



DECEMBER 21, 2021, 12:30 p.m. - WORKSHOP and CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

CITY GOVERNMENT

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

OF THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

The work session and City Manager's briefing was held at 12:32 p.m. Mayor Johnson recognized Alderman Detric Leggett to offer an invocation.

PRESENT: Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding

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

Aldermanwoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2

Aldermanwoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1

Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2

Aldermanwoman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3

Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4, Vice-Chairman

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

Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

ALSO, PRESENT:

City Manager Joseph A. Melder

Chief of Staff Daphanie Williams

City Attorney Bates Lovett

Clerk of Council Mark Massey

Deputy Clerk of Council Margaret Fox

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Animal Control Ordinance](#)

ADDED:

[1. Update on Inclusionary Zoning.](#)

City Manager Melder gave a brief update on the Inclusionary Zoning Resolution. The Resolution is included in today's Regular Meeting Agenda for Council's consideration. Mr. Melder will direct staff to prepare a Workshop in January 2022 for Council to discuss Community Benefits and Inclusionary Zoning.

[2. Animal Control Ordinance.](#)

City Attorney Lovett explained and discussed in detail the Chatham County Animal Ordinance as it relates to the City's obligations. He suggested a tiered system to the County's ordinance and/or Council's consideration of the City having it's own Animal Ordinance.

Following the presentation, Council discussed and asked questions concerning the City's relationship with Chatham County's Animal Ordinance. Some topics discussed are listed below:

- Citizens want more restrictive rules concerning animal control and enforcement. If Council adopted Chatham County's Animal Ordinance today, can the Ordinance be revised later. He recommended the City supplement what the County is already doing (Alderman Purtee).
- The City's proposed Animal Ordinance language is more restrictive than the County's. There are serious feral cat problems within the City that should be addressed (Alderman Lanier).
- The County's animal ordinance has not been optimal for City residents. There are complaints of calls not being answered or the timeliness of responses. She would like to see the City's recommendations in writing and then hold the County accountable. The policies should reflect what the residents want in animal control (Alderman Wilder-Bryan).
- The City does not pay for animal control services to the County. Chatham County is understaffed. For enhanced/increased service, the City could fund two positions at the County to address animal control issues (Mayor Johnson).
- The City should pursue policies that lead to less animals being euthanized. There are nationwide best practices such as trap, neuter & release pilot and encourage the County to expand on the pilot. He volunteered to help connect the City to nationwide organizations to find what works best for Savannah (Alderman Palumbo).
- There have been on-going discussions for two years concerning animal control with animal advocates and Chatham County to no avail. She suggested an Advisory Board but her idea was rejected. She read an e-mail from Carol Williamson, a strong advocate from the City concerning Chatham County versus City of Savannah animal control ordinances (Alderman Gibson-Carter).

Council and Attorney Lovett further discussed the Chatham County Animal Control Ordinance versus the City of Savannah Animal Control Ordinance and how residents could be provided dependable and timely responses. Suggestions of using code compliance officers; a more fair ethical treatment of animals; partnering with the humane society; establishing an advisory board or group; and the cost of the City establishing it's own animal control department.

City Attorney Lovett asked Alderman Gibson-Carter to forward Ms. Williamson's email to him.

Mayor Johnson requested a written report of today's discussion with the next steps for Council's consideration from Attorney Lovett to be distributed to Council Members.

[2. Staggered Terms and Term Limits for City Council Members](#)

Following Attorney Lovett's review and discussion of a PowerPoint presentation, there was dialogue with City Manager Melder, Council Members and Attorney Lovett. Some matters listed below were debated/discussed:

- The community has expressed concerns with corruption and would like to see term limits for Council Members. This will also allow other residents to represent the districts. He agrees with staggered terms (Alderman Purtee).
- Council is changing, gentrification is taking place within the City. Residents will decide who will represent their district. How many years can a person be vested at the City. Suggested Council Members have an expense account (Alderman Miller Blakely).
- Voters will decide term limits. She will go along with whatever Council decides with regard to term limits. She feels it takes more than one term for an individual to make an impact/changes within their district (Alderman Wilder-Bryan).

Other discussion items included research of hub cities on staggered terms; consolidated governments; best practices; staggered terms as it relates to continuity; term limits as a protection for the community which ensures fairness and equity; and maintaining a democracy.

Mayor Johnson requested Attorney Lovett to further investigate other similar cities with regard to staggered terms and term limits within the State of Georgia and outside of Georgia and give Council a report on findings.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Workshop at 1:44 p.m.

A video recording of the workshop can be found by copying and inserting the link below in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=VYMIFZ7WR5C0>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Signature: _____

