



February 20, 2019 Council Workshop

Savannah City Government

SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES

COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

February 20, 2018 – 10:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Pro-Tem Carol Bell, Presiding

Aldermen: Brian Foster, Bill Durrence, John Hall, Tony Thomas, Estella Shabazz (arrived at 10:20 a.m.)

Jen Herman, Interim City Attorney

Bret Bell, Assistant to the City Manager

ABSENT: Mayor Eddie DeLoach

Aldermen: Julian Miller, Van Johnson, II

Rob Hernandez, City Manager

William Shearouse, Assistant City Attorney

Bret Bell, Assistant to the City Manager, welcomed everyone to the meeting and briefly reviewed the agenda.

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. 4th Quarter / Year-End Public Safety Report and 911 Update](#)

[Exhibit 1: 911 Transition Update.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: 2019 Savannah Police Department Annual Review.pdf](#)

[2018 Savannah Fire Rescue Annual Review.pptx](#)

Savannah Police Department

Chief Roy Minter, Savannah Police Department (SPD), presented the 2018 Savannah Police Department annual report. He began the presentation with the crime statistical data stating there was a decrease in violent, property and part I crime. He stated the report shows a nine year trend of crime in the City. There was a decrease in homicides and robberies. Two areas the department is continuing to keep an eye on that had increased activity are aggravated assaults with guns and aggravated assaults without weapons. He stated there was a decrease in commercial and residential burglaries, and a decrease in theft from vehicles and auto theft. Chief Minter stated one of the significant issues we are continuing to face is weapons being stolen out of vehicles, this is a regional, and national issue. He stated the department is continuing to promote this as far as people being cognizant of their weapons, through social media and public service announcements.

Alderman Durrence asked are there any consequences for people who have made no effort to secure their guns. Chief Minter replied there are no criminal consequences but there are civil consequences.

Chief Minter continued the presentation stating citations for the new marijuana ordinance. In 2018, 187 citations were issued since July 1. There have been 66 issued so far in 2019.

Alderman Thomas stated when Council was at the State Legislature, he raised the issue of reckless ownership of guns, and it seemed like there was no interest in touching that issue. He stated he feels there should be some serious consequences for the matter as it hand ties us.

Alderman Foster asked if the County numbers were taken out of these categories from 2009-2018. Chief Minter replied yes.

Alderman Foster stated he finds it interesting that the numbers for theft from vehicle in 2009 was 2,100 and dropped to 1,300 in 2018 and asked if there was a reason the SPD knew of for the drop. Chief Minter corrected his previous statement stating he believes the departments were still merged at that time and those numbers include the City and County totals.

Alderman Thomas stated he is concerned about guns and asked Chief Minter if he has stories that can be connected to the guns stolen from cars that can then be connected to crime stories, as those are the stories that need to be told because that relates it more to the real problem the City has.

Chief Minter continued the presentation stating the homicide clearance rate for 2018 is still pretty good at 93%. The national average is about 64. There have been seven homicides so far this year, two cases are going to the Grand Jury.

Alderman Thomas stated three of those homicides are in the area he represents, and he asked how many of those have been cleared. Chief Minter replied the SPD is currently following up on recent leads for the one at 125 Tibet Avenue that occurred on January 1st; the one that occurred at the Days Inn on Abercorn Street will be going to Grand Jury; and the last one that occurred on February 17th SPD is still following up on leads.

Alderman Hall stated he had two homicides in one of his neighborhoods, and asked what is happening there.

Chief Minter provided Council with the following brief overview of all homicides:

- January 1st - Tibet Avenue: following leads
- January 2nd - 2501 Bull Street at the Crayola Club: still looking and searching for additional information
- January 9th - 31 Chatham Street (Cuyler Cook): looking for leads
- January 9th - classified as a homicide: going to Grand Jury
- January 25th - stabbing suspect was taken into custody
- Days Inn - going to grand jury
- February 17th - 10700 Abercorn (Marcus Drummer): SPD is still looking into it

Alderman Hall stated at the end of last year and first part of this year in the East Savannah community there were two homicides and asked where SPD is on those.

Chief Minter stated he will get some additional information and follow up with him on those.

