COUNCIL MEETING
4040 SOUTH BERKELEY LAKE ROAD
BERKELEY LAKE, GEORGIA 30096
FULL MINUTES
JULY 16, 2026

ATTENDANCE

Mayor: Lois Salter
Council Members: Skip Dahlstrom, Bill Lacy, Bill Lyons and Rebecca Spitler
City Officials: Leigh Threadgill - City Administrator, Michela Monteiro – Special Projects Coordinator, Thomas Mitchell – City Attorney

Members of the Public: 3

Members of the Press: 0

CALL TO ORDER

Salter called the meeting to order at 8:03 PM. A quorum of council members was in attendance.

AGENDA

Salter solicited a motion regarding the agenda.

Dahlstrom made a motion to accept the agenda as submitted. Lacy seconded the motion. All council members were in favor and the motion passed.

PUBLIC HEARING

Salter noted there are no public hearings.

CONSENT AGENDA

Salter noted the following as items on the consent agenda and solicited a motion:

a) Minutes of June 18, 2026, Council Meeting
b) Minutes of June 18, 2026, Council Work Session
c) Financial Statements of May 2026 – Unaudited
d) 2025 Financial Statement - Audited

Salter asked Lacy to speak briefly about the results he heard when meeting with Mauldin & Jenkins. Lacy noted the auditor lived in Berkeley Lake as a child. We spent a half hour going over the audit of 2025 and he had glowing statements to make about the way the city is being managed financially. He couldn't say enough good things about Leigh and her ability to keep things together in an orderly way and maintaining necessary safeguards. It was a glowing report.

Salter said the auditor declared himself to be shocked at how well run the city's finances are. Salter noted that past auditors have said similar things. Most cities get a report that describes things they need to do better and things they need to change, and the auditor had no suggestions for any changes, only compliments.

Salter thanked Threadgill, the City Treasurer, John Pendleton, the citizen Finance Committee and Bill Lacy, the council liaison to the finance committee. All of these people together provide an unusual degree of transparency and good management for our city financially.

Lyons made a motion to approve all items on the consent agenda. Spitler seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

a) O-26-262 – Amendment to Chapter 78, Zoning, Article X, Commercial Use District

Threadgill: The Planning & Zoning Commission considered this request to create a C-2, General Business, district at their April meeting. After much discussion, the commission recommended approval and asked staff to try to create an amendment that would follow TSW's recommendations for the C-2 district proposed in the draft Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Unfortunately, when staff compared the applicant's proposal to the draft UDO, it became clear that there is no separate, discrete set of C-2 district regulations in the draft UDO; there is no single section that can be transplanted into the city's current zoning ordinance. Regulations pertaining to the C-2 district are woven throughout the UDO. Staff has recommended denial of this request to create a C-2 district outside of and in advance of the UDO because the UDO is the avenue by which the new C-2 district should be created to ensure the C-2 regulations that are adopted are comprehensive and vetted through the UDO public process. The proposed ordinance to amend the current zoning ordinance to create a C-2 district is up for adoption.

Spitler made a motion to deny O-26-262, an ordinance to amend Chapter 78, Zoning, to add a new C-2, General Business, district in Article X, Commercial Use District. Lyons seconded the motion.

Spitler noted that this applicant sent council an email following the May council meeting to which she responded in June. She read into the record some of the points from her email to the applicant. Spitler's comments were as follows:

I don't believe the applicant's earnestness to start the project should precede the extensive planning process the city started and is in the final phase to completion.

The applicant knowingly took a risk when choosing to buy the property on PIB. The applicant knew that a previous rezoning request had been denied after the previous applicant spent about 6 months meeting with P&Z and finally requested a rezoning from the city council, a zone that we had defined and was in our current ordinance.

The applicant knew this property has always been problematic, the previous owner was foreclosed on and the property had been owned by the bank for around 15 years.

The applicant was aware the city was engaging a consulting firm to work with us on creating a new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to help us plan for the future redevelopment of the Berkeley Lake commercial district. This is not a process to be taken lightly and involves a lot of public input at various points in the process.

The process of revamping a dated development ordinance needs to be well thought out. Moreover creating new zoning classifications creates an additional layer of complication and requires an additional level of thoughtfulness. What we are currently doing is planning for the future character of the City of Berkeley Lake. Currently, our commercial district does not reflect the upscale character of our residential district. We need to get this into alignment and it is a process that will not and cannot happen overnight, it must be planned.

This city and the properties contained within it will be here long after we are all gone. The planning we do today is taking the long view for tomorrow.

What the applicant wants to do with the property today may be perfectly fine but what about the next owner and what they want to do with it? The city is being asked to create a zone for immediate use that will be obsolete and nonconforming once the final UDO is adopted. This means that out of the gate we have a recently rezoned property that is nonconfoming and must be grandfathered. Also, by creating this new zone preemptively, that zone would then become available to rezone other properties. We could not show preferential treatment to the current request and then deny another request that might be just as valid.

I believe the P&Z Committee did a disservice to the applicant and the city by directing staff to create a C2 zone outside of the bigger UDO project to satisfy a short-term desire. In the UDO, each defined zone references other guidelines within that ordinance.

The city council has ethics standards they must uphold. This includes not showing favoritism to one citizen or property owner or business owner over another. It means not making exceptions unless they have been made through the issuance of a variance.

It is immaterial that the applicant is a City of Berkeley Lake citizen that happens to own a property in our commercial district and that the applicant plans to live in Berkeley Lake for the long term.

The hard dollars and the soft dollar impact the applicant wants to present again is immaterial to how city council should make a decision regarding the creation of a new zone and subsequent rezoning request especially since the applicant wants to do this in front of the soon to be completed UDO.

While the applicant has created a proposed C2 zoning document, it is problematic in several ways and does not fit what is currently being written in the draft UDO. Since we are so close to completing the UDO, it is prudent that city council vote against this proposed ordinance change and focus their efforts on reviewing and providing input on the UDO draft at hand.

All were in favor and the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

a) 2025 Stormwater Project – Final Change Order for Project Close-Out

Threadgill: This change order closes out the 2025 Stormwater Project performed by Cajenn Construction. The final project cost was $18,517.00 less than the contract price. Staff asks that you accept this change order to close out the project.

Spitler made a motion to accept the final project close-out change order for the 2025 CIPP Stormwater Project. Lyons seconded the motion. All council members were in favor and the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Lacy moved to adjourn. Dahlstrom seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Salter adjourned the meeting at 8:16 PM.

Submitted by:

Leigh Threadgill, City Clerk