

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-50

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF HAMPTON, GEORGIA (the “CITY”) AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN AN AMICUS BRIEF IN THE CHANG V. CITY OF MILTON APPEAL PENDING BEFORE THE GEORGIA SUPREME COURT

WHEREAS, the Chang v. Milton litigation involves a claim of liability against the City of Milton, Georgia, for personal injuries due to a 2016 vehicle collision with a fixed obstruction (a masonry planter) located on City-owned right of way where the obstruction was outside the motoring lanes of travel;

WHEREAS, the masonry planter had been at the same location since 1992 and had never been the subject of a complaint or prior accident;

WHEREAS, at the trial court, the City of Milton was found to be partially at fault and a jury awarded money damages against the City of Milton of \$35,000,000;

WHEREAS, on September 16, 2024, the Court of Appeals affirmed the findings of the trial court, City of Milton v. Chang, et. al., 373 Ga. App. 667 (2024) (Court of Appeals ruling);

WHEREAS, on June 24, 2025, the Supreme Court of Georgia granted certiorari, Supreme Court docket number S25G0476;

WHEREAS, the Georgia Supreme Court identified three issues upon which it wanted the Parties to focus in their appellate briefing:

1. Is the design and placement of objects on a shoulder of a roadway part of the ministerial duty of a municipality to keep its “streets and sidewalks in a reasonably safe condition” or is it a governmental function? Compare Mayor, Etc., of Dalton v. Wilson, 118 Ga. 100 (44 SE 830) (1903) with Town of Fort Oglethorpe v. Phillips, 224 Ga. 834 (165 SE2d 141) (1968). See generally OCGA § 36-33-1.
2. Is the placement of a planter on the shoulder of a roadway a “defect[] in the public roads of [the municipality’s] municipal street system”? See OCGA § 32-4-93 (a).
3. For municipal immunity to be waived under the circumstances of this case, must the plaintiff show that the municipality violated its ministerial duty to keep its “streets and sidewalks in a reasonably safe condition” and that the planter on the shoulder of the roadway is a “defect[] in the public roads of [the municipality’s] municipal street system”? Please address the interplay between OCGA § 36-33-1 and OCGA § 32-4-93 (a).

WHEREAS, the CITY believes that answers to the above legal questions are of significant value to its citizens and residents;

WHEREAS, the CITY believes that Supreme Court guidance on such questions may lead to the Court of Appeals ruling being overturned;

WHEREAS, the CITY believes the Court of Appeals ruling is inconsistent with existing legal precedent; and,

WHEREAS, the CITY believes that it is in the best interests of the health, welfare, and safety of its citizens that the Court of Appeals ruling be reversed and that the questions presented by the Supreme Court be answered in a way that benefits Georgia's' cities.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the CITY does hereby authorize participation in an amicus brief before the Georgia Supreme Court asking that the Court of Appeals ruling be reversed and that the Supreme Court's three proffered questions be answered in a way that is legally advantageous to Georgia's cities. An amicus brief so tendered may include the City's name as a participating party.


SO RESOLVED, this 8th, day of July, 2025.

Attest:



SUSAN KING, Interim City Clerk

THE CITY OF HAMPTON, GEORGIA



ANN N. TARPLEY, Mayor

Approved as to form:



Erin Barnes Wiggins, City Attorney