Chief Minter continued the presentation stating the Violent Crimes Task Force has been working hard over the past month and half. In 2018 there were 101 felony arrests. So far in the first part of this year there have already been 93 felony arrests. He stated recently the task force has been more proactive as opposed to reactive and have been putting officers out on a nightly basis hitting the streets hard.

Alderwoman Bell asked does that account for the 61 misdemeanor arrests. Chief Minter replied yes.

Alderman Thomas stated those numbers don't make sense. He asked what's different and if personnel was added? Chief Minter replied the department changed its deployment strategy. In the past the entire task force was deployed all at once, now we have broken them up in smaller groups and have them out on a more regular basis as opposed to a periodic basis. Alderman Thomas asked what area the task force covers and if

those numbers are for Chatham County or regional. Chief Minter stated the numbers are for City of Savannah only. Alderman Thomas stated he doesn't understand the numbers, and asked for more information.

Alderman Foster agreed with Alderman Thomas stating he remembers seeing in the news and on the website large numbers of gang and drug arrests from the Task Force. He stated it looks like we really had a push at the beginning of the year to get people off the streets before crimes were committed. He asked if Chief Minter is saying there has been a focus before they are out doing something. Chief Minter replied yes.

Alderman Hall asked if the 2018 number is 101, and if that is for the entire year? Chief Minter replied yes. Alderman Hall clarified the numbers for 2019 stating it seems like we are being very aggressive.

Alderman Foster stated hopefully that will decline because criminals are off the streets.

Alderman Durrence stated it looks good to him assuming that this is an increase in enforcement rather than criminal activity.

Chief Minter continued the presentation providing Council with a brief overview of traffic enforcement activities stating fatalities for 2017 were 24, and those numbers are down to 14 for 2018. Hands free citations in 2018 were 864, and so far in 2019, 83 citations have been issued.

Chief Minter discussed the Berkshire recommendations that have been completed which include:

- Reinforcing the importance of patrol and getting involved in community
- Improving physical security for customer service staff at headquarters
- Continuing to follow up on salary compression and modifying staffing
- Centralizing domestic violence investigations

Alderwoman Bell asked what is the hold-up on some of these recommendations. Chief Minter replied some of them the department needs to get some things in place before being able to move forward, like the records management systems, and some are policy matters that we are working on with Human Resources. Alderwoman Bell asked that Council be updated when items are moved from the in process to completed list.

Alderman Thomas asked about the tracking warrants recommendation which stated the Sheriff declined. Chief Minter replied a discussion was held with Sheriff Wilcher and he has declined the offer to host that and so the department will need to look at alternatives.

Chief Minter reviewed training highlights for 2018 which include:

- Leadership in Police Organizations
- Critical Incident Management
- Crisis Intervention Team Training programs

Chief Minter stated technology improvements include the purchase of a system called IA Pro, which is used for Internal Investigations.

He then moved on to relationship-based policing, and taking community based policing to the next level. Chief Minter stated the department has started a Top 10 Most Wanted page which is being pushed out to the public. He stated when this page was rolled out it helped with the capture of a fugitive in less than 24 hours with the help of a tip.

Alderman Hall asked how this is being put out. Chief Minter replied print and social media. Alderman Hall asked if the City can go to billboards. Chief Minter stated they intend to use that as a second part of the program.

Alderwoman Bell commended Chief Minter on his relationship building stating he is everywhere.

Chief Minter continued stating the department is building strong relationships through Facebook, not just the department but each precinct. He stated the Facebook page has been up and running for a couple weeks and it has had positive feedback. In addition, the SPD launched a Nextdoor page on February 11th. Chief Minter stated this will allow precinct captains and neighborhood resource officers to communicate on social media.

Alderman Foster suggested putting the phone number of each precinct captain on the webpage not just the email as it should be on the front page of the website where it can be easily located. Chief Minter stated the front page of the website has recently been redesigned and all that information is now there.

Chief Minter continued the presentation stating the department is attending a significant number of community events, including Roll Call in the Streets, recently in the Highlands, in addition to Coffee with a Cop. He stated the Citizens Police Academy will be starting back up on February 21st.

