



Mayor and City Council Work Session

Tuesday, February 03, 2026 at 6:30 PM

City Hall, 875 Main Street, Stone Mountain, Georgia 30083

Minutes

1 **Mayor and Council: Jelani Linder – Mayor| Post 3: Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Smith | Post 1: Council**
2 **Member Anita Bass | Post 2: Council Member Mark Marianos | Post 4: Council Member Kay**
3 **Nunez| Post 5: Council Member Hub Jordan | Post 6: Council Member Elaine Vaughn**

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5 **Staff: Maggie Dimov – Interim City Manager/Economic Development Director/DDA | Shavala**
6 **Ames - City Clerk | Angela Couch - City Attorney**

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8 Public Hearing was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

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10 PRESENT: Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council Member:
11 Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan, Council Member: Post 6 Elaine Vaughn and
12 Jelani Linder

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14 ABSENT: Council Member: Post 2 Mark Marianos

15 16 I. Public Hearing

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18 1. Initial Public Hearing Consideration to opt in – Statewide Floating Homestead Exemption,
19 requested by Interim City Manager Maggie Dimov

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21 City Attorney Angela Couch provided an update explaining that the scheduled public hearing for the
22 morning of the February 3, 2026 City Council Meeting did not take place due to a staffing shortage.

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24 Mayor Linder then opened the discussion for the public hearing regarding the statewide floating
25 homestead exemption.

26 27 Public Hearing Comments

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29 **Public Comment 1: Eileen Smith** – Commented in support of the statewide homestead exemption,
30 noting that she also supported the measure last year. She stated that the City has the opportunity to opt
31 in this year as well as next year and expressed that she does not see a reason to delay the decision to
32 opt in.

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34 **Public Comment 2: Joan Monroe** – Expressed opposition to the statewide floating homestead
35 exemption, stating that moving toward an opt-in approach after previous public input to opt out
36 undermines the community's position. The exemption would disproportionately benefit owners of higher-
37 value properties while placing additional financial pressure on the City, its residents, visitors, and
38 businesses.

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40 **Public Comment 3: Ms. Thomas** – Stated that she was neither for nor against the statewide homestead
41 exemption. Noted that the public hearing scheduled for the morning was canceled and was informed that
42 it would be rescheduled. Recommended that the City post additional signage and provide a digital means
43 for submitting comments to better accommodate seniors and individuals with children who cannot attend
44 in person. Requested more information regarding the potential impacts of the statewide floating
45 homestead exemption.

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Public Hearing Closed: 6:37 P.M.

Public Hearing

2. 1008B Main Street, Requested by Planning Manager Tamaya Huff

Planning Manager Tamayah Huff provided an overview of the Special Use Permit and outlined the conditions of approval in accordance with the land use requirements specified in the zoning district code, along with the staff’s recommendation.

Public Hearing Comments

Public Comment 1: Ms. Thomas – Stated that she was neither for nor against the item but expressed concern that residents are told they must be physically present, while applicants are often allowed to participate by phone or are not present at all. She also noted that individuals who applied for changes to their homes were permitted to serve on the Comprehensive Planning Stakeholder Committee, while community members like herself were not given the same opportunity.

Public Hearing Closed: 6:44 P.M.

Public Hearing

3. Public Hearing - Alcohol License - 947 Main Street - Live Oak Tap, LLC

City Clerk Shavala Ames provided an overview of the City Code requirements related to alcohol licensing, noting that all City-issued alcohol licenses are subject to a mandatory public hearing. Applicant Johnathan Hartnett then presented a brief overview of the request, explaining that the proposed location is a full-service restaurant seeking approval to obtain a local liquor license.

Public Hearing comments

Public Comment 1: Joan Monroe – Expressed strong support for the application, noting that the applicant is a long-standing anchor in the City of Stone Mountain.

Public Comment 2: Dave Thomas – Stated that supporting the request was a no-brainer and noted that the applicant also owns another business, Cherokee Rose. Hope that staff crossover between the two locations would ensure quality control, which he believes will carry over to the new establishment.

Public Comment 3: Ms. Thomas – Stated that she was neither for nor against the request but suggested implementing a requirement for ID checks prior to serving liquor at the establishment.

Public Hearing Closed: 6:48 P.M.

II. Adjournment

ACTION: MOTION TO ADJOURN PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:49 P.M

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan and Council Member: Post 6 Elaine Vaughn

MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)

III. Call to Order

104 Mayor Linder called the meeting to order at 6:49 P.M

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106 **IV. Determination of Quorum**

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108 PRESENT: Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council Member:
109 Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan, and Council Member: Post 6 Elaine Vaughn

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111 ABSENT: Council Member: Post 2 Mark Marianos

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113 **V. Invocation and Pledge**

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115 Mayor Linder led a 30-second moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

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117 **VI. Citizen Comments/Including comments from public/stakeholders**

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119 **Citizen Comment 1: Eileen Smith** – Stated that over \$24,000 was invested in Citywide Solutions to light
120 the trees on Main Street. The promised seasonal color changes have not occurred and that the work has
121 not been completed as expected. Despite reporting the issue through SeeClickFix, it has still not been
122 addressed.

