

**Dunn City Council
Work Session
Tuesday, September 8, 2026
6:30 p.m. Dunn Municipal Building**

MINUTES

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

ALSO PRESENT: *City Manager Justin Hembree, Assistant City Manager Billy Ray Godwin, Finance Director Cary McNallan, Police Chief Lynn Gay, Senior Planner Stephanie Goodrich Human Resources Director Connie Jernigan, Administrative Support Specialist Christy Sweeney, City Attorney Tilghman Pope and City Clerk Melissa Matti.*

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor William P. Elmore, Jr. called the City of Dunn Work Session to order at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 8th, 2026. The Mayor welcomed all in attendance and proceeded with the business of the evening.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Raquel McNeil led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSIDERATION & APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Council Member Dr. David Bradham, seconded by Council Member Alan Hargis to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda included three (3) items:

- Approval of August 25, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes
- Proclamation for Constitution Week 2026, and
- Proclamation marking the 25th Anniversary of September 11, 2001.

Motion by Council Member Alan Hargis, second by Council Member Raquel McNeil to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously. *Copies of the Proclamation for Constitution Week 2026 (P2026-16) and the Proclamation marking the 25th Anniversary of September 11, 2001 (P2026-17) are incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #1.*

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION & CALENDARING FOR SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

Rezoning / Map Amendment

RZ-26-03

1210 Chicken Farm Road

Senior Planner Stephanie Goodrich presented Rezoning Request RZ-26-03. The property owner of 1210 Chicken Farm Road is seeking to change the zoning classification from Industrial back to R-20 Residential. She noted that the property had been rezoned from R-20 to Industrial as part of a Citywide rezoning effort in 2017. The Planning Board heard the matter and is recommending denial.

City Manager Justin Hembree shared his perspective, noting that preserving industrially zoned land is becoming increasingly important for municipalities like Dunn that are experiencing and anticipating growth. He drew a comparison to the legislative push to protect farmland, suggesting that a similar argument could be made for preserving industrial property. He further noted that this particular parcel has been actively marketed for industrial development by Harnett County's Economic Development arm, that it has potential railroad access, and that it sits within a reasonable distance of I-95.

Ms. Goodrich clarified that the applicant's original motivation appeared to be a desire to lower her property taxes, having been advised by Harnett County that a rezoning might help. However, City Manager Hembree and the Council were quick to point out that zoning classification alone does not determine tax value — what matters is the current use of the property. The applicant already holds a bona fide farm exemption, and the industrial zoning

has no bearing on her tax burden. Council Member J. Wesley Sills noted from his own experience as a farmland owner that the County provides Agricultural Tax Deferments regardless of zoning, suggesting that the applicant may have been given some misinformation during the revaluation process.

Mr. Sills also raised a concern about a chemical facility located across the railroad from the subject property, which he noted had reportedly received State citations, and expressed interest in being better informed about such matters going forward.

The matter will be calendared for the September 22, 2026 Regular Meeting, at which time a Public Hearing will be held. Staff and citizens who appeared at the Planning Board meeting — including at least seven (7) attendees, most of whom wished to see the area remain rural — are expected to participate.

The Council was encouraged to reach out to staff with any questions in advance.

Conditional Rezoning / Map Amendment

CZ-26-03

Stoney Run Campground

Senior Planner Stephanie Goodrich presented Conditional Rezoning Application CZ-26-03 for the Stoney Run Campground, located on NC-55 adjacent to Rooms To Go. The property is currently zoned I-100, and the applicant is seeking to add an RV campground as a Permitted Use through a Conditional Rezoning / Map Amendment. Ms. Goodrich explained that the applicant had received a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the same use back in 2021, but that permit expired without the project moving. Because the City no longer issues CUPs, the Conditional Rezoning process is the most appropriate path forward. The Planning Board heard the application and is recommending approval.

Council Member Alan Hargis expressed support for the concept, noting that a short-term RV Campground would bring visitors into town and benefit local commerce. Discussion turned to the question of preventing long-term or permanent occupancy of the campground. Council Member Raquel McNeil and others expressed concern about campers eventually building additions onto their units and turning the site into something resembling a permanent community — drawing comparisons to White Lake and similar beach-area campgrounds.

