

**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/
July 13, 2026
6:30 PM**

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**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Call to Order**

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

- 4. Announcements**
- 5. Presentations**
- 6. Old Business**
- 7. New Business**
- 8. Committee and Board Reports**
- 9. Public Hearing(s)**
- 10. Consent Agenda**
- 11. General and Administrative**
- 12. Public Safety**

A. Crime Statistics: June 2026

Consideration for the acceptance of the June 2026 crime statistics.

Kennesaw Police Chief Bill Westenberger presented the June 2026 city crime statistics. [See Exhibit A]

13. Information Technology

14. Public Works and Building Maintenance

15. Recreation and Culture

16. Community Development

17. Public Comments

6:33 PM FLOOR OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

SAMUEL RUSCH [City Resident]: Mr. Rusch praised Parks department employees for their recent efforts to beautify Woodland Acres Park. He reminded Council about the racially sensitive graffiti — located on Ridgecrest Drive in the Woodland Acres community — that he highlighted at last week's city council meeting. Rusch used a pressure washer to remove the graffiti and replace the image with that of a smiley face. Rusch's still needs help with the anti-law enforcement graffiti located behind the QuikTrip retention pond on Kennesaw Drive. He expressed excitement about the Woodland Acres - Butler Creek park agenda item being discussed later during the work session. Rusch hoped to learn more about the 2026 Kennesaw Parks and Recreation Playbook. He identified amenity improvements such as lights, signage, and regular upkeep as needed for both parks.

MATTHEW MAYO [City Resident]: Mr. Mayo thanked Parks department employees for their recent efforts to beautify Woodland Acres Park. He also thanked public works personnel for cutting back the overgrown kudzu located on the sidewalk on Ridgecrest Drive. He had not seen the sidewalk in years because of the overgrowth. He thanked the council members that were listening to citizen feedback from his community. He requested that the chain blocking the entranceway to Woodland Acres Park be replaced with a bollard — a reiteration of a request made during last week's council meeting.

JORY LYONS [City Resident]: Mr. Lyons thanked Parks department employees for their recent efforts to beautify Woodland Acres Park. Lyons participated in a community clean-up day, which yielded a collection of approximately 360 pounds of trash. He hopes there is a larger discussion about new amenities for Woodland Acres Park.

ANNETTE CONN [City Resident]: Mrs. Conn commented on the extensive clean-up effort by the Parks department at Woodland Acres Park. Conn displayed pictures of Parks department employees cleaning up Woodland Acres Park in 2024. City Manager Jeff Drobney, Assistant City Manager Marty Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director Bill McNair, and Assistant Director of Public Works Tim Cox visited the park in 2024 and

organized a cleanup of the park that occurred between May and July 2024. As a result of their efforts, Mrs. Conn sent two thank you letters to Director Bill McNair in appreciation for the City's ongoing efforts to maintain Woodland Acres Park. Conn challenges the assertion of others in her community that city officials have failed to properly maintain Woodland Acres Park for decades. She had a message for community naysayers whom she felt were being disingenuous about the city's stewardship of Woodland Acres Park: "your gripe is unripe" and "your blather doesn't matter."

HUDSON COLEMAN [City Resident]: Mr. Coleman is a resident of Paulding County and a student at Kennesaw State University. He commented on the proliferation of data centers in the Atlanta metropolitan area and how Cobb County and the municipalities located within its boundaries are handling the issue. He stated that the Cobb County data center moratorium is set to expire next month. Coleman supports a 12-month data center moratorium for the City of Kennesaw.

6:44 PM FLOOR CLOSED FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

18. City Manager's Report

- A. Reports, Discussions, and Updates

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

- A. Council Member Discussion Items

Jonathon Bothers, Post 3 Discussion Item (Renaming Sardis Street Extension)

Antonio Jones, Post 4 Discussion Item (Woodland Park and Butler Creek Park)

Anthony Gutierrez-Leon, Post 5 Discussion Item (Data Center Moratorium)

Mayor Easterling opened the floor for Council Member discussion items.

JONATHON BOTHERS, POST 3 AGENDA DISCUSSION ITEM: RENAMING OF SARDIS STREET EXTENSION

Council member Bothers suggested honoring former council member Pat Ferris by renaming the future Sardis Street Extension in his honor. When campaigning for election to the city council, Bothers declared that one of his first acts in office would be to honor Ferris, who served on the city council for 25 years. Bothers commented that

Ferris was one of the best examples of what a city council member or mayor should be. Though Bothers would like to honor Ferris, he doesn't know exactly how he will honor him. He mentioned the possibility of renaming the future Sardis Street Extension in honor of Ferris. Bothers also added that Ferris was vehemently against the creation of the Sardis Street Extension. Bothers had made Ferris aware of his intentions.

