

*"Preserving Our Heritage,
Shaping Our Future"*

Historic Home of Gravel Hill
Est. 1815

Timothy Byler, MAYOR



City Hall

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CITY COUNCIL VISION WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

MARCH 2ND, 2026 AT 9:00 A.M.

FLEMINGTON CITY HALL - 156 OLD SUNBURY RD

Present at City Hall: Mayor Timothy Byler
Mayor Pro Tempore ('MPT') Rene' Harwell
Councilman Larry Logan
Councilman Hasit Patel
Councilwoman Leigh Smiley
Councilman Paul Martin
Councilman Manish Patel
Shameka Hawkes, City Clerk

Present via Phone: None

Absent:

1. The regularly scheduled vision workshop meeting of the Council of the City of Flemington was called to order by Mayor Byler on Monday, March 2nd, 2026 at 9:04 a.m. at Flemington City Hall. A quorum necessary to conduct business was visibly present.
2. Mayor Byler requested approval of the agenda *Councilwoman Smiley made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilman Logan seconded the motion. All approved. The motion passed.*

The workshop focused on creating unified vision and mission statements to guide city development, attract businesses and residents, and establish a clear identity for Flemington. Council reviewed guidance on developing clear and impactful Vision and Mission statements. It was noted that a Vision Statement should be a single sentence communicating desired goals, aspirations, and overall impact, while a Mission Statement should outline what the city does, why it does it, and how it serves the community. Discussion emphasized that both statements should engage all stakeholders and serve as a unifying call to action rather than simply identifying governmental functions. Flemington's current Mission Statement was reviewed and determined to focus primarily on governmental operations ("develop and administer policies") rather than reflecting the broader purpose and identity of the city as a whole. The current motto, "Preserving our heritage. Shaping our future.", was also reviewed. It was noted that the motto reads more like an abbreviated mission statement and does not strongly invite community participation in achieving the city's future vision.

CORE VALUES IDENTIFIED

Community Character:

- Neighborly culture where everyone knows each other
- Small-town feel with quality of life
- Green space preservation

- Clean, neat environment
- Transparent leadership and integrity

Growth & Development:

- Intentional, thoughtful planning over reactive development
- Fiscally responsible growth
- Enhancing city character through development
- Long-term sustainability over short-term gains

Citizen Engagement:

- Community-centric (not government-centric)
- Fostering relationships with residents, businesses, and Fort Stewart
- Civic engagement opportunities
- Public safety and property values

Community Culture

Council discussed the importance of organizational and community culture in shaping the city's environment. It was noted that culture is influenced by programs, communication, behaviors, and the shared residential, business, and civic values of the community. Culture cannot simply be declared; it must be intentionally developed over time through consistent effort.

Key components identified for developing a strong community culture include:

- Telling the city's story
- Building with people in mind
- Supporting local businesses and residents
- Creating enjoyable community experiences
- Forming strategic partnerships
- Reusing and maximizing existing assets
- Providing reasons for visitors to come to the city

The discussion emphasized the need for intentional planning and collaboration to cultivate a vibrant and sustainable community culture.

3. Embrace Local Identity and Heritage

- Defining what makes the city unique.
- A community's identity may be rooted in its history, culture, architecture, or natural beauty.
- Building the city's future around its unique story and strengths.
- Aligning future development and planning efforts with the city's heritage and character.

4. Build Walkable Spaces & Central Green Spaces

- Pedestrian-friendly downtown with parks, plazas, trails
- Safe walking environments lit and secure
- Pet-friendly public spaces
- Close proximity development to encourage walkability

5. Support and Celebrate Local Businesses [Shop Local Days]

- Streamline permitting process (reduce 60-90-day timeline)
- Support local businesses through events (shop local days, first Fridays)
- Reduce bureaucratic red tape
- Partner with developers and local organizations

6. Make Arts, Culture & Events Central

- Make arts and cultural events central to community life
- Weekly events (rotating themes: arts, food trucks, music)

- Festivals and public gatherings
- Amphitheater and downtown cultural hub

7. **Form Strong Public-Private Partnerships**

- Fort Stewart military community engagement
- Local non-profits (Rotary, Keep Liberty Beautiful)
- Corporate sponsors (Target, Home Depot, Lowe's)
- Schools and ministerial alliance
- Developer partnerships

8. **Revitalize a Town and Reimagine Blight Spaces**

- Not just cleanup, but reimagining spaces
- Establish maintenance standards for businesses
- Explore grants and volunteer programs
- Create code enforcement aligned with county

9. **Create a Destination: Tourism, Commercial, or Industry Focus**

- City of choice in the region
- Upscale experience destination
- Historic yet forward-thinking
- Vibrant, inviting, desirable community

10. **Infrastructure Development**

- Water and sewer expansion (long-range goal)
- Interconnecting roads linking developments to downtown
- Safe pedestrian crossings near schools
- Downtown development with shops, restaurants, green space

VISION CONCEPTS

Destination Identity: City of choice in the region, Upscale experience destination, Historic yet forward-thinking. Vibrant, inviting, desirable community. *Cultural Elements:* Preserve heritage while shaping the future, Neighborhood-focused culture, Accommodating multiple generations, Historic district preservation (North Main Street) *Differentiation:* Not just a suburb of Hinesville - distinct identity, Set high standards for the region. Involve all citizens in city vision, Balance preservation with progress

WORKING MISSION STATEMENT DRAFT

"To be a unique community that reflects the heritage and beauty of our region and offers fun, exciting cultural experiences to its citizens and the surrounding community."

Vision & Mission Committee:

Mayor Byler
Councilman Logan
Councilman M Patel

- Take workshop findings to create cohesive language
- Organize town hall meetings by neighborhood
- Create surveys for resident input
- Develop finalized vision and mission statements

Logo Decision:

- **Approved:** First logo design with lamppost design (straight block letters)
- Concept: "Lighting the path"
- Black and white base with optional color flame

- Additional color versions for murals and merchandise

Councilman Patel made a motion to approve the 1st Logo design with a few changes, more prominent flame and color logo. Mayor Pro Tem Harwell seconded the motion. All approved. The motion passed.

Other Action Items Discussed

- Contact postmaster about Flemington 31313 zip code visibility
- Reach out to DOT about dedicating a road to former Mayor Martin
- Follow up with Keith Payne about hosting informational meeting
- Develop architectural design standards
- Plan community town hall meetings (multiple locations, casual format)

KEY THEMES & INSIGHTS

1. **Sustainable Growth Model:** Avoid the boom-bust cycle of rapid development by planning for long-term maintenance and multigenerational appeal
2. **Community Investment:** Make residents and businesses stakeholders in the city's vision through events, partnerships, and shared identity
3. **Marketing Through Mission:** Vision/mission statements should serve as marketing tools for residential, business, and tourism attraction
4. **Generational Perspective:** Design for current residents while anticipating what will attract future generations (10-20 years out)
5. **Regional Impact:** Position Flemington as a destination that sets standards for Liberty County

This workshop successfully gathered foundational input for developing a modern, inclusive vision and mission statement that can guide Flemington's growth for the next decade and beyond.

11. *Mayor Pro Tem Harwell made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Martin seconded the motion. All approved. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:23 am.*