



June 7, 2018, Council Work Session

Savannah City Government

SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES

COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

June 7, 2018 – 10:00 a.m.

Present: Mayor Eddie DeLoach, Presiding

Aldermen: Carol Bell, Julian Miller, Brian Foster, Tony Thomas (arrived at 10:30 a.m.), Van Johnson, II (arrived during Executive Session), Bill Durrence (left after the Airport Commission presentation, and returned during Executive Session), Estella Shabazz (arrived at 10:16 a.m.)

Rob Hernandez, City Manager

Brooks Stillwell, City Attorney

Jennifer Herman, Deputy City Attorney

ABSENT: Alderman John Hall (family emergency)

Mayor DeLoach announced that Alderman John Hall's granddaughter was shot yesterday in San Antonio, Texas. He doesn't know the details at this time but asked that everyone keep him in their prayers. Alderman Miller stated he informed him it was a road rage situation.

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Housing Authority of Savannah](#)

[Housing Authority Presentation 060718 Workshop.pdf](#)

Earline Wesley Davis, Executive Director Housing Authority of Savannah (HAS), stated the HAS is committed to continuous collaborations with public and private partners, Preserving, Producing and Promoting housing opportunities, and creative use of resources to navigate a complex, highly regulated, and frequently changing environment.

Mrs. Davis showed a picture of Savannah before the HAS, which was created in 1938 as a public housing authority under the laws of the state of Georgia. She then showed a list of the current and former Public Housing sites. Mrs. Davis reviewed demolition and redevelopment of new housing of Fellwood, Garden Homes, Fred Wessels Homes, Robert Hitch Village, Blackshear Homes, Stubbs Towers (they were unable to rebuild on this site due to it being wetlands), and Stillwell Towers, which is the tallest building in Savannah.

She reviewed the redevelopment of Garden Homes and the extension into the Benjamin Van Clark Park neighborhood, reviewed the redevelopment of Fellwood Homes, and the new calculations for HUD.

Mrs. Davis then introduced Kenneth Clark, Director of Development Services, to discuss the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program.

Mr. Clark stated in 2012 HUD recognized there was a \$26 billion backlog in capital improvements. He stated there were voluntary initiatives that allow housing authorities to leverage public and private sources to address the equivalent of 20 years of capital improvement needs. The operating subsidy and capital funds are converted to project-based Section 8 assistance. Properties requiring substantial improvements benefit from low-income housing tax credits (LIHTCs) to fill

financing gaps. Tax awards are made based on eligible project costs. Banks and large corporations purchase tax credits; equity raised is used to fund the project. Recently renovated properties may be able to convert without outside investment.

Mr. Clark stated the program is evolving and the HAS is participating. Some projects don't require a lot, and some are more extensive and require private capital. He discussed the redevelopment of Fred Wessels Homes and Blackshear, stating it was a substantial rehab rather than a tear down and rebuild, with a rebrand for the properties.

Alderman Foster asked if the net number of units is less than what it was prior? Mr. Clark replied that is correct as some units will be demolished by the end of the year.

Mrs. Davis stated there are fewer units going back on the sites, however 70 of those units are being transferred to the old Hitch Village site.

Alderman Foster stated he saw boxes were being moved from the office yesterday and asked if it will be torn down. Mrs. Davis replied yes it will be.

Mr. Clark stated they are in the process of updating the master plan for the former Hitch site to include the former Wessels and Blackshear sites to make sure the uses fit the development going on around it moving forward.

Mrs. Davis stated they are also looking at putting senior housing at the 200 East Broad Street site.

Alderman Foster asked if the offices are all moving to the new building. Mrs. Davis replied yes a wing has been added to the Administrative Complex on Wheaton Street. The Section 8 office is moving and then all administrative functions will be at Bee Road and Wheaton Street.

Alderman Foster stated the plan is to make East Broad look like a continuation of the Historic District. Mrs. Davis Earline replied yes.

Alderwoman Bell asked if the funding drove her in terms of the configuration that was chosen for the restoration of Wessels versus the configuration used on Pennsylvania Avenue (Savannah Gardens).

Mrs. Davis replied Savannah Gardens isn't a HAS project it belongs to the City. Alderwoman Bell restated the question asking if they went unit by unit versus that type of configuration. Mrs. Davis replied when the total demolitions were done which is what they have at Sustainable Fellwood and Ashley Midtown they were able to come back with duplexes rather than the barracks style, but with the RADs they were renovations and they were able to rework the exteriors.

Alderman Durrence asked if they are still planning the boulevardization of the project right on through Oglethorpe which he thinks is critical as it has felt for years that East Broad Street is the dividing line between the east and west sides of the district. He stated he spoke with her previously about getting the fences down as that psychological boundary needs to be broken.

