Mayor and Council Workshop
6 p.m. September 9, 2025
Law Enforcement Center, and livestream

MINUTES

The Holly Springs Town Council met in a workshop session on Tuesday, September 9, 2025 at the Law Enforcement Center and via livestreaming. Mayor Mayefskie presided, calling the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was established as the Mayor and four Council members were present in the room as the meeting opened.

Council Members Present in the room: Mayor Sean Mayefskie, Council members Tim Forrest, Danielle Hewetson, Annie Drees, and Chris Deshazor.

Council Members Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Dan Berry.

Staff Members Present in the room: Randy Harrington, Town Manager; Linda McKinney, Town Clerk (recording the minutes); Daniel Weeks, Assistant Town Manager; Scott Chase, Assistant Town Manager; John Schifano, Town Attorney; Jesse Dixon, IT; Corey Petersohn, Director, Office of Budget and Strategic Planning; Paige Scott, Director, Public Works; Cassie Hack, Director, Communications and Marketing; Chris Hills, Director Development Services; Sean Ryan, Elizabeth Goodson, Chris Ritter-Garcia, Sarah Lipkin Sularz, Development Services; and Rachel Jones, Utilities and Infrastructure.

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

1. Overview: Randy Harrington, Town Manager, gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

2. Development Services Updates

a. Microtransit

Chris Hills, Director of Development Services, said he was going to provide an overview of the selection process and community feedback received and request final direction on branding and service options for the microtransit program. He reminded the Council of the previous engagement on this topic, beginning with last year's retreat, and what they initially thought the program would look like. He said that the project has come in on time, under budget, and focused on quality service to the town.

Chris Ritter-Garcia, Development Services, said that community feedback was positive by a ratio of three to one, and gave an overview of the participants. He said that feedback indicated that the number one priority was that it be easy to use, and the number one anticipated destination was dining locations. Hot topics included discussions of the minimum user age, accessibility, service hours, connectivity, and driver quality.

Mr. Hills discussed the components considered in selecting a vendor and the reasons for selecting Freebee as the vendor. He said that the contract was $57,000 below what was budgeted and with the 50% CAMPO grant would cost the town $228,500. Council member Drees asked if this was for 6 months. Mr. Hills said it was for an entire year.

Jason Spiegel of Freebee gave an overview of the company and their service model. He showed a video of the rider experience.

Mr. Hills said there were seven elements in building the microtransit service. He said the service model area that was proposed included zones within the town limits and the ETJ and zone restrictions, and corner to corner. With input from the service provider and other stakeholders, staff recommend a simpler model based on distance restrictions of 7 miles, which would cover most of the town, and not require transfers from one zone to another and be door-to-door.

Council member Deshazor said he is pleased about the door-to-door service. He asked what the 7-mile restriction leaves out. Mr. Hills said it doesn't leave anything out, but if a rider is at an extreme end of town, they might not make it to the other extreme and it would be only one fare as opposed to changing in the downtown area. The distance is 7 miles from wherever you start. Council member Deshazor asked if the 7 miles would take you out of town. Mr. Hills said no, it is restricted to within town limits.

Mayor Mayefskie said he likes the door to door, especially for seniors who might want to take it to doctor's appointments.

Mr. Hills said staff recommends a minimum age of 16 for a rider not accompanied by an adult, and not including schools as pick-up and drop-off locations. Council member Deshazor asked if the technology would allow a parent to look at the app to see if the child was dropped off. Mr. Spiegel said parents could log into their child's account and see that but there is not a "parent app." Council member Deshazor asked if other places allowed student riders. Mr. Spiegel said that places that allow that see that students "take over the system" and they eventually change to a minimum age of 18. He said there are cameras in the car, but the goal is to maximize ridership and so they pool rides. But they do not pool anyone under 18 with an adult. Council member Hewetson asked how they monitor rider age. What if a 14 year old uses their parent's app to schedule a ride? Mr. Spiegel said there is a photo of you on your account along with your age. If someone shows up that looks too young they can be denied. In his experience that has not happened. Council member Drees asked to clarify that riders under 16 can ride with a parent. Mr. Spiegel said yes, and they have booster seats in the cars to be family friendly.

Council consensus was to set the minimum age at 16.

