



# Small Cities Council Meeting Summary

Wednesday, May 25, 2022 | 9:00 AM  
Metroplan | Jeffrey Hawkins Conference Room  
*Approved July 27, 2022*

Meeting PowerPoint slides available at <https://metroplan.org/small-cities-council>

## SCC Members Attending

- |                                    |                       |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Mayor Sammy Hartwick, President | City of Greenbrier    |
| 2. Mayor Mike Kemp, Vice President | City of Shannon Hills |
| 3. Mayor Sam Higdon                | City of Guy           |
| 4. Ms. Jennifer Hill               | City of Haskell       |
| 5. Mayor Butch House               | City of England       |
| 6. Mr. Keith Keck                  | Hot Springs Village   |
| 7. Mr. Randy McKenzie              | City of Austin        |
| 8. Mayor Trae Reed                 | City of Lonoke        |
| 9. Mayor Terry Robinson            | City of Wooster       |
| 10. Mr. Matt Smith                 | City of Austin        |
| 11. Ms. Deborah Staley             | City of Ward          |

## Metroplan Staff

- |                           |                                      |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 12. Mr. Casey Covington   | Deputy Director/CARTS Study Director |
| 13. Ms. Bernadette Rhodes | Community Planner                    |
| 14. Mr. Tab Townsell      | Executive Director                   |

## I. Call to Order & Welcome

Mayor Hartwick called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed participants, then asked Ms. Rhodes to proceed with the agenda.

## 2. Introductions & Announcements

Ms. Rhodes asked participants to introduce themselves and share city updates, successes, or challenges. Ms. Hill volunteered to give the July Community Spotlight presentation.

Mayor Hartwick shared that Greenbrier has finished one sidewalk project and is about to start another. Sewer projects and new home construction are ongoing. A new car wash is being constructed.

Mayor Higdon of Guy stated that 6 new water meters had been installed. The city is growing. Utilities are in the process of being relocated under the new street, with water lines being laid and flushed out.

Jennifer Hill, Recorder/Treasurer of Haskell, reported that a new affordable housing subdivision is being built on the side of a former manufactured home park.

Mayor Reed of Lonoke shared that the city is looking for funding to purchase rocking chairs for its downtown, to complement its “Front Porch of the Delta” branding. The Lincoln Street sidewalk project was just completed. A solar array will be constructed south of the Lonoke Community Center to offset City’s energy consumption. Permits are on the rise.

Mayor House reported that England has an on-going water project and two active sidewalk projects. A few businesses are expanding.

Ms. Deborah Staley of Ward reported that the sidewalk and Hwy. 319/367 intersection projects are still under construction. Mayor Gastineau and the Water Superintendent have finished an RFP for water meter improvements. Parks projects are near completion, including a new concession stand. New subdivisions and homes continue being constructed.

Mr. Matt Smith introduced himself as Austin’s newest Planning Commissioner. Mr. Randy McKenzie shared that Austin is currently performing sewer upgrades and street improvements on local streets in subdivisions.

### **3. Summary of Previous Meeting**

Jennifer Hill made a motion to approve the summary of the March 30, 2022 meeting. Mayor Reed seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **4. Community Spotlight on Guy and Greenbrier**

Mayor Higdon presented photos of Guy City Hall, City staff, and the City Park, which was established 10 years ago with the purchase of 20 acres and built with grant funding. Mayor Higdon and his wife planted 100 trees. The County helped build a fishing pond, and the City hosts an annual fishing derby. The last derby hosted 99 children. This year’s derby is scheduled for June 16<sup>th</sup>. The park also features ballparks, concession stands, a playground, and an almost 1-mile-long walking trail. Solar panels were installed on school property adjacent to the park. The school is pleased with the solar panels and is planning to add more solar features. Another photo featured an historic building, the former Church of Christ, built by the renowned Faulkner County stonemason, Silas Owens. It was purchased and renovated by the City during the last administration and has been turned into a community center/library, which is currently under development, but requires more grant funding. The building is notable because Silas Owens stuck marbles and small crystals in the grout as a trademark. Finally, Mayor Higdon shared a photo of the new Dollar General, which, according to Mayor Reed, is the best DG in Arkansas. Mayor Higdon praised the friendly staff.

Mayor Hartwick presented photos from Greenbrier’s 2022 Chamber of Commerce Banquet, called “Off to the Races,” a Kentucky Derby-themed event. He shared that a local resident made a

beautiful quilt with Greenbrier's tagline, "You Belong Here," which was auctioned at the event for \$1,750 to benefit the arts council. The same tagline is also featured on a 3,500-square-foot mural that the City and Chamber recently had painted on the side of the Dollar Tree. The tagline is in recognition of mental health awareness. Due to its size, the event was held at Legacy Acres, an event center near Beaverfork Lake which is a member of the Chamber. Mayor Hartwick highlighted the City and Chamber staff who contributed to the event.

