

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

**Livestream: [www.kennesaw-ga.gov/publicmeetings/](http://www.kennesaw-ga.gov/publicmeetings/)  
May 4, 2026  
6:30 PM**

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Present

Mayor Derek Easterling  
Mayor Pro Tem Antonio Jones  
Councilmember Madelyn Orochena  
Councilmember Tracey Viars  
Councilmember Jonathon Bothers  
Councilmember Anthony Gutierrez-Leon  
Deputy City Clerk Nicholas Simpson  
City Manager Jeff Drobney  
City Attorney Sam Hensley, Jr.

**1. Invocation**

The Chamber observed the invocation led by Mayor Derek Easterling.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Chamber recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Andrew Brannett.

**3. Call to Order**

Mayor Derek Easterling called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**4. Announcements**

**5. Presentations**

**6. Public Comment**

This section is for comment on any item on the agenda.

6:31 p.m. - Floor Open for Public Comments

No Comments

6:32 p.m. - Floor Closed for Public Comments

**7. Old Business**

**8. New Business**

**9. Committee and Board Reports**

**10. Public Hearing(s)**

- A. **Ordinance: Rezoning Request for 1600 Old 41 Hwy & 0 Old 41 Hwy**  
Consideration for approval of an ordinance authorizing a rezoning request submitted by Walton Communities, LLC for the properties located at 1600 Old 41 Hwy and 0 Old 41 Hwy (Parcel #20021200130 & 2002120156). Case #RZ2026-01

Planning Director Chanelle Campbell presented an ordinance authorizing a rezoning request submitted by Walton Communities, LLC for the properties located at 1600 Old 41 Hwy and 0 Old 41 Hwy. Said requests to rezone 1600 Old 41 Hwy (parcel # 20021200130) and 0 Old 41 Hwy (parcel #20021201560) from General Commercial (GC) and RM-12, Multifamily residential respectively to RM-16, Multifamily residential for the development of a multifamily community.

The parcel consists of 11.44+/- acres and lies in Land Lot 212 and Tax Parcels 13 & 156. The public hearing was advertised in the Marietta Daily Journal on January 16, 2026 and public notice signs posted on site on January 16, 2026 and updated February 17, 2026. At the March 4, 2026 meeting, the Planning Commission recommended approval with conditions as outlined by staff.

During the March 9, 2026 and March 16, 2026 scheduled Mayor and Council meetings, the applicant requested the application be deferred to allow for continued discussion with staff. On April 15, 2026, the applicant submitted a request to withdraw the application without prejudice.

Planning and Zoning recommends approval to withdraw the application without prejudice.

Motion by Council member Tracey Viars to accept the request to withdraw the rezoning application without prejudice. Motion seconded by Council member Madelyn Orochena.

6:34 PM Floor Open for Public Comment

No Comment

6:35 PM Floor Closed for Public Comment

Vote taken: approved, 5-0. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

- B. **Zoning Variance: 1600 Old 41 Hwy & 0 Old 41 Hwy**  
Consideration for approval of a variance application for the properties located at 1600 Old 41 Hwy and 0 Old 41 Hwy (Parcel #20021200130 & 20021201560) as submitted by Walton Communities, LLC. Case #ZV2026-01

Planning Director Chanelle Campbell presented a zoning variance application for the properties located at 1600 Old 41 Hwy and 0 Old 41 Hwy (Parcel #20021200130 &

20021201560) as submitted by Walton Communities, LLC. Said request is to vary from the parking requirement as outlined in section 6.06.09 that requires 1.75 parking spaces per unit to 1.5 parking spaces per unit. Parcel contains 11.44 +/- acres, lies in Land Lot 212, Tax Parcel 13 & 156. This public hearing was advertised in the Marietta Daily Journal on February 13, 2026, and a public notice has been posted onsite.

At their March 4, 2026 meeting, Planning Commission recommended approval of the variance request. During the March 9, 2026 and March 16, 2026 scheduled Mayor and Council meetings, the applicant requested the application be deferred to allow for continued discussion with staff. On April 15, 2026, the applicant submitted a request to withdraw the application without prejudice.

Planning and Zoning recommends approval of the request to withdraw the application without prejudice.

Motion by Council member Tracey Viars to accept the request to withdraw the zoning variance application without prejudice. Motion seconded by Council member Jonathon Bothers.

