



Good day, Mayor and Council Members,

I am pleased to share with you the seventh installment of the Community Building Team's Strategic Performance Report. It is produced to coincide with the monthly City Council Work Session. The format and content are topical based; concise in nature; organized by the alphabetical order of offices/departments following City Manager lead topics; and accented with images and illustrations for more relatable reading. A pdf version of the document is attached for higher quality reading and printing.

While this month's report has a multitude of diverse and important topics that are covered, I would like to lead off with the continuing, more probing discussion began last month on the topic of "Sustainable Development" for the City of Pine Lake to include a continuing review of long term plans developed by the City over the past ten years as we prepare for a renewal of these or similar plans in the near future for Pine Lake's sustainability, starting most immediately with the setting of the City Council's Fall Planning Retreat.

The Mayor and I have held some preliminary conversations on the schedule, and we are proposing that Council Members consider a date yet to be determined during the month of September.

PINE LAKE: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANS

"Sustainable development is an approach to progress that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It's about balancing economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection to ensure a healthy planet and society for everyone, both now and in the future." [Wikipedia]



Sustainable development aims to improve living conditions, provide access to resources, and promote well-being for people today. It encourages a long-term perspective, recognizing that short-term gains can sometimes lead to long-term problems if not carefully managed.

In past years, the City of Pine Lake has undertaken long-term studies that could contribute to the community's sustainability. These include a Wetlands Management Strategy from October 2024 https://pinelakega.sophicity.com/Assets/Files/Wetlands/WetlandsManagementStrategy-memo.pdf; a Comprehensive Plan Update in October 2021 https://pinelakega.sophicity.com/Assets/Files/Planning/PineLake2021CompPlanUpdateFINAL.pdf; and the Rockbridge Road Economic Development Plan in April 2019 https://pinelakega.sophicity.com/Assets/Files/Planning/EconomicDevelopmentPlanandVision062 819.pdf;

I believe that it is incumbent upon us (the current and future City Council along with the recently appointed City Manager and City Attorney) to leverage the value of these long-term strategic plans with sufficient review and updates as we plan future retreats towards an activated sustainable course for the City of Pine Lake.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The City's economic plan was memorialized in the <u>Rockbridge Road Commercial Corridor</u> <u>Economic Development Vision & Plan</u> in April 2019. The plan was undertaken with the understanding that economic development is necessary to maintain and improve the quality of life for citizens and to maintain the economic viability of the community.

To be effective, the plan acknowledged that this long-range plan should be used to guide short-range decisions made over the next several years. Shortly afterwards (about a year), the Coronavirus of 2019 (COVID- 19) disease hit the world and disrupted the best intended plans. However, sufficient time from recovery of the global epidemic affords the opportunity along with other changes in Pine Lake's government to get back on course.

Recommendations presented in the economic development plan range from the broadest category to the simplest, beginning with a Vision Statement:



"The Rockbridge Road corridor in Pine Lake will be a vibrant commercial district with a unique atmosphere that is welcoming to everyone and that serves as a departure from the chronic sameness of the typical American commercial landscape. The Rockbridge Road corridor will be a safe and thriving commercial area consisting of a mosaic of small businesses in a setting that reflects Pine Lake's passion for the environment and the arts while also celebrating the tremendous ethnic diversity in and around Pine Lake."

It is a powerful and appealing vision, one that if we truly work to achieve it, I believe that it will produce dividends that this unique community deserves. In near future reporting to and discussions with the City Council, we will review the list of goals and strategic initiatives for achieving the City's vision of economic development along the Rockbridge Road corridor and how they made need to be revised since 2019 for advancing our aspirations.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Comprehensive plans in Georgia are mandated by the state's Department of Community Affairs (DCA). They serve as roadmaps for local governments to guide future development. These plans, typically updated every five to ten years, address physical, economic, social, and other factors to shape a community's vision and goals. They guide land use, transportation, and infrastructure, while also protecting natural resources and enhancing quality of life.



Key Components and Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan:

Land Use Plan

Outlines desired locations, density, and design for future development, redevelopment, or preservation.

Public Input

Comprehensive plans are developed with public dialogue and input, ensuring they reflect the community's vision.