Council Member Responses to Agenda Discussion Item: Renaming of Sardis Street Extension

Mayor Pro Tem Jones concurred with Bothers' intent to highlight former city council member Pat Ferris' legacy. He noted Ferris' years of service to the City and mentioned that he was previously seeking to name a city facility after Ferris. Jones stated for the record that he supports Bothers' efforts to rename Sardis Street Extension in honor of Ferris.

Council member Tracey Viars echoed Bothers' statement that Ferris was opposed to the Sardis Street Extension. Given that opposition, she supports honoring him but would like to explore an option other than renaming the Sardis Street Extension. She believed former council member Ferris to be a great parliamentarian, and she would like to honor him in a way that reflects that aspect of his leadership.

Council member Madelyn Orochena echoed Council member Viars' sentiment concerning renaming Sardis Street Extension in honor of Ferris. She noted that he opposed the Extension, and she would be more inclined to honor Ferris in a way more personal to his interests.

Council member Anthony Gutierrez-Leon recounted a Council discussion that occurred approximately one year ago concerning the renaming of facilities or roads solely for deceased city officials. Gutierrez-Leon suggested bestowing an honor more closely aligned with locomotives or the Southern Museum. In his opinion, the Sardis Street renaming would not be the most appropriate way to honor Ferris.

Council member Bothers responded that the Sardis Street Extension renaming was simply one idea. He looks forward to working with Council to find an appropriate way to honor former Council member Ferris.

Mayor Easterling responded that Council should defer to city staff when deciding on how best to honor Ferris.

MAYOR PRO TEM ANTONIO JONES, POST 4 AGENDA DISCUSSION ITEM: WOODLAND ACRES PARK AND BUTLER CREEK PARK(AKA PINE MOUNTAIN PARK)

Mayor Pro Tem Jones thanked City Manager Drobney for his leadership and the leadership provided by his staff. Jones visited Woodland Acres Park to assess the site and make recommendations for capital improvements. He would like to see the park maintained as an open, passive park without any playgrounds. He would also like to have picnic tables and benches installed, and convert the former basketball court into a

pavilion for barbecuing and family gatherings. Jones believes that Butler Creek Park may need more investment considering it has been closed since 2004. He would like to see an engineer's study conducted to determine what type of capital investment would be feasible for the site. In his opinion, the children in the neighborhood need a safe space for recreation.

Council Member Responses to Agenda Discussion Item: Woodland Acres Park and Butler Creek Park

Council member Jonathon Bothers stated that he does not support extensive capital investment in Woodland Acres Park. He would not take his children or grandchildren to the park due to safety concerns. The park is not well lit and there is only one main entrance and the park is located near an extended-stay hotel. While he empathizes with community members' desire to see improvements to the park, Bothers does not feel it prudent to open the park for use by children; he supports maintaining Woodland Acres Park as green space with walking trails. Butler Creek Park, in Bothers' view, is a better candidate for capital improvements.

Council member Anthony Gutierrez-Leon suggests having the official town hall in order to have a broader discussion with the community about next steps for improvements to Woodland Acres Park. Gutierrez-Leon highlighted the parks survey crafted by Council member Madelyn Orochena, which received over 50 responses from residents in the Woodland Acres and Pine Mountain Acres community. Lastly, Gutierrez-Leon suggested removing the chain blocking the entranceway to Woodland Acres Park and replacing it with a bollard.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones responded that he does not believe that a town hall is necessary. He believes that the Council has enough information to move forward and act. He doesn't want to kick the can down the road on this issue.

Council member Madelyn Orochena highlighted the parks survey she crafted to solicit feedback from residents in the Woodland Acres and Pine Mountain Acres community.

Orochena used the survey to canvass the neighborhoods with council members Jones and Bothers. She noted that while canvassing the neighborhood, she learned that many residents were unaware that there were neighborhood parks nearby. She discussed the survey questions and the varied responses collected for the survey. Per Orochena, people want a safe and well-maintained place for children to play in their neighborhood. When canvassing residents, Orochena targeted residents that lived closest to either Woodland Acres Park or Butler Creek Park.

Council member Tracey Viars began her comments by stating that the Council holds a town hall every Monday night. She wished there was more support for park improvements. She supports removing the entranceway chain at Woodland Acres Park, which she believes to be an appropriate location for green space, and replacing it with a bollard to make it more welcoming. Viars noted that Council receives emails that guide their decision-making. She had been made aware of the extended-stay hotel located nearby and the park's lack of visibility in terms of policing, and parking issues. She

supports picnic tables, benches and a trash can at Woodland Acres. Viars opined that Butler Creek Park is a better candidate for capital investment, but she noted the potential EPA restrictions associated with the development of the site.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones believes that until the Council makes a decision on how to best proceed, city staff hangs in limbo. Jones asked the Mayor if a vote could be taken to establish a consensus for moving forward. Mayor Derek Easterling advised Jones that it is not the Council's job to determine the best way to move forward, it is the Council's job to simply express its desire to move forward. City staff can provide the research, information and insight needed to assist the Council in making a very informed decision from conception to implementation. City Attorney Sam Hensley, Jr. advised Council that once a consensus was determined, city staff would be charged with finding a workable solution. Noting that a consensus was made by Council to move forward, Mayor Easterling asked City Manager Drobney if any additional information was needed from Council.