City Attorney Tilghman Pope confirmed that, because this is a Conditional Rezoning, the Council may attach conditions that the applicant must accept in writing. He suggested that a condition prohibiting accessory structures attached to campers might address the Council's concerns. Ms. Goodrich noted that some similar campgrounds address long-term occupancy by requiring campers to remove their vehicles for at least 24 hours before re-entering for another week's stay.

Council Member Raquel McNeil googled suggested conditions for campgrounds and suggested quiet hours, wildlife and plants, stay limits, campfires, development levels, site types, basic gear, ground safety distance from water and climate impact. Council Member Dr. David Bradham also suggested that they provide the number allowed per camp site – and pay for every additional person, etc.

Council directed staff to reach out to the applicant ahead of the September 22nd Public Hearing and request a copy of their proposed rental agreement or lease terms, so that the Council can review what conditions they intend to apply to their guests. Mayor Elmore encouraged any Council member with proposed conditions to contact Ms. Goodrich in advance so the board would be aligned and prepared for the hearing.

This item will be calendared for the September 22, 2026 Regular Meeting.

Voluntary Annexation Petition

ANX-01-26

Stoney Run Campground

(Step #1)

City Manager Justin Hembree presented the Voluntary Annexation Petition ANX-01-26 for Stoney Run Campground (Step #1). He explained that the Stoney Run Campground applicant has simultaneously filed a Voluntary Annexation Petition to bring the subject property — approximately 55.88 acres — into the corporate limits of the City of Dunn. He clarified that adopting the resolution at this stage only directs the City Clerk to investigate the sufficiency of the petition and does not commit the City to completing the annexation. Staff noted this is a satellite annexation under North Carolina General Statute.

Motion by Council Member J. Wesley Sills, second by Council Member Alan Hargis to adopt the Resolution Directing the City Clerk to Investigate the Sufficiency of Voluntary Annexation Petition ANX-01-26, to Annex 55.88+/- acres Contiguous to the Corporate Boundary of the City of Dunn. The motion carried unanimously. *A copy of the Resolution Directing the City Clerk to Investigate the Sufficiency of Voluntary Annexation Petition ANX-01-26 (R2026-25) is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #2)*

Special Use Permit

SUP-26-02

804 South Clinton Avenue

City Manager Justin Hembree and Senior Planner Stephanie Goodrich introduced this item, informing the Council that an application has been filed for a Special Use Permit to allow a small event venue at 804 South Clinton Avenue — a property formerly occupied by an antique and thrift shop, that was now vacant, located across the street from Wardrobe Cleaners. No zoning change is involved; the proposed use is allowable within the existing zoning classification but requires a Special Use Permit.

Mr. Hembree took care to remind the Council that Special Use Permits are quasi-judicial matters. As such, the decision must be made based solely on evidence presented during the formal hearing, and Council members were advised not to engage in outside deliberations or discussions about this specific application before the evidentiary hearing. Ms. Goodrich confirmed that adjacent property owners and businesses would be formally notified, and that Public Notice would be placed in the newspaper.

This item is calendared for the September 22, 2026 Regular Meeting.

Sale of Residential Structure

at 400 East Townsend Street

Assistant City Manager Billy Ray Godwin presented a request from staff for Council authorization to declare the residential structure at 400 East Townsend Street as surplus property and to initiate the Public Upset Bid Process under NC General Statute 160A-269. He reported that the City has received an offer of \$10,000 to purchase and relocate the structure, with the buyer responsible for removing it from the land within sixty (60) days of closing. Adopting the resolution would not constitute acceptance of the offer but would direct the City Clerk to publish notice in the newspaper and formally solicit competing bids.

Mr. Godwin further noted that a "For Sale" sign citing the Upset Bid Process had been posted on the property that very day, and that a similar sign was being prepared for the Magnolia Street property, for which informal offers had also begun coming in.

Council Member Alan Hargis moved to table the matter for thirty (30) days, arguing that \$10,000 is well below the value of the structure and that the sign had only gone up that afternoon, giving the public no real opportunity to learn about the offering. He contended that waiting thirty (30) days would allow more interest to develop, potentially yielding significantly higher bids before the upset bid clock even begins. He also suggested the sale be promoted through the City's Government Channel in addition to the newspaper.

Mayor Pro Tem April Gaulden opposed the delay, reminding the Council that the Upset Bid Process itself is designed to generate competing offers, and that the Council had already voted at the previous meeting to move forward. She expressed concern about the pattern of revisiting settled decisions.