Asset-Based Community Development

Plans often focus on identifying and utilizing local resources like parks, historic downtowns, and retail districts.

Five-Year Work Program

Includes a detailed plan to address the community's needs and priorities.

The City of Pine Lake's Comprehensive Plan (a hard copy is provided with your agenda packet) was adopted on October 12, 2021, as prepared by the Atlanta Regional Commission. It consists of multiple chapters specified for data and demographics; community input, vision, and feedback; issues, opportunities, and policies; areas of attention; character areas and narrative; transportation; broadband; report of accomplishments; and community work program.

We have recently received communication from the Atlanta Regional Commission advising that the City's Comprehensive Plan should be updated by October 2026 and the process to meet that timeline should begin soon. The City will need to determine if it wants to continue with the ARC or contract with another expert consultant for facilitating Pine Lake's process.

The Georgia DCA Local Planning Rules allow communities to request assistance from their Regional Commission to prepare a basic plan update, at no additional cost to the jurisdiction. In accordance with the rules, the Regional Commission plan update process largely focuses on the local plan's Goals, Needs and Opportunities, Broadband Element, and five-year Community Work Program.

CHAPTER 110-12-1-.02 REQUIREMENTS 110-12-1-.02 Requirements. O.C.G.A. 50-8-1 et seq. gives the Department authority to establish standards and procedures for comprehensive planning by all local governments in Georgia.

Those standards and procedures, embodied herein, emphasize preparation of plans that help each local government address its immediate needs and opportunities while moving toward realization of its long-term goals for the future.

In order to maintain qualified local government certification, and thereby remain eligible for selected state funding and permitting programs, each local government must prepare, adopt, maintain, and implement a comprehensive plan as specified in these standards. (1) Required and Optional Plan Elements.

Each community's comprehensive plan must include the required plan elements specified in the "Required for" column below. Each community is encouraged to go beyond these minimum required elements and supplement its comprehensive plan with other plan elements (refer to the list of optional plan elements in the Supplemental Planning Recommendations for suggestions) to make the overall plan a good fit for the community.

Plan Element	Required for	Recommended for	Specifics at
Community	All local		110-12-103(1)
Goals	governments		
Needs and	All local		110-12-103(2)
Opportunities	governments		
Community	All local		110-12-103(3)
Work Program	governments		
Broadband	All local		110-12-103 (4)
Services	governments		
Element			
Capital	Governments that		110-12-103(5)
Improvements	charge impact fees		, ,
Element			
Economic	Communities	Communities seeking improved	110-12-103(6)
Development	included in Georgia	economic opportunities for their	
Element	Job Tax Credit Tier 1	citizens	
Land Use	Communities with	Communities that:	
Element	zoning or equivalent	 Are considering new land development 	110-12-103(7)
	land development	regulations	
	regulations that are	Include Target Areas in	
	subject to the Zoning	their comprehensive plan	
	Procedures Law	Wish to improve aesthetics of specific	
		areas or protect the character of specific	
		parts of their community	
		parts of their community	
Transportation	Local governments that	Communities:	110-12-103(8)
Element	have territory included	With automobile congestion problems	
	in a Metropolitan	in selected areas	
	Planning Organization	Interested in adding alternative	
		transportation facilities for	
		bicyclists, pedestrians, public	
		transportation users	
		That may have too much or too little	
		2	
		parking in specific areas	
Housing	HUD CDBG	Communities with:	
Element	Entitlement	Concentrations of low-quality	110-12-103(9)
	Communities	or dilapidated housing	
		Relatively high housing costs compared	
		to individual/family incomes	
		A jobs-housing imbalance	
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EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN



Chapter 58 – Public Safety of the City's Municipal Code provides in Section 58-23 for Emergency; special powers.

In the event of man-made or natural disaster, mass electrical failure, rioting, actual enemy attack upon the United States or any other emergency which may affect lives and property, the mayor may declare that a state of emergency exists by written order setting out the circumstances of the emergency and that portion of the city affected. Thereafter the mayor shall have and may exercise for any period as this state of emergency exists or continues, certain emergency powers.

Upon a declaration of an emergency above, the City Council shall immediately be called into session to perform any duties necessary.

