



SAVANNAH CITY GOVERNMENT
SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 11, 2021 – 2:00 p.m.

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the regular meeting of the City Council was held via Zoom video communications at 2:00 p.m. Following the roll call, Mayor Johnson recognized Aldерwoman Miller Blakely to introduce Reverend Dr. Leonard Small, Pastor of Litway Missionary Baptist Church who delivered the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

PRESENT: Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding

Aldерwoman Kesha Gibson-Carter, At-Large, Post 1, Chairman

Aldерwoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2

Aldерwoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1

Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2

Aldерwoman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3

Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4, Vice-Chairman

Aldерwoman Dr. Estella Edwards Shabazz, District 5, Mayor Pro-Tem

Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

OTHERS PRESENT:

Acting City Manager Michael Brown

City Attorney Bates Lovett

Clerk of Council Mark Massey

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

[1. Adoption of the Regular Meeting Agenda for February 11, 2021](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to adopt/approve the Regular Meeting Agenda for February 11, 2021 as amended, postponing/continuing Items #33 and #34 for two weeks per the recommendation of Acting City Manager Brown, Aldерwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2. Approval of Minutes for the Work Session & City Manager's Briefing held on January 28, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Minutes - January 28, 2021 City Council Workshop.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #2, #3 and #4, Aldерwoman Miller Blakely and Aldерwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[3. Approval of Minutes for the Regular Meeting held on January 28, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Minutes - January 28, 2021 City Council Regular Meeting.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #2, #3 and #4, Alderwoman Miller Blakely and Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[4. Approval of Minutes for the Special Called Meeting \(Closed Executive Session re: Real Estate, Litigation and Personnel\) held on February 4, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Minutes - February 4, 2021 Special Meeting re Real Estate and Litigation.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #2, #3 and #4, Alderwoman Miller Blakely and Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA - (This section shall include all routine items for which it is anticipated there will be no debate or requests for public input. Any Alderman can remove consent items for discussion or separate consideration.)

[5. Approval of a Resolution Acknowledging Savannah as the First City in Georgia to Partner with Georgia Power in the "Georgia Make Ready" Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Program](#)

[Exhibit 1: Resolution - Georgia Make Ready Program.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson cited the City of Savannah as the first city in Georgia to partner with Georgia Power as a soft-launch partner in a new electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure program called "Georgia Make Ready." The City's Public Works Facility at Interchange Court was selected as one of two locations state-wide to participate in the soft launch of this new program. Through the partnership, GA Power funds all the power infrastructure upgrades, and the City funds the EV charging stations.

Through this partnership, the City will realize a real opportunity to leverage this program to achieve tangible steps towards the City's 100% Renewable Energy goal. Georgia Power has funded approximately \$98,000 in power and infrastructure upgrades and the City will fund the purchase of four (4) EV charging stations with capacity to charge eight vehicles simultaneously at a cost of \$6,300. With the power infrastructure upgrades provided by GA Power, the City already has in place the capacity for approximately 25 charging stations on this site, capable of simultaneously charging 50 electric vehicles. Mayor Johnson introduced Sustainability Director Nick Deffley and welcomed Georgia Power representatives Ms. Tammy Harrington & Mr. Phillip 'Todd' Allums.

As key Account Manager for the City of Savannah, Ms. Harrington spoke on behalf of Georgia Power and their executive leadership, Chris Womack, CEO & President, to thank City Council for the opportunity to partner with Georgia Power in the new electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure program called "Georgia Make Ready." As Savannah Field Coordinator, Mr. Phillips thanked and congratulated City Council on the first City in Georgia to enlist the Program. Nick Deffley thanked Ms. Harrington and Mr. Phillips for the outstanding work in establishing the infrastructure in the City for the charging stations.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan moved to approve Item #5, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz, Alderwoman Miller Blakely and Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Members thanked Georgia Power for the opportunity and through the 'Georgia Make Ready' program the City will be able to move forward to achieve tangible steps towards the City's 100% Renewable Energy goals.

