



## SAVANNAH CITY GOVERNMENT SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES

### COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

**MARCH 25, 2021 – 4:30 p.m.**

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the City Council Work Session and City Manager's Briefing was held via Zoom video communications at 4:30 p.m. Following the roll call, Mayor Johnson recognized Alderman Purtee to offer the invocation.

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

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

Alderman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2

Alderman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1

Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2

Alderman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3

Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4, Vice-Chairman

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

Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Acting City Manager Michael B. Brown

Assistant City Manager Health Lloyd

City Attorney Bates Lovett

Clerk of Council Mark Massey

Planning & Urban Design Director Bridget Lidy

**Workshop Agenda Items**

[1. Litigation \(4:30p.m. - 5:00p.m.\)](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to close the Work Session to conduct an Executive Session regarding litigation, Alderman Wilder-Bryan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Closed Executive Session began at 4:35 p.m.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to exit/close the Executive Session, Alderman Palumbo seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

There were no votes taken and the Executive Session ended at 4:50 p.m., whereupon the Mayor called for a ten-minute break.

The meeting reconvened at 5:01 p.m.

[2. Discussion Regarding Southside Vitality \(5:00p.m. - 6:00p.m.\)](#)

Acting City Manager Brown outlined the discussion topics included in the presentation. He introduced Assistant City Manager Health Lloyd and Planning & Urban Design Director Bridget Lidy as participants of the PowerPoint Slide Presentation.

Following the presentation there were questions and discussions from the Mayor and Aldermen/Aldermwomen.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz presided:

Alderman Purtee discussed the importance of connecting the different City areas (Districts). He would like to see more action in completing the projects.

Aldermwoman Miller Blakely had concerns and asked how the City would pay for the projects; the presentation showed projects which will be very costly. She asked if there are other city models. Mr. Brown answered, he suggests to conduct an executive session at the next meeting to discuss how to pay for the projects. He will make recommendations at the next meeting on how to proceed with some of the purchases for the projects. Mr. Brown cited an example off Washington Street at Habersham; a small strip of businesses with the concept.

Alderman Leggett asked Mr. Brown if this was a missed opportunity by not having the hotel/motel tax to fund the projects. Mr. Brown indicated he did make a proposal that was included, but the General Assembly Session is over and it's possible to revisit the hotel/motel tax next year. Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz agreed with Alderman Leggett and suggested the hotel/motel tax is a good discussion for extending projects down to and including the Southside.

Alderman Palumbo stressed the need for the City to have good walkable space outside of downtown; the City should do a better job of connecting the neighborhoods. He indicated the City should start collecting funds for surface parking to pay for some of the projects.

Aldermwoman Lanier likes the vision of the Southside Vitality plan. She spoke about prior meeting discussions pertaining to Federal Opportunity Zones where capital gains could be utilized. The concepts of economic development opportunities, density, vibrancy, and connectivity are concepts she encourages and asked for the Westside. There is a similar project being developed in the Highlands using these same concepts. The City should be consistent and provide this concept to each side of Savannah and include the residents in the development.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz thanked Mr. Brown, Mr. Lloyd, Ms. Lidy and Alderman Purtee for the update on the Windsor Forest Golden Age Center being extended to 2025.

Aldermwoman Gibson-Carter asked Mr. Brown what is the cost and how the projects would be funded. Mr. Brown answered, the City will need to figure it out, some could have been included in the Bells Landing project; before the executive session, he will see if there is any way to make adjustments, and some may be funded with SPLOST. Mr. Brown would like the Council to discuss cost and funding in executive sessions.

Aldermwoman Gibson-Carter stated, if there is no budget or timeline, the City could utilize the work session time more efficiently. Previously, to get items on the agenda, there was a work session topic first. There was never a work session topic for Southside Vitality Plan. However, there are six Districts and she would like to see Council prioritize how the City approaches these projects. Aldermwoman Gibson-Carter read a listing and description of Council work session topics to be considered; and mentioned she was not pleased with action taken in the police department with the appointment of the Deputy Police Chief.

Alderman Palumbo called for point of order.

Mayor Johnson rejoined the work session.

Mayor Johnson cautioned Aldermwoman Gibson-Carter personnel matters are not discussed in work sessions.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the work session at 6:15 p.m.

The audio recordings of the work sessions can be found by copying and inserting the below links in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=vWEtkeWL8gLW>

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=HcVwOhs06w6s>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

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

Initials: \_\_\_\_

