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## March 28, 2019 City Council Workshop

Savannah City Government

SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES

COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

March 28, 2019 – 10:00 a.m.

The workshop of Council was held at 10:02 a.m. in the second floor media room of City Hall.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Eddie DeLoach, Presiding

Aldermen: Carol Bell, Julian Miller, Brian Foster, Bill Durrence, John Hall, Van Johnson, II, Tony Thomas, Estella Shabazz

Rob Hernandez, City Manager

Jen Herman, Interim City Attorney

Bret Bell, Assistant to the City Manager

William Shearouse, Assistant City Attorney

Bret Bell, Assistant to the City Manager, welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed Council there were new cameras installed in the Media Room and Council Chambers to provide better video quality for the viewers. Additionally he informed Council the City Manager would be joining the meeting later.

### Workshop Agenda Items

#### [1. Update on the Renovation of the Savannah Police Central Precinct Caretakers' Cottage](#)

##### [2019 0328 Council Workshop\\_Caretakers.pdf](#)

Bret Bell introduced the presenters which included Carol Moon, Project Manager from the Office of Capital Projects Management, who discussed the restoration of the cottage; and Chief Roy Minter, Savannah Police Department, who discussed the selection process for individuals that would meet the requirements to live in the cottage.

Ms. Moon provided Council with a brief history of the project which included the purchase of the properties located at Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and East 34<sup>th</sup> Street; and the demolition of the 36 dilapidated apartments to make way for the Central Precinct. Additionally she discussed the proposed renovations for the exterior and interior of the Caretaker's Cottage. Lastly, a summary project timeline was provided with construction beginning in April 2019 and a move-in date of July 2019 to coincide with the opening of the new precinct.

Alderman Miller expressed his concern with the cottage having one bathroom. He suggested adding an additional bathroom in the event the dwelling is sold in the future.

Ms. Moon briefly discussed keeping with the historic nature of the building.

Alderman Foster asked for clarity on the use of the cottage and it being utilized by Police Officers for ten years as part of the easement.

Chief Minter thanked the Mayor and Council for their consideration on the matter and believes the facility for this proposal will go a long way with enhancing the relationship between police and the community. He then provided Council with the selection committee members that would be involved in vetting the request of officers that want to move into the facility.

Heath Lloyd, Chief Operating Officer, informed Council the item is on Council agenda as is, but if Council wishes to do a redesign it can be done. He pointed out the budget for the project was \$500,000, and the current contract is \$464,000 which means based on existing funding there will not be enough to cover a second bathroom due to the additional redesign costs. In addition, the opening of the cottage would not coincide with the precinct opening.

Alderman Durrence suggested changing the leasing option to four single officers instead of two officers with families, as it would serve the purpose of what the City is trying to provide to the community.

## 2. Bicycle Mobility Projects

[Exhibit 1: Presentation - U.S. Bike Route 1.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Presentation - TideToTown.pdf](#)

Nick Deffley, Director of Sustainability, provided Council with background information for U.S. Bike Route 1 which is a national network of public bike travel routes with over 13,000 rideable miles. The resolution is on the Council agenda today for approval. If Council chooses to approve the resolution the routes will be formally identified and will improve awareness and safety. In addition, the local district GDOT office will be responsible for installation and maintenance of wayfinding signage and no street treatments or maintenance will be required by municipalities as part of this bike route designation.

Denise Grabowski, Owner of Simbioscity in Savannah and Tide to Town Board member, provided Council with a brief overview of Tide to Town which is a 30-mile core loop Downtown to the Southside connecting neighborhoods to schools, work, medical, etc. The benefits go beyond just providing transportation.

Alderman Foster inquired if the paths were combined for bicyclist and walkers. Ms. Grabowski informed Council the path is shared by walkers and cyclist and signage to encourage them to be on designated paths in addition to alternatives to separate cyclist from walkers if necessary.

Alderman Miller inquired about the projected cost. Ms. Grabowski informed Council the projected cost is \$25 million but does not include the Springfield Canal Trail or Truman Trail because they are programmed projects. Alderman Miller inquired about grants that are available for the project. Ms. Grabowski informed Council that Tide to Town is a non-profit organization and would pursue grant funding opportunities for the implementation to move this forward.

Alderman Thomas inquired if cost estimates have been done to determine what the connector fees would be to connect Coffee Bluff. Ms. Grabowski informed Council it has not been done but can be done and provided to Council.

## 3. SPLOST VII Discussion

[Exhibit 1: SPLOST 7 Discussion.pdf](#)

Bret Bell provided Council with a quick Legislative update on the following: a recent bill filed in reference to the State having overview of Airports; bill introduced to de-annex Memorial Hospital from the City of Savannah (it won't move forward); Savannah Logistics Technology Corridor process (made it through appropriations); no huge changes were made in other bills.

Alderman Miller inquired where the City stands on HB 346 which refers to banning landlords from evicting tenants that are asking landlords to repair rental properties. Council discussed the matter and decided to have staff draft a resolution to be placed on the Council agenda today.