[6. Approval of a Resolution Ratifying the Mayor's Renewed Emergency Declaration](#)

[Exhibit 1: Resolution - February 2021 Emergency Order.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Resolution - Ratifying February 2021 Emergency Order.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #6 through #10, and Item #12 per the Acting City Manager's recommendation, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[7. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract Renewal for Portable and Flush Toilet Rentals to Blu-Site Solutions for up to \\$60,000 \(Event No. 7364\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Portable Toilets.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Portable Toilets.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #6 through #10, and Item #12 per the Acting City Manager's recommendation, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[8. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract Renewal for Microfilm Archiving Services to Tameran Graphic Systems, Inc. for up to \\$60,000 \(Event No. 7187\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Archive Microfilm Services.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Archive Microfilm Services.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #6 through #10, and Item #12 per the Acting City Manager's recommendation, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[9. Authorize the City Manager to Execute Two Contract Renewals for Horticultural Products to BWI Companies and Howard Fertilizer and Chemical for up to \\$51,203.16 \(Event No. 6599\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Horticultural products.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Horticultural Products.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #6 through #10, and Item #12 per the Acting City Manager's recommendation, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[10. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract Renewal for Sod Installation Services to Turf Services, Inc. for up to \\$47,765 \(Event No. 6809\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Sod Installation Services.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Sod Installation Services.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #6 through #10, and Item #12 per the Acting City Manager's recommendation, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[11. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract Renewal for Pet Waste Receptacle Maintenance with J&M Coastal Construction, LLC for up to \\$32,000 \(Event No. 7565\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Pet Waste Receptacle Maintenance.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Pet Waste Receptacle Maintenance.pdf](#)

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter inquired about the pet waste receptacle maintenance as it relates to added City services for neighborhood communities and programs for the youth. Mayor Johnson indicated pet waste is a public waste issue and the Power Program was approved in the 2021 Budget and will be engaged when it's safe (for youths). Acting City Manager Brown stated, pet waste is a health issue and once COVID-19 vaccines are issued, he will see which elements of the City's recreation programs can be reinstated. He will send Council information in regards to the meeting.

Rather than have an outside vendor, Alderwoman Miller Blakley asked if the City's Park and Tree Department could monitor the pet waste receptacles. Mr. Brown responded, since it is pet waste the vendor takes care of the total process including the disposal of the waste. This will prevent the City's staff from coming in contact with and disposing of the hazardous pet waste thereby preventing a health issue.

Alderman Leggett asked if the pet waste receptacles are maintained by the vendor. Mr. Brown reported the vendor maintains the receptacles and disposes of the waste, but the City is responsible for any repairs of the receptacles.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan had concerns about the Council Work Session discussion involving a line item in the Mayor's budget for interns. She suggest removing that line item to release funds. If Council agrees not to have interns, she will agree with Council. The only time she was in discussions regarding interns, was during a Council Work Session. She suggested having a separate line item during a Council Work Session to discuss interns. Mayor Johnson indicated the proper time to discuss this subject would be during the first quarter Budget discussions. The Acting City Manager will notify Council of the first quarter Budget meeting. Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan asked Mr. Brown to include interns as a discussion item for that meeting.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter stated the item on the table is discussions and suggestions regarding pet waste receptacles. She is a lover of pets, but if the City puts this much money into pet waste, what more can the City contribute to youth programs.

Alderman Leggett moved to approve Item #11, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz and Alderman Purtee seconded. The motion passed 8-1-0 with Alderwoman Miller Blakley voting no.

Alderwoman Lanier asked if the pet receptacles are only in the downtown area since she has not seen any pet waste receptacles in District 1. Mr. Brown answered the pet receptacles are mainly in the downtown area and the squares. She suggested staff investigate securing specific funds for these type of expenses.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz stated she would like to have the pet waste receptacles in District 5 in heavily walked areas and the parks.

