



OCTOBER 28, 2021, 4:00 p.m. - WORKSHOP and CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

CITY GOVERNMENT

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

OF THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the work session of the City Council was held at 4:01 p.m., via Zoom video communications. Mayor Johnson recognized Alderswoman Bernetta B. Lanier to offer the invocation.

PRESENT: Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding

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

Alderswoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2

Alderswoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1

Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2

Alderswoman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3

Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4, Vice-Chairman

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

Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

ALSO, PRESENT:

City Manager Joseph A. Melder

City Attorney Bates Lovett

Clerk of Council Mark Massey

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Presentation of the Racial, Equity and Leadership \(REAL\) Task Force Final Report](#)

[Exhibit 1: REAL Final Presentation.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson provided detailed information on the decision to establish the task force, the individuals volunteering, and the final racial equity document.

PRESENTED by Mayor Johnson, along with the Chair of the Savannah Racial Equity and Leadership Task Force and former Mayor Otis Johnson, Attorney, author and social critic Dr. Lloyd Johnson, Executive Director of Step Up Savannah Alicia M. Johnson, Founder of Bluknowledge LLC Dr. Erika D. Tate, a representative of Savannah State Shykeria Edwards, REACH representative Armand Turner, Healthy Savannah representative Tiffany Pertillar, Executive Director of the Housing Authority

of Savannah Earline Davis, and Executive Director of Coastal GA Indicators Coalition Lizann Roberts.

Following the presentations there was a question and discussion session from Council Members.

- Fairness and justice is not always in place so how do we get values injected (instilled) in our youth and the decision makers to bring about racial equity (Alderswoman Wilder-Bryan).
- The current Council must demonstrate racial equity by prioritizing allocation of resources and finances, build in equity in all decisions to minimize bias and state/declare racial equity as a value (Alderswoman Lanier).
- Various topics presented should be a separate subject for future workshops (Alderman Leggett).
- Pleased to have an actual document to start the conversations on equity, race and equality. Thanked all members of the task force for their outstanding work (Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz).
- The final request is for the City Council to create a Resolution indicating a commitment to move forward with a racial equity agenda (former Mayor Otis Johnson).
- Facts are in, now it's time to do the work to make change (Alderswoman Miller Blakely).
- City Manager Melder was asked how he feels about getting the work done on establishing racial equity (Alderswoman Wilder-Bryan).
- Going forward, we should look internally as we approach this work. Prior to adopting a Resolution, she would like the current administration to make changes within before calling on others. Savannah had prior African American leadership, if we want change, we must be the change (Alderswoman Gibson-Carter).

Mayor Johnson stated, Savannah is fair but not fair to all, equitable, but not equitable to all, equal but not equal for all. We have perceived, we have believed and now quantified and documented inequity. Now, what will Savannah do with what is now confirmed. It will take a city-wide effort, not just the City of Savannah. It will take a multi-jurisdictional approach. At the November 9, 2021, regular meeting, Council will be asked to adopt the racial equity plan and ask the City Manager to put into action a plan to address issues as it pertains to the City's budget.

Mayor Johnson thanked every task force member for the work put forth in creating the racial equity plan for the City of Savannah. He thanked the SABELO Foundation and The Center for Southern Equity for partnering with the City, along with a few local organizations to finance the project. Savannah now has a Plan.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Workshop at 6:03 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=twjdhi8ooR3Z>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Signature: _____

