

**MINUTES
WORK SESSION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF DOUGLAS, GEORGIA
NOVEMBER 13, 2023**

The Board of Commissioners held a Work Session on Monday, November 13, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall Council Chambers. Mayor Tony L. Paulk was presiding over the meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Olivia Pearson and Commissioners Steve Bailey, Edwin Taylor, Kentaiwon Durham, Mike Gowen, and Cindy McNeill were present.

REVIEW OF OCTOBER 23, 2023, MEETINGS MINUTES

The first business item presented by Mayor Tony Paulk was to review the minutes from October 23, 2023 (W.S./Reg Minutes) of the Board Commissioners. Mayor Paulk requested that the Commissioners offer any changes so that the City Clerk could correctly record the minutes for historical data.

The Commission's consensus was to move this item forward on the **Consent Agenda**.

DISCUSSED AND CONDUCTED A PUBLIC HEARING FOR PUBLIX'S ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE LICENSE APPLICATION

Rodger Goddard, City Marshal, appeared before the Commission to seek permission to conduct a public hearing and approve issuing an alcoholic beverage license for Publix Super Markets, Inc.

Mr. Goddard stated that Publix Super Markets, Inc. has applied for an alcoholic beverage license for retail sales, off-premises consumption, of beer and wine. Publix Super Market #1870 will be at 1329 S. Peterson Ave, Douglas, Georgia. Phillip Harrison will be the licensee's designated manager. Publix Supermarket Inc. and Phillip Harrison meet all the requirements set forth by state law and city ordinance to receive an alcoholic beverage license. Chief Pruette has reviewed the application.

The Commission agreed to move this item forward on the **Regular Agenda**.

DISCUSSED DISTANCE VARIANCE REQUEST FOR 1002 WARD ST. W. - MCRAE'S PHARMACY AND PUBLIC HEARING

Rodger Goddard, City Marshal, appeared before the Commission to seek permission to discuss and hold a public hearing on a Distance Variance request by McRae's Pharmacy to sell and dispense low THC Oil (Medical Cannabis) to registered patients.

Mr. Goddard stated that McRae's, located at 1002 Ward St. W., of Douglas, Georgia, has made an application with the Georgia State Board of Pharmacy to dispense low THC Oil (Medical Cannabis) to registered patients and provide an additional therapeutic option to alleviate symptoms associated with chronic pain, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, and chemotherapy-induced nausea, among other disorders and illnesses. Currently, the law states such products are not to be sold or dispensed within a thousand (1,000) feet of a "covered entity," such as a public or private school or an early care and education program, as defined in the Georgia State Code Section 20-1A-2. These products are also not to be sold or dispensed within a thousand (1,000) feet of a church, synagogue, or other place of public religious worship.

MINUTES
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NOVEMBER 13, 2023

DISCUSSED DISTANCE VARIANCE REQUEST FOR 1002 WARD ST. W. - MCRAE'S PHARMACY AND PUBLIC HEARING-CONTINUED

This location is 1,000 feet from Westside Elementary, West Ward Church of God, FatihONE 17, and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day.

State Law O.C.G.A. 16-12-215 (a) states,

Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection, local governments may, via the use of existing zoning powers otherwise provided by law allow dispensing licensees only to locate in places other than those provided in this subsection so long as such modification is needed to allow retail outlets to be established to service registered patients residing within such local jurisdiction.

The Commission agreed to move this item forward on the **Regular Agenda**.

DISCUSSED DISTANCE VARIANCE REQUEST FOR 722 SHIRLEY AVE. - THE MEDICINE CABINET AND PUBLIC HEARING

Rodger Goddard, City Marshal, appeared before the Commission to discuss and hold a public hearing on a Distance Variance request by The Medicine Cabinet, 722 Shirley Avenue, to sell and dispense low THC Oil (Medical Cannabis) to registered patients.

Mr. Goddard stated that the Medicine Cabinet, located at 722 Shirley Avenue, has made an application with the Georgia State Board of Pharmacy to dispense low THC Oil (Medical Cannabis) to registered patients and provide an additional therapeutic option to alleviate symptoms associated with chronic pain, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, and chemotherapy-induced nausea, among other disorders and illnesses. Currently, the law states such products are not to be sold or dispensed within a thousand (1,000) feet of a "covered entity," such as a public or private school or an early care and education program, as defined in the Georgia State Code Section 20-1A-2. These products are also not to be sold or dispensed within a thousand (1,000) feet of a church, synagogue, or other place of public religious worship. This location is 1,000 feet from Young's Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, House of God Christian Fellowship, St. James Church of God in Unity, Church of the Kingdom, Wiregrass Georgia Technical College, and South Georgia State College.