[12. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract Renewal for Off Road Diesel Fuel and Tank Maintenance with Southern Fox Services, Inc. for up to \\$25,590 \(Event No. 7404\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Off Road Deisel.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Off Road Deisel.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #6 through #10, and Item #12 per the Acting City Manager's recommendation, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[13. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract for the Design of the Springfield Canal Wall Widening Project with Hussey Gay Bell in the Amount of \\$92,500 \(Event No. 8274\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Design Services.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Design Services.pdf](#)

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked if this was a part of the Canal District development. Acting City Manager Brown answered, it is part of the Arena development because the Canal has natural banks. The section of the Canal from Gwinnett to the north will need engineering and construction for the design of the canal banks. The expense is covered as part of SPLOST.

Alderwoman Lanier asked the citizens of Savannah to pay close attention to these contracts and projects as it relates to Stiles Avenue. The Canal, the wall widening project and the adjacent Park is a great addition to the entire Arena project. Mayor Johnson stressed the importance of the wall widening project as it will prevent flooding in and around the area.

Alderwoman Lanier moved to approve Item #13, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz and Alderman Leggett seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely expressed concern for this item not being placed in the contract prior to presenting the contract to Council for approval. Acting City Manager Brown explained there was an existing wall by the Arena project, however this request is for the extension of the canal wall to stabilize the bank and prevent flooding.

PURCHASING ITEMS

[14. Authorize the City Manager to Execute Two Contract Renewals for Storm Water and Sewer Line Repair Services with Survey Southeast Pipe Survey, Inc. \(Primary\) and Insituform Technologies, LLC \(Secondary\) for up to \\$3,000,000 \(Event No. 5937\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Sewer Line Repairs.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Sewer Line Repairs.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #14 through #17, and Items #20 through #22, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[15. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract Renewal for Architectural and Technical Support Services with Cogdell Mendrala Architects for up to \\$300,000 \(Event No. 7615\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Design Service.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Design Services.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #14 through #17, and Items #20 through #22, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[16. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract Renewal for Corrosion-Control Additive with American Development Corporation for up to \\$150,000 \(Event No. 7494\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Corrosion Control Additive .pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Corrosion Control Additive.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #14 through #17, and Items #20 through #22, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[17. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract for Construction of the Force Main for Travis Field Water Reclamation Facility with Ruby-Collins, Inc. in the Amount of \\$7,992,950 \(Event No. 8192\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Travis Field Force Main.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Travis Field Force Main.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #14 through #17, and Items #20 through #22, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[18. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract for Repairs to the Existing Police Memorial Trail with Johnson-Laux, LLC in the Amount of \\$599,285 \(Event No. 8272\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Police Memorial Trail.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Police Memorial Trail.pdf](#)

Alderwoman Lanier received a letter from the 'Friends of Tide to Town' project asking for her support of Agenda Item #18. She does not believe the email was sent to every Council Member, because some members associated with that project think she is against the project. This is not true, she understands the merits of a trail as it relates to health, wealth and connectivity. Due to residents in District 1 concentrating on their personal well-being, i.e., food, housing, health, etc., the Trail would not be a major priority for the area; however, she does understand the importance and concept of the Trail. As Aldermen/Alderwomen who represents Districts, we become experts on representing/advocating our respective Districts. She respects all Savannah Aldermen and Alderwomen along with the Mayor and the two At-Large Alderwomen. It has always been customary to be respectful of each Council Member and their Districts. If she was approached on an issue of another District, she would refer that individual to the representing Council Member and support that Council Member. With that being said, Alderwoman Lanier is asking for and demanding that same respect when it comes to District 1 because she has spent countless hours with community and City officials advocating enhancements for the residents of District 1. She is sending a message out to all the news media, especially WTOC, and Alderman Palumbo. The Arena project which she has advocated/supported for years is in District 1, if anyone has questions concerning that project they can ask her, for input.

