



October

2024

Introduction

This Newsletter is to give you an overview of the activities and discussions of council, along with the status of various projects and initiatives that are underway with the city. The intent is to be as transparent as possible.

Vision

“Galax is a vibrant, diverse, friendly, citizen engaged community that pursues a culture of excellence.”

Mission Statement

“The city provides high quality public services to sustain an excellent community in which to live, work and play.”



Dear Residents,

As we step into September, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for your incredible patience and resilience during Hurricane Helena. The power outages, flooding, and water shortages were undoubtedly challenging, but your strength has shone through.

I want to thank our dedicated volunteers, including the Fire Department, Police Department, Rescue Squad, Social Services, Parks and Recreation, and many organizations like God’s Storehouse and Christ Chapel, all the local churches. Together, we witnessed the true spirit of community as neighbors and friends rallied to support one another.

While the storm has tested us, it also revealed the unwavering bond we share. We are blessed to live in a city where so many come together in times of need, including those who traveled from afar to lend a helping hand.

Let us continue to pray for those still facing difficulties as we rebuild and recover together. I am grateful for our city crews, street maintenance teams, the water plant and everyone who contributed to our recovery efforts. Your hard work and dedication are deeply appreciated.

Thank you for your patience and for embodying the spirit of our community. Together, we will emerge stronger.

Warm regards,

Willie

**Willie T. Greene, Sr
Mayor
City of Galax**

October City Council Meeting 10/7/2024

Here is a quick summary of our last Council meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING – AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 148 OF CITY CODE REGARDING

GOLF CARTS ON CITY STREETS

to receive public comments on amending Chapter 148 of the Galax City Code, Article VI to allow the operation of golf carts on City streets where the speed limit is limited to 25 miles per hour or less.

Council was asked to hear public comments related to this public hearing and then determined they would like to send it back to the Public Safety Committee for further study.

PUBLIC HEARING – AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 51 OF CITY CODE REGARDING

PRIVATE MEDICAL TRANSPORTS

WITHIN THE CITY to receive public comments on amending Chapter 51 of the Galax City Code to allow private medical transport companies to provide medical transportation of individuals within the City limits for non-emergency medical transportation only.

Council heard public comments related to this public hearing and then determined it would like to amend the City Code a proposed.

PUBLIC HEARING – REQUEST FOR ZONING CHANGE - FITZER UPPER, LLC (PARCEL

55-94,95) – City Council – A Zoning Change Request was submitted by Fitzer Upper, LLC pertaining to property located at 201 W. Oldtown Street which sought to change the zoning district designation from B-2 'General Business' to R-2 'Medium Density Residential'.

PUBLIC HEARING – CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT TO FY24 GALAX CITY BUDGET

The primary structure on the property had operated as a church building until a structural concern associated with the east exterior wall caused church services and activities to cease.

The property was purchased by the applicant and temporary shoring was implemented followed by structural improvements to restore the building as a safe structure. The owner's intended future use for the building is to renovate as a single-family residence.

The property is adjacent to a R-2 zoning district; therefore, approval of the request would involve an extension of the current boundary. The Planning Commission heard the request and approved it unanimously.

Council heard public comments related to this public hearing and then determined it would like to approve the request as presented.

PUBLIC HEARING – REQUEST FOR ZONING CHANGE - DAVID A.

WILSON (PARCEL 69-

4) - City Council – A Zoning Change Request has been submitted by Mr. David Wilson pertaining to a 12.42-acre property recently purchased at the intersection of Greenville Road and Ken brook Drive which sought to change the zoning district designation from M-1 'Light Industrial' to R-2 'Medium Density Residential'. The owner's intended future use for the property is to construct a single-family home.

The property is adjacent to a R-2 zoning district; therefore, approval of the request would involve an extension of the current boundary. The Planning Commission heard the request and approved it unanimously.

Council heard public comments and then determined it would like to approve the request as presented.