Section 58-25 provides that the city be a part of the county emergency management agency (DEMA). Under the city's memorandum of understanding with DEMA, the city is a local emergency planning member and assists in developing an emergency management plan. The specific departments within the serve as emergency support functions within DEMA, as outlined in the DEMA emergency operations plan (EOP).

The City Manager serves as the City's representative to DEMA. DEMA is in the process of finalizing DeKalb County's Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) Working Group to identify and prioritize hazards, assess associated risks, and determine the capabilities needed to respond effectively across all jurisdictions. I assigned the Police Chief as the City's representative to THIRA.

From a practical standpoint, the Police Chief serves as Emergency Management Officer. She advises that the City does "not have a current, active Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) in place. In most emergency situations, we rely on our county Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to guide response efforts. Outside of our agency-specific MOUs, Chapter 58 of our Municipal Code, and our internal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), there is no standalone EOP currently active.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the city had initiated the development of an Emergency Operations Plan. Missye played an essential role in that process, primarily handling the administrative components. However, the project was placed on hold as the city focused on recovery efforts in the aftermath of the pandemic.

I dusted off an outline I began during that time. I think it's something we definitely need to have."

An Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is a document that outlines how an organization will respond to emergencies and disasters. It establishes roles, responsibilities, and procedures for various entities involved in the response. The Federal Emergency Management Agency provides guidance and resources for developing and implementing EOP's, which are crucial for a coordinated and effective emergency response. It is on our "to do list."

PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS – STATE OF GEORGIA

In Georgia, the fair market value of real and personal property is established by the county Board of Tax Assessors.

Fair market value is defined as the amount a knowledgeable buyer would pay and a willing seller would accept in an arm's length, bona fide sale.



Counties are legally required to establish a fair market value for all properties as of January 1st each year.

The Board of Tax Assessors utilizes three primary appraisal approaches to determine fair market value:

- Sales Comparison/Market Approach: This involves analyzing recent sales of comparable properties in the area and making adjustments based on factors like size, age, condition, and location.
- o Cost Approach: This method estimates the cost to replace or reproduce the property's improvements, less any depreciation, and then adds the land value.
- o Income Approach: Used primarily for income-producing properties, this method estimates the property's value by capitalizing its estimated net income.

In addition to the appraisal methods, assessors consider various factors influencing value, including zoning, existing use, deed restrictions, and other relevant information.

Rather than operating on a fixed reassessment schedule, counties review property values annually based on sales data and market conditions, adjusting values upwards or downwards as needed. The frequency of these updates can vary depending on market activity in a given county.

In essence, the Board of Tax Assessors in each Georgia county determines the fair market value of properties by applying standard appraisal methods and considering various relevant factors to arrive at a value that reflects the current market.

PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS – DEKALB COUNTY

Board of Assessors

Operating under the Georgia Revenue Codes, the Board of Assessors is responsible for the appraisal and assessment of all residential, commercial and personal property in DeKalb County. Property is appraised at 100 percent of its fair market value and assessed at 40 percent of that value.

The Board of Assessors is a five-member body of appointed citizens of DeKalb County, serving on a part time basis, who meet every other Thursday at 9:30 a.m. unless otherwise posted. They are appointed for staggered terms of four, five, or six years by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners and operate autonomously. A chairman, vice chairman and secretary are elected on an annual basis. The Board of Assessors hires a chief appraiser to administer the functions of the Property Appraisal Department.



Board of Equalization

The DeKalb County Board of Equalization is a panel of property owners appointed by a Grand Jury to serve the citizens of DeKalb County. These appointees are required to have at least a high school diploma, own real property in DeKalb County, and must complete at least 40 hours of certified training before they can serve on the Board of Equalization. Once certified, these board members must also complete yearly continuing education training by the State Department of Revenue. The Board is charged by the O.C.G.A. 48-5-311 to hear appeals of property tax matters.

Appeal of Assessment

If a property owner wants to appeal the tax assessment made on their DeKalb property, the property owner(s) must file an appeal in writing to the Board of Assessors within 45 days of the postmarked date on their assessment notice. The appeal is reviewed by the Board of Assessors and if the Board's decision is "no change," the appeal is forwarded to the Board of Equalization.

