



City of Durham
CITY COUNCIL RETREAT & GOAL PLANNING MINUTES
January 14, 2026

A. OPEN COUNCIL RETREAT & GOAL PLANNING SESSION.

Mayor Joshua Drake opened the Council Retreat & Goal Planning session at 6:30 PM at Durham City Hall.

B. ROLL CALL OF COUNCIL MEMBERS.

Councilors present: Mayor Joshua Drake, Council President Leslie Gifford, Councilors Gary Paul (via Teams), David Streicher (via Teams), and Sean Lee

Councilors absent: None

Staff present: City Administrator Jordan Parente and Administrative Assistant Wyatt Bean

Visitors: None

C. INTRODUCTIONS.

Councilors reflected on aspects of their roles that were unexpected, including the efficiency of council and the variety of topics the Council covers. Members shared areas they would like to improve and identified key successes from the prior year, emphasizing collaboration, council cohesion, and policy progress.

D. COMMUNICATIONS & CALENDAR CHECK-IN.

Council discussed how communication has evolved, particularly with the availability of a City-issued cell phone for the City Administrator and a prior preference for text communication. Members considered whether responsiveness and clarity had improved and what additional steps could further strengthen internal communication. Council also reviewed the prior year's meeting calendar and expressed general approval of the adjustments made for the 2026 calendar.

E. ROLES OF & ON COMMITTEES.

Council reviewed the current committee structure, including whether to maintain or adjust Councilor roles on external committees, or create new city committees for specific processes. Discussion included how committee assignments support Council priorities and workload balance.

F. COUNCIL RULES.

Council discussed the role of Robert's Rules of Order in governing meetings and how they interact with legal requirements such as the Charter and state and federal law. At this time, Council felt that more formal or stringent local guidelines weren't presently necessary. Additionally, particular emphasis was placed on the importance of public comment and appropriate Council responses.

G. NEW ITEMS.

Council briefly identified potential new topics and emerging issues that may warrant future discussion or policy attention. Members acknowledged the need to remain flexible as new priorities arise.

H. PICK YOUR POLICY PRIORITIES.

Council reviewed and discussed a broad list of potential policy priorities, including the Comprehensive Plan, street standards, FEMA, Metro Local Share projects, website upgrades, citizen communications,

infrastructure improvements, and long-term facilities planning. Members weighed urgency, capacity, and strategic importance when considering priorities. City Administrator Parente requested Council to each individually rank the listed priorities following the meeting and return their ranked lists to him.

I. ADJOURN.

Mayor Drake adjourned the meeting at 8:00 PM.

Approved:

Joshua Drake, MAYOR

Attest:

Jordan Parente, CITY ADMINISTRATOR/RECORDER