Written comment(s):

- Caila Brown, Michael Edwards and Mike Nadeau with 9 signatures (Bike Walk Savannah) – Supports
- Friends of Tide to Town with 12 signatures – Supports
- Sean Mannion (Edgemere-Sackville Neighborhood Association – Supports
- Scott Anderson (Ardsley Park-Chatham Crescent Neighborhood Association

Alderman Palumbo is proud to see the Trail repaired since it has been in disrepair since Hurricane Matthew. Since transportation costs to residents in Savannah are at an all-time high, the residents have the County's Truman Linear Park Trail and the City's Police Memorial Trail, now joined, as an alternative transportation mode.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz has not been supportive of the Tides to Town Trail in the past because the Trail only touched the 5th District at one tip of the Trail. However; she is pleased to see the Trail repaired.

Alderwoman Lanier moved to approve Item #18, Alderwoman Gibson-Carter seconded. The motion passes unanimously.

[19. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract for Construction of a Parking Lot and Pad at the Edwin Street Metroplex with F.H. Paschen Construction Company in the Amount of \\$289,908 \(Event No. 8286\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Edwin Street Metroplex Parking Lot.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Edwin Street Metroplex Parking Lot.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz asked Acting City Manager Brown if this is the site where the police support functions are located. Mr. Brown answered, yes. She thanked the City staff and the Acting City Manager for the continuous improvements on the site for the benefit of the police department.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Item #19, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[20. Authorize the City Manager to Execute Two Contracts for Archaeological Services with Brockington and Associates, Inc. \(Primary\), and LG2 Environmental Solutions, Inc. \(Secondary\) for up to \\$200,000 \(Event No. 8071\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Archaeological Services.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Archaeological Services.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #14 through #17, and Items #20 through #22, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[21. Authorize the City Manager to Approve an Annual Membership with Info-Tech Research Group for Technology Advisory Research Services in the Amount of \\$139,230 \(Event No. 8268\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Technology Advisory Services .pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification- Technology Advisory Services.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #14 through #17, and Items #20 through #22, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[22. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract for Natural Gas with Scana Energy Marketing, LLC for up to \\$100,000 \(Event No. 8297\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Natural Gas.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Natural Gas.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #14 through #17, and Items #20 through #22, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

SAVANNAH AIRPORT COMMISSION

[23. Approval to Execute a Contract with Reeves Construction Company for the Site Clearing and Parking Improvements Project In the Amount of \\$2,902,849.75](#)

[Exhibit 1: Map - January 2021 Image .pdf](#)

Alderman Purtee moved to approve Items #23 and #24, Alderwoman Miller Blakely and Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[24. Approval to Execute a Contract Renewal for Professional Services with Ailevon Pacific Air Service Consulting in the Amount of \\$136,000](#)

[Exhibit 1: Agreement for Consulting Services.pdf](#)

Alderman Purtee moved to approve Items #23 and #24, Alderwoman Miller Blakely and Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ALCOHOL LICENSE HEARINGS

[25. Approval of Class C \(Liquor, Beer, Wine\)\(By the Drink\) Alcohol License with Sunday Sales to Tyler R. Kopkas of Ardsley Station at 102 East Victory Drive \(Aldermanic District 2\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Checklist - Ardsley Station.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Density Map - Ardsley Station.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Alcohol Reports - Ardsley Station.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - Ardsley Station.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson opened the alcohol license hearings for Items #25 and #26. Item #27 was deferred to the end of the Agenda.

No speaker(s):

a. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter moved to close the alcohol license hearings for Items #25 and #26, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked if there were any update on a work session presentation for the alcohol overlay district City wide as discussed at the January 28, 2021 work session. Mayor Johnson indicated the Acting City Manager is currently working on scheduling. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter suggested revisiting the Council's original list to redetermine priority.

b. Alderman Leggett moved to approve Item #25, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz and Alderman Purtee seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[26. Approval of Class C \(Wine\)\(By the Drink\) Alcohol License with Sunday Sales to Cristine Tindall of Cafe M at 128 East Bay Street \(Aldermanic District 2\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Checklist - Cafe M.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Density Map - Cafe M.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Alcohol Reports - Cafe M.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - Cafe M.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson opened the alcohol license hearings for Items #25 and #26. Item #27 was deferred to the end of the Agenda.