Mrs. Davis stated about one-third of Hitch is in the wetlands now and they are not allowed to build back on the property. HUD has conditions for the one for one requirement. She stated it says you have to bring the units back but it doesn't state necessarily at the same site. She stated they are continuously working on maximizing the land that they have. She stated there are height restrictions in certain areas.

Alderman Durrence stated the architecture is really beautifully done and asked how much of the wetlands could be used for a potential playground? Mrs. Davis responded that HAS is always looking for partners.

Mr. Clark continued by showing images of The View (former Hitch Village), stating they are working on Phase II, and have a market rate component as well. He stated in term of the RAD conversion, they invested quite a bit of funding into Kayton Homes, and on March 30, 2018 it was converted. Mrs. Davis stated just to clarify as long as the residents live in one of the units they will have the subsidy, if they move out it does not transfer.

Alderwoman Shabazz stated with the rebranding of Fred Wessels and Hitch there is a perception of gentrification, is that true? Mrs. Davis replied no because the incomes and the residents are the same.

Mr. Clark continued with the presentation showing the different dynamics the Housing Authority is currently doing in terms of building and operating. He stated they want the residents in their communities to be successful and transition well.

He then discussed the conventional public housing communities and mixed-finance communities.

Mr. Clark discussed the Housing Authority using bonds in conjunction with tax credits.

Alderman Durrence asked if this is what is being used out at Gateway? Mr. Clark replied yes.

Alderman Foster stated the units behind JC Lewis were mentioned and stated he was recently on a district tour and was confused by condos. Mrs. Davis replied those do not belong to the Housing Authority, the first units you see are privately owned.

Alderman Foster asked if they have been redone? Mrs. Davis replied no and Mr. Clark stated they are a candidate for RAD conversion. Alderwoman Shabazz asked what is the name? Mr. Clark replied Patterson Terrace.

Alderwoman Shabazz stated there is a development going on next to it and asked if the Housing Authority is involved. Mrs. Davis replied those are all private condos sold to individual owners. Alderwoman Shabazz stated they are a disaster.

[2. Savannah Airport Commission](#)

[Savannah Airport Commission 060718 Workshop.pdf](#)

Dawoud Stevenson, Director of Program Management, gave an update of the capital improvement program for the Savannah Airport. He stated it is a one to five year program process to increase the airport's infrastructure. He showed the overlay of planned projects at the airport as well as the airport layout plan which must be updated on a yearly basis as the FAA uses it to distribute funds and grants.

Mr. Stevenson then reviewed a list of current projects; the list did not include all projects related to normal operations projects. He showed the southeast quadrant redevelopment project which includes several projects which will bring in approximately \$20 million.

He stated the Global Federal Inspection Services Facility is needed because the Customs Border Patrol was operating out of the old terminal building and were moved. Therefore the airport had an obligation to provide them a new building.

Apron/Ron Capacity Expansion, which will start in 2018, is needed for more gates. The expansion from 15 to 19 gates necessitates the expansion of the apron.

Four Gate Concourse Expansion is needed as more flights are forecasted.

The Security Checkpoint Expansion, the building was designed pre-9/11, and is currently at capacity with four security screening lanes. The plan is to create an additional building to the side to create additional screening lanes.

Rental Car Improvements is needed to increase capacity for a secure space for vehicles.

Emergency Operations and Security Center (EOC with County) is needed to house critical personnel during hurricanes and emergency situations. The airport is in need of a separate facility for dispatch in the event the building needs to be evacuated.

Air Cargo Relocation, the current location is in the southeast quadrant and proposing to move it by the air traffic control tower as it provides more space.

Taxiway Improvements is needed to gain access to Air Cargo space.

Southeast Quadrant Redevelopment will include the north apron expansion, aviation facilities, taxiway, general aviation redevelopment area, as well as stormwater improvements.

Mr. Stevenson stated all of these proposed projects will be done during the 2018-2021 period. The purpose for the update is because the way the FAA is designed to distribute funds the airport is set up to have the City approve many of the airport purchases and projects.

Alderman Miller asked how does the inspection services facility allow us to bring in bigger planes? Mr. Stevenson replied it allows us to process bigger planes, the runway allows for the actual planes themselves but the apron space around the facility allows it, but if the space was smaller it would have limited access for bigger planes.

Alderman Miller then asked what happens at the inspection services facility? Mr. Stevenson replied that is the onboard and customs inspections.

Alderwoman Shabazz stated to reorient herself for the new emergency building, where is the main passenger building? Mr. Stevenson stated it is adjacent to Gulfstream Road, north of the terminal.

Alderwoman Bell thanked Mr. Stevenson for including the expansion of the TSA security area.

