

Dunn City Council

Work Session

Tuesday, September 9, 2025
6:30 p.m., Dunn Municipal Building

Minutes

PRESENT: Mayor William P. Elmore Jr., Mayor Pro Tem April Gaulden, Council Members J. Wesley Sills, , Billy N. Tart, and Alan Hargis.

ABSENT: Council Members Raquel McNeil and Dr. David L. Bradham

Also present: City Manager Justin B. Hembree, Assistant City Manager Billy R. Godwin, Downtown Director Karyn Lindsey, Finance Director Cary McNallan, Administrative Support Specialists Christy Sweeney, City Attorney Tilghman Pope, and City Clerk Melissa Matti.

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor William Elmore called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM on Tuesday, September 9, 2025. He welcomed everyone and noted that Council Members McNeil and Bradham were absent due to illness and personal reasons, respectively. The Mayor confirmed that a quorum was present to proceed with the meeting.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Elmore led the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Gaulden seconded by Council Member Hargis to approve the agenda as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

PROCLAMATIONS & SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Proclamation

Constitution Week 2025

Assistant City Manager Godwin presented the Proclamation recognizing Constitution Week. He explained that September 17, 2025 marks the 238th anniversary of the drafting of the Constitution of the United States of America by the Constitutional Convention. He read the proclamation, which declared September 17-23, 2025, as Constitution Week in the City of Dunn, encouraging residents to reaffirm the ideals of the framers and vigilantly protect the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution. *A copy of the Proclamation – Constitution Week 2025 (P2025-5) is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #1.*

CONSENT AGENDA

August 26, 2025

Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion by Council Member Tart seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gaulden to approve the August 26, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION & CALENDARING FOR SEPTEMBER 23, 2025 REGULAR MEETING

Conditional Zoning

Application CZ-25-04

City Manager Hembree presented the Conditional Zoning Request (CZ-25-04) submitted by Sharon Barefoot to conditionally rezone property located at 910 North Ellis Avenue from R-10 to R-7 Conditional Zoning. He explained that the lot is being subdivided to build another single-family dwelling, but requires R-7 zoning to meet dimensional requirements. The conditional aspect would ensure only a single-family home can be built, as R-7 zoning normally permits duplexes and other uses.

Mr. Hembree noted that the Planning Board unanimously recommended approval of the request. He indicated that this item would be placed on the September 23rd Regular Meeting Agenda for formal consideration following a Public Hearing.

The Mayor asked if a motion was needed to move the item to the next meeting. City Attorney Pope advised that it could be done by consensus, as the staff typically sets the agenda in consultation with the Mayor.

Unified Development

Ordinance Amendment

OA-25-01

City Manager Hembree presented proposed text amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance that were initiated by staff. The amendments included:

- Increasing the maximum impervious surface in the I-100 zoning district from 50% to 60% (reduced from the originally proposed 70% following Planning Board feedback)

- Increasing the maximum building height in I-10 and I-100 districts from 35 feet to 60 feet
- Technical changes regarding application information requirements
- Clarification of definitions for single-family and two-family dwellings
- Updates to buffer yard requirements to resolve contradictions between text and tables
- Increasing the maximum width for driveways from 12 feet to 18 feet

Mr. Hembree explained that the Industrial Zoning District changes were recommended to ensure Dunn remains competitive with surrounding jurisdictions for economic development projects. He noted that even with increased impervious surface allowances, developers would still be required to manage all stormwater. He emphasized that the Planning Board had reviewed and unanimously recommended approval of these amendments.

Mr. Hembree indicated that a Public Hearing would be scheduled for the September 23rd meeting where the Council could formally act on the amendments.

Middleton Townes

Phase 2

Final Plat Approval

City Manager Hembree presented the Final Plat for Phase 2 of the Middleton Townes development. He explained that approval of a Final Plat confirms the infrastructure has been properly installed according to development requirements and permits the developer to sell lots.