Council Member Raquel McNeil used the discussion to revisit her previously unanswered question of whether the structure could remain in place, be renovated, and serve as a community event space connected to Codrington Park. Mayor Elmore responded that the

narrow frontage of the lot, combined with the obstruction the house creates, would limit parking and prevent the park from feeling open and accessible from the neighborhood. He also noted that the renovated school building nearby already offers rentable space for events, including the cafeteria.

The residential structure at 400 East Townsend Street is being offered for sale at a current offer price of \$10,000, though Council members noted the structure's value is likely in the range of \$60,000–\$80,000 or more. This is a one-time revenue-generating transaction, with the proceeds accruing to the City. The stated long-term purpose of clearing the site is to improve access and visibility for Codrington Park, supported in part by a previously awarded \$500,000 state grant. The Council's rationale for tabling was to allow broader public exposure to generate a more competitive bid, thereby maximizing the return to taxpayers. No formal oversight metrics were discussed, but the 60-day removal requirement is written into the proposed upset bid terms to ensure timely execution.

Motion by Council Member Alan Hargis, second by Council Member Raquel McNeil to table this item for thirty (30) days and return it to the Council with updated information, with the sale to be advertised via the City's Government Channel in addition to signage. The motion carried 5 to 1, with Mayor Pro Tem April Gaulden casting the lone dissenting vote.

Juniper Creek

Streambank Restoration

Assistant City Manager Billy Ray Godwin presented this item, explaining that significant streambank erosion is occurring along the west bank of Juniper Creek in the area adjacent to the Canterbury subdivision. The erosion has progressed to the point where a major sewer outfall line — the main line running to the Treatment Plant — has become exposed in the creek bed, placing it at serious risk of being undermined during storm events.

City Manager Justin Hembree underscored the urgency, noting that if the outfall line were to be compromised, the City could be facing a major sewer project far more costly and complex than anything in recent memory. He noted that the stormwater Engineer, Dory Sabeh of WithersRavenel, had assessed the site in February and determined that the presence of this public infrastructure makes the project eligible for a State Grant and Loan Program that would not otherwise be available for typical streambank erosion.

Council Member J. Wesley Sills acknowledged the issue is part of a broader pattern of streambank erosion throughout the city and questioned what would be done about the rest of the problem. Mr. Godwin and Mr. Hembree acknowledged the wider challenge but noted this particular project rises to a different level of urgency because of the exposed outfall line.

The item before the Council was simply a request to authorize WithersRavenel to apply for the State grant and loan funding on the City's behalf. No funding is obligated at this stage.

The specific cost of the Juniper Creek Streambank Restoration project has not yet been determined, but the authorization allows WithersRavenel to pursue a State Grant and Loan program on the City's behalf. Staff expressed hope that the project would be funded at or near 100% through grant dollars, with any loan component potentially forgivable upon project completion depending on how the application scores.

Motion by Council Member Alan Hargis, second by Council Member J. Wesley Sills to authorize WithersRavenel to apply for State Grant and Loan Funding for the Juniper Creek Streambank Restoration project. The motion carried unanimously. *A copy of the Resolution authorizing WithersRavenel to apply for the State grant and loan funding on the City's behalf (R2026-26) is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #3)*

REPORTS & UPDATES

Data Centers

City Manager Justin Hembree and Senior Planner Stephanie Goodrich provided an update on the ongoing effort to draft zoning regulations for data centers. Staff has been reviewing ordinances from Catawba County, Northern Virginia, and Texas, with a particular focus on landscaping, aesthetic standards, and building appearance requirements. Ms. Goodrich raised the question of whether aesthetic standards should apply only to data centers or to

all industrial buildings visible from major thoroughfares. Council expressed a preference for applying consistent standards to all industrial development.

Council Member Alan Hargis emphasized that beyond aesthetics, the unique impacts of data centers — particularly water usage, electricity consumption, and noise — warrant specific regulatory attention. Mr. Hembree confirmed that when a recommendation comes back to the Council, it will likely include both data-center-specific provisions and broader I-100 district changes. Council Member J. Wesley Sills raised the question of whether data centers should require a Special Use Permit rather than being permitted by right. Mr. Hembree explained that either approach is possible depending on the Council's preference. Mayor Elmore noted that the State Legislative Delegation is also working on Data Center Regulations in Raleigh and suggested that staff reach out to their Legislative contacts for coordination.

The draft ordinance is expected to come back to the Council for further input before being sent to the Planning Board for the standard text amendment process.

