

**MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING
CITY OF KENNESAW
Council Chambers
(2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, GA 30144)**

**Livestream: www.kennesaw-ga.gov/publicmeetings/
August 25, 2025
6:30 PM**

Present	Mayor Derek Easterling Mayor Pro Tem Pat Ferris Councilmember Madelyn Orochena Councilmember Tracey Viars Councilmember Antonio Jones Councilmember Anthony Gutierrez City Clerk Lea Alvarez City Manager Jeff Drobney City Attorney Sam Hensley, Jr.
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1. Invocation

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Call to Order

Mayor Easterling called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

4. Announcements

5. Presentations

A. Proclamation: Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

Presentation of a proclamation declaring the month of September 2025 as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in the City of Kennesaw.

This proclamation will be presented by Mayor Easterling at the regular City Council meeting on Tuesday, September 2, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

6. Old Business

7. New Business

8. Committee and Board Reports

9. Public Hearing(s)

A. First Public Hearing: FY26 Operating Budget

Consideration to approve a Resolution adopting the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Operating Budget for the City of Kennesaw.

Finance Director Jennifer Gordy will present the FY 2026 Operating and Capital

Improvement (SPLOST) budgets at the regular City Council meeting on Tuesday, September 2, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Ferris asked if any changes had been made since the budget was last discussed, and Ms. Gordy confirmed there were none.

- B. **First Public Hearing: FY26 Capital Improvement (SPLOST) Budget**
Consideration to approve a Resolution adopting the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Capital Improvement (SPLOST) Budget for the City of Kennesaw.

10. Consent Agenda

- A. **Minutes: August 18, 2025 Regular Meeting**
Approval of the August 18, 2025, City Council regular meeting.

11. General and Administrative

12. Public Safety

13. Information Technology

14. Public Works and Building Maintenance

- A. **Resolution: Transfer 2016 SPLOST Funds**
Consideration for approval of a Resolution to transfer 2016 SPLOST funds from Sardis Street projects to Ben King Road improvements.

Councilmember Ferris announced he would abstain from discussions and votes involving Sardis Street due to the proximity of his residence to the project.

City Manager Jeff Drobney stated that Cherokee Street and Ben King Road remain priority projects. Originally priced six to seven years ago, the costs of these projects have increased significantly. The City has already acquired the necessary right-of-way and easements, and both projects are ready to move forward. To do so, staff recommends temporarily reallocating SPLOST funds from the Sardis Street project to Cherokee Street and Ben King Road. SPLOST collections continue to exceed projections, and those funds may only be used for designated projects. This reallocation would allow the City to complete final surveys, engineering, and bidding, with construction bidding anticipated to begin in early 2026.

This item proposes reallocating 2016 SPLOST Sardis Overpass and Extension funds to the 2016 SPLOST Ben King Road Improvements project.

The remainder of the items were taken out of order.

- D. **Resolution: Allocation of 2022 SPLOST Funds**
Consideration for approval of a Resolution to allocate 2022 SPLOST excess funds to the Neighborhood Improvements project.

Dr. Drobney proposed reallocating \$3,000,000 from the 2022 SPLOST Overage funds to the 2022 SPLOST Neighborhood Improvements account (sidewalks, curbs, and gutters) in support of the Cherokee Street and Ben King Road projects.

E. Resolution: Transfer of 2022 SPLOST Funds

Consideration for approval of a Resolution to reassign 2022 SPLOST funds from Sardis Extension project to Neighborhood Improvements project.

Dr. Drobney stated that \$9,000,000 would be temporarily reallocated from the 2022 SPLOST Sardis Extension account to the 2022 SPLOST Neighborhood Improvements account to support the Cherokee Street and Ben King Road projects. He reiterated that items 14. A, D, and E all involve reallocations intended to complete these projects.

C. Resolution: Allocation of 2022 SPLOST Funds

Consideration for approval of a Resolution to allocate 2022 SPLOST excess funds to the Cathey Rutledge project.

Dr. Drobney stated that this item relates to the Cathey Rutledge Lane project, which was originally planned in 2005 but did not move forward beyond initial acquisitions. No final design or engineering was completed at that time. As costs have increased, \$4,000,000 was allocated to the project in the 2022 SPLOST; however, staff anticipates costs will continue to escalate.

