
November 5, 2018, City Council Workshop

Savannah City Government

SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES

COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

November 5, 2018 – 10:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Eddie DeLoach, Presiding

Aldermen: Carol Bell, Julian Miller, Brian Foster, Bill Durrence, John Hall, Tony Thomas, Estella Shabazz (arrived at 10:15 a.m.), Van Johnson, II (arrived at 12:25 p.m.)

Rob Hernandez, City Manager

Bret Bell, Assistant to the City Manager

Brooks Stillwell, City Attorney

Jennifer Herman, Deputy City Attorney

William Shearouse, Assistant City Attorney

Denise Cooper, Assistant City Attorney

City Manager Hernandez welcomed everyone to the meeting and briefly reviewed the agenda.

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Department Overview: Code Compliance](#)

[Code Compliance Department Council Workshop Nov5 2018.pdf](#)

Taffayne Young, Chief Community Services Officer, stated this presentation marks the first year of her and Kevin Milton's oversight of the Code Compliance Department. She stated the department was pulled together from multiple sources and departments across the City after the reorganization. She and Mr. Milton have been looking at the department as a whole and determining ways to improve its systems and processes. She gave a brief overview of the presentation stating timelines have been included to show how long it generally takes to complete things in the department, in addition some proposed ordinance changes have also been included. Ms. Young stated the department needs its tools to work as there have been ordinances that have been on the books for a while. Staff has had a chance to look at them and would like to get some feedback from Council.

Kevin Milton, Code Compliance Department Director, reviewed the reorganization goals of the department and described the layout of the department before and after the reorganization. He stated the new department does all enforcement for the following areas:

- Property Maintenance
- Downtown Enforcement
- Zoning Enforcement
- Tourism Enforcement
- Taxi Enforcement

Mr. Milton stated there is a total of 6 teams. The Downtown Team has both code and tourism compliance officers.

Mayor DeLoach asked for an explanation of what the transportation compliance officers responsibilities include. Mr. Milton replied the transportation compliance officers are responsible for the enforcement of motor coaches, taxis and direct operations that occur downtown.

Mayor DeLoach asked for an explanation of what the tourism compliance officers responsibilities include. Mr. Milton replied they are responsible for pedicabs, walking tours, trolleys, and horse carriages.

Alderman Thomas asked what the total number of vacancies is currently. Mr. Milton replied seven currently.

Mr. Milton continued with the presentation stating when the team was formed they looked at the mission statement and revised it as follows: To promote a safe, clean and healthy environment through community outreach, education and enforcement of the City of Savannah's housing, property maintenance, sanitation and zoning codes. He then reviewed the goals for the department which include to:

- Provide prompt, courteous, and professional service
- Seek voluntary compliance with the provisions of the City Code
- Improve both the appearance and value of residential & business property
- Encourage responsible property maintenance
- Ensure properties are used in accordance with adopted Zoning Ordinances
- Ensure Tourism, Taxi, Pedicab, and Wrecker businesses comply with applicable City Ordinances
- Maintain open communications and continuing education with the community

He stated staff is working on cross training and necessary certifications across the department. By December 2019 the plan is to have all Code Compliance Supervisors and Officers both IPMC and IZC certified. In the interim the existing Zoning Inspector serves as Zoning Advisor to the traditional Property Maintenance teams as they take on more zoning functions. By January 2020 and forward, once the certifications are complete, the City will move from two Zoning Inspectors to 29 Zoning and Property Compliance Officers.

Mr. Milton then reviewed the significant accomplishments in the department to date, which include:

- Operated as a unified team, under central leadership, for the St. Patrick's Day Festival
- All Enforcement Officers now wearing the same uniform
- Thousands of "snipe" and realtor signs removed from City right-of-ways
- Moved entire team from Gamble Building to 1700 Drayton Street
- Standardized citations
- Implemented enforcement of Shopping Cart Ordinance
- Implementing significant changes to Recorder's Court in cooperation with the City Attorney's Office and the Clerk of Court

Alderman Miller asked if any Shopping Cart Ordinance citations have been issued. Mr. Milton replied yes, several have been issued for failure to pick up a shopping cart and two cases will be going to court within the next week for failure to provide a shopping cart retrieval plan.

Alderman Durrence asked if snipe signs include political signs. Mr. Milton replied yes.

