

**AN ORDINANCE BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DACULA, GEORGIA, ESTABLISHING A MORATORIUM ON REZONING, SPECIAL USE PERMIT AND VARIANCE APPLICATIONS, BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATIONS; SUBDIVISION CONCEPT PLAN SUBMITTALS; AND LAND DISTURBANCE PERMIT APPLICATIONS FOR PROPERTY WITHIN THE URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA IDENTIFIED AND DESCRIBED IN THE URBAN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; TO PROVIDE FOR SEVERABILITY; TO PROVIDE FOR AN ADOPTION DATE AND EFFECTIVE DATE; TO PROVIDE A PENALTY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**WHEREAS**, the governing authority of the City of Dacula, Georgia (hereinafter, the “City”), is the Mayor and City Council thereof;

**WHEREAS**, the City has been vested with substantial powers, rights and functions to generally regulate the practice, conduct or use of property for the purposes of maintaining health, morals, safety, security, peace, and the general welfare of the City; and

**WHEREAS**, Georgia law recognizes that local governments may impose moratoria on zoning decisions, building permits, and other development approvals where circumstances warrant the same, *see, City of Roswell v. Outdoor Systems, Inc.*, 274 Ga. 130, 549 S.E.2d 90 (2001); *Lawson v. Macon*, 214 Ga. 278, 104 S.E.2d 425 (1958); *Taylor v. Shetzen*, 212 Ga. 101, 90 S.E.2d 572 (1955); and

**WHEREAS**, the Courts take judicial notice of a local government's inherent ability to impose moratoria on a short term or emergency basis; and

**WHEREAS**, the Georgia Supreme Court, in *DeKalb County v. Townsend Associates*, 243 Ga. 80, 252 S.E.2d 498 (1979), held that, "To justify a moratorium, it must appear first, that the

interests of the public generally, as distinguished from those of a particular class, require such interference; and second, that the means are reasonably necessary for the accomplishment of the purpose, and not unduly oppressive upon individuals." The City has found that the interests of the public necessitate the enactment of a moratorium for health, safety, morals and general welfare purposes by means which are reasonable and not unduly oppressive; and

**WHEREAS**, Gwinnett County recently announced the creation of a new employment center known as "Rowen" in unincorporated Gwinnett County adjacent to and near the City limits; and

**WHEREAS**, the Rowen project is expected to generate large scale infrastructure improvements in the areas near and inside the City; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council have, as a part of planning, zoning and growth management, been in review of the City's Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinances, and Development Regulations, and have been studying the City's best estimates and projections of the types of development which could be anticipated within the City; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council have developed a comprehensive plan which integrates all of these concerns and therefore considers this moratorium a proper exercise of its police powers; and

**WHEREAS**, the City has drafted an Urban Redevelopment Plan in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 61 of Title 36 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, entitled the "Urban Redevelopment Law," as amended (the "Urban Redevelopment Law") and identified a potential Urban Redevelopment Area to enhance the livability, walkability, economic opportunity, sense of community, and overall vitality of the City's historic and future downtown core in response to the issues and circumstances described above;

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council therefore consider it paramount that land use

regulation in the Urban Redevelopment Area continue in the most orderly and predictable fashion with the least amount of disturbance to landowners and to the citizens of the City in the core area identified in the Urban Redevelopment Plan. The Mayor and Council have always had a strong interest in growth management so as to promote the traditional police power goals of health, safety, morals, aesthetics and the general welfare of the community; and in particular the lessening of congestion on City streets, security of the public from crime and other dangers, promotion of health and general welfare of its citizens, protection of the aesthetic qualities of the City including access to air and light, and facilitation of the adequate provision of transportation and other public requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, it is the belief of the Mayor and Council that the concept of "public welfare" is broad and inclusive; that the values it represents are spiritual as well as physical, aesthetic as well as monetary; and that it is within the power of the City "to determine that a community should be beautiful as well as healthy, spacious as well as clean, well balanced as well as carefully patrolled." *Kelo v. City of New London*, 545 U.S. 469, 125 S. Ct. 2655 (2005); *Berman v. Parker*, 348 U.S. 26, 75 S. Ct. 98 (1954). It is also the opinion of the City that "general welfare" includes the valid public objectives of aesthetics, conservation of the value of existing lands and buildings within the City, making the most appropriate use of resources, preserving neighborhood characteristics, enhancing and protecting the economic well-being of the community, facilitating adequate provision of public services, and the preservation of the resources of the City; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council are, and have been interested in, developing a cohesive and coherent policy regarding land uses within the boundaries of the Urban Redevelopment Area, and have intended to promote community development through stability, predictability and balanced growth which will further the prosperity of the City as a whole and coordinating that policy with neighboring jurisdictions.

