

JOINT GASTONIA CITY COUNCIL / GASTONIA PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 10, 2026 – 6:00 P.M.
MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS CENTER – GASTONIA, NC

Mayor Richard Franks called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at the Municipal Operations Center, 1300 N. Broad Street, Gastonia, North Carolina.

PRESENT: Mayor: Richard Franks
Mayor Pro Tem: Jim Gallagher
Council Members: Demetri Koutsoupias
Glenn Silverman
Angela Dreher
Jennifer M. Stepp
Donyel Barber
City Manager: Michael C. Peoples
City Attorney: Eric Edgerton

ABSENT: None

GASTONIA PLANNING COMMISSIONERS (GPC) PRESENT:

Chairperson: Kristie Ferguson
Vice-Chairman: Chad Ghorley
Commissioners: Megan Chapman
Carl Harris, Sr.
Jeff Howe
Julie Coffee
David Wilson

ABSENT: None.

ATTENDING STAFF: Quentin McPhatter, Assistant City Manager
Adrian Miller, Assistant City Manager
Brian Potocki, Assistant City Manager
Assistant City Attorney, Charles Graham
Tucker Johnson, Director of Engineering
Sushil Nepal, Planning Director
Maddy Groce, Senior Planner
Veronica Bateson, Senior Planner
Keith Linebeger, Assistant City Engineer
Corey Steiss, City Traffic Engineer

GUEST SPEAKERS: Dr. Morgen Houchard, Superintendent, Gaston County Schools

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING – FEBRUARY 10, 2026

Also attending, Candice G. Owenby, Deputy City Clerk, who recorded the minutes.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Mayor Richard Franks and Commissioner Kristie Ferguson, Planning Commission Chairwoman, welcomed everyone and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

GASTON COUNTY SCHOOLS UPDATE

Mayor Franks introduced Dr. Morgen Houchard, Superintendent, who presented an update on growth for Gaston County Schools noting the growth would only be around 2,000 students from now until 2030. To self-replenish the school population, families would have to have 2.1 children, but Gaston County families are not able replenish the population with 1.3 children. Therefore, the county is relying on immigration to replenish the population, which has not been as much as expected over the last two to three years due to the cost of housing, interest rates, etc. Although, the City of Gastonia does not see a lot of demographic changes. Other counties are also faced with the same and having to lay off employees, downsize and consolidate schools. 600 students for Gaston County accounts for \$4.4M in State funding. Gaston County is capable to handle more development with a lot of avenues to achieve it and will always make accommodations.

Dr. Houchard fielded various questions from the Council and Commission.

GASTONIA 2050 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OVERVIEW

Mr. Quentin McPhatter and Mr. Sushil Nepal presented an overview of the Gastonia 2050 Comprehensive Plan noting the transition from “land uses” to “place types”, which looks at an area contextually rather than a single use, and creating activity nodes throughout the city. Mr. Nepal noted the importance of the Comprehensive Plan as a long-term vision and guiding principles for growth and development that works hand in hand with the Unified Development Ordinance.

Mr. Nepal provided information on the Unified Development Ordinance update for 2026 to align with the adopted 2050 Comprehensive Plan focusing on Urban Design and Place Making, which will be a multi-year project with an estimated cost in the \$225,000 to \$450,000 range. Mr. Nepal said a Steering Committee will also be selected for this task.

UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE (UDO) UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

Mr. Eric Edgerton presented an update on legislation on the Unified Development Ordinance explaining there will be a shift in Conditional Zoning for Annexations.

Mr. Nepal and Mr. Edgerton fielded various questions from the Council and Commission.
(Reference as contained in Exhibit Book 8 to Minute Book 115 at Page 20)

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING – FEBRUARY 10, 2026**UPDATE ON UTILITIES, CAPACITY, AND SERVICE AREA**

Mr. Brian Potocki presented an update on Water and Sewer Utilities system overview and growth including Water and Wastewater Treatment Facilities, Two Rivers Utilities Municipal Customers, Southeast Utility Expansion Project and Phase 3 and Service Areas, Southwest Utility Study, Southwest Water Service, and Southern Utility Service Plan.

Mr. Potocki fielded various questions from the Council and Commission.

(Reference as contained in Exhibit Book 8 to Minute Book 115 at Page 21)

TRAFFIC IMPACT ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

Mr. Corey Steiss provided information on what a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) is, the stages of a TIA, when one is required, the cost and timeline.

Mr. Steiss fielded various questions from the Council and Commission. The Council and Commission members discussed traffic management in high-growth areas.

(Reference as contained in Exhibit Book 8 to Minute Book 115 at Page 22)

SOUTHEAST GASTONIA AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

Mr. Michael Peoples, Mr. Sushil Nepal, Mr. Tucker Johnson, and Mr. Cory Steiss provided an update on the Southeast Gastonia Area Transportation Study including study goals and scope, identified transportation needs, potential roadway improvements, and coordination with long-range planning initiatives.

Mr. Nepal reviewed Residential Development lot size, lot width, streetscape and product type, which the Council and Commission discussed at length.

Mayor Franks stated he and Commissioner Ferguson feel there is a consensus to give staff flexibility with some parameters. Commissioner Ferguson added that the consensus is based on conversation. She feels like the stake holders need to figure out what the parameters need to look like and send it to Council for conversation.

(Reference as contained in Exhibit Book 8 to Minute Book 115 at Page 23)

CLOSING COMMENTS/ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Ferguson commended staff, Commissioners and Council for their work and service to the city.

Mayor Franks adjourned the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING – FEBRUARY 10, 2026

Mayor Richard Franks

Eric Edgerton, City Attorney

Candice G. Owenby, Deputy City Clerk

SJM20260210