Alderman Foster asked about education of snipe signs. Mr. Milton stated when the officers see them if they have a contact number they do call. He stated most of the education that has been done is with the Realtor Board for the realtor signs.

Alderman Durrence asked if the signs are saved if the owner decides they want to recover them. Mr. Milton replied no.

Alderman Thomas asked where the seven department vacancies are. Mr. Milton replied there are five Code Compliance Officer vacancies and two Tourism Compliance Officer vacancies.

Alderman Thomas asked if there are any vacancies on the southside as he only ever sees two names. Mr. Milton stated there are no vacancies on the southside. Alderman Thomas asked where staff is as it relates to filling those positions. City Manager Hernandez stated there is a hiring freeze in place until the end of this fiscal year.

Alderman Thomas stated neighborhood vitality is one of the most critical topics discussed across the City in community meetings that Council hears about. He asked if the City is doing aggressive code compliance. How will the rising calls about neighborhood compliance issues from citizens be addressed?

City Manager Hernandez replied through public education, which is an ongoing issue that the City needs to undertake and by getting those positions filled once we go into the new budget year, if our financial situation allows it. He stated Code Compliance and the City Attorney's Office have been working very closely with Recorder's Court to revise the process. He stated staff is becoming more efficient in terms of how cases are prosecuted. Additionally, a new code compliance software is on the list of things to do which should help the department become more efficient as well.

Alderman Miller referring to Mr. Milton stated he has done a marvelous job hiring people as they are some of the sharpest he has seen in meetings, but they don't stay long. He asked if turnover is a big problem. Mr. Milton replied turnover is an issue in the Code Compliance Department, they typically lose an officer a month for various reasons. He stated in the budget year they submitted a proposal to increase pay in accordance with the new certification requirement which he hopes will stop good employees from leaving for more pay.

Alderman Thomas asked how many personnel he has that do taxi compliance only. Mr. Milton replied there are two dedicated Transportation Compliance Officers that also enforce the Tourism Ordinance as well.

Ms. Young stated one of the activities she does is ride with all the teams, in doing so she asks many of the questions that she is often asked in reference to the amount of time it takes for something to be addressed. She stated she charted out the processes with the staff. The first process and timeline she reviewed was for abandoned vehicles. She stated the current code does not address abandoned vehicles however it does address derelict vehicles. She stated on the Council agenda today abandoned vehicles are being proposed as an addition to the code. Ms. Young then reviewed the timeline pointing out the difference between the amount of time to correct an issue when it's on public property versus private property, based on Georgia law.

Alderman Thomas questioned an issue in his district with two vehicles parked house to house on Windsor Road for one year which he reported multiple times and asked for an explanation. City Manager Hernandez asked if the vehicles were on private property. Alderman Thomas replied yes. City Manager Hernandez stated typically what staff does is place a placard on the vehicle and go through the required legal process. Mayor DeLoach asked staff to review what occurred with this matter to figure out where the ball was dropped. He informed staff if an issue like this arises again to inform Council so they are aware. Alderman Miller added that communication is very important.

City Manager Hernandez stated with the new software system staff is hoping to get a system that will allow citizens to file and view the status of a complaint online, which would eliminate them from calling in to inquire about the status.

Alderwoman Bell suggested that it might be helpful for the Council to set a timeframe and notify them when a case has passed the allotted approximate timeframe. City Manager Hernandez asked staff if the current software has the capability to flag cases. Mr. Milton replied no. Alderwoman Bell stated the Code Compliance Officers should be aware of their cases and have some familiarity with them. Alderman Thomas stated the officers in his district are writing citations and his comments are in no way disrespectful to them, as they do a good job in his area. His concern was with the particular issue that lasted a year. Ms. Young stated the Parking Ordinance was revised and once those changes were adopted, staff realized once the revisions passed they were too stringent on people which created more problems. Alderman Thomas replied that was disastrous for neighborhoods. He stated in the future he thinks a better job needs to be done explaining to Council when the City adopts an international ordinance. Alderwoman Shabazz expressed her concern with approving the revisions today. City Manager reassured her that nothing would be approved today, as the proposed ordinance is on first reading today. Alderwoman Shabazz requested additional time with staff for further explanation.

Ms. Young continued with the presentation, briefly reviewing the timeframes regarding derelict vehicles enforcement, and overgrowth enforcement for occupied and vacant properties. Alderman Miller inquired about vacant lots that have dwellings on the lots versus empty lots. Mr. Milton replied one of the proposed revisions to the ordinance addresses that issue. Alderman Thomas inquired about FEMA lots. City Manager Hernandez replied FEMA lots are City owned property and are cut once a month by the Greenscapes Division or a contractor.