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE/ADMINISTRATION

Ned Dagenhard, Acting City Clerk

Technology Improvements, Vol. 2

The City of Pine Lake is a charming vessel amid the open seas. Often to the surprise of onlookers, it fairs well through storms—not because of some fancy-shmancy craftsmanship, but out of the unyielding will of its crew. The *crew*, in this example, does not solely consist of the staff and elected body, but of the entire community.



Survival of knuckle-whitening squalls and coursealtering hurricanes has been contingent on an intrinsic love of this ship, and the will to see its journals and records expanded, its story put to song.

Not a mighty man-o'-war, but a humble and jolly sloop (with, perhaps, tie-dyed sails). This boat has carried us far, and now we've returned to port with a blue sky overhead. But before we sew the old sails and duct-tape the mast, let's take a deeper look below deck. And, if it please ye, drift from this metaphor.

Picking Up Speed

The City's website is many things. Let's rip the band-air off: Your friendly neighborhood Acting City Clerk finds it to be, at best, a functional archive that keeps us compliant with the State as it pertains to publishing notices to the public, meeting agendas, minutes, and so on. At worst, I could say it is outdated and clunky, and often presents misleading or incomplete information. I should note here, this is not a criticism of those who developed the website. There is nothing

wrong with its bones, and—as with the Frankenstein sails—it bears the fingerprints of well-meaning and caring stewards. And let me say as well, the goal of redeveloping the website is not to get rid of the pictures of playful residents in goofy hats, nor the fragmented histories of bygone initiatives.

The goal is to take honest stock of our resources, and get creative in building on a function we all enjoy—telling the story of Pine Lake. Not the 1930s fishing camp; but the bungalow-dotted,





ethnically diverse, nature-loving, artistic,

community-driven oasis. The goal, getting to brass tacks, is to take the big step from 2010 to 2025. The information gathering has already begun, and we have some exciting paths ahead.

Old Friend. New Skills

As we've stepped down the dock, eying the new recruits, we have found an old friend and possible first-mate: *CivicPlus*. Having long offered tools useful to local governments, in fact specializing in technostructure (digital pens and paperclips) for small governments, *CivicPlus* is

now a juggernaut. Recently, they acquired *MuniCode*, the company that maintains the City's Code of Ordinances library. In addition to offering library management services, they also build websites. To use some fancy-talk, the websites offer integration between different modules offered by *CivicPlus*: agendas, minutes, media/livestreaming, and notification services.

I don't know how else to say it: these tools are *smart*. With this new website, not only can residents view livestreamed City Council meetings right there on the website (the YouTube link being embedded into the agenda module), but when your humble Acting City Clerk takes



minutes, the livestream updates with a timestamped glossary.

"Hey, I don't want to sift through 3-hours of footage to find that one section about the wetlands! My tai chi class starts in 20 minutes!" Not to worry, Patty Pine Lake. You can look on the righthand side of the video steam, and click "Item 3. Wetlands Update (45:07)." Boom! Bob's your uncle. "Wait a minute! After tai chi, I'm rehearsing with my avant garde jazz quartet! I don't have time to read the news blast!" Patty Pine Lake, cool your jets! *CivicPlus* has its own newsletter templates—geared not solely toward information sharing, but toward readable, engaging formats. Looking for that tennis court update? You can find it in its own little blurb—maybe inside a little tennis ball graphic. Efficient, engaging, and useful. That's what we're looking to do here. We don't want you, illustrious resident, fumbling around a clunky website. You have things to do! Tai Chi! Jazz band practice!

If you want to play around with what *CivicPlus*'s basic level website looks and feels like, check out the City of Port Orange, Florida: https://www.port-orange.org/



Resource Impact

Now, how much is all this going to cost? At present, the City spends roughly \$1,850 annually on the website, newsletter, and *MuniCode* library. While staff will be working with *CivicPlus* to develop a concrete quote ahead of the August 26th Regular Meeting, I have been told a ballpark quote is \$3,000-6,000 annually. Leave it to your Finance Director to move the beans around, and hey, like

the 'Stones said, "you can't always get what you want." But here's the deal, *CivicPlus* has a pretty cool crew of their own, and they specialize in small cities with tight purse strings. If we can't afford a 2026 Cadillac, maybe we can get by with a 2022 Honda. But this 2004 Saturn has

run its course. Heck, they don't even make parts for it anymore! I've really abandoned the ship metaphor, haven't I... Let's move on.