Executive Session 1

Upon motion of Alderwoman Bell, seconded by Alderman Miller, and unanimously carried, Council went into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Litigation.

Upon completion of this session, a motion was made to come out of Executive Session by Alderman Thomas, seconded by Alderman Miller, and unanimously carried.

The executive session began at 11:00 a.m. and ended at 11:28 a.m.

Daphanie Williams, Special Projects Coordinator with the City Manager's Office, provided Council with an overview of proposed SPLOST VII projects which were separated into three tiers prioritized by strategic priority as recommended by City Manager Hernandez.

Alderman Foster inquired about the wide disparity in dollars (120 to 250). City Manager Hernandez informed Council that the City has not received guidance from the County on how much they believe SPLOST will generate and how much would be available to cities. Because there are no definitive numbers so for planning purposes a conservative estimate was used. The County will be scheduling a meeting with all municipalities in late April or early May after which time specific timelines will have to be met statutorily.

Alderwoman Shabazz wanted Council to recall that she was not a part of the majority that wanted to go with the City Manager's recommendation as her choice was that the projects be selected by Aldermanic district and 50% of the funding allocated to citywide projects and the remaining split equally between the six districts.

Ms. Williams briefly reviewed the items in Tier One.

Alderman Miller inquired if the Downtown Streetscape General Obligation Bonds were for River, Bay and Broughton Streets. Ms. Williams confirmed that it did include those streets. Alderman Johnson followed up inquiring if that was also inclusive of Bay Street from Martin Luther King, Jr. to the viaduct. City Manager Hernandez informed Council that bonds have not been issued for Bay Street to the from Martin Luther King, Jr. to the viaduct, monies that have been issued thus far through a series of \$2million increments have been for Bay, River and Broughton Streets. Alderman Miller inquired if there was anything to take care of the West Bay project. City Manager Hernandez informed Council there isn't anything in any of the tiers that will be presented but it is a project submitted by staff.

Alderman Durrence informed Council when the City Manager asked for individual priorities he provided him with two one of which isn't in tier one, two or three. He added if there is not substantial, defined, structural changes to the five two lane streets in the City of Savannah, in Tier One, he will not support SPLOST VII.

Ms. Williams briefly reviewed the items in Tier Two.

Alderman Miller inquired about the proposed funding for the Eastside Precinct (\$10 million), Southside Precinct (\$15 million) and the Southside Savannah Community Center (\$12 million) and if the Eastside Precinct could be built for \$10 million. City Manager Hernandez explained that one good location for the Eastside Precinct would be the existing Waters Avenue Shopping Center because the City already owns the land. There are two tenants one is on a month to month basis and the other expires in either 2020 or 2021 with no renewal options.

Alderman Miller expressed his concerns with the proposed amounts allocated for the Daffin Park swimming pool as he hasn't received any complaints other than its never open. Additionally he inquired about the Daffin Park/Washington Lawn Renovation. City Manager Hernandez informed Alderman Miller the Washington lawns get a lot of use and staff has suggested removing the sod, putting down new dirt, compacting it and possibly putting down artificial turf. Alderman Miller suggested putting lights up at the park on the Washington Avenue side and pointing them towards the park.

Ms. Williams briefly reviewed the items in Tier Three.

Council questioned what the Highlands Town Center was. City Manager Hernandez explained it's basically a park.

Mayor DeLoach provided Council with his suggestions as follows:

- Tier 1 – keep all items with the exception of the Southside Savannah Community Center, move those funds (\$12 million) to Street paving and pavement rehabilitation to increase the amount to \$32 million.
- Tier 2 – remove Highlands Boulevard widening for now or until something happens in the area if nothing occurs there will be time to put it back

- Tier 3 – move the Fairgrounds and Grayson Stadium to Tier 2

Alderman Bell asked Mayor DeLoach if he was suggesting to make Tier 1 projects citywide. Mayor DeLoach confirmed that is what he is attempting to do.

Alderman Thomas expressed his concerns with Mayor DeLoach's suggestion to move the Southside Savannah Community Center from Tier 1 asking what his plan will be when the seniors and children are booted out of the center currently being utilized. He informed Council that he will not be supportive of taking away the Southside Community Center that land has already been purchased for. Mayor DeLoach informed Alderman Thomas if the seniors are removed from the center currently being utilized he will do a bond referendum to ensure they have a place to go.

Alderman Thomas informed Council that the Golden Age Center currently serves citizens from the District 4, 5 and 6.

Alderman Bell questioned Alderman Thomas' comments about the land that has already been acquired. Alderman Thomas informed her that the land on Windsor Road and Briarcliff has already been acquired for the center. He expressed his concerns about the community center being deprioritized that will leave the City with a gap and inability to provide services to the seniors and children currently being served.

Alderman Bell inquired when the lease is up. David Keating, Real Estate Services Director, was asked to get that information to Council.

