



City of Flowery Branch
City Council Meeting
Thursday, May 21, 2026, 6:00 PM
5410 Pine Street
Flowery Branch, GA 30542



Call Work Session to Order:

Mayor McClellan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor McClellan and Council Members Chris Mundy, Joseph Mezzanotte, William McDaniel, Charles Vanderbilt, and Pete Lena.

Also present were City Manager Tonya Parrish, City Clerk Shelia Cooper, Finance Director Matthew Hamby, Public Works Director Bill Whidden, Fun Director Renee Carden, Planning & Community Development Director Chris McCrary, Police Chief Chris Hulsey, and City Attorney Ted Baggett.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Mayor McClellan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda:

There was a motion made to adopt the agenda.

Motion: Chris Mundy

Second: Pete Lena

Ayes: Chris Mundy, Joseph Mezzanotte, William McDaniel, Charles Vanderbilt, Pete Lena

Nays: None

Result: passed

Awards & Recognitions: There were no awards or recognitions.

Public Hearing:

- a. Public Hearing and First Read to Consider Ordinance 784 for Rezoning of 4651 and 4665 Hog Mountain Road

City Clerk Cooper read the caption for Ordinance 784.

Director McCrary presented Ordinance 784 to rezone 4651 and 4665 Hog Mountain Road from Hall County AR-1 (Agricultural – Residential) and R-1 (Residential) to City of Flowery Branch SF-TH (Single-Family Townhome) for the construction of a 75-lot single-family detached residential subdivision. The single entrance proposed off Hog Mtn. Rd. must include both a right-turn and left-turn lane. The exit shall include a right-out only dedicated lane with a 6” raised curb median to prohibit left-turn exits. These turn lanes will

help alleviate congestion during peak demand periods and maintain the flow of through traffic. The sidewalk along Hog Mountain Rd. is to be extended south-west to terminate at the pedestrian crossing adjacent to Porter Rd. Developer to extend the 5' sidewalk to the pedestrian crossing. The ADA ramp may need to be rebuilt as part of the improvements. In consideration of Ordinance 784 – Rezoning from Hall County AR-1 & R-1 to City of Flowery Branch SF-TH for 4651 & 4665 Hog Mountain Rd., staff recommends approval of the rezoning request with conditions.

City Attorney Baggett provided insights into the procedures for this consideration.

Council held a discussion with Director McCrary.

In Favor:

Jake French, High Point Development, 1776 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, Georgia 30309

There being no opposition, Mayor McClellan closed the public hearing at 6:32 p.m.

- b. Public Hearing and First Read to Consider Ordinance 786 to Add a Definition for Mixed-Use Residential Over Business and add Mixed-Use Residential Over Building to Table 9.1

City Clerk Cooper read the caption for Ordinance 786.

Director McCrary presented Ordinance 786 to add a definition for mixed-use residential over business and mixed-use residential over building to Table 9.1. Ordinance 786 establishes a proposed Mixed-Use Residential Over Business (MU-ROB) development definition for properties within the Central Business District (CBD), focused on the Old Town Character Area. The intent is to support a walkable, economically active downtown by requiring ground-floor commercial activity while allowing and regulating residential units above, with project-specific Council review and approval through a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and an approved Master Development Plan (MDP). This amendment proposes the addition of a definition to Article 2—Definitions & Interpretations and an addition of a conditional use to Table 9.1—Permitted & Conditional Uses in Article 9—Non-Residential Zoning Districts. It does not establish an overlay district nor a zoning category. As it currently stands, the City's code allows for multi-family dwellings (conditional) as well as various restaurants and retail uses (use by right) within the CBD zoning district. However, there is not a specific mixed-use residential over retail use listed in Table 9.2, weakening the City's ability to fully regulate and control development proposals of a vertical mixed-use nature in the CBD. Furthermore, without the addition of a detailed definition of mixed-use that specifically controls for residential over retail/business, the City's use definitions section of Article 2 will continue to be open to weaknesses of interpretation. Staff recommends advancing Ordinance 786 to a Second Read.

Council held a discussion with Director McCrary.

There being none for or against Ordinance 786, Mayor McClellan closed the public hearing at 6:52 p.m.

Unfinished Business - Work Session: There was no unfinished business - work session.