Staff recommends one fare allowing two persons so that parents or caretakers can accompany the rider. Council member Deshzor asked if it was possible to have a family fare, so a family of four could request the same ride. Mr. Spiegel said you can request up to five passengers on a trip. And the town can design the fare however they like. You can charge additional for additional riders. Council member Deshazor said he is in favor of a family fare for up to 5 people. Council member Hewetson said she thinks it is simpler for one fare to equal 2 riders and 2 fares equals 2 or 3 riders. Mr. Hills said it is very simple; it will be intuitive. You don't have to make a new request for additional riders. The fare would be $2 in-town; $4 for ETJ. The vendor has seen an additional $1 per additional riders, but we can go up to $2 per additional in the ETJ. Council member Deshazor asked if this was the right rate to charge, since it is easier to remain steady than to raise rates every year. Mr. Spiegel said there is a balance between maximizing revenue, or providing an economical way for people to get around town and Council could set their rates according to their goal. Mr. Hills said staff's recommendation is to get people using the service. Having a reasonable fare structure will get more ridership, which he said staff thinks is important to consider at this time.

Council member Forrest asked about maintenance and storage of the vehicles. Mr. Spiegel said they will start procuring a location that as soon as this is approved, but vehicles will be located here in town. Council member Forrest asked how they take vans out of service in the middle of the day to charge. Mr. Spiegel said they do not usually run out of battery in a single day, but if they do we have a fourth vehicle that can jump right into service. Council member Forrest asked if they have had issues getting VW into the country. Mr. Spiegel said they had not. Mayor Mayefskie said Council needed to answer the fee question. He asked if Council was in agreement with $2 for the 1st 2 riders in town and $4 in the ETJ. Consensus was yes.

Mr. Hills said that as a way to launch the program and attract riders, staff recommends that each download of the app come with two free trips (i.e. one roundtrip). Council was good with this.

Mr. Hills said the program can be evaluated on a quarterly basis with tweaks made as needed. They will evaluate ridership, hours, and other aspects of the service. Council member Hewetson asked if 311 would have any ability to understand and know what is happening if people call the town with issues. Mr. Spiegel said it depends on what the issue is, but FreeBee will give the 311 people a direct line to their customer service to make sure they get an issue resolved quickly. Council member Deshazor asked where their call center was based and Mr. Spiegel said it was in Miami. Their employees were bilingual, but US based.

Branding was discussed and Freebee takes care of that. There are some municipalities that sell advertising, but staff thinks the best way to start is to have the vehicles Holly Springs branded. Revenue from advertising only brings in 5% to 10% of the cost of the service and distracts from the Holly Springs brand.

Mr. Hills said that, working with Communications and Marketing, they discussed various ways of branding this service. They wanted to avoid acronyms and non-Holly Springs specific names. He proposed the name Holly Springs Hopper and said his staff is working with Communications and Marketing on appropriate branding.

Council consensus was to go with that name.

Mr. Hills said that next steps include refining the service in consultation with the vendor, finalizing the branding, developing the app and marketing the program to the public.

Council member Forrest asked if the CAMPO grant proscribed limitations on vehicles, ridership or other aspects of the program. Mr. Ritter-Garcia said there are metrics that we have to hit by years 4 or 5. Council member Forrest asked if the grant defined the insurance requirements. John Schifano, Town Attorney, said the grant did not specify the insurance; that was a town decision.

Council member Drees asked if one could order a car without the app. Mr. Spiegel said that you can call the dispatch center and order a car by phone.

Council member Deshazor said that in Wake Forest, if there is a major event they order more cars. He asked if it be possible to bring the 4th car into service if we think it would be necessary. Mr. Spiegel said yes, the 4th vehicle is easy to bring online, and they have a large fleet if you need more than that.

b. Comprehensive Plan

Sean Ryan, Development Services, said this is a check in on the Comp Plan update. No decisions will be expected tonight, but it will come back to Council for a public hearing and decision later in the fall. He said the Comprehensive Plan Land Use and Character Plan was updated in 2019. In 2021 the Parks, Recreation, and Greenways section was updated followed by the Transportation section in 2022. The final chapters to be updated are Community Facilities, Infrastructure & Utilities, and Natural Areas, which were last updated in 2009. He said these need to be aligned with the other parts of the plan. These sections are based on outdated growth assumptions which make it difficult to plan for future growth of town services. Utility planning does not reflect current trends and usage assumptions, all of which hinders Community Investment Plan development. He outlined the timeline of this project from February of this year to the proposed adoption in November.

Mr. Ryan said that updating these together and aligning key initiatives saves time, money, and resources. He outlined which elements would be delivered this fall, and which in the spring of 2026.