State Law O.C.G.A. 16-12-215 (a) states,

Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection, local governments may, via the use of existing zoning powers otherwise provided by law, allow dispensing licensees only to locate in places other than those provided in this subsection so long as such modification is needed to allow retail outlets to be established to service registered patients residing within such local jurisdiction.

The Commission agreed to move this item forward on the **Regular Agenda**.

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DISCUSSED DISTANCE VARIANCE REQUEST FOR 225 (223) ASHELY ST. - THE MEDICINE CABINET AND PUBLIC HEARING

Rodger Goddard, City Marshal, appeared before the Commission to discuss and hold a public hearing on a Distance Variance request by The Medicine Cabinet, 225 (223) Ashely Street, to sell and dispense low THC Oil (Medical Cannabis) to registered patients.

Mr. Goddard stated that the Medicine Cabinet, located at 225 (223) Ashley Street, has made an application with the Georgia State Board of Pharmacy to dispense low THC Oil (Medical Cannabis) to registered patients and provide an additional therapeutic option to alleviate symptoms associated with chronic pain, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, and chemotherapy-induced nausea, among other disorders and illnesses. Currently, the law states such products are not to be sold or dispensed within a thousand (1,000) feet of a "covered entity," such as a public or private school or an early care and education program, as defined in the Georgia State Code Section 20-1A-2. These products are also not to be sold or dispensed within a thousand (1,000) feet of a church, synagogue, or other place of public religious worship. This location is 1,000 feet from Douglas First Methodist Church Inc. and The Boys & Girls Club of Coffee County Region.

State Law O.C.G.A. 16-12-215 (a) states,

Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection, local governments may, via the use of existing zoning powers otherwise provided by law, allow dispensing licensees only to locate in places other than those provided in this subsection so long as such modification is needed to allow retail outlets to be established to service registered patients residing within such local jurisdiction.

The Commission agreed to move this item forward on the **Regular Agenda**.

DISCUSSED APPROVAL OF THE CHANGE ORDER FOR GEORGIA HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANT FOR THE DOUGLAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGN GUIDELINES

Rodger Goddard, City Marshal, appeared before the Commission to approve the change order for the Historic Preservation Fund Grant for the Douglas Historic Preservation Design Guidelines.

Mr. Goddard stated that The City of Douglas' initial award for the Georgia Historic Preservation Fund Grant from the Department of Community Affairs for the Historic Preservation Design Guidelines was \$15,000, the city match was \$10,000, and the total project cost would be \$25,000. After bidding on the project, three items were added to the scope of work, including a kick-off meeting, printed copies of the final design guidelines, and a conclusion meeting of the final design guidelines, which increased the project cost to \$26,451.05. Therefore, the total project is now \$26,451.05; the federal share is \$15,000, and the local match is \$11,451.05.

FUNDING: Project Total \$26,451.05 Funding Sources: HP Grant \$15,000 Local Match \$11,451.05 (FY24/100-7402-52.1201)

The Commission agreed to move this item forward on the **Consent Agenda**.

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NOVEMBER 13, 2023**

DISCUSSED APPROVAL OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND COMMUNITY VIOLENCE REDUCTION GRANT FOR THE DOUGLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT

Rodger Goddard, City Marshal, appeared before the Commission to seek approval of the grant award and to allow Mayor Paulk to execute all necessary documents.

Mr. Goddard stated that the Staff had been questioned and received requests for variance about our city ordinance. The variance requests are about alcoholic beverage sales in the town center district and distance requirements relating to retail sales of medical marijuana at pharmacies.

Mr. Goddard also stated that The City of Douglas Police Department applied for and was awarded a Governor's Office of Planning and Budget State Fiscal Recovery Funds Public Safety and Community Violence Reduction Grant for \$110,000.00. The sole source offered the ShotSpotter program which was SoundThinking, INC. The ShotSpotter System detects and accurately locates within 25 meters of the actual gunshot location 90% of unsuppressed, outdoor gunshots fired inside the contracted coverage area using standard, commercially available rounds greater than .25 caliber. SoundThinking's real-time Incident Review Center (IRC) will review at least 90% of all gunfire incidents within 60 seconds. This human review is intended to confirm or change the machine classification of the incident type and, depending on the reviewer's confidence level that the incident is or may be gunfire, will result in an alert ("Reviewed Alert") sent to the Customer's dispatch center, patrol car mobile data terminals (MDT), and officer smartphones (via the ShotSpotter App), based on the particular criteria. **FUNDING:** Governor's Office of Planning and Budget \$110,000 Local Match \$0

The Commission agreed to move this item forward on the **Consent Agenda**.