Mayor Johnson indicated Ms. Cristine Tindall was available, in support, she did not speak.

No speaker(s):

a. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter moved to close the alcohol license hearings for Items #25 and #26, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Alderman Leggett moved to approve Item #26, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz and Alderman Purtee seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[27. Show Cause Hearing for the Revocation of the Alcohol License for Stuart Putman of the Treehouse at 309 West St. Julian Street](#)

[Exhibit 1: Notice to Owner - Treehouse Show Cause.pdf](#)

Moved to the end of the Agenda.

Mayor Johnson explained the process to Council. He opened and presided over the Show Cause Hearing.

Mayor Johnson administered an oath to all speakers.

Mr. Stuart Putman, Owner, The Treehouse declined legal counsel and will represent himself.

Speaker(s) representing the City of Savannah:

- Assistant City Attorney Denise Cooper - introduced the following three (3) witnesses.
- Judee Jones, Revenue Department/Alcohol Beverage Licenses - July 2, 2004 an approved alcohol license was issued to The Treehouse and it has been renewed each year with no violations that she is aware.
- Captain David Gay, Police Department - cited the following incidents: 1.) December 21, 2016 a patron had a firearm in the establishment; 2.) November 24, 2018 a fight with a firearm in the establishment but no patron was hit or injured; 3.) January 1, 2021 a fight with a firearm in the establishment with three (3) patrons hit and one (1) fatality. There was no security check (wand) at the front door. During investigation the night of the incident, at least 40 patrons said they were not wanded and there was an additional patron with a firearm; and 4.) January 16, 2021 there is an on-going active investigation involving The Treehouse which cannot be discussed at this time. Captain Gay feels the establishment is a danger to the community.
- Sergeant Samantha Stephens, Police Department - There were ABC administrative hearings with the owner, Mr. Putman. Sgt. Stephens explained the process of why and how administrative hearings are requested; 1.) November 30, 2018 the police department asked the owner for an updated security plan showing he posted no gun signs visible to all patrons, wanding all patrons (ankle, waist & legs), and post dress code signs in the establishment visible to all patrons. Wanding was required due to a patron having a gun in the establishment on December 21, 2016 and the actual gun fire incident on November 24, 2018; 2.) on January 5, 2021 an administrative hearing was held in response to the incident involving gun fire and a homicide on January 1, 2021. A review of the previous plan where he was wanding all patrons was discussed. Mr. Putman stated patrons were wanded except some females, the female wand person was

dismissed due to COVID-19 requirements. There was a gun given to police that evening by another patron in the establishment who advised he was not wanted. Mr. Putman advised he is not always in the establishment, he has an office across the street. The police department considers him an absentee owner.

Mr. Putman was cited on January 13, 2021 for not following the safety plan, which is a requirement. Sgt. Stephens feels the establishment is a threat to the safety of the public. During the past 24 month period there have been 81 calls to the business: 1 homicide, 14 fights, 3 drug related incidents, 10 suspicious persons, and all other calls related to drunk persons, alarm system and damage to property.

Speaker(s) representing The Treehouse:

- Stuart Putman, Owner, The Treehouse - 1.) The December 21, 2016 incident was a police cadet celebrating his graduation with other cadets who had the firearm. He was later fired by the police department. The Treehouse is typically a hang-out for the Savannah police; 2.) The November 24, 2018 incident the patron was charged with an unlawful discharge of a weapon. The administrative hearing with ABC was held after this incident so The Treehouse followed the required safety plan and wanted patrons on Friday and Saturday nights.

COVID-19 did have an affect on the business. The number of patrons were reduced to 85 and staff reduced. Mr. Putman apologized for the incident on New Year's Eve and stated The Treehouse has now increased security efforts. An additional wand person has been added, every patron is wanted and bags are checked before an person enters the bar. All staff complete A-Plus safety program as a requirement.

