



MARCH 24, 2022, 4:00 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 4:03 p.m. Mayor Johnson recognized Alderman Purtee 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

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. Housing Authority of Savannah Update](#)

[2022 HAS Workshop with City Council.pptx](#)

HEARD after Item #2.

Mayor Johnson gave a synopsis of the affordable housing challenges in the City and discussed the recent efforts to alleviate some of the housing shortage issues. City Manager Melder introduced

Executive Director Earline Davis of the Housing Authority of Savannah (HAS) to give the presentation on housing updates.

Following the presentation, there were discussions, some in question format others in discussion form. Ms. Davis answered Council Members questions and/or concerns:

- For public understanding, Mayor Johnson asked Ms. Davis to explain the relationships between HUD, the Housing Authority of Savannah (HAS) and the City of Savannah. He also asked her to explain funds received from HUD for repairs/maintenance on housing developments managed by Housing Authority of Savannah.
- Alderman Leggett asked Ms. Davis to explain the process of demolition and timeline for the Yamacraw Village housing development.
- Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked if market rents are charged in any of the housing authority developments; if and when Yamacraw Village is demolished, will it be replaced with affordable housing; and how many housing authority properties are slated for demolition in the future?
- Alderwoman Lanier received calls from constituents concerning problems with landlords not wanting to accept vouchers for rent payments. Will there be any policy initiatives in Savannah to address the discrimination by landlords on income source? She questioned why the public does not know about the homeownership program offered by HAS. She recommended the larger developments be divided into smaller projects so local contractors and DBEs will be able to participate. Alderwoman Lanier had concerns for her request made last year for the documents showing the sale of the Bartow property to the Salvation Army. She would still like a copy of the sale documents.
- Alderwoman Lanier expressed the need for rental housing in the city, and mentioned the recent Resolution passed by City Council to decrease the number of rental units in the city. Mayor Johnson explained the recent Resolution sent to the General Assembly was against the State taking away local control of allowing rental companies to create rental developments without any local control.
- Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked what if demolition is not approved by HUD for Yamacraw Village, what are HAS plans for the development? She asked about the composition, appointing authority, and number of members for the HAS Board. She also discussed numerous problems at Stillwell Towers: non-working elevators, plumbing and bed bugs. She asked how and when the conditions would be solved and recommended establishing a workable process for residents with problems to have their complaints resolved before calling Council Members. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter had other questions concerning the HAS banking accounts and sharing banking information with the City of Savannah.
- Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan raised a point of order while Alderwoman Gibson-Carter was speaking.
- Alderwoman Gibson-Carter discussed that HAS listened to the Feldwood residents' desire not to change the name and asked the difference of HAS not listening to the Yamacraw Village residents' desire for no demolition, and the residents in neighboring Augusta Avenue not wanting the Weeping Time land desecrated. She also expressed concern for the Indians to have a voice.
- Mayor Johnson raised a point of order.
- Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan stated the HAS office is in her district and she has a good rapport with the authority. If bug bites existed, the residents should send complaints to HAS caseworkers. She has visited Stillwell Towers and stated there are numerous residents who are sick and afraid. She asked if Adult Protective Custody has received any complaints from Stillwell Tower residents (no). She recommended solving complaints and not dwelling on the challenges already facing the at-risk residents.
- Alderwoman Gibson-Carter raised a point of order while Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan was speaking.
- While attending some of the meetings with residents of Yamacraw Village, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan stated, when and if Yamacraw Village is demolished by HUD, statements were made that HAS should have addressed issues sooner. She added, when/if the name is changed, the quality of life needs to be improved for the residents.

Mayor Johnson thanked Ms. Davis for the presentation. He asked Ms. Davis to provide Council Members with contact information of Resident Managers at each development to address residents concerns/complaints. He asked Council Members with questions to speak with Ms. Davis at the close of the meeting if they had any further questions.

Mayor Johnson will keep updated on the decisions of Yamacraw Village. He believes people need and deserve equitable housing and Yamacraw is sub-standard housing. The City and the Housing Authority of Savannah need and will do a better job of offering housing to residents.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely stated if Yamacraw was maintained, it would be equitable.

Mayor Johnson thanked Ms. Davis.

The PowerPoint presentation is available and on file in the Clerk of Council's office.

[2. Discussion Regarding Board Appointments](#)

[Available Appointments to Boards-2021 as of 03-18-2022.pdf](#)

HEARD before Item #1.

PRESENTED by Mayor Johnson. Only the Historic District Board of Review (HDBR) and Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) listings were considered.

Members of Council reviewed both lists and made recommendations for reappointment or appointment to each Board/Commission. The designated candidates will be placed on the regular meeting agenda for approval.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Workshop at 5:41 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=V7t37NPtenwU>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Signature: _____