Ms. Young continued, briefly reviewing the timeframe for unsafe/unsecure structures. Alderman Miller asked if the area can be roped off in the interim, when dealing with unsafe situations. Mr. Milton replied due process is allowed to all the property owners. Alderman Hall asked when a structure has a placard on it how long is the process before the City does something in the interim. Mr. Milton replied placards are left on structures as long as there is an unsafe condition remaining. Alderman Hall expressed his displeasure with that process. City Manager Hernandez asked at what point does the City have the legal authority to condemn and demolish the structure when a property owner is refusing or is unable to do so? Mr. Milton replied when they make a case of that nature in the court they ask the judge to make that determination. He continued stating in many cases the City has no further recourse except to add the property to the blighted property tax. Attorney Stillwell added there was a change to the State law recently to allow the City to start condemning properties when they get to a dilapidated condition. He continued stating the City has started implementing that and will expand it citywide within the next year. He stated they don't want to tear the houses down until they are condemned if that is the decision, because the way the State law is written a vacant lot cannot be condemned but a lot with a dilapidated structure can be. Ms. Young added through the eminent domain process the thing to keep in mind is that the City is purchasing those properties.

Ms. Young continued with the presentation, moving on to the timeline regarding housing violations. She brought the following Code Compliance challenge to the attention of Council: the court summons is only valid if signed and served in person. If the owner cannot be located or does not appear in court, the violation remains an open case, and the City has no further recourse to address housing conditions until further

deterioration. She stated this goes back to the comments Mr. Milton made in reference to the City not having any further recourse once a structure has been placarded.

Alderman Thomas asked about the Forsyth Park house on Whitaker Street that has had scaffolding for over a decade. Mr. Milton replied as long as they have an active building permit then its hands off. Alderman Durrence added oftentimes construction dumpsters remain outside the structure indefinitely and it should be removed until the work begins again.

Ms. Young provided some examples of structures with long-term housing code violations that demolition is now being pursued on. She stated one of the City's biggest challenges is trying to figure out what can be done locally and on the State level to change the laws to allow for more aggressive activity as it relates to these properties.

Alderman Miller stated one of the houses in the picture is constantly on Facebook and people are questioning why the City isn't doing anything about it. Ms. Young stated the City has done all it can. Alderman Foster added that the judge closed the case without compliance. Mayor DeLoach stated that issue is not as prevalent as it used to be.

Ms. Young continued by providing Council with a recap of the total number of cases as of July, which is over 2,260 cases. She stated she expects those numbers to more than double as staff begins to go out and deal with businesses and other code violations, which is why she believes the software is so important.

Ms. Young then reviewed the proposed changes to the Property Maintenance Ordinance which include:

- Parking in residential areas
- Provides for the proper placement of certain vehicles in residential areas to eliminate blight and improve health and public safety.
- Adds Sec. 7-1016 to Sec. 8-1003 with proposed revisions

Alderman Miller inquired about challenges if there is not enough room for parking. Ms. Young replied staff has added in the proposed ordinance the ability for people to request a variance. Mayor DeLoach asked what is the distance from a resident's neighbor property line that is allowable? Mr. Milton replied there isn't a limit. Mayor DeLoach expressed his displeasure stating one needs to be established so people with multiple vehicles aren't using the property of their neighbors to ingress and regress.

Alderman Thomas provided an example that may cause a problem referring to Greenbriar off of White Bluff Road which has ten feet setbacks from structure to structure.

City Manager Hernandez replied his first reaction to this situation is that the City should start permitting driveways like other jurisdictions do. Aldermen Miller and Thomas briefly discussed permitting and zoning issues.

- Exterior property maintenance
- Replaces "Chapter Six" of the City's former local Property Maintenance Code which was not included when the City adopted the International Property Maintenance Code in 2003.
- Addresses minimum standards for maintenance of exterior property including prohibited objects, litter, garbage, rubbish, animal excrement, vegetation, grass, weeds, stagnant water, and other unsightly, unsafe or unsanitary matter.

Ms. Young continued with the presentation, reviewing objects in yards which are not addressed in the International Property Maintenance Code. She briefly reviewed the list of examples which includes: debris; garbage; litter; and objects. Additionally unsafe trees was on the list.