The Treehouse has been in business for 15 years and never cited for underage drinking, he displayed over 200 fake ID's confiscated at the door. His off-duty officers respond to local incidents first and he feels the establishment is a positive force in the community. He is asking Council to let him reopen.

Assistant City Attorney Denise Cooper provided closing remarks - After administrative hearings, Mr. Putman still did not make changes to ensure the safety of The Treehouse patrons. The safety plan should have been followed, wanted should have always been in place. This place of business is a threat to the community and she is asking for the revocation of the alcohol license.

Written comment(s) received:

- Colin Brady – Opposed to revocation

Following the show cause hearing Mayor Johnson, Aldermen/Alderwomen and Acting City Manager Brown asked questions of Ms. Jones, Captain Gay and Sergeant Stephens. There were discussions involving a difference between a bar and nightclub, legal responsibilities involving wanted, the City's policy on police officer's wearing weapons inside a bar, responsibility of the on-site manager, the safety plan as a result of the administrative hearings, the 81 incidents over the past 24 months and corrective actions, and Council's collective agreement on the penalty. Council extended condolences to the family of the murder victim.

Alderman Leggett asked for the City Manager's recommendation. Acting City Manager Brown cited most cities do not allow police officers to work in bars because if there is a problem, the owner points to the City as the responsible party. He does not recommend the City allow officers to work in an establishment that sells alcohol. In this case: 1.) the establishment allowed weapons inside the bar; and 2.) the owner/alcohol license holder as the responsible party, was not present in the establishment when the incident happened on January 1, 2021. Council could set standards to prohibit officers from working in establishments that sell alcohol. The Savannah Council will need to make the decision if the bar owner upheld his responsibility of checking all patrons to make sure no fire arms were permitted in the establishment. Alderman Leggett suggested further conversations with staff, ABC team, and the Acting City Manager relating to officers working in establishments that serve alcohol.

Mayor Johnson suggested a suspension of the alcohol license until April 1, 2021, reopen on April 1, 2021 with an approved security plan and a monitored 90-day probationary period. Acting City Manager Brown recommended suspension, a security plan with the owner/manager on duty at the establishment, with the Acting City Manager's features. That security plan would be submitted through the police department and the City's enforcement team back to the Acting City Manager for his final approval. The Acting City Manager would send a report to Council prior to their meeting, that the security plan is satisfactory and the owner has met all requirements. He would then recommend the establishment be reopened on a monitored probationary period (90-day period). Should they violate that security plan, the probationary period would be extended or the revocation of the alcohol license at that location. The security plan would be used for any establishments with an approved alcohol license.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz and Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan discussed other establishments in the African American community that were cited with less than 81 police calls, but were not given this same opportunity as Mr. Putman. Alderwoman Lanier suggested a graduated penalty procedure and would like to see officers permitted to work off-duty for extra income.

a. Alderwoman Miller Blakely moved to grant a suspension to Stuart Putman until April 2021 and he adheres to all the measures in the new ordinance and should he fail to adhere to the measures, his license will be revoked. There was no second.

b. Alderwoman Miller Blakely moved to amend the motion as follows, Alderman Leggett seconded. The main motion to suspend the alcohol license for Item #27, with conditions passed unanimously.

- Suspend Alcohol License through April 1, 2021, pending the development of a safety plan approved by the City Manager, City Attorney, Chief of Police and others;
- Meet with Alderman Leggett and other community partners and/or associations to work through issues presented; and
- Following the suspension, serve a three (3) month probationary period.

c. Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz made a substitute motion to revoke the alcohol and business license permanently for Item #27, seconded by Alderman Leggett. The substitute motion failed 3-6-0, with Alderman Leggett, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan, and Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz voting yea.

Mayor Johnson informed Mr. Putman he has been given a second chance and it will be up to him to prove how much he values the establishment and the employees who work for him in the coming months.