Alderman Foster asked if all funding is done thru the FAA? Mr. Stevenson replied no, there are several different types of funding, AIP (Airport Improvement Program), which funds are mainly given by the FAA which are grants, and PFC (Passenger Facility Charge) a user fee imposed by the airport.

Alderman Foster stated so they don't bond, they just do it out of their funds? Mr. Stevenson replied not necessarily, they may end up needing bonds, the second director was able to secure about \$30 million in discretionary funds for these projects, and the airport makes about \$7 million in revenue a year. He concluded stating they may use bonds but currently lending from banks is low and may be an option as well.

3. Equine Sanitation

[Equine Sanitation Council Presentation 060718.pdf](#)

Eddie Grant, Special Events, Film & Tourism, introduced Amanda Hutson, Tourism Coordinator. Mr. Grant stated two things will be discussed as it relates to the equine sanitation, the first being a minor change to the Revenue Ordinance to take the cap off the City allowance for equine sanitation and the second is the selection of a new vendor for equine sanitation.

Ms. Hutson reviewed some background of the program and ordinance which has the provision for equine sanitation. She stated since the SDPS MOU in 2015 with Historic Savannah complaints about the responsiveness of service and trailing smell of urine in the streets have been received.

She stated staff is suggesting making the following amendment to the ordinance:

“Horse-drawn carriage tour companies registered with the City of Savannah shall remit a monthly payment for the cost associated with the City of Savannah equine sanitation contract. The total monthly cost for equine sanitation shall be divided equally among the registered companies. Payment shall be remitted to the City of Savannah no later than the 1st day of the month following the month in which tours were given.”

Alderman Thomas asked if the \$1,350 amount was the total or the amount for each operator? Ms. Hutson replied it is the amount for each operator.

She stated the MOU expired in March 2017, an RFP was issued, and only 1 bid was received. Subsequently a new RFP was issued with higher standards in terms of responsiveness. Additionally there was greater scrutiny of chemicals and specific measures for removal and/or disposal.

Three bids were received on May 8, 2018, and the contract was awarded to Image Keepers Building Services who received the highest score, in the review process, although they were not the lowest bidder or the most qualified, they received the highest score.

Alderwoman Bell asked for clarification. Ms. Hutson replied there is a company out of Charleston that received the highest score, but their prices were too expensive.

Ms. Hutson then reviewed the contract costs and comparisons of bids.

Alderman Thomas asked if Image Keepers is a local company? Ms. Hutson replied yes. He stated other than some hotspots he believes the current company has done a decent job. He mentioned two intersections which are at Bull and Bay in front of City Hall and Congress and Whitaker which are both terrible spots regardless of the time of day. He stated he would like whomever receives the contract to focus on those areas.

Ms. Hutson replied there will be continuous patrol and a list of hotspots provided to Image Keepers.

Alderman Thomas asked what the average cost of a carriage ride is. Ms. Hutson replied \$25 for adult and a little less for children. Alderman Thomas stated carriage companies are roughly paying about \$50 in carriage fees per month.

Alderman Miller stated he was told that most of the chemicals don't work over 85 degrees. Ms. Hutson stated she was told that same information and has required safety sheets for chemicals. She stated Image Keepers provided a chemical in their bid that was not acceptable as it was toxic. She stated staff provided them with a chemical that is used in New Orleans by their carriage tour operators. She concluded stating they also found an acceptable chemical on their own that was

approved by the City's Water Treatment Department. Alderman Miller asked if it will work in temperatures over 85 degrees. Ms. Hutson replied it's not enzyme based so there shouldn't be a problem.

Alderman Miller stated he's not lobbying for one company over another but when he visits Charleston, he doesn't notice the smell. He stated it is important to get rid of the odors, and if the new vendor isn't working out staff needs to come back quickly.

Ms. Hutson stated it is being requested that all standing liquid be removed before and after treatment.

Alderwoman Bell asked if there will be an opportunity to evaluate after a period and come back to Council after the award of the contract. Ms. Hutson replied if it is in alignment with the City's purchasing policy.

Susan Broker, Director of Special Events, Film and Tourism, stated with any contract for services if service is not being provided as acceptable it will be addressed.

Alderwoman Bell suggested referring to these as proposals rather than bids because you are evaluating on other things besides price.

Alderman Miller stated fluids are not always the only odor generators we have with horses and as other aromas have been discussed and asked what have we done about fecal matter?

Ms. Broker replied the horses do wear diapers, sometimes they do not catch everything, and the provider is required to clean that up too.

Alderman Miller stated perhaps the catch basins need to be cleaned more often. Ms. Broker replied that staff can discuss that with the carriage companies. Alderman Miller suggested instead of discussing the matter it be required. Ms. Broker replied the City has not required any type of daily maintenance be done and will do so on some kind of level.