Mr. Milton continued the presentation addressing the changes to the Tree Lawn Ordinance:

- Tree lawn maintenance
- Addresses long-standing concerns regarding the care and maintenance of tree lawns by:
 - Codifying party responsible for providing ongoing maintenance of tree lawns
 - Providing minimum standards for tree lawn care and maintenance

Mayor DeLoach stated if a resident lives on a corner lot they are responsible for both the front entrance and the side yard.

Alderman Foster asked if three feet is the height in the current ordinance on plants. Mr. Milton confirmed that was correct.

Alderman Durrence asked if the changes will apply regardless of ownership or use of property. Mr. Milton replied yes.

Alderman Hall asked if a tree lawn is considered as such when a sidewalk goes through it? Mr. Milton replied no. City Manager Hernandez stated one thing he wanted to point out is that the City is requiring property owners to police the areas in front of their property.

Alderman Miller inquired about parking in tree lawn. Mr. Milton replied it's covered in the section of the ordinance on parking, and it is a violation of the ordinance. Alderman Miller then asked if there is a possibility to extend coverage to lanes as well. Mr. Milton replied yes, the existing ordinance discusses the responsibility of the property owner to maintain anything that abuts the property.

Alderman Thomas inquired about cul-de-sacs. City Manager Hernandez replied the City is responsible for the median but the property owner is responsible for the curb's maintenance. Alderman Thomas stated some cul-de-sacs in his district have been maintained by homeowners but they have since died or relocated, and now they are no longer being maintained which needs to be addressed.

Alderman Miller added traffic circles also need to be addressed.

Mr. Milton continued with the presentation moving to:

- Abandoned and derelict motor vehicles:
 - Adds "Abandoned Vehicles" to the City's Ordinance on Derelict Motor Vehicles
 - Updates definitions of key terms such as: abandoned motor vehicle; derelict motor vehicle; owner; public property; private property; and real property
 - Reduces the time period for motor vehicle owners to correct conditions and comply with the code

Mr. Milton stated the proposed changes to abandoned and derelict motor vehicles would bring the City in line with the State law.

Alderman Durrence asked in general is it impossible to address litter, particularly cigarette butts with a citation? Mr. Milton replied in order to enforce it, he has to see the individual littering.

Alderman Durrence asked if there was something that could be done in reference to people parking in their driveway that is part of the public right-of-way, which essentially blocks the sidewalk. City Manager Hernandez replied yes, the City can cite them for blocking the sidewalk. Mr. Milton stated in reference to trash collection service, the ordinance states if you get service off the street you must return your cart adjacent to your property.

Alderman Miller stated he wanted to mention communication again as there was a case on Damascus Road by Livingoods, which is an area that doesn't get a lot from the City. He stated there was a case which was one of the worst cases he's ever seen, as it looked like a junk yard. He continued stating it causes a lot of discontent, and communication goes so far. Code enforcement and speeders in the neighborhoods are the top two items Council members hear about. He concluded stating many southside communities don't feel like they are a part of the City. He applauded the efforts of the department and asked Mr. Milton to help him with communication. Mr. Milton replied stating the department now has three customer service representatives, and the goal is to get an officer out within 48 hours of a call.

[2. 3rd Quarter Public Safety Update](#)

[Savannah Police Public Safety Update Nov 5 2018.pdf](#)

[Savannah Fire EMT Update Nov 5 Workshop.pdf](#)

Roy Minter, Director of Police Services, presented the 3rd quarter Savannah Police Department (SPD) update.

He began with the crime analysis update stating the City is still down in several important crime categories.

He briefly reviewed the Berkshire Study recommendations, pointing out a few that he thought would be noteworthy to Council which include: steps being taken to reinforce the importance of patrol; the increase in security at the customer service desk at Headquarters; and incorporating community outreach into crime reduction.

Director Minter then briefly reviewed Berkshire recommendations that are currently being worked on to include: develop "work around" to address accident reporting issues; and officer retention.

He continued stating the homicide clearance rate is 18 for 2018. He stated traffic is one of the top complaints received. He stated the Traffic Unit currently has one vacancy, has increased citation numbers, and decreased traffic related fatalities.

Director Minter briefly reviewed statistics by Aldermanic District to ensure the SPD is doing the best job possible in servicing the constituents in each district.