**NOW THEREFORE**, be it, and it is hereby ordained by the Mayor and Council of the City of Dacula:

**SECTION I.**

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

The Mayor and Council of the City of Dacula hereby make the following findings of fact:

(1) Recently, Gwinnett County has announced plans for a large planned growth development known as “Rowen” to serve as an employment center adjacent to the City. The Rowen project is expected to bring large scale infrastructure improvements including roads, water, sanitary sewer, and other utilities in and around the City. Two major road construction projects at Highway 316 and Highway 8/Atlanta Highway are progressing toward completion. The City has drafted an Urban Redevelopment Plan and identified an Urban Redevelopment Area described on Exhibit “A” attached hereto as a core area for future development within the City. As a result of all of these circumstances, the City has received a number of inquiries regarding various uses and potential rezoning’s in and near the City.

(2) It appears that the City’s Code of Ordinances, Development Regulations, and Zoning Ordinances warrant and require additional review by the City as they relate to uses within the Urban Redevelopment Area;

(3) Substantial disorder, detriment and irreparable harm would result to the citizens, the businesses and the City if the current land use regulation framework in and for the above described Urban Redevelopment Area were to be utilized by property owners prior to a more thorough review;

(4) The City's ongoing revision of its Code of Ordinances, Development Regulations, and Zoning Ordinances requires that a limited cessation of rezoning, special use permit and variance applications; subdivision concept plan submittals; building permit applications and land disturbance applications for properties within the Urban Redevelopment Area be enacted;

(5) It is necessary and in the public interest to delay, for a limited and reasonable period of time, the processing of any applications for such rezonings, special use permits, variances, building permit applications, concept plan submittals, land disturbance and developments within the Urban Redevelopment Area, to ensure that the design, development and location of the same are consistent with the long-term planning objectives of the City; and

(6) Limited moratoria are reasonable and do not constitute a burdensome regulation on land use when such moratoria are applied throughout the City, *see City of Roswell v. Outdoor Systems Inc.*, 274 Ga. 130, 549 S.E.2d 90 (2001).

## **SECTION II.**

### **IMPOSITION OF MORATORIUM**

(1) There is hereby imposed a moratorium on the acceptance by the staff of the City of Dacula of rezoning applications; special use permit applications; variance applications; building permit applications; subdivision concept plan submittals; land disturbance permit applications; and development permit applications for properties within the Urban Redevelopment Area described in Exhibit "A" attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference;

(2) The duration of this moratorium shall be until the City of Dacula adopts a revision of the City's Zoning Ordinance, Development Regulations and other ordinances related to uses within the Urban Redevelopment Area or until the expiration of one- hundred eighty (180) days from enactment, whichever first occurs;

(3) This moratorium shall be effective as of the date of adoption of this Ordinance;

(4) This moratorium shall have no effect upon approvals or permits previously issued or as to development plans previously approved by the City. The provisions of this Ordinance shall not affect the issuance of permits or site plan reviews that have received preliminary or final

approval by the City on or before the effective date of this Ordinance. The provisions of this Ordinance shall not apply to permit applications for repairs or remodeling of the interior of existing structures which do not change the existing land use or to permits for fences, decks or accessory structures.

(5) As of the effective date of this Ordinance, no applications for development or permits for the above described use may be accepted by any agent, employee or officer of the City with respect to any property in the City of Dacula, and any permit so accepted for filing will be deemed in error, null and void, and of no effect whatsoever and shall constitute no assurance whatsoever of any right to engage in any act, and any action in reliance on any such permit shall be unreasonable;