ORDINANCES - FIRST AND SECOND READING

[28. An Ordinance Prohibiting Pedestrian Interference with the Flow of Traffic to Include Occupying Medians](#)

[Exhibit 1: Ordinance - Pedestrian Interference with Traffic Flow.pdf](#)

Alderman Palumbo has received numerous fatalities and accidents pertaining to medians. Working with a group of concerned residents, Alderman Palumbo is pleased to see a measure to improve the safety at the median crossings and a means to empower the police department to enforce those measures.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz thanked City Attorney Lovett for working diligently on improving the City's right-of-ways and making sure the laws and language is properly established to avoid fatalities and accidents in and around the medians.

Alderman Purtee acknowledged the Abercorn corridor as one of the dangerous areas in the City for median accidents and fatalities. He thanked Attorney Lovett for the hard work in getting the language for the ordinance.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter commended Attorney Lovett and his staff for the ordinance language to assure all rights of the Savannah citizens are protected while enforcing laws to prevent litter, accidents and fatalities along the corridors of the City. She announced a 'Too Legit to Quit' campaign to clean the litter from the City's corridors.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan thanked numerous staff and Aldermen for their support in putting the final ordinance before Council in a timely and orderly fashion.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely commended Attorney Lovett and his staff for their work to assure the citizens will be safe and she asked Council Members and staff to make sure the residents are aware of the ordinance.

a. Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Item #28, Alderwoman Lanier and Alderman Purtee seconded. No vote taken.

b. After the first reading was considered the second and a request that an Ordinance be placed and passed upon its adoption, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Item #28, Alderwoman Lanier and Alderman Purtee seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Johnson thanked all staff and Council involved in getting the ordinance passed.

REAL ESTATE ITEMS

[29. Approval to Award the Sale of Surplus Property Located at 1700 Drayton Street \(PIN 20053 38013\), 104 E. 34th Street \(PIN 20053 38007\), and 1705 Abercorn Street \(PIN 20053 38003\) to Pinyan/Procida Development Group \(Event No. 7984\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Map - 1700 Drayton Street.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Bid - 1700 Drayton Street.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Evaluation - 1700 Drayton Street.pdf](#)

Acting City Manager Brown gave a brief update of the award for the workforce housing proposal.

Chief Operating Officer Bret Bell provided photos of the projects. Mr. Brown recommended approval of Bid #1.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked Mr. Brown if this will be affordable housing or workforce housing and how many units will be affordable workforce. Mr. Brown answered this will be workforce housing with rates slightly below market rates for thirty years. Mr. Bell outlined the rates for the units and will send Council a copy of the unit rates.

Alderwoman Lanier discussed the differences between workforce housing and affordable housing. She has concerns about the units becoming student housing. Mayor Johnson suggested the City place some type of restrictions to avoid the units becoming student housing. Mr. Bell read into the record the IRS restrictions to prevent the units from becoming student units.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked Mr. Brown if this was an Opportunity Zone. Mr. Brown does not believe it is an Opportunity Zone. She asked Attorney Lovett and Mr. Brown if they have responded to the 'letter of concerns' from other bidders who participated in the process. The unsuccessful bidder received a letter from the Purchasing Department and Mr. Bell and Mr. Brown have spoken to the unsuccessful bidder. She asked Attorney Lovett if he was satisfied with the letter of response to the unsuccessful bidder from the City's Purchasing Department. Mr. Lovett answered, the City is satisfied with the response. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter discussed the timeline of projects in different community and how the City handles the timing. She suggested the City focus more on senior housing throughout the City possibly assigning some of the workforce housing for seniors.

Mayor Johnson and Mr. Brown discussed the City's senior housing throughout the City and because of the restrictions by the IRS due to tax credits, the workforce housing cannot be used as senior housing.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked Mr. Brown if he supplied Council with the actual value of the property. Mr. Bell responded, the high bidder offered \$750,000 and the Board of Assessors valued the property in 2020 at \$445,700, vacant land without any buildings (the building burned). The City paid \$675,000 in 2003 with the building intact. She asked for the resale value. Mr. Bell stated, whatever the market is willing to pay.