He stated the bid for drones is now closed and the vendor has been selected which is the Florida Drone Supply, Inc. The quotes have been received and are being reviewed for pilot training. He stated two public forums were held to provide information to the public about the program.

He continued stating with the End Gun Violence Program they are working towards a decrease in gangs. The program is working, as the numbers are down in all categories. He stated they are keeping an eye on non-fatal shootings.

Director Minter moved on to Youth and Community Outreach, stating they have been out in the community often. They recently did the Pumpkin Painting which was an outstanding event and had a great turnout. He briefly reviewed some upcoming events that will be taking place to include:

- Coffee with a Cop at Chick-fil-A on Victory Drive will be November 13
- Explorers Program has an event tonight which he will be attending
- Citizens Police Academy is being revived (more information will follow)

He continued moving on to recruiting and retention of personnel stating there are currently 536 authorized positions within the budget, 18 of which are grant funded. There are currently 521 of those positions filled, 48 officers are in training, of that number 17 are in the Academy, 14 are in Patrol School, and 17 are in PTO (they are due to release and hit streets and various precincts in the next few weeks).

He stated there were 54 resignations, those officers are going to the Chatham County Police Department (CCPD), and there are 7 pending separations (not necessarily leaving for other agencies, some are retirements and other personnel related matters).

Alderman Bell asked if the City will be reimbursed for the training expenses incurred for the officers that are leaving to go to CCPD. Director Minter replied if they leave within a two year period they are responsible for repaying the City for the training.

City Manager Hernandez replied the City's philosophy is that the individuals leaving now, eight months after the demerger are not covered by the demerger. Whereas in the past the City had an arrangement with the County where they would pay a certain percentage of the training cost. He concluded stating these are individuals choosing to leave and subject to the two year recapture period.

Director Minter continued stating applications received to date are 489, 11 people have been hired for the next academy which will be in January. He stated the numbers are still strong for new applications that have come in since SPD implemented the digital campaign.

Alderman Miller congratulated Director Minter and the department. He stated he was outside passing out candy during Halloween and two patrol cars stopped and handed out candy as well, which he thinks is a great way to do community policing. He referred to the Berkshire recommendations that are pending and asked him to elaborate on Officer Retention/Improved Deployment: improve shift rotation policies (delayed by other City bureaus). Director Minter replied there has been discussion about moving to other shifts and how that may impact the payroll system and the budget. He stated it's not delayed presently as they are looking at different shift options. He continued stating a meeting was held with other City departments and he believes they are at the point to move forward in the upcoming year.

Alderman Miller referred to the officer transfers to the County asking what the allure is and why is the City losing people to the County? Director Minter replied what he is hearing from some of the officers that have left is the shifts at the County are 12 hours versus 8 hours and they are rotating shifts where officers are getting every other weekend off; they are giving brand new vehicles to everyone along with new equipment; and defined pay plan with increments with years of service.

Alderman Miller replied it worries him that the City is bringing in good people but losing its seniority and experience to the County. He continued stating he is concerned about what's going on with the cars, better equipment, pay scale and shifts, and asked what can be done to improve these situations?

Director Minter replied it is his understanding that the SPD is almost done with the cars (everyone with two or more years has been issued a take home vehicle); as far as pay the City isn't losing people to the County because of starting pay, it's more so what they will be making after x number of years. He stated he believes the pay and comp study currently being looked at will address that issue. The 12 hour shifts are currently being looked at to determine if a pilot program to adjust and modify shifts could be done to make the City more competitive. He stated as it relates to the equipment they are looking at funding for a new records management system which will allow the department to progress and use more technology that can be put in the vehicles. He stated the automated ticketing system will be a part of that.

Mayor DeLoach stated it is his understanding that the County is using the same records system as the City. City Manager Hernandez replied stating it is a totally different system, however there are three systems, the court system, records management system and the e-ticketing module component, all of which are interrelated. He continued stating the City has an outdated system that needs to be replaced, but thinks it would be best to wait until the court system has worked out its bugs with the new system. There has been some discussion with all police departments within the county to standardize a records management system.

Alderman Hall asked could one watching this misconstrue that the City is losing everyone to the County for better equipment and pay?

Director Minter replied those are just a few of the examples that were given. He continued stating he believes people that want to be with the SPD will be here, as it is a great organization and wonderful City to work for. He concluded stating he believes the flow of people leaving will come to an end very soon.