6:35 PM Floor Open for Public Comment

No Comment

6:36 PM Floor Closed for Public Comment

Vote taken: approved, 5-0. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

**C. Resolution: 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Short Term Work Program**

Consideration for approval of a Resolution to submit the transmittal of updates to the Capital Improvement Element and Short Term Work Program (CIE/STWP) covering the five-year period of 2026-2030. Case #MISC2026-05

Planning Director Chanelle Campbell presented a Resolution to submit the transmittal of updates to the Capital Improvement Element and Short Term Work Program (CIE/STWP) covering the five-year period of 2026-2030. The transmittal of updates will be submitted to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) for review with a final submission to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The update is completed annually and is required by all local governments in the Atlanta metro region that collect development impact fees. The purpose of the transmittal is to ensure that the City's capital planning and short-term priorities remain aligned with state requirements and regional review standards. Once reviewed, staff will receive an official response from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The updated CIE/STWP will be submitted to Mayor and Council for final review and adoption. The request was properly advertised in the Marietta Daily Journal.

Planning and Zoning recommends approval.

Motion by Council member Madelyn Orochena to accept the Resolution as presented.  
Motion seconded by Council member Tracey Viars.

6:38 PM Floor Open for Public Comment

No Comment

6:39 PM Floor Closed for Public Comment

Vote taken: approved, 5-0. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

## 11. Consent Agenda

- DRAFT
- A. **Minutes: April 13, 2026 Work Session**  
Approval of the April 13, 2026, City Council work session minutes.
  - B. **Minutes: April 20, 2026 Regular Meeting**  
Approval of the April 20, 2026, City Council regular meeting minutes.
  - C. **Minutes: April 20, 2026 Executive Session**  
Approval of the April 20, 2026, City Council executive session minutes.
  - D. **Resolution: Hiram Butler House Rehabilitation Project**  
Consideration for approval of a Resolution accepting a proposal for professional services for the Hiram Butler House Rehabilitation project.
  - E. **Final Plat Application: 0 Maple Drive**  
Consideration for approval of the final plat application submitted by Daniel Gonzalez for 0 Maple Drive (Parcel #20010002870); this plat subdivides the existing 1.78+/- acre lot into three parcels for the construction of three single-family detached dwelling units. Case #PS2025-03
  - F. **Final Plat Application: 2615 South Main Street & 2681 South Main Street**  
Consideration for approval of a final plat application submitted by Kennesaw Development Owner, LLC for 2615 S. Main St and 2681 S. Main St (Parcel # 20016700990 & 20016700140). Case #FP2025-03

**G. Central Business District: 2250 Lewis Street**

Consideration to review a CBD Project application request for the construction of a parking lot on the parcel located at 2250 Lewis Street (Parcel #20013801620). Case #CBD2026-01

**H. Cemetery Deed: Section III, 18-H**

Authorization for the Mayor to sign a deed for a cemetery lot purchased by Matthew A. Schwarzman in the Kennesaw City Cemetery.

**I. Cemetery Deed: Section III, 11-F**

Authorization for the Mayor to sign a deed for a cemetery lot purchased by Brenda Hackney and Jennifer Pickert in the Kennesaw City Cemetery.

Council member Anthony Gutierrez-Leon made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda engross. Council member Jonathon Bothers seconded the motion.

Council member Madelyn Orochena requested Mayor Easterling grant her time to comment on Consent Agenda Item G. (Central Business District: 2250 Lewis Street) prior to taking a floor vote.

Mayor Easterling affirmed Council member Orochena's request for time to comment on Consent Agenda Item G. (Central Business District: 2250 Lewis Street) prior to taking a floor vote, and confirmed the need to strike the motion to approve the Consent Agenda engross with City Attorney Sarah Masley, J.D.

Council member Orochena made a motion to strike the motion to approve the Consent Agenda engross. Council member Tracey Viars seconded the motion.

Vote taken: approved, 5-0. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mayor Easterling asked Council member Orochena if there was any item on the Consent Agenda that she wanted to discuss and have removed.

Council member Orochena stated that she wanted to discuss Consent Agenda Item G. (Central Business District: 2250 Lewis Street).

Mayor Pro Tem Antonio Jones made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda Items A through F and Consent Agenda Items H and I. Council member Jonathon Bothers seconded the motion.

Vote taken: approved, 5-0. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Council member Madelyn Orochena made a motion to approve the Central Business District project application for 2250 Lewis Street otherwise known as Consent Agenda Item G. Council member Tracey Viars seconded the motion.

Reiterating a comment she made during the Monday, April 27, 2026, Council work session, Council Member Orochena stated that, when the City enters into the design phase for the 2250 Lewis Street project, she would like to see an effort made to keep the trees that are currently shading the sidewalk. She would like to see the tree canopy preserved. If the trees are removed, she would like to see them replaced in the same location so that they can continue to shade the sidewalk.

Mayor Easterling took a floor vote for the approval of Consent Agenda Item 11.G - Central Business District: 2250 Lewis Street.