DISCUSSED RESOLUTION AND PUBLIC HEARING ON NEW PROPOSED BOUNDARY FOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT AND MAIN STREET

Rodger Goddard, City Marshal, appeared before the Commission to discuss a resolution on the proposed new boundary map for the Downtown Development District and Main Street, followed by a public hearing and action of the City Commission.

Mr. Goddard stated that the DDA is proposing to adjust the boundaries of the Douglas DDA District. Current boundaries are North at McNeil Dr., South at the Bowen Mills intersection, West to Columbia Ave., and East to Pearl Avenue. The proposed new boundaries will be North at Walker Street, South at Baker Hwy., West to Columbia Ave., and East to Pearl Avenue. This proposed district was shared with stakeholders on Monday, November 6, 2023, and notice to the public was adequately publicized for tonight's public hearing.

The Commission agreed to move this item forward on the **Regular Agenda**.

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DISCUSSED APPROVAL OF THE POLE ATTACHMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF DOUGLAS AND SATILLA EMC

Mike Hudson, Utilities Director, appeared before the Commission to seek approval for a pole attachment agreement with Satilla EMC.

Mr. Hudson stated that the City of Douglas and Satilla EMC have been working on establishing ownership of poles in Douglas that we share. There are 175 total poles that both Satilla EMC and the City of Douglas have power attached to in Douglas. Satilla EMC owns 115 poles, and the City of Douglas owns 60. This agreement would allow us and Satilla EMC to charge each other for all attachments at \$27.71 per attachment. (The City of Douglas's total cost per year will be \$3,186.65 & Satilla's cost will be \$1,662.60 per year). I have attached the proposed pole attachment agreement for your review. **FUNDING:** Electric Budgets going forward

The Commission agreed to move this item forward on the **Consent Agenda**.

DISCUSSED APPROVAL OF THE GFL ADJUSTMENTS TO RATES

Charles W. Davis, City Manager, appeared before the Commission to discuss approving a customer billing rate increase of 2.7% to recoup the 5.8 vendor increase that is being charged to the city. The Regional District Manager of the GFL appeared to discuss the increased rates and EDA fees and how they will improve their services.

Mr. Davis stated that per our agreement with GFL, the Service Fee will be increased annually every January 1st, 2024. This will reflect the annual adjustment based on Table 1 of the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U.S. City Average by expenditure category and commodity and service group, Water and Sewer and Trash Collection Services. A CPI increase of 5.8% will be implemented for the billing period of January 1st, 2024, for all services. The city will have to increase customer billing rates by 2.7% to recoup the 5.8 vendor increase charged to the city. For residential customers, this is an approximate 0.86 cent increase.

The Commission agreed to move this item forward on the **Regular Agenda**.

DISCUSSED APPROVAL OF THE DATE CHANGE OF UPCOMING COMMISSION MEETINGS

Charles W. Davis, City Manager, appeared before the Commission to seek guidance on date changes for the upcoming Commission Meetings in 2023 and 2024.

- *The second Commission Meeting in December is scheduled for Christmas Day on Monday, December 25, 2023. We ask that the meeting be changed to Monday, December 18th, 2023.*
- *Memorial Day is Monday, May 27th. The second Commission Meeting is scheduled for that day. We ask to change the meeting date to Tuesday, May 28th, 2024. (Subject to Change)*

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DISCUSSED APPROVAL OF THE DATE CHANGE OF UPCOMING COMMISSION MEETINGS-CONTINUED

- *The GMA Annual Conference is June 21-25. The second Commission Meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 24th, 2024. We ask that the meeting be changed to Thursday, June 27th, 2024. (Subject to change)*

The Commission agreed to move this item forward on the Consent Agenda.

GENERAL COMMENTS


CITY MANAGER'S UPDATES

ADJOURNMENT

Without further discussion, the work session meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.



Wynetta J. Bolder, CMC



Mayor Tony L. Paulk