Alderman Bell gave a brief update on the Multi-Agency Resource Complex (MARC) stating they are working with the Juvenile Court and held a soft opening on October 1st. She stated they are scheduling a ribbon cutting tentatively for December 11th. She concluded stating with the soft opening they are accepting walk-ins but was told they will be accepting local law enforcement referrals beginning January 1st.

Mayor DeLoach asked if the number given was the total resignations. Director Minter confirmed that was the total. Mayor DeLoach replied it's less than 10%, so he doesn't feel there is a mass exit. Alderman Foster added that the number is less than projected.

City Manager Hernandez stated attrition numbers are right where they have been historically.

Chief Charles Middleton, Savannah Fire, gave Council an update on the EMT training plan. He reviewed the startup of the EMT program stating the purpose of this presentation is to provide Council with an idea of where they are currently. Chief Middleton introduced Captain Michael Vandercook, Medical Services Officer, to provide the presentation.

Captain Vandercook stated as part of the Strategic Forward plan the Savannah Fire Department is currently training all firefighters to become Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT). Funding was secured in April 2018, and training began June 4th. He stated the trainings last two months per training group of 21 firefighters. A total of 42 firefighters were trained in 2018 (two classes). He continued stating the plan is to train 63 firefighters each year until all 333 firefighters have been trained.

Captain Vandercook stated the EMT Training funding was received through the service enhancement funds approved through the planning process to support the Savannah Forward strategic plan. The funds are used for training courses and equipment, State licensure applications and State mandated refresher and continuing education. He stated in working with WorkSource Coastal, the department is receiving 50% reimbursement through the incumbent worker training grant, which helps pay 50% for each EMT class.

Captain Vandercook briefly reviewed the skills learned in EMT training which include:

- Enhanced Patient Assessment
- Cardiac Arrest Management
- Oxygen Administration
- Spinal Immobilization
- Fracture Immobilization

Captain Vandercook stated the program is needed in the City of Savannah because 33% of their calls are EMS related, of those calls the majority are vehicle accidents with injuries, and pedestrians struck by vehicles. Additionally, they are requested by EMS approximately 6% of the time.

Captain Vandercook concluded the presentation, briefly reviewing what's next for the training stating:

- EMT training integrated into firefighter training academy
- Naloxone (Narcan) on all Savannah Fire apparatus in January of 2019
- Partnering with Georgia Trauma Commission and Memorial Health to conduct Savannah-based pedestrian injury research
- Partnering with Georgia EMS Association, Georgia Office of EMS, Burn and Reconstructive Centers of America, and Department of Public Health to provide best-practices
- Continue programs to support fire-based EMS delivery

Mayor DeLoach asked if the City is working towards training in the area of a mass casualty? Captain Vandercook replied they are trained to treat mass casualties; they have stop the bleed kits and are able to help if needed.

City Manager Hernandez added the City is not currently an EMS provider, we have some capability to respond in that type of situation. The City does not have paramedic staffed engines, but is working on getting EMT staffed engines. He continued stating he doesn't want Council to think we are where we need to be in order to handle a mass casualty situation as the City does not have a mature EMS program yet. The purpose of this is not to get in the business of EMS or patient transport business, the intent is to be a first responder and provide immediate lifesaving first aid while an ambulance is in route.

Alderman Miller stated he follows where the City Manager is going having everyone EMT trained but sees no mention of paramedics, and asked doesn't the City need that?

City Manager Hernandez replied that will be later, staff will be bringing back a plan for Council to look at. He continued stating they are currently getting to the EMT level and may later look at the paramedic stage. He concluded stating they may go to the advanced EMT level which would not require the need for the paramedic level.

3. National Park Service Conditions Assessment

National Park Service Assessment Nov 5 Workshop.pdf

Bridget Lidy, Director of Planning and Urban Design, stated she will be providing a quick update with the efforts to address the National Park Service (NPS) assessment of the National Historic Landmark District (NHLD).

Ms. Lidy stated in late August, the NPS released an assessment of the integrity and condition of the NHLD. There are four categories which are:

- Satisfactory (Priority 3)
- Watch (Priority 2)
- Threatened (Priority 1)
- Emergency

In 2006, the NHLD was listed as satisfactory but has since moved to a threatened status. Ms. Lidy stated the report does not state the City will lose its designation but it does state that we need to be cognizant of the fact that there are issues going on with the development of Downtown as well as other intangible issues such as noise and traffic that impact what makes the plan so unique.