To support the project, staff requested that \$2,500,000 of the 2022 SPLOST Overage funds be reallocated to the 2022 SPLOST Cathey Rutledge project. The scope includes a traffic light at Swift-Cantrell Park and a right-turn-only connection from Rutledge Road to Main Street. The project is in its early stages, and the transfer of funds will allow staff to begin acquisitions and engineering.

Councilmember Jones asked if the City had received federal funding from Congressman Loudermilk for the intersection. Dr. Drobney responded that some of those funds had been pulled back.

With Council consensus, Mayor Easterling recommended placing the item on the Consent Agenda for the regular meeting.

B. Resolution: Allocation of 2022 SPLOST Funds

Consideration for approval of a Resolution to allocate 2022 SPLOST excess funds to the Public Safety project.

Dr. Drobney requested that \$1,000,000 of the 2022 SPLOST Overage funds be allocated to the 2022 SPLOST Public Safety project. A portion of the funds will cover a change order for a new access drive. Additional funds will be used for stormwater enhancements associated with the project. Although stormwater funds were originally budgeted, staff determined it would be more appropriate to use SPLOST funds, preserving stormwater dollars for other community needs.

Councilmember Jones asked if the change order should be the contractor's responsibility. Dr. Drobney responded that it was not.

Public Works Director Ricky Stewart explained the need for a new access road. The original plan to maintain the dirt road leading to the lower yard required a temporary easement from a neighboring property owner, which was denied. As a result, the City

no longer has sufficient access for dump trucks and trailers. Staff identified an alternative access point that they recommend pursuing.

With Council consensus, Mayor Easterling directed that the item be placed on the Consent Agenda for the regular meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferris requested a SPLOST project list update at the next work session. Assistant City Manager Marty Hughes stated the committee could provide the update at the September 8, 2025, City Council Work Session.

15. Recreation and Culture

16. Community Development

A. Discussion Only: Development update on Townes at Cantrell located at 3057 N. Main Street.

Zoning Administrator Darryl Simmons reported that staff would be providing updates on active City projects. The first update concerned the Townes at Cantrell development at 3057 North Main Street, a 5.98-acre property that will include 38 townhomes adjacent to Swift-Cantrell Park.

Tyler Shoop of Crawford Creek Development stated that grading is underway, utilities will be installed next week, curbing is expected by mid-October, and paving by the end of October. He added that the model permit would be submitted at that time, with the model home anticipated for completion in February or March 2026.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferris asked if the development would connect to the neighborhood on Rutledge Road. Mr. Shoop responded that it would not.

B. Discussion Only: Development update on Ross Pointe subdivision located at 1651 McCollum Pkwy.

Mr. Simmons provided an update on the Ross Pointe subdivision at 1651 McCollum Parkway. The 5.13-acre property will include 68 units, consisting of single-family homes fronting McCollum Parkway and townhomes to the rear. The project was approved in 2024.

Michael Miller of Piedmont Residential noted the development includes 68 fee-simple for-sale lots, consisting of four product types: single-family detached and three attached styles similar to Pritchard Park. The final plat is expected to be submitted in October. Townhomes are anticipated to be priced in the low \$300,000s, with single-family detached homes starting in the \$500,000s.

Mr. Miller added that Piedmont Residential is coordinating with Parks and Recreation to upgrade the adjacent Kennesaw Station Park. Plans include removing outdated equipment and grading the site in accordance with the department's final design. As required by zoning conditions, Piedmont Residential will contribute \$20,000 toward the park at the time of final plat approval.

Councilmember Jones asked about the percentage of homes that would be affordable for teachers, firefighters, and similar professions. Mr. Miller responded that one of the attached products will feature designated on-street parking, helping to keep the price point in the low \$300s.

17. Public Comments

6:54 p.m. Floor Open for Public Comments

No comments.

6:55 p.m. Floor Closed for Public Comments

18. City Manager's Report

A. Reports, Discussions, and Updates

Dr. Drobney had nothing to report tonight.

19. Mayor's Report

A. Mayor and Council (re)appointments to Boards and Commissions. This item is for (re)appointments made by the Mayor to any Board, Committee, Authority, or Commission requiring an appointment to fill any vacancies, resignations, and to create or dissolve boards and commissions, as deemed necessary.