Alderwoman Bell asked what the difference is between the Police Activities League and PAL Summer Camp. Chief Minter referred to Major Devonn Adams who stated the PAL Summer Camp will be going on for the 90 days of summer while the kids are out of school. He stated the PAL national certification was recently reinstated which will be a year round program. Major Adams added as it relates to the Violent Crimes Task Force, 2018 was a trying year for the department during the demerger. He stated now there is coverage seven days a week and officers are more dedicated which explains a lot of the differences in the numbers.

Alderman Thomas asked if there was a task force in 2017 when the departments were merged. Major Adams replied no, it wasn't a permanent task force, it was reactive and put together when something happened. In November 2018 a committed full-time task force was put together. Alderman Thomas asked if that takes patrol officers away from precincts and neighborhoods. Major Adams replied no, the task force moves around the City as well.

Alderwoman Shabazz asked Major Adams to discuss the functions of the Police Athletic League versus Police Activity League. Major Adams stated initially the Police Athletic League focused on sports as that was a great way to attract youth. However National PALs, which is now the Police Athletic Activity League, felt everyone wasn't being reached so everything was encompassed into one program with focuses on mentoring and tutoring as well.

Chief Minter continued the presentation discussing recruitment and retention stating there are currently 536 authorized sworn positions, there are currently 38 vacancies, 48 officers in training, and 1 pending separation.

Alderman Thomas asked of the 48 officers in training how many are capable of driving a car by themselves and be on patrol. Chief Minter replied none. Alderman Thomas stated therefore it's really 83 officers that are not on the streets. Chief Minter stated they are on the streets. Alderman Thomas asked if they are doing ride-alongs with other officers. Chief Minter replied yes. Alderman Thomas asked how many are on leave for military, health, etc. that are counted in 536. Chief Minter replied there are 4 on administrative leave, 8 on restricted leave, 15 on military, and 9 on FMLA leave. Alderman Thomas stated that is another 36 that are not in the mix which brings the total to 71 officers that are not on the streets. He stated Council needs to understand the level of officers that are patrolling the numbers presently.

Alderman Durrence discussed the total number of vacancies and actual number of officers on patrol, stating he is concerned by the total number of people not available due to vacancies, leave and training.

Alderwoman Bell asked at what percentage does the City overhire? Assistant Chief Gavin replied the department has been approved to hire up to 25.

Alderwoman Bell asked should the department analyze that looking at the trends over the past few years and determine if that number needs to be increased for overhires. Chief Minter replied that is part of what staff is looking at for future academies. Alderman Thomas stated of those 48 in training, some of them aren't going to make it.

Alderman Hall asked how recruiting is going. Chief Minter replied the SPD recruitment numbers are strong.

Chief Minter briefly reviewed officers in training and academy classes that are coming up in 2019, which includes four academy classes scheduled for this year.

Alderwoman Shabazz asked where most of the trainees are coming from, whether it's the military or other departments. Chief Gavin replied stating a few years ago we were pushing a national look that has now been pulled in to our MSA for people with local roots as the department wants more people who live here that represent our community.

Alderwoman Shabazz stated with the breakdown of gender and race, can you give us a report on the upcoming class, how does our police force look in reference to our City. Chief Gavin stated the department has been concentrating on minority hiring to make it more representative of that.

He stated he doesn't have the exact number of breakdowns but they do track that and it has increased. Chief Gavin will provide the last few classes to Council.

Alderwoman Shabazz stated staff needs to work on the overall attitude of our officers when dealing with the public.

Alderman Foster stated in the past when he asked if the City hires already trained officers, he was told no by the previous chief. He asked why the City doesn't want to do that.

Chief Gavin replied that's an open option to hire certified officers, we just want to make sure we aren't hiring a problem officer and their backgrounds are clear. He stated there is a level of competitiveness which is a continual process.

Alderman Foster asked if there is a policy that stated the City will not hire fully trained and certified officers from other areas. Chief Gavin replied there is no policy.

Alderwoman Bell asked if the 12 hour shift prevented us from competing. Chief Minter replied there is a desire to move to a 12 hour shift. A study and assessment has been done and we are moving forward patrol officers to that effective March 3rd. Alderwoman Bell asked if the officers have been provided that information. Chief Minter replied yes, a PowerPoint presentation and schedule will go out to precincts this week.

Alderman Thomas asked how vacancies are managed. Chief Minter replied staff looks at where the critical needs are and moves officers as needed.