City Manager Jeff Drobney responded that he was trying to understand what types of improvements Council would like to see at Woodland Acres Park. Drobney repeated what elements Council members previously said they would like to see in Woodland Acres Park. Mayor Pro Tem Jones reiterated that he would like to see a pavilion, trash cans, benches, tables. At Butler Creek Park, Jones would like to see some small play equipment for children. Mayor Easterling advised Jones that a pavilion would carry an expensive price tag. Jones responded that he would like to see a cost estimate provided by city staff to guide his decision to move forward with the pavilion at Woodland Acres Park. He noted that he has visited other parks and they have pavilions. Council Member Bothers reiterated that he supports Woodland Acres Park as a green space with walking trails. He doesn't want the park to be a gathering place. He repeated that the site is not safe. Jones suggested equipping the park system with a network of surveillance cameras that were connected to the police department's real-time crime center. He added that investing in more security measures for the parks may be necessary. Mayor Easterling asked Dr. Drobney if he could produce several scoping estimates that include benches, the creation of walking trails/paths, and other feasible elements in the park. Dr. Drobney stressed that he wanted to be sure that he would be able to provide scoping estimates for projects that council members mutually agree upon. Council member Orochena commented that she believes that Council supports fashioning Woodland Acres Park as green space and replacing the entranceway chain with a bollard. Dr. Drobney advised Council that he would provide a cost estimate for Woodland Acres Park to include a pavilion and the creation of walking paths/trails similar to those found in green spaces.

Moving the discussion to Pine Mountain Park — a.k.a. Butler Creek Park — Mayor Easterling asked Jones to confirm whether he wanted to create his own wish list for Butler Creek Park or receive scoping recommendations from the department of Parks and Recreation. Jones responded that he would like to receive recommendations from staff, noting the EPA concerns that were previously raised by Council member Viars, but he would like to see some type of playground similar to the playground at

Kennesaw Station Park. Council member Orochena would like to see a small-scale playground, i.e., a swing set and a small climbing structure. Orochena emphasized that survey respondents prefer small play equipment for neighborhood residents only.

ANTHONY GUTIERREZ-LEON, POST 5 AGENDA DISCUSSION ITEM: DATA CENTER MORATORIUM

Council member Gutierrez-Leon led the discussion on the implementation of a moratorium or ban on the construction of data centers in the City of Kennesaw.

According to datacenter.com, there are approximately 220 data centers currently in operation or already approved for construction in the metropolitan Atlanta area. He commented on the City of Marietta's recent approval of a 31.4-acre data center located directly next to an existing neighborhood. The data center's projected IT load, which refers to the electrical energy consumed exclusively by computing hardware, is 108 megawatts, roughly the equivalent of 80,000 homes. Data centers threaten to strain our water resources and lead to a spike in utility costs. Gutierrez-Leon spoke about local jurisdictions using eminent domain to make room for data centers by displacing property owners. He cited Coweta County, Georgia, where, according to media reports, Georgia Power has the authority to acquire private property via eminent domain for the construction of data centers. A medium-sized data center (5,000–20,000 square feet) using a water-based cooling system can consume 110 million gallons of water per year or the equivalent of 1,000 homes. A large data center can consume up to 5 million gallons of water per day or 1.8 billion gallons of water per year. Data center cooling systems require fresh water, which once used, becomes non-potable and is released back into watersheds. Closed data center cooling systems do not require fresh water but instead use generators to power the system and adjust output when needed. The noise from the generators can exceed 60–90 decibels on average. Gutierrez-Leon believes that it is irresponsible to wait for a problem to affect us as a city when we see how the issue adversely impacts the cities and counties around us. He countered the belief that the city does not have the expanse of land needed to site a data center, which can come in many different sizes and forms.

Gutierrez-Leon wants a complete ban on data centers within the city limits of Kennesaw.

Council Member Responses to Agenda Discussion Item: Data Center Moratorium

Mayor Pro Tem Antonio Jones supports Gutierrez-Leon's moratorium and asked the City Attorney if state law allowed the imposition of a moratorium for more than six months. City Attorney Sam Hensley, Jr. advised Jones that he believes that, per state law, the time limit for a moratorium cannot exceed 12 months. Hensley advised Jones that he would research the matter and follow-up with him.