(6) The following procedures shall be put in place immediately. In *Cannon v. Clayton County*, 255 Ga. 63, 335 S.E.2d 294 (1985); *Meeks v. City of Buford*, 275 Ga. 585, 571 S.E.2d 369 (2002); *City of Duluth v. Riverbrooke Props.*, 233 Ga. App. 46, 502 S.E.2d 806 (1998), the Supreme Court held: "Where a landowner makes a substantial change in position by expenditures and reliance on the probability of the issuance of a building permit, based upon an existing zoning ordinance and the assurances of zoning officials, he acquires vested rights and is entitled to have the permit issued despite a change in the zoning ordinance which would otherwise preclude the issuance of a permit." Pursuant to these judicial decisions, the City of Dacula recognizes that, unknown to the City, de facto vesting may have occurred. The following procedures are established to provide exemptions from the moratorium where vesting has occurred:

A written application, including verified supporting data, documents and facts, may be made requesting a review by the Mayor and Council at a scheduled meeting of any facts or circumstances which the applicant feels substantiates a claim for vesting and the grant of an exemption.

### **SECTION III.**

#### **EXEMPTION**

(1) During the term of this moratorium, any person may file an application for exemption from this moratorium related to residential uses with the Mayor and Council. The Mayor and Council may grant such exemption where the proposed use is deemed to be in conformity with the proposed amended Development Regulations, proposed amended Zoning Ordinance and/or the Comprehensive Plan that are to be considered during the term of this moratorium. The Mayor and Council shall consider the general terms of the proposed development, the proposed use, the proposed development plans, the benefits of the proposed development to the City, and the Comprehensive Plan for the City in deciding upon a requested exemption.

(2) Should the Mayor and Council grant such exemption, the staff of the City of Dacula may accept site plans, development plans, rezoning requests, and applications for building permits subject to any conditions or limitations adopted by the Mayor and Council. However, the grant of an exemption from this moratorium in no way confers any rights upon the applicant or the exempted plans, applications or requests.

(3) Any exemption granted by the Mayor and Council shall not constitute final approval of such plans or requests by the City. Any granted exemption shall merely grant the City staff the ability to accept and process the subject application in accordance with all City laws.

#### **SECTION IV.**

(1) It is hereby declared to be the intention of the Mayor and Council that all sections, paragraphs, sentences, clauses and phrases of this Ordinance are and were, upon their enactment, believed by the Mayor and Council to be fully valid, enforceable and constitutional.

(2) It is hereby declared to be the intention of the Mayor and Council that, to the greatest extent allowed by law, each and every section, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance is severable from every other section, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance. It is hereby further declared to be the intention of the Mayor and Council that, to the greatest extent allowed by law, no section, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance is mutually dependent upon any other section, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance.

(3) In the event that any phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph or section of this Ordinance shall, for any reason whatsoever, be declared invalid, unconstitutional or otherwise unenforceable by the valid judgment or decree of any court of competent jurisdiction, it is the express intent of the Mayor and Council that such invalidity, unconstitutionality or unenforceability shall, to the greatest extent allowed by law, not render invalid, unconstitutional or otherwise unenforceable any of the remaining phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs or sections of the Ordinance and that, to the greatest extent allowed by law, all remaining phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs and sections of the Ordinance shall remain valid, constitutional, enforceable, and of full force and effect.

#### **SECTION V.**

All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances in conflict with this Ordinance are, to the extent of such conflict, hereby repealed.



**SECTION VI.**

The preamble of this Ordinance shall be considered to be and is hereby incorporated by reference as if fully set out herein.

**SO ORDAINED** this \_\_\_\_ day of April, 2024.

AYES: \_\_\_\_

NAYES: \_\_\_\_

CITY OF DACULA, GEORGIA

\_\_\_\_\_  
Hugh D. King, III, Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Brittni Nix, City Clerk

## Exhibit "A"

### Urban Redevelopment Area

The boundary of the Urban Redevelopment Area begins at the southeast corner of Dacula Road at Broad Street intersection, follows southward until the Winder Highway and Broad Street intersection. Boundary continues westward along Winder Highway for 680 feet (+/-) and then continues southward. The boundary includes properties along McMillan Road until the McMillan Road and Harbins Road intersection. The boundary follows Harbins Road, includes Dacula City Hall, and continues until the Tanner Road intersection. The boundary continues northeast along Tanner Road for 235 feet (+/-) and then continues northward until it intersects with Freemans Mill Road. The boundary continues eastward along Freemans Mill Road for 1,192 feet (+/-). Then, the boundary continues northward until it intersects with Winder Highway. The boundary proceeds westward along Winder Highway until it intersects with Dacula Road where it continues northward until the boundary ends at the Dacula Road and Broad Street intersection.