She briefly reviewed the specific challenges identified in the report which include:

- Preserving and maintaining the elements of the Oglethorpe Plan
- Preserving historic development patterns (large scale development and additions)
- Responding to natural disasters
- Considering noise and traffic
- Protecting archeology resources
- Preserving historic pavement materials

She stated the City received kudos for some changes that occurred within the context of the Historic District ordinance for protecting streets and lanes.

Ms. Lidy stated the last four items have more to do with observations the NPS had. She stated there are certain things the City needs to be more cognizant of in terms of protecting as well as looking forward and trying to be a healthier historic district.

She stated according to the NPS, what makes our historic district so unique is that it is larger compared to others that are out there. Additionally, the City of Savannah is a living and breathing City and is constantly evolving to meet the needs of its residents. The NPS assessment states the cumulative effect of small changes can result in the severe loss of integrity of the district.

Ms. Lidy stated the report was very clear in that this is not just a City of Savannah problem as there are other organizations that are stewards for the district. She stated it's also the individuals that live here that play a critical role.

In conclusion, Ms. Lidy reviewed the next steps which include:

- Coordinating a response with partners
- Upgrading the district's current condition back to "satisfactory"
- Developing an Archaeology Ordinance and a Historic Pavement Materials Ordinance in the 1st quarter of 2019
- Addressing additional tasks outlined in the Work Plan

Alderman Durrence asked how can the City make people understand that they are responsible for some of these things? He stated he thinks most people think the City of Savannah is City staff but in fact it's everyone who lives here. He concluded stating everyone has a responsibility, and we have to start some kind of large scale public engagement process.

Ms. Lidy replied as part of this effort the Mayor is pulling together a small working group that will tackle the work plan that was very clearly articulated as far as what are some of the things that we need to be doing. She continued stating as part of that it can be brought up, as they are looking at pulling in the NPS to coach them through some of the items.

She stated in order to get the City off of the NPS threatened list, we need to preserve the historic streets and lanes pattern that has been articulated. The NPS stated those need to be protected.

Alderman Miller asked what would an Archaeology Ordinance look like? Ms. Lidy replied there are several models that are out there. Staff has done some research by looking at other communities to get a framework and then plan to go to the public for additional feedback to see where it would be applicable in terms of would it just be for the historic district or citywide.

Alderman Foster asked does the NPS look at the number of actual residents in the district, and does it make a difference? Ms. Lidy replied they recognize that it's a living breathing city with residents as well as a central business district so they did consider residential population when they looked at the report.

Alderman Foster stated it appears to him that the City doesn't have as many people that actually live and work downtown as we used to. He stated he believes there are more renters and vacation rentals and the trend is continuing that way.

Ms. Lidy stated when staff was working on the vacation rental information they pulled together some information from the census. She stated she can get that information to Council.

Alderman Foster stated what he is seeing is property values skyrocket because of vacation rentals, and that is a big concern because soon no one will be able to afford to live in the area.

Ms. Lidy stated they can add that to the list of items that will be worked on by the stakeholder group.

Alderman Miller announced Dr. Robin Williams will be doing a presentation on historic paving Wednesday night from 6:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at the Massie Heritage Center located at 207 East Gordon Street.

[4. City Hall Conditions Assessment and Restoration Plan](#)

[CouncilWorkshop_CityHallRestorationPlan_2018-11-05.pdf](#)

Luciana Spracher, Municipal Archives Director, provided Council with an update of the interior condition assessment and restoration plan for City Hall.

Ms. Spracher stated City Hall was officially opened in 1906, and at 112 years old has held up very well but is beginning to show its age. She stated in 2008, a major restoration and repair of the exterior of the building was done but there has never been any interior restorations done. City Hall is our landmark flagship building which is located at the foot of the spine of the National Historic Landmark District. She continued stating previously City Hall was considered as just a government building but it straddles the world of being a building for our modern City government and building of museum quality.