West Broad Street

City Manager Justin Hembree reported on a community meeting held September 1st with property owners and business operators along the West Broad Street corridor — the stretch commonly known as the "Kim's area." The meeting was described as well-attended, with strong representation from property owners including Bozie Tart, Gerald and Linda Hayes, the AutoZone property owners from Charlotte, and others. Hembree said the meeting served two (2) purposes: informing stakeholders about the project's progress and explaining why the City has not simply gone in and repaved the road immediately.

Mr. Hembree said the near-universal sentiment from property owners was that while they'd love a smooth road tomorrow, they'd rather wait and have it done right rather than risk making flooding worse for Kim's Barbecue and neighboring businesses. The study is expected to be completed by early 2027, after which design alternatives will be presented.

Council Member Dr. David Bradham raised the point that the general public — not just property owners — deserves to understand why the road still looks the way it does and suggested the City's communications team do more to get that message out. Council Member Alan Hargis proposed a newsletter insert in water bills as an additional outreach tool, noting that not everyone follows social media. Council Member J. Wesley Sills advised this would cost \$600. Mr. Hembree acknowledged that social media outreach has increased significantly in recent months with the assistance of Sandra Osman, the Downtown Director, who is now also helping with Public Information duties.

Additionally, Mayor Elmore noted that property owners along the corridor had asked the City to help with code enforcement behind their buildings, specifically regarding overflowing and poorly maintained dumpsters in the back of the shopping center. The owners expressed willingness to cooperate and the City intends to engage through enforcement rather than expense.

Council Chambers

City Manager Justin Hembree gave a brief update on the Council Chambers, noting that the last Municipal Court Session was held there at the end of June. Public Works staff has removed the jury box dividers and chairs to open up the space. It was also discovered that the judge's raised dais at the rear is poured concrete rather than wood, which will complicate its eventual removal. Mr. Hembree said the immediate next step would likely be new carpeting to improve the appearance and eliminate breaks in the flooring, though he noted the order of operations with the concrete dais would need to be worked out carefully to avoid double work.

South McKay Avenue Street Closing

City Manager Justin Hembree reported that work related to the East Side Pump Station project — specifically the rehabilitation of the main sewer outfall line running through the South McKay Avenue corridor — is underway and expected to be completed by October 14th.

Mr. Hembree acknowledged that the ramps have been rough and have generated complaints, and confirmed the contractor will be improving them with gravel and temporary asphalt to smooth out travel.

Parks & Recreation Trust Fund Grant Award

Mr. Hembree also shared the good news that the City has been formally notified of a \$500,000 Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant award from the Governor's office for the Codrington Park project. This is in addition to a previously received \$500,000 accessibility grant. The City has budgeted \$175,000 in matching funds this year, with additional match funding to be set aside in the coming fiscal year. A Federal Grant Application — potentially worth up to another \$250,000 to \$500,000 — is also being prepared by McAdams, with award announcements expected in late winter or early spring.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

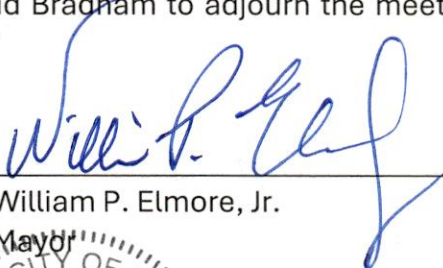
Mayor Elmore announced the following upcoming events:

- A book launch party for local author Bill McNallan, a Triton High School alumnus, will be held on September 12th from 2:00 to 6:00 PM at the Howard House.
- The next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2026 at 6:30 PM.
- The next Work Session will be held on October 13th.
- The Dunn Police Department and Parks and Recreation Department will co-host a Trunk or Treat event at Tart Park on October 30th from 5:30 to 7:30 PM.
- Trick-or-treating Citywide will be observed on Saturday, October 31st from 5:00 to 8:30 PM.

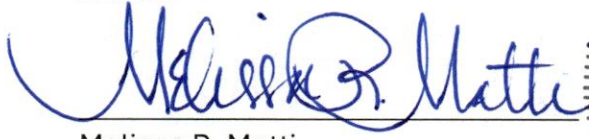
ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, a motion by Council Member J. Wesley Sills, Second by Council Member Dr. David Bradham to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.


 William P. Elmore, Jr.
 Mayor

Attest:


 Melissa R. Matti
 City Clerk