Council Member Sills expressed concern that he drives by the development twice daily and didn't believe all infrastructure requirements had been met. Assistant City Manager Godwin clarified that if infrastructure is not complete, the developer must post a bond to ensure completion.

Mayor Elmore inquired whether the City conducts inspections to verify completion, which was confirmed. He recalled a similar situation on Bruce Drive, where approval was granted with a bond requirement for incomplete items.

Council Member Tart raised concerns about asphalt thickness in subdivisions, noting that many developments have thin asphalt that breaks up when heavy vehicles like trash trucks use the roads, requiring the City to later repave them. Mr. Hembree acknowledged that this was a common issue and indicated he would speak with the Planning and Inspection Departments about their process for verifying construction standards.

Mr. Hembree recommended this item be added to the September 23rd Meeting Agenda, but suggested it would be placed on the regular agenda rather than consent agenda to allow for further inspection and discussion of infrastructure completion status.

Special Events Permit

Temporary Blocking of Streets

Black River Tobacco Company

City Manager Hembree presented a request from Black River Tobacco Company for a Special Event Permit/Temporary Street Closure on Saturday, September 27th, to close East Edgerton Street between North Clinton Avenue and North Magnolia Avenue. He explained that while the City typically requires such requests sixty (60) days in advance, this was an exception because a previous request from the company had been delayed during policy development.

Mr. Hembree noted that Police Chief Jackson had no issues with the event, which would include fundraising activities benefiting the Police Department. He mentioned that officers would be stationed at closed intersections at the organization's expense.

Motion by Council Member Alan, seconded by Council Member Gaulden to approve the Special Events Permit/Temporary Blocking of Streets for Black River Tobacco Company. Motion carried unanimously.

Special Events Permit

Temporary Blocking of Streets

North Carolina Cotton Festival

City Manager Hembree presented the Special Events Permit/Temporary Street Closure Request for the Cotton Festival, noting it was similar to previous years in terms of streets to be closed and hours of closure. He confirmed this request came from the Tourism Authority.

Motion by Council Member Hargis, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gaulden to approve the Special Events Permit/Temporary Blocking of Streets for the North Carolina Cotton Festival. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hembree mentioned that staff would bring a proposed policy regarding special events and street closures to an upcoming work session. The policy would identify recurring annual events that could be automatically approved without coming to the Council each time, while establishing clear criteria for other events.

Codrington Park

Improvements and Enhancements

Parks & Recreation Director Brian McNeil reported that the City had been awarded a \$500,000 Accessible Parks Grant for Codrington Park to address accessibility needs, with a \$100,000 match from the City. He explained

that while these improvements are critical for accessibility, staff envisioned taking the park development beyond the scope of this project to make a larger community impact with better connections and improved amenities.

To achieve this vision, Mr. McNeil recommended engaging a consultant to prepare a Conceptual Design Plan that would integrate the grant-funded improvements with additional enhancements. This would require a Budget Amendment of \$33,500 from the General Fund Reserves for project planning.

City Manager Hembree added that this would essentially create a formal Master Plan for the park, which hasn't been done in a long time. The plan would include citizen and neighborhood engagement, and its completion would coincide with the next round of PARTIF Grant applications, potentially positioning the City for additional funding.

Motion by Council Member Hargis, seconded by Council Member Tart to approve the Budget Amendment of \$33,500 from the General Fund Reserves for Codrington Park Project Planning. Motion carried unanimously. *A copy of the Budget Amendment (BA-2025-4) is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #2.*

Council Member Sills inquired about connecting Codrington Park to the other City parks. Mr. McNeil explained that the Accessibility Plan includes a connection from the park to the Training School, which would create access to connect to other parks. He noted that this would address the challenge of limited right-of-way on Burke Street by providing safe access through the Training School parking lot.

Council Member Hargis asked about the status of the Pickleball Facility, to which Mr. McNeil responded they were approximately two (2) weeks away from starting construction, as they were waiting for green fencing to match the existing fencing.

