800. Opposed: Koritko.

MOTION CARRIED. (6-1)

N. Consideration of City of Newnan Cemeteries Master Plan Final Report - 2026

Mr. Craver told Council that the consultants from WLA Studio could not attend the meeting. The consultants took Council comments from their previous presentation and incorporated those into the plans. This is a guiding document that allows Staff to have a plan, to help know how to fund the improvements to maintain what we currently have and how to look to the future for Oak Hill, Eastview and Eastview Annex. Mr. Craver went through the summary of recommendations at each site and showed each detailed master plan.

The consultants believe with these plans there could be 60-70-year capacity at Eastview Annex and Oak Hill. Mr. Craver showed associated costs, starting with maintenance and then future plans. A design professional would have to be brought in to give more exact numbers. There is \$1.2 million budgeted in 2026 to begin these improvements.

Councilwoman Jenkins asked if the consultants changed their numbers, as they previously based projections on the current condition of Eastview and not after improvements are made. Mr. Craver said yes, they adjusted the numbers and they went out and conducted a community survey.

Councilman Thomasson wanted to clarify that this is just adopting a road map, and any project would still come back to Council for approval. Mr. Phillips referenced a recommended priority table that is in the final report and said the budgeted funds for 2026 can go to that list getting started. This would include maintenance, entry features and roadway condition improvements that if approved, staff can begin working on.

Councilwoman Jenkins wanted to ensure that high priority would be on getting Eastview fixed. Mr. Phillips said the top 8-10 items on the priority list are either Eastview or Eastview Annex.

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Berta to adopt the city's Cemetery Master Plan Final Report.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

O. Discussion and Consideration of Appointments to the City of Newnan's Comprehensive Plan 2026-2046 Steering Committee

Mr. Cole said that Staff used the same method as with the previous update to find volunteers for the Steering Committee. The list was presented to Council and included representatives from various boards and commissions, Chamber of Commerce, Newnan Coweta History Center and the school system. The Steering Committee must also include at least one Councilmember.

Motion by Councilman Guillaume, seconded by Councilman Koritko to appoint Mayor Pro Tem Scott Berta to the Steering Committee.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

Motion by Councilwoman Morrison, seconded by Councilman Thomasson to adopt the list of volunteers for the Steering Committee as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

P. Consideration of an Amendment to the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 3, Alcohol, Section 3-9, to combine Retail Package and Retail Consumption Licenses

Mr. Craver explained this is in response to the people from Cooper's Hawk that came to Council. This amendment combines the on-site consumption and retail licenses. Mayor Shepherd asked if they still must go through state licensing even if this passes and Mr. Craver said yes.

Motion by Councilman Thomasson, seconded by Councilwoman Morrison to adopt the ordinance amendment as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

VISITORS, PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS & COMPLAINTS

Q. Request from Jason Walton with Foundation Church, for additional street closure on April 3rd for Good Friday Event

Mayor Shepherd asked Chief Blankenship if this could be accommodated. Chief Blankenship said he does not foresee any issues and that Mr. Walton already spoke to him about hiring an off-duty officer as well.

Motion by Councilwoman Jenkins, seconded by Councilman Koritko to approve the request as presented.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilman Koritko, seconded by Councilwoman Morrison to adjourn the Council meeting at 8:25pm.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

Megan Shea, City Clerk

James Shepherd, Mayor