City Manager Hernandez informed Council that the list provided is not indicative of which projects will get implemented by priority its only for making funding decisions. Staff will then go back and determine over the six year period and develop an implementation plan for SPLOST that will also need approval from Council.

Alderman Bell asked City Manager Hernandez when funds will start coming in, if SPLOST VII is approved. City Manager Hernandez responded October 2020.

Alderman Bell asked if there are attendance records of the number of participants in the Golden Age program. City Manager Hernandez requested Taffanye Young, Chief Community Services Officer, provide the requested information to Council.

Alderman Thomas informed Council if the \$12 million is reprioritized to the Street paving and paving rehabilitation he wants a full list of where the funds will go. He added he will not support SPLOST VII if he doesn't get a commitment from Council that the Southside Center will get priority if citizens are pushed out of the current center.

City Manager Hernandez informed Council the lease for the Golden Age Center expires May 30, 2022.

Aldermen Miller, Thomas and Shabazz discussed the possibility of putting a payment center on the Southside. Alderman Thomas expressed his concerns as it relates to the disconnect between the City of Savannah south of DeRenne Avenue and north of DeRenne Avenue down Abercorn. He added he believes there is a need for a Southside Center because citizens that live south of DeRenne should not have to drive 12 to 15 miles to Broughton Street to fight for parking to pay their utility bill.

Alderman Miller suggested adding portions if not all of the Tide to Town initiative into SPLOST VII and also getting the County involved.

Alderman Johnson questioned if the process is being done out of sequence as he is concerned that there hasn't been enough public discussion. He added that he favored the district approach as he believes ultimately things like SPLOST and the people you are asking to vote for it understand it more when they see it in their particular district. Additionally, he suggested adding something in SPLOST VII for Bay Street from Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to the viaduct in some significant way. He also made suggestions for the community centers in the First District specifically the Woodville Center which was discussed in the last SPLOST and Tremont Park which is the oldest center in the City (he suggested using some of the funds from the Grant Center to add to the vitality of both of those centers). He also suggested moving the \$10 million for the Highlands Boulevard widening (\$5 million for Tier 1 and \$5 million for Tier 2) as the area is growing and allows the City to get underway. Lastly, he discussed ShotSpotter as the communities that need it don't have it and submitted this could be an opportune time to start the infrastructure needed to be able to allow those tools to be in neighborhoods across the City.

Alderman Hall expressed his concerns with the amount of funding proposed for general traffic improvements in District 3. He added he will not withdraw his support of SPLOST but would like staff to take another look at the growing situation and reprioritize the matter.

Alderwoman Shabazz informed Council she was in support of the district approach for SPLOST VII and provided her list of priorities which include: the upper Springfield Canal needs to be increased; Liberty City Community Center improvements and park expansion, new sidewalk improvements – to include the Bradley Pointe sidewalks; swimming pool rehabilitation, general traffic improvements; Fairgrounds property; Fifth District playgrounds and parks improvements; tree lawn and streetscape maintenance, Poplar Place playground improvements; Feiler Terrace Passive Park and walking trails. She added she will have serious problems with supporting SPLOST VII if the projects provided are not included.

Alderwoman Bell asked staff to add an additional column to Tier 1 that would delineate which District are being affected by each project.

City Manager Hernandez informed Council items in Tier 1 (\$120 million) are probable; Tier 2 (\$80 million) is less probable but likely; and Tier 3 (\$50 million) probably won't happen. He added the tiers give him the direction he needs when he sits down with the County.

Alderman Durrence expressed his concerns with the lack of funding being allocated for community centers in District 2 stating of the \$29 million being allocated for other community centers and recreation projects according to the list provided today only \$250,000 is for one project which is the W.W. Law Center. He added the relatively small projects are not being addressed and the people in those communities need the same treatment as everyone else. Lastly he added the variety of programs at Moses Jackson is not available at other community centers.

#### 4. Litigation, Real Estate, and Personnel

##### Executive Session 2

Upon motion of Alderman Johnson, seconded by Alderman Durrence, and unanimously carried, Council went into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Real Estate and Personnel.

Upon completion of this session, a motion was made to come out of Executive Session by Alderman Foster, seconded by Alderman Durrence, and unanimously carried.

The executive session began at 12:54 p.m. and ended at 1:43 p.m.

##### City Manager's Briefing / Council Meeting Agenda Items for March 28, 2019

City Manager Hernandez presented the City Manager's Briefing of the agenda items for the Council Meeting of March 28, 2019. The agenda can be found online and will be made a part of the permanent record.

The City Manager indicated that he planned to withdraw items #39 and #48 from the regular meeting agenda.

There being no further business, Mayor DeLoach declared this meeting of Council adjourned.

The video recordings of the Work Session can be found by copying and pasting the below links in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=sKsFK8Z8J88L>

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=fOnxbFwWW58V>

**Mark Massey,  
Clerk of Council**