Ms. Spracher stated the first step was completing an interior condition assessment and restoration plan for the building. In partnership with the Historic Savannah Foundation, a grant was received from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Ms. Spracher thanked the following departments/agencies for contributing technical expertise:

- Municipal Archives
- Real Estate Services/Buildings Maintenance
- Sustainability Office
- Historic Savannah Foundation
- MPC Historic Preservation Division
- Historic Preservation Consultants: Lominack Kolman Smith Architects (LKS)

Ms. Spracher then reviewed the project goals which included:

- Assessing the current conditions of the first and second floor public spaces (lobby, Rotunda, hallways, stairwell, Council Chambers, Reception Room)
- Based on the assessment the consultants were asked to:
 - Identify issues related to historical and architectural integrity

- Prioritize restoration needs based on severity
- Identify restoration solutions and provide cost estimates for planning purposes
- Develop a maintenance schedule for the building's continued use

She stated although the scope of the plan is limited to the first and second floors, the same materials are seen throughout the building which make the recommendations applicable to other areas within the building.

Ms. Spracher stated the final assessment included:

- A detailed assessment of conditions/concerns organized by space and materials
- A restoration plan based on the assessment, balancing the building's continued use in a modern world with guidelines set forth in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Restoration, respecting the original 1906 materials, features, and layout

She stated in addition, the consultant provided several appendices including:

- Conditions quick reference guides by material, location, and severity
- Annual Inspection Form and Data Sheet
- Maintenance Quick Reference Guide (bid specs/bidding janitorial)
- Restoration estimates for planning purposes

Ms. Spracher continued with the presentation, showing pictures of examples of the current conditions, including material loss/damage, insensitive intrusions, security concerns, deferred maintenance, and making do with repairs.

She stated in addition to very specific restoration recommendations the consultants also gave general recommendations for long-term preservation of the building including:

General recommendations:

- Educational opportunities for maintenance staff
- Qualifications based selection process for restoration work
- Consolidation of work for like materials
- Annual building inspections

Historic preservation policy recommendations:

- Dedicated historic preservation staff
- Internal advisory committee to review City Hall alteration work requests to ensure in keeping with restoration plan
- Continued use of building as seat of government

Ms. Spracher provided Council with an estimate of the restoration work; the total estimated cost is \$2,753,262. She stated these are preliminary estimates to help the City plan budget requests. All restoration work would need to formally bid out through the Purchasing process.

In conclusion, Ms. Spracher provided Council will next steps that can be done in the short-term, which include:

Develop City Hall Historic Preservation Team and Mindset:

- Current Janitorial Staff (appropriate cleaning products and methods)
- Purchasing Staff/Real Estate Services (future janitorial services)
- Real Estate Services/Buildings Maintenance (maintenance in keeping with restoration plan; annual building inspections to monitor conditions)
- Establish Advisory Committee to review department renovation/building upgrade requests (including archives, historic preservation, sustainability, and real estate/buildings maintenance representation)

Implementation of Restoration Plan:

- Determine if phased or full implementation
- Identify funding sources

She stated when the building was built the Council stated they were building it for a century to come, and we have passed that point and need to determine how to get to the next century.

Alderman Foster asked for clarification on the grant received. Ms. Spracher replied this was partially funded by a grant with matching funds from the City of Savannah and the Historic Savannah Foundation. Alderman Foster asked if it is possible to get a grant for some of the work? Ms. Spracher stated they do need to go back and explore the options but she doesn't believe full funding could be received.

City Manager Hernandez stated this is an example of a project that will end up on the recommended SPLOST funded projects list. Whether it makes it to the final list is solely up to Council.

Alderman Thomas asked would this be considered maintenance? City Manager Hernandez replied he believes there is something in SPLOST that allows spending on arts and cultural resources. He continued stating this is restoration work, in his opinion its capital not maintenance.

Mayor DeLoach stated he would like to move forward on getting the advisory committee together for this project.

Alderman Johnson stated in order to be renovated it has to be done by individuals that have those credentials. He asked is that the same for maintenance and janitorial types of staff? Ms. Spracher replied currently when the City has been bidding out janitorial staff its been the same for all facilities with choosing the lowest bidder. She continued stating she doesn't think that has been successful for City Hall. She stated she thinks the current janitorial staff needs to be brought up to speed with the needs of the building and when the bid is rebid for City Hall there are specifics for products and cleaning for this building. She suggested writing the bid for this building separately and providing a higher level of supervision.

5. Real Estate, Personnel, Litigation

No Executive Session was held.

6. City Manager's Briefing / Council Meeting Agenda Items for November 5, 2018

City Manager Rob Hernandez presented the City Manager's Briefing of the agenda items for the Council Meeting of November 5, 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 meeting of Council 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=JMuteQMmBIR0>

Luciana M. Spracher
Acting Clerk of Council