New Business - Work Session:

- a. Consider Resolution 26-010 Adopting the City of Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan

Planner Nash presented Resolution 26-010 to adopt the City of Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan. The 2026 Comprehensive Plan Update for the City of Flowery Branch was prepared in collaboration with City staff, the Georgia Mountain Regional Commission (GMRC), a dedicated stakeholder committee, and exceptional public feedback and engagement. The draft has been reviewed by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and was returned to the City for adoption with no revisions or changes required. Adoption of the DCA approved draft is necessary for the City to maintain Qualified Local Government status and grant eligibility. Staff met with Joe Rothwell from Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, a state-designated planning and development agency, in March 2025 and determined that staff had the necessary professional qualifications and experience to keep the process in-house. A Stakeholder Committee was established comprised of staff members, elected officials, residents, and business owners and met 5 times to help guide the survey production, community engagement efforts, and updates to the Needs & Opportunities sections and related action items. Engagement efforts, which included 2 public workshops beyond the DCA required public meetings as well as an informational insert added to all utility bills in January, resulted in an over 100% increase in survey participation, from 472 respondents in 2021 to 950 respondents in 2025/2026. Several options for the Vision Statement and Tagline for the City, which make up the backbone of the plan, were included in the survey and selected by direct public vote. Flowery Branch not only checked all the required boxes—we delivered a fully complete and review-ready plan to DCA. The 2026 draft update tells a consistent story—from vision to action. DCA determined that the 2026 draft update is not simply a vision document but a practical and actionable tool for decision-making. The 2026 draft update presents a connected and implementable work program which not only details what is desired but maps out how to get there. The 2026 draft update presents a clear, consistent, and usable land use map with strong alignment with character areas and overall narrative. The 2026 draft update submitted was sufficiently polished and professionally prepared to be accepted by DCA with no revisions or corrections required. Achieving a draft submittal with no comments from DCA is a notable accomplishment. The success of not only the draft itself, but of the entire process as a whole, would not have been possible without the dedication and support of our mayor and elected officials, City staff across all departments and roles, our energetic and detail-orientated stakeholder committee, Joe Rothwell and GMRC, and the citizens of Flowery Branch who took the time to add their voices, perspectives, and personal visions which helped steer the project. A sincere thank you to everyone.

Council held a discussion with Planner Nash.

- b. Alcohol Ordinance Discussion

City Attorney Baggett presented a discussion of potential changes to the Alcoholic Beverage Ordinance. There was a discussion in April 2026 and council wanted more information on three items in regard to limits on the number of package stores licensed to sell distilled spirits for off-premise consumption, wholesaler or distributor licenses, and allowing recreational or entertainment facilities to be permitted for sale for consumption by the drink on premises. City alcoholic beverage code does not issue licenses to those engaged in alcoholic beverage wholesaling. The City's zoning ordinance does allow wholesale operations in M1 and M2 by right and in CBD and HB with the granting of a Conditional Use Permit by City Council. An alcoholic beverage wholesale operation must have a local license to operate in the City.

Council expressed support, but a question was asked in reference to what other cities the size of Flowery Branch did regarding these types of businesses. Among the cities reviewed, local distributor licenses for wine were typically \$500 each for wine and beer. For distilled spirits, the license fees ranged from \$1,000 to \$4,000, with most coming in at \$1,000. Fees for state licenses (which a distributor must obtain in addition to the local license) are: \$500 each for wine and beer and \$1,000 for distilled spirits. License fees should probably match those imposed by the state and other local governments. \$500 each for wine and beer, and \$1,000 for distilled spirits.

The inquiry came from a recreational facility that was curious/interested in being licensed to sell for consumption on premises. Feedback from City Council suggested openness but requiring some minimum level of gross receipts from the sale of prepared food. The city's current ordinance requires restaurants to have 40% minimum gross sales of food. The only current exceptions to the minimum food sales rule are for the microbreweries, licensed micro-distilleries, licensed farm winery tasting rooms, or hotels. The city has amenity licenses, but these cap gross sales of alcohol to 10% and limit the amount sold per patron to either 12 ounces of wine or beer per day. The details that may not have been clear may guide your decision: The recreational facility that inquired about sales for consumption on premises does not have an onsite kitchen facility and thus cannot sell food. Provided that they can meet the existing amenity license rules, they would already be eligible to be licensed—they'd simply have to live under those rules.

Council held a discussion with Attorney Baggett.

Department Reports:

c. Department of Fun Report

Director Carden noted upcoming events in the city.

f. Planning Department Report

Director McCrary reported that he and his staff submitted the DCA Plan First Designation Application to the Department of Community Affairs for approval. He is awaiting the approval and is proud to say his staff did a great job on the application.

g. Police Department Report

Police Chief Hulsey reported that Lieutenant Rick Whaley was awarded the John W. Jacobs Sr. Memorial Award for Excellence in Law Enforcement from the Gainesville Kiwanis Club. He also reported Officer Cody Inman was named the Hall County Optimist Club Officer of the Year. Congratulations to Lieutenant Whaley and Officer Inman.