PUBLIC HEARING – REQUEST FOR ZONING CHANGE - VIRGINIA CAROLINA HEATING & COOLING, LLC (PARCEL 37-5,6)

A Zoning Change Request has been submitted by Virginia Carolina Heating & Cooling, LLC pertaining to a .52-acre property recently purchased at 708 Glendale Road which sought to change the zoning district designation from R-2 'Medium Density Residential' to B-2 'General Business'. The owner's intended future use for the property is to construct a commercial building for operation of their HVAC business. The property is adjacent to a B-2 zoning district; therefore, approval of the request would involve an extension of the current boundary. The Planning Commission heard the request and approved it unanimously.

Council heard public comments related to this public hearing and then determined it would like to approve the request as presented.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Intersection of Center Street and Main Street Update**

October City Council Meeting 10/7/2024 (Continued)

Planning Director Doug Williams – Work is currently ongoing to improve the intersection of Center Street and Main Street to meet Americans with Disabilities Act regulations. Staff continues to work with the Contractor to attempt to find ways to open access through the construction zone to assist impacted businesses. City Council heard the informational presentation and ask questions as deemed appropriate.

Swanson Street Stormwater Project Contract Award Planning Director Doug Williams provided Council with results of bidding for the proposed Swanson Street Stormwater project and requested Council’s approval of a construction contract with the low bidder.

City Council heard this presentation and decided to award the construction contract as presented.

Temporary Additional Demand-Response Bus Update – Melanie Fleenor, Mountain Lynx Transit Ms. Fleenor provided Council with an update on the results of the recent an additional Mountain Lynx Demand-Response Bus within the City of Galax.

City Council heard this presentation and determine next steps based off of the findings of the usage and cost of the additional Demand-Response bus. Council approved the request.

NEW BUSINESS

• **Approval of Local Emergency Declaration**

City Manager Burnette declared a local state of

emergency on Friday, September 27, 2024 as allowed by the Galax City Code and the Code of Virginia. By state code, it is required that this declaration be “confirm[ed] by the governing body at its next regularly scheduled meeting or at a special meeting within 45 days of the declaration, whichever occurs first”. **Council was asked to retroactively approve the local declaration of a state of emergency due to Hurricane Helena.**

City Council retroactively approved the Local State of Emergency declaration made by the City Manager on Friday, September 27, 2024.

VA250 Preservation Fund – Rex Theater ADA Accessibility Grants Administrator Jolena Young – The Virginia Department of Historic Resources received \$20,000,000 in the 2024-2026 Virginia Biennial Budget to initiate a grant program to support improvements at significant historic sites and history museums in Virginia in anticipation of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution and the 1776 United States Declaration of Independence (also known as the nation’s semiquincentennial). At the September Meeting, the Council approved for City Staff to submit a pre-application. The City met the minimum requirements for the grant, and have been asked to submit a full application. DHR received \$135,000,000 in grant requests from 227 preapplications. Council is asked to approve the attached resolution committing a match of \$250,000 to potentially receive \$750,000 in funding for an improvement project of

\$1,000,000 at the historical Rex Theater. The project would include installation of an elevator to reach 4 levels; a stage lift for equipment and performers; ADA accessible bathrooms in the basement; and possibly some HVAC improvements to improve air quality.

City Council was asked to hear details on the potential grant and ask questions as deemed appropriate. Council approved the commitment of matching funding and the proposed resolution as presented.

Recreation Economy for Rural Communities 2024 Application

Grants Administrator Jolena Young – With Recreation Economy for Rural Communities assistance, a planning team will help communities bring together local residents and other stakeholders to decide on strategies and an action plan to grow the local outdoor recreation economy. The planning assistance process will take place over 8 to 12 months, with a focal point being a facilitated community workshop. At the workshop, participants will work together to identify a vision, goals, and specific actions to realize the locally set goals. Council was asked to approve for City Staff to submit an application for EPA RERC Technical Assistance to determine feasibility of connecting the New River Trail to Historic Downtown and Felts Park with a future vision to connect to the Blu RidgeParkway. **City Council heard the request and approved the submission of the presented application.**