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**SAVANNAH CITY GOVERNMENT**  
**SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES**  
**COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING**  
**SEPTEMBER 10, 2020 – 11:00 a.m.**

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the City Council work session and City Manager's Briefing was held via Zoom video communications at 11:00 a.m. Following the roll call, Mayor Johnson asked Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan to offer an invocation.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding

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

Alderwoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2

Alderwoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1

Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2

Alderwoman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3

Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4, Vice-Chairman

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

Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

City Manager Pat Monahan

City Attorney Bates Lovett

Clerk of Council Mark Massey

**Workshop Agenda Items**

[1. Community Benefit Agreements](#)

[Exhibit 1: Community Benefits Agreement.pdf](#)

PRESENTED by City Manager Monahan and Planning, Zoning & Urban Design Director Bridget Lidy.

Ms. Lidy spoke about community benefits agreements and asked Alderwoman Lanier to discuss the best practice model. The presentation by Ms. Lidy will be a starting point of how the City of Savannah can establish a community benefits agreement ordinance. Ms. Lidy described what a community benefit agreement entails and presented five best practice models from different locations. She would like to establish a working group to meet in October to start the process.

Following the presentation, the Mayor and Aldermen/Alderwomen had discussion and asked questions.

Alderman Leggett asked Ms. Lidy how soon could the community benefits agreement ordinance be established. It would depend on the progress of the working group's recommendation. Maybe as soon as the first quarter of 2021. Alderman Leggett wanted to know how closely will the community be working with the developers. No plan is in place at this time but as the group develops, the

community and developers will be included in the process. He asked if any communities around the Arena project have been included in the decision making process. The City is meeting with the communities adjacent to the Arena project and the Canal District to keep them informed on a regular basis. There has been a taskforce established by the Mayor for the Arena project that meet monthly.

Alderman Palumbo suggested codifying neighborhood associations and having a direct set of standards that is up-front and transparent for the community and developers that will be beneficial for the neighborhoods and the City. It's critical that the City represents the neighborhoods during the process. Get the neighborhood associations certified and making sure they represent their neighborhoods.

Mayor Johnson reported that the City has informally participated in this process for sometime with a City developed, 'Good Neighbor Agreement' for alcohol applications. Now that the Council has decided to move forward in creating a community benefits agreement ordinance, the City will have an official community benefits agreement.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz thanked Alderwoman Lanier and Ms. Lidy for the presentation. She liked the key point of using enforceable, effective methods when working with the neighborhoods. She asked when selecting the community people, will each Alderperson designate a person from their respective districts. The build-out from the working group will make that determination.

Mayor Johnson asked Ms. Lidy if the neighborhood and community plannings will play a central role in the development. Yes, Economic Development, MPC, and other departments as well.

## [2. Recreation Re-imagined](#)

[Exhibit 1: Presentation - Community Centers.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Presentation - Recreation Re-Imagined.pdf](#)

Mr. Monahan presented the next presentation in two parts. The first presentation will be an overview of community centers and recreation, presented by Chief Community Services Officer Taffanye Young. The second presentation will be capital improvement projects presented by Assistant City Manager Heath Lloyd and the team for the three community center projects: Hudson Hill, Grant Center, and Delaware Center.

The following persons were presenters:

- a. Chief Community Services Officer Taffanye Young.
- b. Assistant City Manager Heath Lloyd (SPLOST VI and VII).
- c. Capital Improvements Projects Director Cristy Lawrence and staff.
  - i. Carol Moon, spoke re: the Hudson Hill Community Center project/scope, design, funding and schedule.
  - ii. Dan Reel, spoke re: the Grant Center Gymnasium project/scope, design, funding and schedule, adjacent to the Moses Jackson Center.
  - iii. Bryon Stiles, spoke re: the Delaware Center Renovation project/scope, design, funding and schedule.

Following Ms. Young's presentation, there were questions from Council Members.

Alderman Purtee has been looking at ways to improve recreation centers on the Southside. He envisions a multi-use, multi-cultural center for both youth and seniors. After several meetings with the residents on the Southside, he suggested using the old empty Kroger building as a multi-use facility. There could be a police department, recreational facilities for youth and seniors, plus various offices for City business, i.e. payment of utility bills. This could be an all-encompassed service center/recreational facility. Alderman Purtee suggested the City move towards these type of facilities throughout the City.