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124 **Citizen Comment 2: Ms. Thomas** Expressed that she felt disrespected when approached by two Stone
125 Mountain Police officers while giving her comment at the public hearing. Stated that there was no
126 justification for the use of excessive force against her. Two other citizens made similar comments but
127 emphasized that she felt her treatment was prejudiced. Commented on the Mardi Gras event, expressing
128 concern about the reallocation of funds from two other events, including Music for the Souls and
129 Caribbean festivals, toward Mardi Gras without getting input from the citizens.

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131 **Citizen Comment 3: Carolyn Sanderson** – Urged the City Council to implement safeguards prior to any
132 ICE activity in the area. Expressed worry about data centers, citing potential environmental and health
133 impacts from noise pollution, and noted that the amount of helicopter surveillance is concerning.
134 Regarding parks, she acknowledged the care being put into green spaces but expressed concern about
135 accessibility, noting that reserving a pavilion to play her own music was quoted at \$275. Addressed
136 election protections, stating that she is actively working to engage voters and would like to see polling
137 stations clearly identified through signage.

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139 **Citizen Comment 4: Cheryl Dudley** – Referenced Georgia Open Meetings Act, noting that citizens
140 cannot be required to disclose their address during public comments. Emphasized that speech cannot
141 be restricted based on viewpoint or content and stated that violations would infringe on the Open Records
142 Act and First Amendment. She provided guidance on filing a complaint with the Attorney General and
143 shared that she prefers her address remain confidential due to concerns about potential retribution.

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145 **Citizen Comment 5: Joan Monroe** – Urged the Council to consider whether actions are fair for all, the
146 potential long-term repercussions, and to avoid decisions driven by greed. Expressed concern that efforts
147 to improve the gentrification of Sherman Town may primarily benefit developers while displacing elderly
148 residents. Passing ordinances without full public awareness shifts the burden to citizens and stated that
149 requiring individuals to disclose their address during public comments is unlawful and silences residents.

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151 **Citizen Comment 6: Clint Monroe** – Stated that while unity is often discussed, the focus should be on
152 what the community is united around. Expressed concern that prioritizing an increased tax base places
153 an undue burden on homeowners and does not reflect the priorities of Stone Mountain residents. Citizens
154 feel their taxes are not being spent wisely, suggested that some decisions may favor real estate interests
155 over the public, and highlighted neglect in areas outside the city center, including delayed attention to
156 potholes and infrastructure. The City should seek alternative revenue sources rather than balancing the
157 budget on the backs of taxpayers.

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159 **VII. Review of the Journal (City Clerk)**

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161 1. Consideration of an action on a request to approve January 16, 2026 Meeting Minutes

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ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE JANUARY 16, 2026 MEETING MINUTES

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan, Council Member: Post 6 Elaine Vaughn

MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)

2. Consideration of an action on a request to approve January 20, 2026 Meeting Minutes

ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE JANUARY 16, 2026 MEETING MINUTES

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan, Council Member: Post 6 Elaine Vaughn

MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)

VIII. Reading of Communications

1. The Mayor announced that three proclamations would be presented: one for the Public Works Department, one for the Police Department, and one for the Atlanta Evergreen Lakeside Resort, in recognition of their unwavering effort and dedication to ensuring the safety of Stone Mountain residents.

IX. Adoption of The Agenda of The Day

ACTION: MOTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA OF THE DAY AS AMENDED TO INCLUDE THE ADDITION OF AN ANNOUNCEMENT INVOLVING THE CITY MANAGER AT THE TOP OF THE AGENDA

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan, Council Member: Post 6 Elaine Vaughn

MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)

X. Announcement of the Mayor

1. Mayor Jelani Linder announced that Maggie Dimov is the only applicant being considered for the City Manager position with the City of Stone Mountain.

XI. Council Policy Discussion Topics – None

XII. Unfinished Business

1. Approval of Agreement for Mardi Gras 2026 Event Services

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Interim City Manager Maggie Dimov requested that the Council approve Bundos Entertainment as the event organizer for this year's Mardi Gras celebration and authorize the Mayor to enter into an agreement with Bundos Entertainment for the event.

Council inquired whether the Battle of the Bands could be held on the lawn on Main Street instead of 2nd Street. City Manager Maggie Dimov clarified that the plan and proposal submitted by Bundos Entertainment did not include the lawn on Main Street and noted that there is minimal time to approve changes or revise the submitted proposal and scope of work.

ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENT FOR MARDI GRAS 2026 EVENT SERVICES AND AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE THE AGREEMENT

Motion made by Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan, Council Member: Post 6 Elaine Vaughn

MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)

2. Consideration of an action on a request to reallocate funds for (1) new position, Tourism Manager; and (1) previous position Communications Specialist, requested by Interim City Manager

Interim City Manager Maggie Dimov presented the request, clarifying that it reflects a title change and that funds for the positions have already been allocated in the approved budget.