Council Member Sills mentioned the need for a new gym facility to accommodate the many children playing sports, as practice space is limited. He suggested setting aside funds and discussing this at the Budget Retreat.

REPORTS & UPDATES

Project Updates

Road Resurfacing and Rehabilitation

City Manager Hembree reported that the pre-bid meeting for the paving project had taken place the previous week with seven (7) or eight (8) contractors attending. Bids were due on Thursday at noon, after which the engineers would certify the bids and identify the lowest responsible bidder.

Mr. Hembree emphasized to contractors the importance of beginning paving before asphalt plants close for winter, with at least three (3) streets to be completed before year-end. He anticipated the project continuing through the fiscal year, with a second bid package for phase 2 ready as the first phase winds down.

In response to questions, Mr. Hembree confirmed that Tracy Lane and the end of Samson Avenue by Second Baptist Church were included in the paving list, with Tracy Lane scheduled for this fall.

Other Reports & Updates

Administrative Processes and Procedures

City Manager Hembree informed the Council that staff was working to reduce administrative "red tape" and streamline internal processes. He gave the example of travel reimbursements that previously required multiple approvals for even small amounts. He indicated that future policy reviews might address the thresholds for Council approval of expenditures, particularly for items already approved in the budget.

State Health Plan

City Manager Hembree reported that the State Health plan premiums would increase effective January 1, with the employer share rising from \$674 to approximately \$742 per employee. Additionally, the employee contribution calculation method had changed to be based on salary, meaning higher-paid employees would pay a larger portion of costs.

Mr. Hembree noted that staff was analyzing the impact and would develop a plan for funding this unplanned expenditure. He mentioned that their Benefits Consultant had advised that finding an alternative provider with comparable benefits and costs would be unlikely.

Mayor Pro Tem Sills suggested the City should "hold employees harmless" from the premium increases since the budget had already been passed with their pay established. Mr. Hembree indicated they were exploring options to pay the difference directly to the state health plan.

Council Member Hargis expressed concern about reports that Aetna and Duke might not reach an agreement by October 20th, potentially making Duke out-of-network. He suggested the City notify Aetna of their desire to keep Duke in-network, especially with rates increasing.

Code Enforcement Update

At the Mayor's request, City Manager Hembree provided an update on code enforcement efforts. He reported that Alan Canady, the new code enforcement officer, had joined the staff, and they were taking a more active approach to enforcement. This included ordering badges and uniforms for Code Enforcement staff to project authority and ensure safety, as well as creating a grid system to assign specific geographic areas to each officer.

Mr. Hembree mentioned they were encouraging a "persuasive" approach to gain compliance before initiating formal enforcement processes. Council Member Gaulden commended Steven Hodges for his respectful approach and quick response to issues, sharing that a contractor rehabilitating homes in Dunn had spoken highly of him and the City.

Pearsall Street Project Update

Assistant City Manager Godwin provided an update on the Pearsall Street project, reporting that concrete had been poured and contractors were backfilling with stone to bring it up to grade. He explained that precast forms for the bridge top would be delivered next week, earlier than the originally scheduled September 23rd date. The power line along that portion of Pearsall Street had been deactivated and relocated to accommodate the crane needed to set the forms.

Mr. Godwin indicated that despite approximately 40-50 days of weather delays, the contractor still hoped to complete the project by the original late October/early November target date. He mentioned that a 30-day extension had been approved, if needed.

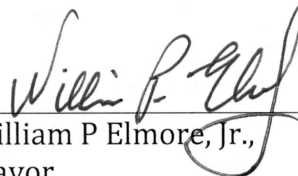
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Elmore announced a 9/11 lunch event at the Vyas Center on Thursday at 11:30 AM to recognize local first responders.

Mayor Elmore expressed appreciation for the staff's responsiveness to constituent concerns, noting recent examples where issues were resolved quickly, resulting in positive feedback from residents.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion Council Member Hargis, seconded by Council Member Sills to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.



William P Elmore, Jr.,
Mayor

ATTEST:



Melissa R. Matti
City Clerk