Council member Madelyn Orochena supports a 12-month moratorium if allowed by state law. She feels a moratorium would give the Council the opportunity to assess the issue and make informed decisions in the future.

Mayor Derek Easterling commented that there are statutory requirements that must be adhered to when imposing a moratorium and the city zoning map does not include a zoning designation for data centers. City Attorney Hensley responded that there is nothing in the zoning code that defines what a data center is and there are limited places in the city where a data center may be sited, depending on its size. Hensley further added that a legally imposed moratorium must have a stated purpose and intended goal to be achieved. The City Attorney's office will research the matter and provide a legal brief for Council to review in advance of any next steps. Attorney Hensley commented that there are many municipalities and jurisdictions currently dealing with the issue of data centers, but he believes that local governments will tackle the issue in their own way.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones asked Council Member Gutierrez-Leon if there were any jurisdictions that have implemented outright bans on data centers. Gutierrez-Leon responded that the city of Fayetteville, Georgia has placed an outright ban on data centers, according to his research. City Attorney Hensley advised the Council that Fayetteville's ban could possibly be challenged in court in the future.

Council member Viars stated that she would wait to hear back from the City Attorney's office on the issue.

Council member Gutierrez-Leon closed the discussion by agreeing to wait to hear back from the City Attorney's office on the issue before considering next steps.

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 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 personnel. Motion seconded by Council member Madelyn Orochena.

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

7:31 p.m. Recess to Executive Session

7:56 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 Council member Madelyn Orochena.

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

22. Adjourn

Mayor Easterling adjourned the meeting at 7:57 p.m. The next work session will be held on Monday, July 20, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The public is encouraged to attend.

Respectfully, Submitted

Nicholas Simpson, Deputy City Clerk

June 2026 Crime Statistics



EXHIBIT A

Group A Crimes	Jun 2026	Jun 2025	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	3 (-1)	4	27 (+5)	22
ANIMAL CRUELTY	0 (+0)	0	0 (+0)	0
ARSON	0 (+0)	0	1 (+0)	1
BRIBERY	0 (+0)	0	0 (+0)	0
BURGLARY	2 (+1)	1	15 (-1)	16
DRUG/ NARCOTICS OFFENSES	28 (-4)	32	229 (+63)	166
EMBEZZLEMENT	0 (+0)	0	1 (-1)	2
EXTORTION	2 (+2)	0	5 (-3)	8
FORGERY	1 (-3)	4	9 (-1)	10
FRAUD OFFENSES	19 (+11)	8	107 (+19)	88
HOMICIDE OFFENSES	0 (+0)	0	0 (+0)	0
INTIMIDATION	14 (+2)	12	51 (-19)	70
KIDNAPPING	1 (-1)	2	5 (-1)	6
LARCENY/ THEFT OFFENSES	15 (-5)	20	67 (-20)	87
MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT	0 (-3)	3	11 (-6)	17
PORNOGRAPHY OBSCENE MATERIAL	2 (+2)	0	10 (+9)	1
ROBBERY	0 (+0)	0	2 (-1)	3
SEX OFFENSES	3 (-2)	5	16 (+1)	15
SIMPLE ASSAULT	15 (+1)	14	86 (+7)	79
STOLEN PROPERTY OFFENSES	1 (+1)	0	9 (+2)	7
VANDALISM	6 (-6)	12	28 (-5)	33
WEAPONS LAW VIOLATIONS	1 (-4)	5	24 (+0)	24
Totals	113	122	703	655

	Jun 2026	Jun 2025	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
Dispatched Calls for Service	777 (-10)	787	4,545 (+61)	4,484
Self-Initiated Activity	1,352 (+46)	1,306	9,006 (+1,184)	7,822
Traffic Citations	559 (-17)	576	4,267 (+889)	3,378
Traffic Warnings*	510 (-247)	757	3,776 (-529)	4,305
Arrests**	61 (-25)	86	468 (-13)	481

	Jun 2026	Jun 2025	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
Auto Accidents	110 (+9)	101	618 (+11)	607
Accident w/ Injury	3 (-7)	10	46 (-13)	59
Hit and Run	7 (-7)	14	68 (-8)	76
Hit and Run w/ Injury	0 (+0)	0	2 (+0)	2
Person Hit by Auto w/ Injury	1 (+1)	0	5 (+2)	3

* Warnings do not include verbal warnings

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Arrests do not include juvenile arrests

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
7/13/2026
Public Comment Sign-in**

	Name	Address	Topic
1	Samuel Rusch	2459 Pine Dr. NW	Woodland Park
2	Matthew Mayo	2570 Woodland Dr.	Woodland Park
3	Jory Lyons	2441 Forrest Dr NW	Woodland Park
4			
5	Annette Conn	2574 Dobbs Dr	Woodland Park
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7	Hudson Coleman	50 Highcrest Dr.	Data Center moratorium
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