Chief Minter concluded the presentation by briefly reviewing the recruitment numbers for applications.

Savannah Fire Rescue

Interim Chief Mark Renew, Savannah Fire Rescue (SFR), provided Council with an overview of the 2018 Annual Savannah Fire Rescue review. He stated the City and all of our officials should be proud of the department, as it has an ISO I certification and only 2% ever achieve that status. In addition the department is an all hazards capable department which means it is equipped to handle Hazmat, heavy rescue and other types of incidents. Chief Renew stated the City has 15 stations, 336 total employees, and 2 heavy rescues until Rescue 2 is taken out of service on March 1. He stated an anonymous customer service survey was given to citizens which the department received an overall approval rating of 96%. There were approximately 7,000 respondents, as surveys were given out at community meetings and online.

Chief Renew briefly reviewed the SFR organizational chart stating there are two assistant chiefs and then it breaks down into battalions.

The department facilities include 15 stations; a service support center (which will be moving to the Station 9 community room); the Fire Prevention Office; the Training Center off Sallie Mood, and the Emergency Command Center. Chief Renew stated they are working to make the agency more efficient through staff reductions, including the removal of Engine 16 and Marine 1, and the removal of Rescue 2 from service.

Alderman Foster stated there was a discussion held last year about having a conversation with the Georgia Ports Authority because Marine 1 was provided by the State because of the Port. He stated they paid for the boat but did not pay for staffing. He asked if those conversations have continued with the Port. Chief Renew stated the City Manager has been in communication with the Ports and Elba Island about funding. He stated the most important thing about Marine 1 that needs to be noted is that it provides us with an endless supply of water for the downtown area. He continued stating they have also been discussing collaborative ideas with the SPD to possibly let it be utilized by the Dive Team as a method of public safety in an attempt to maximize the use of the boat. He concluded stating they are exploring options to make it more used and get costs supplemented.

Chief Renew briefly reviewed the department accomplishments which include:

- 7,759 calls for service (905 fire incidents), a 15% increase from 2017
- Sweetwater Station #15 opened in December 2018
- Scheduled replacements
- Cancer benefits for firefighters – a State mandate
- Trainings, including the implementation of MDTs (mobile data terminals)
- Currently implementing an AED program that will be in all City buildings

He stated the department is improving its community engagement and is continuing to do more.

Chief Revenew provided Council with a breakdown of the incident response summary from 2015-2018. He stated there is a large anomaly due to Hurricanes Matthew and Irma as there were more calls for service during those times. He briefly reviewed a list of the calls broken down stating there were seven fatalities total, 12 fire related injuries, and approximately \$2 million in property damage. He also showed a breakdown of the incident types stating building fires tend to be the primary call.

Alderman Thomas asked if information is kept on non-profit calls for service, as he would like to see how many times the fire department was deployed to institutions that don't pay any type of tax. Chief Revenew replied he's sure they can break that out, and will get that information to Council.

Mr. Bell added the real cost of fire is in the 24/7 readiness, not the fire.

Alderman Thomas stated the fire fee which was highly unpopular across the entire City did have some merit that people need to participate in it. He stated he is not advocating for a fire fee he just wants to see what level of service is provided.

Chief Revenew continued the presentation providing an overview of the Fire Marshal's Office, stating they do an amazing job of commercial inspections. Currently they are preparing for St. Patrick's Day, making sure establishments are providing a safe environment, and maintaining occupancy approvals. He stated in addition they do a lot of reviews on new construction and permits.

Chief Revenew briefly reviewed future initiatives which include:

- **Community risk assessment**
 - Identify and Label "Risk Levels" by parcel via Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- **Standards of cover**
 - Identify and update "Response Levels". Internally for Resource Deployment/ Externally for E911
 - Update Performance Baseline and Benchmarks. Meet National Standards & Industry Best Practices
- **Strategic plan**
 - Recruit Community Leaders to participate in SFR's 2020-2024 Strategic Planning Process
- **Expanding community outreach plan**
 - Fire Safety House Repairs
 - Redesign SFR Website
 - Distribute Customer Satisfaction Surveys during incidents
- **Improve organizational morale**
 - Compensation & Class Study
 - Station Improvements
 - Communication
 - Training Concerns

Chief Revenew added that he met with all staff at all stations and one of the biggest concerns is that firefighters have to attend training on their own time. Alderwoman Bell asked if there is anything Council can do to assist. Chief Revenew stated staffing so they can attend training without having to do it on their own time. Additionally, funding for national training and networking.

