



MINUTES
City of McDonough
Special-Called City Council Meeting
McKibben Chambers City Hall
136 Keys Ferry Street
June 30, 2025
4:00 PM

A Special-Called Meeting of the City of McDonough City Council was held on Monday, June 30, 2025, at 4:00 p.m., for the purpose of hearing concerns from the Main Street Merchants.

Mayor Sandra Vincent called the Special-Called Meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

The City Clerk called roll for the meeting, as follows:

Mayor Sandra Vincent	Present
Mayor Pro Tem Kamali Varner	Absent (Due to family death)
Councilmember Jamal Burt	(Arrived after roll call)
Councilmember Darryl Payton	Present
Councilmember Scott Reeves	Present
Councilmember Rufus Stewart	Present
Councilmember Vanessa Thomas	Present

Others in attendance: City Administrator, Steve Morgan; City Clerk, Christy Taylor; Attorney on behalf of Denmark Ashby Law Firm; Police Chief, Ken Noble; Fire Chief, Dave Williams; Deputy City Administrator, Andrew Baker; Community Development Director, Sylvia Smith; Finance Director, Dr. Ralph Igwedibie; Public Works Director, William VonDenBosch; Technology Services Director, Brian Linton; Main Street Manager, Cinderella Bennett; Public Works Director, William VonDenBosch; Assistant Finance Director, Deborah Upshaw; Assistant Public Works Director, Andy Butts; Executive Assistant, Joani Clemons; Customer Service Manager, Kara Loggins; Budget Manager, Dana Strickland; Code Enforcement Officer, Edwin Torres; Main Street, Cathy Lacey; and Main Street, Jan Madison

Reverend Dr. Nathaniel Long gave the Invocation.

Councilmember Thomas led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Vincent called for a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Stewart made a motion to approve, and Councilmember Thomas seconded. The vote was six in favor. Those voting in favor were Mayor Vincent, Councilmember Burt, Councilmember Payton, Councilmember Reeves, Councilmember Stewart, and Councilmember Thomas. Mayor Pro Tem Varner was not present.

Mayor Vincent offered an overview of the meeting format, followed by the introduction of City staff members who were in attendance.

Comments by the following Merchants and citizens were heard and discussed:

1. Neil Daniell (Kirby G's Diner)

- Issues impacting Main Street Merchants were identified by customers as Parking, Smoking, Visibility, Traffic, Events, Noise, Homelessness, Renovations, and Safety
- Mr. Daniell stated he is not in favor of a Smoking Ban.
- He stressed the significant need for signage for free parking downtown.
- Issues impacting businesses were identified by Merchants as panhandling, noise, sanitation and parking.

2. Danielle Gaskin (Southern Roots)

- 1 in 5 Georgians either smoke or vape
- Not in favor of Smoking Ban, as it singles out merchants on the square and will negatively impact business.
- How will it be enforced?
- Will patrons be fined or businesses?
- Suggested making the patio at Southern Roots a designated smoking area for the Downtown District.
- Signage restrictions are too stringent on downtown businesses

3. Barbara F. Zitz (Pasta Max)

- Our business has lost customers due to smoking and loud music, some of which includes profanities.
- The City needs to find a compromise to encourage the success of all Main Street Merchants.
- Improper parking continues to block alley behind Pasta Max
- Thankful for the continued city-cleanup that occurs on Mondays.

4. Rayden Landress (concerned citizen)

- Opposed to smoking ban downtown.
- The square is a public place and a ban will negatively impact tobacco users.
- Who will enforce the ban? The Police Department has enough to do already.
- The City should consider more designated smoking areas and provide enough trash receptacles with ashtrays to accommodate those who smoke or vape.

5. Jason Elkady (JBE Window Service & More)

- Trash is a significant issue in the downtown.
- There is an issue with the homeless panhandling and harassing patrons of the square.
- There is a need for additional lighting and night patrol to address safety concerns.

6. Peter Pimentel (American Heart Association)

- Supports a smoking ban in the City of McDonough.
- Second-hand smoke causes damage to the cardiovascular system and may lead to stroke
- 12 Georgia cities currently have smoke-free ordinances in place

7. Katy Bell – (Macon Street Tacos)
 - The City should find a compromise on smoking and vaping in the Downtown District.
 - There should be designated smoking areas for smoking/vaping.
 - Parking, both free and paid should be promoted throughout.
 - Panhandling and littering are becoming a significant problem for business owners.
 - Trash can become overwhelming and leads to a smell in the alleyway.
 - When will events return to the square?
 - Please provide a schedule of the events scheduled for the remainder of the year.
 - This year's Geranium Festival was bad for the Main Street Merchants.

Mayor Vincent stated a meeting will be scheduled between the Merchants and the Lions Club to discuss the use of the square for events.

8. David Jonson (Newsole)
 - The landscape on the square looks beautiful.
 - We need events to return to the square to be successful.
9. Micah Hodges (Queen Bee Coffee)
 - Business owner for 13 years in McDonough
 - We need to find compromises that will work for everyone.
10. David Valentine (Crust and Craft)
 - Entertainment is being chipped away.
 - We need speed patrol on the square.
 - Back lot behind business is an eyesore.
 - Parking meters diminish parking around the square.
 - Sign ordinance needs to be less stringent on businesses in the Downtown District.
11. Sir Michael Cole (resident)
 - One of the buildings on the square is falling down and is becoming a safety hazard.
12. Reverend Dr. Nathaniel Long (United Methodist Church)
 - Not in support of Smoking Ban.
 - Not in support of no smoking signage, as it is not welcoming.
 - Traffic enforcement is horrific.
 - Drivers are speeding and driving recklessly.
 - Would be happy to host the Geranium Festival/Merchant Meeting
13. David Jongebauer (Story on the Square/Rough Draft)
 - Smoking ban would be a good thing.
 - Noise/Music from 1942 needs to be lowered.

14. Andrew Dolbier (Print Charming)

- My company works with most of the merchants at Main Street and the City
- If parking signs are approved, Print Charming will provide signage at 50% off or at-cost for “free parking” signs.

15. Tavache Williams and Cindy Williams (Bottled Treasures)

- It is difficult to find parking for staff despite free parking at building.
- Sign Ordinance

Mayor Vincent suggested that the business owners at Bottled Treasures schedule a meeting with the Community Development parking to discuss the restrictions of the sign ordinance.

16. Lawrence Mile (The Cigar Bank)

- Merchants should utilize smoke eaters on patios to reduce smoke spreading
- The square needs a fountain and a stage to encourage entertainment.

17. Monica Moseley – Republic Sanitation

- We have heard the issues raised about sanitation.
- Please feel free to contact Republic directly if you need a larger dumpster or a replacement.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Mayor advised that both proposed Noise Ordinance and the proposed Smoking Ordinance would be discussed at the Tuesday, July 1, 2025, City Council Workshop; however, neither ordinances would be voted on at the meeting.

Mayor Vincent adjourned the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

Christy L. Taylor, CMC
City Clerk

OPEN MEETINGS COMPLIANCE NOTICE: This is a regularly scheduled meeting of Mayor and Council of the City of McDonough duly noticed pursuant to the requirements of the Georgia Open Meetings Law (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1, et seq). Notice of the meeting was provided to the *Henry Herald* on June 23, 2025; and a copy was posted at City Hall and on the City’s website, as required by law.