Alderwoman Lanier asked if there was some type of reporting system to police regarding the workforce housing tenants and where is the compliance part of the project. Mr. Bell answered there are restrictions placed on the property with the tax credits which is monitored by the State and Federal Government. The City will place a deed restriction on the property that would carry from owner to owner that would limit the development to the workforce housing rental project. There will be a reversion clause, if the project is not started within two (2) years, the property reverts back to the City of Savannah. Alderwoman Lanier asked if the 30-year tax credit restriction can be extended. Mr. Brown stated that is a question which should be explored.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz would like the HUD legal definition of workforce housing, affordable housing, and student housing. Moving forward, the purchasing department must show transparency on how scoring and selections are made during the bid process. Mayor Johnson stated the HUD definitions have not changed: affordable housing is defined as an occupant pays not more than 30% of their income for housing cost including utilities; workforce housing is defined as a person is earning between 60%-120% of the area median income; and student housing is an individual who is primarily a student. Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz asked City Attorney Lovett to provide to Council the legal definitions from HUD of affordable, workforce, low-income housing, and student housing.

Alderman Leggett contacted the neighborhood associations concerning their meetings with the developer. All matters were discussed and the neighborhood associations agreed to move the project forward.

a. Alderman Leggett moved to approve Item #29, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan seconded. The motion passed, 7-2-0. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter and Alderwoman Miller Blakely voted no.

b. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter made a motion to amend Item #29, add a contingency clause for an additional twenty (20) years, Alderwoman Miller Blakely seconded. The motion failed, 3-6-0. Mayor Johnson, Alderwoman Lanier, Alderman Leggett, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan, Alderman Palumbo and Alderman Purtee voted no.

CITY ATTORNEY ITEMS

[30. Settlement #1](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Item #30, to authorize the City Attorney to make a settlement in a Worker's Compensation matter in the amount of \$75,000.00 involving Stephanie Vinson, a former employee of the police department, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MISCELLANEOUS

[31. Approval of a Plat for a Major Subdivision - Bradley Pointe South Phase 9](#)[Exhibit 1: Plat Bradley Pointe South Phase 9](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Item #31, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[32. Approval of a Plat for a Major Subdivision - Cumberland Point Phase 4A](#)[Exhibit 1: Cumberland Point at The Highlands Phase 4.pdf](#)

Alderwoman Lanier moved to approve Item #32, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[33. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract Renewal for Tree Planting Services to Pine Hollow Nursery & Landscaping for up to \\$90,000 \(Event No. 6918\) - Item Added on 2/8/21](#)[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Tree Planting.pdf](#)[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Tree Planting.pdf](#)

Postponed/continued Items #33 and #34 for two weeks, during the adoption of the agenda.

[34. Authorize the City Manager to Execute Three Contract Renewals for Tree and Stump Removal Services to Gunnison Tree Specialist \(Primary\), ArborNature, LLC \(Secondary\), and Kocun Tree Care, LLC, \(Tertiary\) for up to \\$700,000 \(Event No. 7276\) - Item Added on 2/8/21](#)[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Tree and Stump Removal.pdf](#)[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Tree and Stump Removal.pdf](#)

Postponed/continued Items #33 and #34 for two weeks, during the adoption of the agenda.

CLOSING:

Mayor Johnson wished everyone a 'Happy Valentine's Day' and encouraged all to show love.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely sent out well wishes to her father, Isaac Miller, who will celebrate his 83rd Birthday tomorrow.

Alderwoman Lanier announced to the public a Job Fair this Saturday for Arena project employment. Residents can view the flyer on the City's Facebook page.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the meeting at 6:29 p.m.

The audio recording of the Council Meeting can be found by copying and inserting the below link in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=tdEk1CIYpDCF>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Initials: ____