Alderman Thomas asked if mutual aid sends an apparatus and then relies on a volunteer firefighter to show up to operate it. Chief Revenew replied mutual aid is just an agreement that says we can cross those jurisdictional boundaries, it doesn't automatically initiate a response each time.

Alderman Thomas briefly discussed volunteers and apparatus of mutual aid. Chief Revenew stated we are the most equipped and best trained department in a fifty mile radius and must rely on ourselves. He stated he doesn't know any other agency in the area that has the technical training and equipment that the City of Savannah has.

Alderman Hall stated he disagrees with Alderman Thomas about volunteers, stating they carry radios and when calls go out they go to the scene not the apparatus. Volunteers are gung-ho and always ready.

Chief Revenew continued the presentation inviting Council to attend the 200 Club 2019 Annual Valor Award Dinner on February 28, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. The event will be held at the Morris Center located at 10 East Broad Street. Savannah Fire Rescue Captain Justin Crain is an honoree. He is being recognized for rescuing people that were in distress in the Forest River by jumping in and risking his own life to save them.

911 Transition Update

Daphanie Williams, Special Projects Coordinator with the City Manager's Office, provided Council with an update on the 911 Transition. Ms. Williams stated in January 2018 Council approved an Inter-Governmental Agreement with Chatham County concerning the E-911 Center. She stated the purpose of the agreement provided that for at least the next 10 years Chatham County would assume financial responsibility over the center effective January 1, 2019. She stated there was a general understanding that Chatham County would work with its municipalities and stakeholders to come up with an operating plan, which was submitted to the State of Georgia and has since been approved. She noted a copy of the report can be found on Chatham County's website. Ms. Williams stated Chatham County has also implemented a new governance structure, with them (Chatham County) being at the top as they are now fully responsible for the 911 center. She stated there is an executive advisory board, recommended review committee and a multi-disciplinary operations committee. All of the decisions related to 911 will be reviewed in this structure as the set-up is intended to ensure all stakeholders are at the table and involved in the process. Ms. Williams stated the Executive Advisory Board is the steering committee, which has about 13 representatives to include: the County Manager as the Chair, and the Savannah City Manager as the Vice Chair. She stated the board is responsible for establishing the strategic direction for 911. The Recommendations Review Committee which includes police and fire chiefs, provides recommendations to the Executive Advisory Board. In addition there are six district specific operations committees, these individuals are involved in the day-to-day operations and oversee workflows and ensure consistency of operations.

Ms. Williams discussed what has occurred internally to transition to Chatham County. As of December 31, 2018, there were:

- 104 positions
 - 18 were vacancies
 - 79 were transferred to the County December 2018
 - 6 will transfer in May 2019 for vesting purposes
 - 1 will remain with the City and work in a different capacity

Ms. Williams stated the largest component of the transition was technology, and the migration of the police CAD system to County servers, this was completed in December 2018. The transfer of all other systems was completed in January 2019. The official name they will be operating under is Chatham 911 Communications Services, which is operated out of the Chatham County Annex on Police Memorial Drive. She stated they are still using space at the Savannah Civic Center as a backup and they are currently searching for a new Director which was advertised in January 2019.

Alderman Foster asked is it correct that the City will no longer contribute any general fund revenue. Ms. Williams replied that is correct. Alderman Foster also asked if the fees collected from cellphones will be what funds the facility. Ms. Williams replied yes and the County will be responsible for any shortfall.

Alderman Thomas, referring to Chief Minter, stated he wanted to drill down a little into the gang issue. He stated the City has been really secretive about gangs for years. Under former Chief Lumpkin it was admitted for the first time. He asked how many gangs are in Savannah that the department knows of. Chief Minter replied in 2019 there are 16 identified gangs in the City and 260 identified gang members in the database.

2. NewZO Update

[Exhibit 1: NewZo Update \(Presentation\).pdf](#)

Melanie Wilson, Metropolitan Planning Commission Executive Director, stated both staffs have worked tirelessly to get to this point to having a document for you to review. She thanked Bridget, Marcus and all staff from both organizations who have worked on this.