Nolan Raney, Kimely-Horn, introduced Cindy Szwarckop also with Kimley Horn and James Hennessy (Hazen Sawyer), and said they had done extensive stakeholder interviews and a survey. Outreach took place at the Developer's Breakfast, the Farmer's Market and a Holly Springs Salamanders Game. He said the top takeaways from the survey were that the top water and sewer challenges are capacity/availability, and proximity to existing infrastructure. There was a desire to share the cost of water and sewer improvements, a desire for clear communication and clarity in defining required improvements. And the public desires greenways, sidewalks and similar amenities.

Council member Drees asked for examples on the “similar facilities.” Mr. Raney said ADA sidewalks and amenities like that were brought up. Mr. Raney outlined the seven components of the Infrastructure and Utilities Section of the Plan.

Mr. Hennessy said that flow projections were estimated based on the Land Use and Character Plan and are in line with prior projections with increases primarily due to economic development. He said water modeling was being updated based on field testing and calibration and existing and future system analysis. Sanitary sewer flow modeling has been completed at 21 sites and a new sewer model has been developed for sewer system pipes greater than 10 inches to be used for existing and future system analysis. He said the recommendations are for regional lift station siting, opportunities for lift station consolidation, and looking sewer outfall / “trunkline” corridors to support the Town’s CIP and future growth.

Council discussed what percentage of the Town’s sewer line were 10” and how this would simplify flow studies.

Mr. Raney said that additional utilities covered in Section 5 were Reclaimed Water, Stormwater, and Fiber Optic. They are reviewing existing initiatives and priorities to consider future needs and recommendations and identify strategic implementation opportunities and partnerships, but they will be similar to the other models.

Mr. Raney said that Goals for Infrastructure and Utilities include developing water and sewer priority investment maps, defining future CIP projects and proposed phasing and providing internal tools to assist with reviews and planning. They anticipate that their recommendations will include regional lift station siting, lift station consolidation, sewer outfall corridors, water transmission main corridors and future elevated storage.

Ms. Szwarckop said that work on Section 4: Community Facilities involved facility inventory and mapping and stakeholder engagement. She showed where new development is coming in and discussed what that meant for planning for future facilities. She then showed where managed and protected lands are and discussed strategies and implementation recommendations for Natural Areas and Resource Protection.

Mr. Ryan asked if Council had goals or recommendations to support building utility capacity, or utility availability. Council discussed the cost and return on investment. They discussed the benefits of having utility-ready sites, similar to the business park years ago, and how that cost would be recovered. They discussed the benefits to current residents of correctly sizing pump station capacity strategically. The Northeast Gateway and Southwest areas of town were called out as areas that might justify investment in utilities, and the strategic use of utility location to drive growth where Council wants development to go.

Mr. Hills asked if there were strategic areas the Town should focus on for water and sewer investments. Mayor Mayefskie asked Council for their top three areas to focus on. Consensus was the Northeast Gateway needed to be a focus, with the hybrid approach of focusing on capacity elsewhere. Council discussed how to handle the possibility of a developer coming in to an area while the Town was in the middle of an upgrade and how reimbursement would be handled in that case.

Mr. Ryan said that next steps would be continuing development of the Comprehensive Plan sections with an anticipated public hearing in October and Council consideration at the November business meeting. The Utility Master Plan Development will continue through spring of 2026.

3. Advisory Board Vacancy Appointments

Linda McKinney, Town Clerk, said that last spring Council asked her to update the Appointments policy to clarify when and how midterm appointments to the Planning Board (PB), Board of Adjustment (BOA), Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC), and Tree Advisory Committee (TAC) would be handled. She said that the current policy specifies that annual appointments be advertised for a two-month period; February 1st to the first Monday in April for PRAC and TAC and October 1st to the first Monday in December for PB and BOA. Currently the only requirement for midterm openings is that they be advertised for a minimum of 14 days.

Ms. McKinney said that staff's suggestion is that advertising begin no less than 14 days after the Clerk's Office is informed of a resignation and last for a minimum of 14 days. But, to avoid having two application periods with different deadlines running at the same time, resignations made within 28 days of the annual appointment process would be rolled into the annual appointments. Resignations received after the close of the annual appointment process would be filled as midterm openings, using the 14-day deadlines. All applications will be forwarded to Council after the close of the application period to be considered at the next convenient business meeting.