Alderman Leggett would like to see the Delaware Center renovation project packaged and used for other locations throughout the City. It would also be a good idea to have office space in the recreational centers where district Aldermen/Alderwomen can meet with the constituents to discuss issues.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz was pleased Ms. Young displayed the staff behind the scenes. She agreed with Alderman Purtee on obtaining the old empty Kroger building on the Southside for a service center/recreational facility. She requested a copy of the slide presentation from Ms. Young for Council.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely agreed with Alderman Purtee on the empty Kroger site, but if that building cannot be purchased, there is an old theater on Mohawk Street (across from Savannah Mall) that would be an excellent facility. She suggested the Council look at a model recreational facility in a

Mall like in Stonecrest, Georgia for ideas. It is family oriented, has theaters, a bowling alley, a water park and all the amenities for a recreational facility. The City should look at other various locations throughout the City of Savannah for opportunities to build unique recreational centers.

Alderwoman Lanier was pleased the Council was heard in reference to recreational centers. The Bayside/Westside Park has the razor fence that has been an issue. She would like to see one of the newly imagined parks there. She suggested the City start tracking their successes with the various programs. With the Arena coming, the City should highlight skating (ice or roller) and incorporate skating in some of the recreational centers and create opportunities for youth to become expert athletics in the field.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter sees this as an opportunity for the City to redesignate resources and move staff from rental spaces to the recreational facilities. The City should also think about serving The Highlands area in district 1. During the pandemic, little leagues have been unable to engage. She suggested the Community Services Department give consideration to the changing demographics of some areas as they move forward with Recreation Re-imagined plan. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter outlined additional services to be utilized as they create the Re-imagined Plan throughout the City.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked Ms. Young how soon will redevelopment of the Bowles C. Ford Park area begin. Mayor Johnson explained Bowles C. Ford Park was initially established as a multi-staged development but since that time, it was discovered the park was on a landfill. The landfill was not lined, consequently, there are only specific projects that are permissible on the site. The Park also has a retention pond which creates an alligator problem. Mayor Johnson instructed Mr. Health Lloyd to forward a copy of the report issued on Bowles C. Ford Park to Council Members.

Mayor Johnson added the City needs to have serious conversations with the County and the School Board when discussing recreation. There should not be a duplication of services when serving the same constituents. Since schools are in every neighborhood and not used in the evenings and on weekends, the City can create partnerships where the schools can be used as recreational facilities for youth and seniors. Some years ago, youth participated in a Youth Town Hall and expressed the centers were not fun so they don't use the facilities. This will be a good opportunity for the City to install additional outlets in the Centers and make sure WiFi is available at each facility. We also need to make sure the residents who live in the City get full benefit of the recreational facilities.

Following Mr. Lloyd's presentation, there was discussion/questions from Council Members.

Mayor Johnson asked Mr. Lloyd to provide the updates and slide presentation information to the Council. He requested a hard stop for a return in 51 minutes for the 2:00 p.m. regular meeting of Council.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz noted to Mr. Lloyd, the Summerside Extension previously mentioned by Alderwoman Gibson-Carter. He acknowledged the Summerside Extension. They are looking at a phased concept and he has heard the expectations of the Council.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely has concerns with The Grant Center. There will be a full scale basketball court, weight rooms, etc. but will it still be called The Grant Center. Mayor Johnson has committed to the community calling it The Grant Center. Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked Mr. Lloyd if that will be the case. Mr. Lloyd and his team did extensive background on Mr. Grant and will honor his legacy by maintaining the name as The Grant Center. If it be the will of Council the new gymnasium will be named The Grant Center.

Council determines the name of every place. At the beginning of this process, Mayor Johnson committed to Shawntay Grant, it will be forever be named The Grant Center. Other Aldermen/Alderwomen agreed with Mayor Johnson.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked if the existing building will remain in place while the new gymnasium is being built. Yes, the intention is to get the new gymnasium in operation prior to any demolishing of the existing building.

To Alderwoman Lanier, Mayor Johnson expressed a concern. The existing building would stay in place until the new gymnasium is completed so the youth will have a place to come and gather for recreational purposes.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz asked Alderman Leggett if the space he mentioned for the Aldermen/Alderwomen to meet with the public was specific to the Delaware Center. Yes, that space and any general space at community centers within the City. Although, he did see a specific space in the Delaware Center that could be used as office space.

Mayor Johnson thanked the Council and asked the IT Department upon return at 2:00 p.m. to only have Council and those participating in the immediate meeting to be on Zoom and put presenters and speakers in the waiting room.

[3. Panhandling Discussion](#)

[Exhibit 1: Document - Panhandling Campaign.pdf](#)

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

POSTPONED to the next meeting to hear the discussion, along with the Homeless Authority presentation.

[4. Canal District Master Plan Update](#)

[Exhibit 1: Presentation - Canal District Master Plan Update.pdf](#)

POSTPONED to the first meeting in October, due to feedback received by the City Manager.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Work Session at 1:13 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=gJ15V2Y3CfEn>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Initials: \_\_\_\_