Audio/Visual Solutions

We here at City Hall have not forgotten the woes over our City Council livestreaming. The main culprit, volume maintenance, persists. Though some residents have told me things have improved (which is nice to "hear"), we need to ensure quality *permanence*. Your humble Acting City Clerk bears a hefty load, but where daylight is gleaned, solutions are being sewn. We've received a quote back from *Quality Communications*, our preferred vendor for audio/visual technology, for \$4,754. The plan would be to surplus what we have, and get some new tech in there that is, in short, more user friendly (volume consistency!).

"But Ned, Patty Pine Lake has a couple SM-58s you can have for free!" Pine Lake is full of kind people, and many performers. But the fact of the matter is, the system that includes microphones, preamplification, a digital interface for streaming management, and many other little "technology handshakes" indeed requires niche equipment. So, Patty—hold onto those SM-58s and let's put them to use at the next jam session!





I have been discussing this very thing all week with Katrina Reyna, my fellow-Clerk in Avondale Estates. They have had similar woes, and she's put me in contact with some folks—local contractors and companies alike. Additionally, I have been browsing equipment directly from suppliers such as *Shure* and *Behringer*. I look forward to presenting the "sensational six" (the Governing Body) with competitive quotes to consider ahead of the August 26th Regular Meeting.

FINANCE

Danny Lamonte, Finance Director

The Finance Department of the City of Pine Lake continues to build operational strength and fiscal accountability. The following is a summary of major accomplishments and updates for the month of August 2025.

Key Activities – August 2025

- 1. FY2024 Audit in Process The department has successfully begin to gather the needed documents and reports for the Fiscal Year 2024 audit. The onsite Audit review is scheduled to be conducted on Monday August 11, 2025.
- 2. Enhancements to the Accounting System Significant progress was made in expanding the City's accounting system to include newly required line items and fund structures. These additions were necessary to accommodate the growing number of special projects and funding sources across departments.
- 3. ACH Vendor Payment Implementation The Finance Department has added the capability to process vendor payments via ACH (Automated Clearing House). This upgrade modernizes the City's payment processes, increases efficiency, and reduces the reliance on paper checks.
- 4. Preparation for FY2026 Budget Development Preliminary planning for the FY2026 Budget is underway. The department will soon begin meeting with leadership and departments to develop a balanced and strategic financial plan aligned with the City's goals for the upcoming year.



The Finance Department continues to manage core operational responsibilities including accounts payable, bank reconciliations, Treasury management, and financial reporting. We remain focused on strengthening internal controls and ensuring accurate and timely financial operations for the benefit of the City of Pine Lake.

POLICE

Sarai Y'Hudah-Green, Police Chief

Community Policing



In addition to the arrests, officers seized five firearms and recovered a stolen vehicle, further contributing to community safety.

Operations like this are a critical step toward making our neighborhoods safer—not only for City and County residents, but also in fostering strong partnerships among local law enforcement agencies. Together, we continue to work toward one shared goal: Safe Streets in DeKalb County.

Public Safety



Filming Security Summary – Universal Content Productions, LLC



The Pine Lake Police Department provided security for Universal Content Productions, LLC during their recent filming in the city. This was an all-hands-on-deck operation, with additional support from an officer with Stone Mountain Police Department to help ensure public safety for both residents and visitors.

Production days began as early as 7:00 AM, with one filming day extending until 2:00 AM, and a municipal court day occurring in between. This marked the first major production hosted in the City of Pine Lake, and overall, it went very well.

There were no major concerns reported during the operation. The city remained clean, orderly, and safe throughout the entire production period.

Community Service

Community service is off to a slow start. We had one volunteer who worked one day but chose not to return, citing the heat as a concern.

We do have a second individual scheduled to begin this week. This person appears to be much more motivated and is required to complete 100 hours. We will continue to keep you updated on the progress.