Other changes proposed to the policy clarify advertising locations and methods to match current practice, update retention periods for applications to match the state retention requirements and clean up the formatting of the policy. Council asked for incorporating "all forms of communication" instead of "Town Website." Ms. McKinney said that after Council suggestions are incorporated, the amended Policy will be brought to Council for adoption at a later business meeting.

4. Community Satisfaction Survey

Cassie Hack, Director of Communications and Marketing, said this item was to present an overview of the 2025 Community Survey and receive feedback on questions to inform strategic planning. She reminded Council of the positive feedback received from the 2023 survey including higher satisfaction than the average in the Atlantic region and the nation. Top community priorities were management of traffic, management of growth and development, walking and biking trails, street lighting, visibility of police and the maintenance of town streets. Overall satisfaction with the quality of town services was 29% above the U.S. average, and satisfaction with town employees is 45% above the U.S. average.

Ms. Hack said that for benchmarking to compare how Holly Springs compares to other locations and regional and national averages, it is important to maintain many of the same questions from year to year. However, there was an opportunity to add some questions. She said that certain questions were not deemed necessary because they were covered by other, similar, questions, or because they did not supply significant information. For example, the question "has anyone in your household used a park, recreation facility, or recreation program" received an almost 100% yes answer, whereas other questions around Parks and Recreation drilled down more deeply into which programs and facilities are used. She said the 2023 survey had multiple questions regarding public safety and suggested three questions that could be removed without affecting the data collected, in addition to one question about planning and development that had not provided meaningful data in the previous surveys. Council had questions about public safety questions suggested for removal and Ms. Hack said that data was available in other reports.

Ms. Hack requested feedback on which of several broad areas Council wished to address in the added questions, including the Yard Waste program, downtown priorities, Cultural Center space needs, and cultural events and classes.

Council discussed whether including the downtown priorities would be helpful, and whether the Downtown Plan, which received resident input, does a good job of outlining priorities. There was discussion about polling whether Mims Park should be a passive or active park. Council asked about the number of surveys sent and responses received in past surveys and how the consultant ensures a statistically valid sample. Chris Hills, Development Services, said information on Mims Park in the Downtown Plan could be pulled and shared with Council. Randy Harrington, Town Manager, suggested one possibility is to frame a question that captures Council's vision and reports how residents react to that vision.

Ms. Hack said that next steps would include launching the survey in mid-November and presenting the results to Council at their February retreat.

5. Ethics Policy

John Schifano, Town Attorney, said at the March 18th meeting when the new ethics policy was adopted, Council posed some questions about other areas that might be included in a future update. He outlined nine best practice elements of an ethics policy as required by statute, and which are covered by the current ethics policy. He said some additional considerations raised by Council were enforcement mechanisms, social media and digital conduct, and enhanced training requirements. He said that these items are covered by our current ethics policy and/or other policies currently in place. He said that conflict of interest could be tweaked if Council desired. Ethics education is covered by statute but is not included in Council's policy. It could be added if preferred. He said the policy could directly encourage in-house education and resources, so it could be added. Record keeping on compliance is not in the policy, but it might be a good thing to add, particularly for complaints and violations.

Other suggestions from Council included adding enforcement mechanism. Current policy says "any action allowed by law" but you could have gradations of enforcement according to the violation. Social Media and digital conduct were mentioned. Mr. Schifano said his thought is that the dictates of the ethics policy cover no matter what the format of the behavior (in person or online). He asked if they wanted a separate Social media policy. They have a communication policy already that dictates when they are speaking for themselves and when they are speaking as a group. Enhanced training requirements could be added should Council desire to add anything.

Council discussed additional ethics training and the retention policy for ethics complaints. Council member Deshazor asked for data on ethics complaints over the last ten years. Mr. Schifano said there had been one and it was not substantiated. Council discussed various scenarios and how they were covered by the current ethics policy, who was entitled to raise an ethics complaint against an elected official, the process of filing the complaint with the Town Attorney, who would investigate and report to the full Council, who would then decide what action to take. Council discussed adding enforcement options to the policy.

Mr. Schifano said he would draft the requested tweaks to the policy and bring it back to a future meeting for Council's consideration.

6. Open Discussion: none

7. Closed Session: none.

8. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn was made by Council member Deshazor seconded by Council member Forrest and passed with a unanimous vote. The September 9, 2025 workshop meeting of the Holly Springs Town Council was adjourned at 8:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted on Tuesday, October 21, 2025.

Linda C. McKinney

Linda McKinney
Town Clerk