Vote taken: approved, 5-0. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

## **12. General and Administrative**

### **A. Audit Report: Fiscal Year ended September 30, 2025**

Consideration to accept the Audit Report for Fiscal Year ended September 30, 2025, for the City of Kennesaw as presented by Mauldin and Jenkins, LLC.

Finance Director Jennifer Gordy introduced Will Derzis from Mauldin and Jenkins, LLC., to deliver the annual overview of the municipal audit report for Fiscal Year ended September 30, 2025.

An Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) goes beyond the normal financial reporting required by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States. An ACFR goes far beyond the basic requirements of annual financial reporting, and the City should be commended for going beyond the minimum and providing such a report. Once completed, the fiscal year 2024 ACFR was submitted to the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for determination if the report would merit the GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The GFOA Certificate has been made a part of the City's 2025 fiscal year ACFR. Derzis concluded his presentation by asking Council if they had any questions concerning the audit report and his remarks.

Mayor Pro Tem Antonio Jones asked Derzis and Finance Director Jennifer Gordy if they could quantify the amount of revenue the city was losing as a result of the increase in property owners enrolling in the senior citizens' property tax exemption program.

Finance Director Jennifer Gordy advised the Mayor Pro Tem that she did not have the information readily available, but she would provide him with that information in advance of the upcoming city budget meetings.

City Manager Jeff Drobney advised Mayor Pro Tem Jones that the senior citizen property tax exemption cost the city \$1.8 million dollars in Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Dr. Drobney expects the upcoming Fiscal Year (2026-2027) outlay for the senior citizen

property tax exemption to cost the city \$2 million dollars or more.

Motion by Council member Madelyn Orochena to accept the audit report for Fiscal Year ended September 30, 2025, as presented. Motion seconded by Council member Jonathon Bothers.

Vote taken: approved, 5-0. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

### **13. Public Safety**

### **14. Information Technology**

### **15. Public Works and Building Maintenance**

### **16. Recreation and Culture**

### **17. Community Development**

### **18. Public Comment**

This section is for general comment.

6:51 p.m. - Floor Open for Public Comments

Andrew Bramlett (City Resident) Mr. Bramlett delivered a presentation on Kennesaw History focused on the founding and establishment of Kennesaw College, known today as Kennesaw State University. [See Exhibit A]

6:53 p.m. - Floor Closed for Public Comments

### **19. City Manager's Report**

City Manager Jeff Drobney thanked everyone for their hard work at Saturday's (May 2nd) concert. He observed Assistant City Manager Hughes enjoying himself. Dr. Drobney also observed many young people singing along and having a good time. He thanked everyone who worked. Dr. Drobney also congratulated Finance Director Jennifer Gordy and her staff on the completion of a clean audit. He commented that finance is "at the heart of what we do". He mentioned that the city budget prep season begins in April and concludes in September when the Fiscal Year budget is adopted, but the audit process occurs afterward during the holiday season. The finance team works diligently during that time, working weekends and working late at night. Dr. Drobney lauded Gordy and her team's efforts.

A. Reports, Discussions, and Updates

### **20. 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.

## **21. Council Reports & Discussions**

## **22. 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 Council member Jonathon Bothers to enter into Executive Session as allowed by O.C.G.A. Sec. 50-14-3 for the purpose of discussing legal. Motion seconded by Council member Madelyn Orochena.

Vote taken: approved, 5-0. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

6:54 p.m. Recess to Executive Session

7:10 p.m. Reconvene to Open Session

Council member Jonathon Bothers 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 Mayor pro Tem Antonio Jones.

Vote taken: approved, 5-0. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

## **23. Adjourn**

Mayor Easterling adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m. The next work session will be held on Monday, May 11, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The public is encouraged to attend.



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Nicholas Simpson, Deputy City Clerk

# KENNESAW HISTORY

KJC Name

In 1963 the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia approved a new junior college for Cobb County, and soon afterwards land next to Pinetree Country Club was selected for the new school. It was left to the school's first president, Dr. Horace Sturgis, to pick a new school name. A variety of names were proposed, including the Cobb County Junior College and Richard Russell College.

Dr. Sturgis began to call the school Marietta College, causing outrage in North Cobb. Kennesaw's mayor, Johnny Adams, and Acwoth's mayor, Mary McCall, were particularly upset as they felt the school should better reflect their communities. The next name proposed was Kennesaw Mountain Junior College, which was dismissed for being both too wordy and sounding too country. Eventually, this was cut down to Kennesaw College, which satisfied all parties. This was partly because Kennesaw

Mountain was seen as belonging to both North Cobb and Marietta. When the school opened in 1966 it was named Kennesaw Junior College, and after a series of name changes it eventually became Kennesaw State University in 1996.



Kennesaw Junior College in the 1960s

Presented by Andrew J. Bramlett at the April 30, 2026,  
City of Kennesaw Mayor & Council Meeting