20. Council Reports & Discussions

Councilmember Gutierrez said he is embracing the "no beard" part of his EMT uniform. He shared that training starts in a couple of weeks.

Councilmember Jones had nothing to add tonight.

Councilmember Orochena congratulated the candidates who qualified for Post 3 and Councilmembers Jones and Gutierrez for four more years.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferris said that real football starts this Saturday!

Councilmember Viars thanked Mr. Simmons and Ms. Alvarez for researching the topic of home-based businesses and virtual business licenses. She thanked the Downtown Development Authority for running the Farmers Market all summer. Today is the last day!

A. **Discussion Only: Home-Based Business Licensing Process**

Discussion item requested by Councilmember Viars regarding the home-based business licensing process.

Councilmember Viars stated that the City began discussing virtual business licenses about a year ago. She noted that while homeowners can apply for land-use permits,

renters currently do not have that option. Many entrepreneurs want to operate legally, but the lack of a process in Kennesaw creates barriers. She added that individuals working from rental homes or apartments must often spend \$700 annually on a mailing center if their landlord does not approve. In her view, the City should consider creating a virtual business license to make it easier for residents, whether homeowners or renters, to run small businesses from their homes without the added expense of office space.

Councilmember Viars further commented that Council meetings have become drawn-out for individuals running very small home-based businesses, who must spend significant amounts on certified letters and multiple hearings, often for operations generating only modest income. She suggested much of this could be handled administratively.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferris agreed that reducing regulations and costs for home-based businesses would benefit the community.

Councilmember Orochena asked whether the City was already considering administrative approval for home-based occupational licenses instead of applicants having to go through land use permit hearings.

Mr. Simmons reported that staff reviewed recent land-use permits and found no violations. Staff are exploring ways to allow renewals to be processed administratively when there is no change in services and no documented issues. He clarified that land-use permits generally apply to businesses with production or client visitation, such as therapists, music teachers, or financial planners.

Councilmember Jones asked whether apartment leases, like homeowner association (HOA) covenants, restrict home-based businesses. Councilmember Viars confirmed that such provisions are often included in lease agreements.

Mr. Simmons added that research shows a mix of approaches across Georgia. Some jurisdictions require approval from property managers or leasing companies. A recurring concern is property rights and whether a city has authority to override HOA covenants or lease restrictions. Staff noted this remains a key legal consideration.

Dr. Drobney concluded that staff would work with City Attorney Sam Hensley, Jr. to develop options for Council consideration.

21. Executive Session

Pursuant to the provisions of O.C.G.A 50-14-3, the City Council could, at any time during the meeting, vote to close the public meeting and move to executive session to discuss matters relating to litigation, legal actions and/or communications from the City Attorney; and/or personnel matters; and/or real estate matters.

Motion by Councilmember Gutierrez to enter into Executive Session as allowed by O.C.G.A. Sec. 50-14-3 for the purpose of discussing land and legal. Motion seconded

by Councilmember Viars.

Vote taken: motion approved unanimously 5-0. Motion passed.

7:12 PM Recess to Executive Session

Mayor, City Council, City Manager, Assistant City Manager, City Clerk, Economic Development Director, Representative from Raymond James, and City Attorney attended Executive Session.

Representative from Raymond James left Executive Session.

Public Works Director and Patterson and Dewar Engineering joined Executive Session.

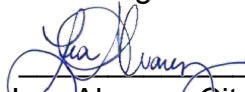
7:50 PM Reconvene to Open Session

Councilmember Gutierrez read the Board back into Open Session and directed the Mayor and City Council to execute an affidavit in compliance with O.C.G.A. Sec. 50-14-4. Motion seconded by Councilmember Viars.

Vote taken: motion approved unanimously 5-0. Motion passed.

22. Adjourn

Mayor Easterling adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m. The regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 2, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The public is encouraged to attend.



Lea Alvarez, City Clerk

Names and Addresses will be disclosed in the Permanent Minutes of the
City of Kennesaw

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR NAME IS LEGIBLE AND CLEAR

**City Council Work Session
8/25/2025
Public Comment Sign-in**

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