Council inquired about the previously discussed Park and Recreation Coordinator position and whether those duties would fall under the Tourism Manager role. There was also discussion about whether the two positions could be combined; the Interim City Manager clarified that each requires a distinct skill set that a single candidate may not possess. Council expressed concern about the need for additional key positions, such as a Grant Director and a Downtown Development or Economic Development Director, to help bring the City closer to compliance.

The Mayor asked Council to consider the City's long-term goals regarding community engagement and expressed strong support for promoting tourism within the City of Stone Mountain.

ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE REQUEST TO REALLOCATE FUNDS FOR (1) NEW POSITION, TOURISM MANAGER

Motion made by Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez, Seconded by Council Member: Post 6 Elaine Vaughn

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 6 Elaine Vaughn

Voting Nay: Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan

MOTION PASSED

ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE REQUEST TO REALLOCATE FUNDS FOR (1) PREVIOUS POSITION COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Motion made by Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Seconded by Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez

270 **Voting Yea:** Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council
271 Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan, Council Member: Post 6 Elaine
272 Vaughn

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274 **MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)**

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276 3. Consideration of an action on a request to initiate a comprehensive review and research of HB 581
277 to evaluate its potential impacts and benefits for the citizens of Stone Mountain, requested by Mayor
278 Pro Tem Ryan Smith

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280 Steven Mayor of Sumter Consulting presented an overview of the statewide floating homestead
281 exemption, outlining the options available to the City and the potential implications of opting in or
282 opting out. Following an in-depth discussion, the governing body concluded that, based on the current
283 timeline, there is sufficient time to further evaluate the options and make a determination on whether
284 to opt in or opt out at a later date.

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286 **NO ACTION TAKEN**

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288 **XII. New Business**

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290 1. Approval of Additional Services Quote / McCurdy Park Stormwater Project, requested by Mike Helton,
291 Public Works Director

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293 Mike Helton and Mike Vasquez gave an overview of the request as outlined in the City Council packet.

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295 **ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE ADDITIONAL SERVICES QUOTE / MCCURDY PARK**
296 **STORMWATER PROJECT**

297 Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 5
298 Hub Jordan

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300 **Voting Yea:** Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council
301 Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan, Council Member: Post 6
302 Elaine Vaughn

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304 **MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)**

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306 2. Consideration of an action on a request to offer an amnesty program to resolve unpaid traffic citations,
307 requested by Clerk of Court Kristie Tucker

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309 Clerk of Court Kristie Tucker provided a general overview of the amnesty program, including its purpose
310 and benefits. The program offers an opportunity to recover outstanding monies owed to the City. The
311 amnesty program will begin this month and is intended to be publicized across all available
312 communication platforms to ensure community awareness and participation.

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314 **ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE A REQUEST TO OFFER AN AMNESTY PROGRAM TO**
315 **RESOLVE UNPAID TRAFFIC CITATIONS**

316 Motion made by Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Seconded by Council Member: Post 6
317 Elaine Vaughn

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319 **Voting Yea:** Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council
320 Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan, Council Member: Post 6 Elaine
321 Vaughn

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323 **MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)**

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325 3. Consideration of an action on a request to approve an alcohol license for Live Oak Tap, LLC located
326 at 947 Main Street, requested by City Clerk Shavala Ames

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**ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE AN ALCOHOL LICENSE FOR LIVE OAK TAP, LLC
LOCATED AT 947 MAIN STREET**

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan, Council Member: Post 6 Elaine Vaughn

MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)

4. Consideration of an action on a request to approve the Special Use Permit (change in conditions) for 1008B Main Street, requested by Tamaya Huff

Planning Manager Tamaya Huff gave an overview with staff recommendations.

**ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE A SPECIAL USE PERMIT WITH STAFF
RECOMMENDATIONS TO ALLOW PARKING CHANGES AS REQUESTED FOR 1008B MAIN
STREET**

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan, Council Member: Post 6 Elaine Vaughn

MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)

XIII. New Ordinances and Resolutions

1. Second Read Ordinance 1082 New Gibraltar Square, requested by Planning Manager Tamaya Huff

NO ACTION TAKEN – SECOND READ ONLY

XIV. Remarks of Privilege – None

XVI. Executive Session to discuss Personnel, Legal, Cyber Security, and/or Real Estate (if needed)

**ACTION: MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:32 P.M. TO DISCUSS
LITIGATION**

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan, and Council Member: Post 6 Elaine Vaughn

MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)

**ACTION: MOTION TO ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION AND RECONVENE THE CITY
COUNCIL MEETING AT 8:55 PM**

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass

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Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan, and Council Member: Post 6 Elaine Vaughn

MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)

Mayor Jelani Linder clarified for the record that Maggie Dimov is the candidate being considered for the City Manager position, not “applicant” as stated earlier in the meeting.

XVII. Adjournment

ACTION: MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING 8:56 P.M.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Kay Nunez, Council Member: Post 5 Hub Jordan, Council Member: Post 6 Elaine Vaughn

MOTION PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY)

Jelani Linder, Mayor

Shavala Ames, City Clerk