## 5. Metroplan Updates

Ms. Rhodes reminded members to stay for the special board meeting at 10:00 AM, during which Metroplan's updates would be shared.

## 6. UDO Review & Recommendation

Ms. Rhodes reported that the draft Unified Development Ordinance has passed legal review by a land use attorney. She passed out a summary of key elements of the UDO that would be discussed during the presentation. She then highlighted recent changes to the document:

Acknowledgments: Key contributors and cities that provided language for the UDO are listed at the beginning of the document.

Mobile Vending: Many cities desired guidance on regulating mobile vending. Types of vending addressed in the UDO includes food trucks, food truck parks, farmers markets, flea markets, and ice cream trucks. Mayor Higdon asked if any cities had issues with flea markets or yard sales that left merchandise out on the sidewalk overnight. Mr. McKenzie advised that Austin allows four yard sales per year per household. Any items left out beyond that timeframe are handled as trash. Ms. Rhodes advised that the UDO requires any outdoor displays at businesses to be brought inside at closing unless the owner applies for an outdoor display permit. Mayor Hartwick indicated that an ice vendor in Greenbrier pays the city a percentage of sales when product is sold at baseball games. Mr. McKenzie asked if mobile vendors were required to have RPZs on their water lines if they have a permanent or semi-permanent hookup to city water. The consensus was that was a good idea.

Short-Term Rentals: Mayor Reed indicated that Lonoke was working on a STR policy. Cities struggle with regulating the density of STRs in certain areas and avoiding nuisances. Mayor Reed advised that STRs must pay Advertising and Promotions tax if applicable, as hotels do. Knowing the location of STRs in the city is the first step to regulating them and collecting any applicable taxes. There are also safety considerations. There was discussion about the length of time an STR point of contact should have to respond to a problem. The UDO states 60 minutes but may be too restrictive. Mr. Keck shared that it is challenging to identify who is responsible for responding to nuisances created by STRs. Code Enforcement is active during business hours, but many issues with STRs occur at night. Cities must check what actions police are allowed to take in response to a violation. Who can write tickets, and who gets the violation? The property owner would need to provide the City with the information required to issue them a ticket in their absence. Mayor Reed mentioned that other websites, like House Swap, are also active and not regulated by any STR ordinance.

Temporary Dwellings: Ms. Rhodes reported that several cities have indicated a desire for language regulating temporary dwellings, such as individuals residing in a camper in a back yard. Regulations

added to the UDO indicate allowances for one temporary dwelling per lot, lengths of time allowed, and for which reasons. Allowable parking/storage of campers/trailers is outlined in the UDO's parking section (UDO p. 82). For instance, if stored in a back yard that abuts a street, campers must be screened. Mr. McKenzie asked which cities enforce vehicles parking across public sidewalks. Several members indicated that common sense must be used, and residents can be approached directly if the blocking of the sidewalk is problematic. Ms. Hill shared that several subdivisions have covenants that limit parking. Mayor Reed advised that meeting ADA requirements is the most important consideration. Maintaining vegetation that is blocking the sidewalk is also an issue. When asked, most homeowners prefer to cut the vegetation themselves.

A question was raised about a modular home being brought into someone's backyard. Ms. Rhodes advised that would be regulated as an Accessory Dwelling Unit, and that there was no minimum size for an ADU, only a maximum size. Per the UDO, ADUs must be site-built, which includes modular homes that meet all state and local building codes.

Mayor Robinson emphasized that cities will need some flexibility in interpreting the UDO or providing for exceptions.

Next Steps: Ms. Rhodes shared that several cities are ready to start the adoption process. There are two possible next steps for the Small Cities Council: 1) continue to review and recommend changes; 2) recommend current version for adoption by the Metroplan Board. Mayor Hartwick asked members to review the document and provide feedback. Mayor Robinson requested a longer meeting to allow a more in-depth review of the document. Mayor Reed recommended a Standards of Practice page to prepare cities to adopt, implement, and enforce the UDO, including guidance on answering questions from residents, developers, and business owners.

## **7. Preview of Upcoming Meetings**

Upcoming meeting dates were provided via a slide in the PowerPoint presentation:

- *May Special Board Meeting* – Wednesday, May 25, 10:00 AM
- *June Board Meeting* – Wednesday, June 22, 10:00 AM
- *July Small Cities Council* – Wednesday, July 27, 9:00 AM

## **8. Adjourn**

Ms. Hill made a motion to adjourn. Mayor Robinson seconded. Mayor Hartwick adjourned the Small Cities Council meeting at 9:55 AM.