[4. Fire Fee Hardship Program](#)

[Fire service fee hardship program 060718 council workshop.pdf](#)

Taffanye Young, Chief Community Services Officer, reviewed the eligibility requirements for the Fire Fee Hardship Application Program stating the applicant must:

1. Be the owner of the property and reside in the property.
2. Be current on City property tax payments.
3. Have an installed and fully operational smoke detector(s).
4. Meet annual income requirements established by the City of Savannah (Based on Federal Guidelines).
5. Certify that building(s) on their property have the street number properly displayed on the front of the house or building, over or near the front door.
6. Have scheduled or completed a Home Fire Safety Survey by Savannah Fire.

Ms. Young stated as it relates to being the owner and property taxes the applicants must submit:

- A copy of the Property Record Card with the name of the current property owner. (Available online at: www.boa.chathamcounty.org/Home/Search-Property-RecordCards); OR
- A copy of the Property Tax Bill with the name of the current property owner and assessed Fire Service Fee
- A copy of payment from the Tax Assessor's Office or mortgage company statement acknowledging payment of property taxes

Ms. Young stated the Hardship Assistance Program (HAP) gives an opportunity to connect to services. She stated she hopes agencies will take advantage of the program and see rewards beyond the fire fee.

The HAP Management Agent must:

- Be a not-for-profit, 501 (c) (3) agency
- Provide in-person screenings (Monday – Friday)
- Be located in an ADA accessible facility preferably along the transit route within City limits

- Be able to connect/refer applicants to other social services

In conclusion Ms. Young reviewed the tentative timeline for the 2018 Hardship Assistance Program as follows:

- June 2018 Request for Proposal issued
- July 2018 Secure and train vendor
- Mid-August Hardship applications available
- October 31, 2018 Hardship application period closes
- November 15, 2018 Payments due (No late fees/interest due until after March 2, 2019)

She stated applicants will be notified of approvals/denials on a weekly basis.

Alderman Miller asked for clarification on the process when customers receive their bill.

Ms. Young replied before customers receive their bill they want them to know if they feel like they are eligible to go forward with submitting an application. When the bill goes out it will include the fire fee on it but her goal is to make sure there is also information about hardship services on it.

Alderman Miller asked what the process is if there is a miss, for example they were approved for a discount but it is still showing on their bill.

Ms. Young replied payment of the bill will happen internally, between Finance and Revenue, no check will be sent to the customer.

Alderman Miller suggested putting a number on the bill if there is an issue. He stated one of the best things the City does is the smoke detector program and asked if adding the house numbers to homes could be added to that process, if they don't them?

Ms. Young replied staff can look into that.

Alderwoman Bell suggested adding on the application that the inspections are free, and smoke detectors are free. She stated she likes the idea of connecting this process to other services and hopes the agencies understands the City would like this done in order to help with identifying needs. She then stated she noticed that one of the requirements was that applicants had to be current on their property taxes and if they are in a hardship state on paying property taxes there might also be an issue for them to pay this as well.

Alderman Thomas asked about mobility of the application process, stating many people that are experiencing a hardship may also have difficulty getting there or connecting online. He suggested establishing clinics at community centers around the City, at which time it can be determined if they have other issues. He stated there are some seniors in the City that are not aware of other exemptions that are available to them and there may be some education provided for the total array of exemptions available to them.

[5. Board, Commissions and Authorities](#)

Luciana Spracher, Acting Clerk of Council, distributed applications for vacancies available on boards, commissions and authorities to Council and asked for direction on setting up interviews. Council came to a consensus to interview applicants for the following boards: Chatham Area Transit Authority (CAT), Coastal Workforce Investment Board (CWIB), Historic Preservation Advisory Council, Savannah Airport Commission, Savannah Recreation Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Alderman Thomas suggested that each Council member come up with a short list of possibly two to three applicants for each board that interviews will be held for.

Ms. Spracher will send a follow-up email to Council with short list deadline information.

[6. Executive Session: Litigation & Personnel](#)

Upon motion of Alderman Miller, seconded by Alderman Foster, 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 Miller, seconded by Alderman Thomas, and unanimously carried.

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

Upon motion of Alderman Johnson, seconded by Alderwoman Shabazz, and unanimously carried the motion to go back into Executive Session was amended to add Litigation.

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

[7. City Council Agenda Review](#)

City Manager Rob Hernandez presented the City Manager's Briefing of the agenda items for the Council Meeting of June 7, 2018. The agenda can be found online and will be made a part of the permanent record.

There being no further business, Mayor DeLoach declared this Work Session adjourned.

The video recording of the Council meeting can be found by copying and pasting the below link in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=Vmp6nxjdQpyx>

Luciana M. Spracher, Acting Clerk of Council