Code Compliance

The Code Compliance Division has made significant strides in recent months, with approximately 80% of the citywide property assessment now complete. Our compliance officer has been actively addressing a wide range of concerns, from routine violations such as overgrown vegetation and inoperable or junk vehicles, to more complex challenges involving vacant properties, which continue to be a primary concern among resident homeowners. Current Enforcement Activity

- 10 active code enforcement cases are underway.
- 5 cases have advanced to municipal court and have been issued 30- and 60-day compliance orders.
- 1 property owner is currently pursuing demolition permits, in accordance with court directives.
- 2 cases have been granted extensions, due to extenuating circumstances or pending corrective actions.



^{**}Upcoming Inspections

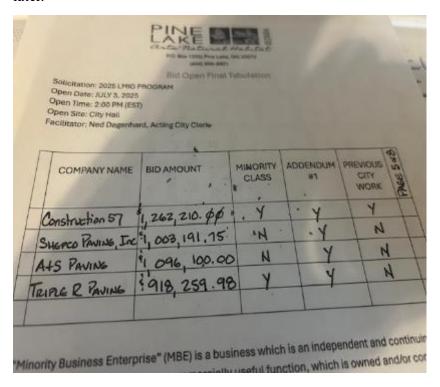
Multi-family apartment inspections are scheduled for August and September, in support of the city's rental property compliance initiative. These inspections are focused on ensuring ongoing adherence to health, safety, and property maintenance standards across rental communities.

PUBLIC WORKS

Bernard Kendrick, Public Works Director

2025 LMIG Resurfacing Bid

The City of Pine Lake opened bids for the 2025 Local Maintenance Improvement Grant Program (LMIG) on July 3, 2025. All bids failed sufficiency for recommendation of approval and therefore were deemed unresponsive. Staff advised rejecting the bids and will propose next steps later.



Street Sweeping Project



Street sweeping was completed for all city streets except Beaver Road, Oak Road, and Oak Drive on July 18, 2025. About 13 tons of sediment were collected during the process.

Pine Lake Dam Inspection



The proposed dam inspection is scheduled for August 18-19, 2025. The trail will be closed to pedestrian traffic while the inspection is underway.

Avalon Tree Services completed their vegetation removal on July 31, 2025.

462 Clubhouse Drive



462 Clubhouse Drive is open for business. The Court Services Department and Public Works Administration are fully functioning out of the newly renovated space. Naming survey is coming soon.

Tennis Court Project

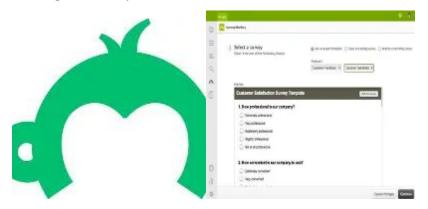
The tennis court project is progressing slowly. The recent weather challenges have had a significant impact on the construction. The surface contractor needs approximately 3 rain free days to complete the project.







Greenspace Survey



AECOM has published a survey on the City's website to collect feedback from stakeholders and residents for the masterplan development as part of the Greenspace/Recreation Task Order.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ACT) Project Update





Staff continues making progress on ADA projects. The boardwalk extension starts August 8, 2025.

The Police Department's service counter was the latest recipient of renovation.

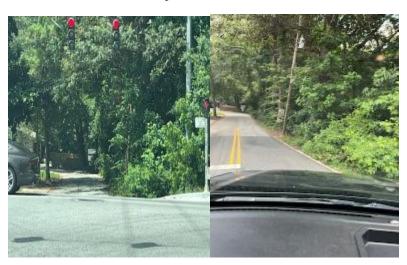
Generator Replacement Project Update





The diesel generator was decommissioned and taken out of the Courthouse Complex. The previous generator was subsequently sold at auction on GOVDEALS.

Grounds Maintenance Update









Beyond routine maintenance, staff have prioritized several new projects in recent weeks. Public Works, Police Chief Green, and City Attorney Balch are advancing these initiatives.

470/463 Clubhouse Drive Renovation Project



Work has begun in the Clubhouse. Several subfloor issues have been uncovered and remedied.

FIREHOUSE RENOVATION PROJECT UPDATE

PLEASE JOIN STAFF @ 530 PM BEFORE COUNCIL MEETING FOR OUR "SOFT OPENING."

Very truly yours,

Stanley D Hawthorne

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