Adjournment Work Session:

Mayor McClellan adjourned the work session at 7:22 p.m.

Voting Session Agenda

Call Voting Session to Order:

Mayor McClellan called the voting session to order at 7:22 p.m.

Public Comments:

Please limit to two minutes

Mary Willis, 6219 Springlake Drive, Flowery Branch, Georgia 30542.

Mrs. Willis stated she is in support of the comprehensive plan. However, she would like to see the 2014 Redevelopment Plan updated, including revisiting the Phase II designs.

Consent Agenda:

- a. Consider Wine & Beer License for Rarora Business LLC DBA: McEver Food Mart
- b. Consider Mayor McClellan April 2026 Per Diem
- c. Consider Council Member Mezzanotte April 2026 Per Diem
- d. Consider May 4, 2026 Special Called City Council Meeting Minutes
- e. Consider May 6, 2026 Special Called City Council Meeting Minutes

Council Member Vanderbilt stated that he would abstain from voting on May 7, 2026 City Council Meeting Minutes because he was absent from the May 7, 2026 City Council Meeting. He also had questions about the wine and beer license. Council held a discussion with City Manager Parrish, City Attorney Baggett, and Police Chief Hulsey.

There was a motion made to approve items a, b, c, d, and e on the Consent Agenda.

Motion: Chris Mundy
Second: William McDaniel
Ayes: Chris Mundy, Joseph Mezzanotte, William McDaniel, Charles Vanderbilt, Pete Lena
Nays: None
Result: passed

f. Consider May 7, 2026 City Council Meeting Minutes

There was a motion made to approve item f on the Consent Agenda. Council Member Vanderbilt abstained from voting for item f.

Motion: Chris Mundy
Second: Pete Lena
Ayes: Chris Mundy, Joseph Mezzanotte, William McDaniel, Pete Lena
Nays: None
Result: passed

Unfinished Business - Voting Session: There was no unfinished business voting session.

New Business - Voting Session:

- a. First Read to Consider Ordinance 784 for Rezoning of 4651 and 4665 Hog Mountain Road

City Clerk Cooper read the caption for Ordinance 784.

There was a motion made to advance Ordinance 784.

Motion: Chris Mundy
Second: Pete Lena
Ayes: Chris Mundy, William McDaniel, Pete Lena
Nays: Joseph Mezzanotte, Charles Vanderbilt
Result: passed

- b. First Read to Consider Ordinance 786 to Add a Definition for Mixed-Use Residential Over Business and add Mixed-Use Residential Over Building to Table 9.1

City Clerk Cooper read the caption for Ordinance 786.

There was a motion made to deny Ordinance 786.

Motion: Joseph Mezzanotte
Second: Charles Vanderbilt
Ayes: Joseph Mezzanotte, Charles Vanderbilt
Nays: Chris Mundy, William McDaniel, Pete Lena
Result: failed

There was a motion made to advance Ordinance 786 to the next council meeting.

Motion: Chris Mundy
Second: Pete Lena
Ayes: Chris Mundy, William McDaniel, Pete Lean
Nays: Joseph Mezzanotte, Charles Vanderbilt
Result: passed

c. Consider Resolution 26-010 Adopting the City of Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan

City Clerk Cooper read the caption for Resolution 26-010.

There was a motion made to approve Resolution 26-010.

Motion: Pete Lena
Second: William McDaniel
Ayes: Chris Mundy, Joseph Mezzanotte, William McDaniel, Charles Vanderbilt, Pete Lena
Nays: None
Result: passed

Executive Session:

There was a motion made to enter executive session for matters related to the acquisition/disposition of real estate, for matters related to certain personnel issues, and for matters related to pending or potential litigation at 7:32 p.m.

Motion: Chris Mundy
Second: Pete Lena
Ayes: Chris Mundy, Joseph Mezzanotte, William McDaniel, Charles Vanderbilt, Pete Lena
Nays: None
Result: passed

There was a motion made to exit the executive session at 7:59 p.m.

Motion: Chris Mundy
Second: William McDaniel
Ayes: Chris Mundy, Joseph Mezzanotte, William McDaniel, Charles Vanderbilt, Pete Lena
Nays: None
Result: passed

Adjournment:

There was a motion made to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

Motion: Chris Mundy
Second: William McDaniel
Ayes: Chris Mundy, Joseph Mezzanotte, William McDaniel, Charles Vanderbilt, Pete Lena
Nays: None
Result: passed

Oliver McClellan
Mayor

Date

Shelia Cooper
City Clerk