Bridget Lidy, Director of Urban Planning, stated last week staff presented at the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) and during that process the goal was to have them approve NewZO. Ms. Lidy stated a lot of public feedback was received and the recommendation of the MPC was to continue the matter for 30 days before it moves to Council for consideration. This would give staff time to address some of the concerns that were raised. She stated today Council will be provided with background and an update.

Marcus Lotson, MPC Director of Development Services, stated the February 12th Planning Commission hearing was an excellent meeting with a lot of good public feedback. He stated staff often talks about how long this has been going on as the original zoning ordinance was adopted in 1960. Mr. Lotson stated after NewZO is adopted staff will continue to work on it which is an ongoing process because even when you roll out a

new document there are still a lot of changes that have to take place. He stated staff has made a lot of effort in this iteration to make sure we have fewer and fewer non-conforming properties. In 1997, the Planning Commission hired a planning consultant to critique the ordinance and the same issues were still coming up. One of the big take aways was when a staff and board has to process a large number of zoning changes, the burden keeps staff and the Commission from doing real planning. Mr. Lotson continued stating the first public meeting to discuss an ordinance update occurred in 2007. Between that time and 2011 there were 75 meetings leading up to Draft 1 which was published in 2011. Since that time, up until now, there have been over 350 meetings surrounding NewZO.

Mr. Lotson stated some of the big issues staff has been tackling include:

- Reduce Nonconformity
 - Non conformity is substantially reduced by NewZO
 - Particularly in residential communities with historic development patterns characterized by small lots with or without lane access.
- Reduce Requests for Variances (Lot Area, Lot Width, Lot Coverage, Parking Requirements)
 - NEWZO proposes lower parking minimum requirements and increases distance-based thresholds for parking sharing:
 - 1,300 feet in Downtown parking district
 - 600 feet for other non-residential
 - 300 feet for other residential
 - NewZO applies appropriate dimensional standards to residential properties making more properties conforming
- Improve Usability of the Ordinance
- Reduce Impacts of Incompatible Zoning
- Promote higher residential density where appropriate
- Provide Framework for Improving Neglected Communities

Alderman Thomas asked does this ordinance being proposed address the proliferation of group homes in neighborhoods. Mr. Lotson replied group homes are covered, there are a number of different types covered in the current draft of the zoning ordinance. Alderman Thomas stated he is only referencing residential communities and asked if there is a requirement for a public notification process and public hearing in which neighbors are made aware. Mr. Lotson replied within the special use category public notification is required as is a public hearing. Alderman Thomas requested a list of those requests that have been made.

Mr. Lotson continued stating some areas of the City have not benefited from neighborhood specific planning efforts. In conjunction with NewZO, planning efforts will commence for these neighborhoods as they align with City of Savannah priorities – specifically areas like the gap area between Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Mid-City on Montgomery Street. He added there is definitely a need for some neighborhood scaled planning. He continued stating the zoning map for the City of Savannah is being converted in this process. While most zoning classifications primary change is in nomenclature, a process has to be put in place to review requests for zoning changes prior to the effective date of the ordinance. He stated the zoning map has been simplified a lot which is color coded and easier for the layman to read and use on the digital platform. In addition a process will be put in place for people to submit feedback if they feel their property has been improperly converted.

Ms. Lidy stated Council has been provided with the executive summary which breaks down the ABCs of the ordinance. There are 13 chapters/articles each one focusing on a different aspect of the zoning code. She stated within our code right now, we have several different use tables, there will be a specific use with a specific condition associated with that definition. There are both business uses and residential uses. Ms. Lidy stated staff is consolidating this so all zoning districts can be represented in one place. All districts will be simplified into one table. In addition there will be a table that outlines when meetings are needed, to include neighborhood meetings, to ensure proper public notification occurs. She stated staff looked at the base parking standards, and made some significant changes to specific uses, and added in standards for bicycles to facilitate our community to be a healthier place to work and live.

Alderman Thomas asked about the change in single-family parking being changed from 2 to 1 per unit. Mr. Lotson stated this applies to new subdivisions, not existing. The market drives a lot of the demand and this addresses the minimum.

Alderman Durrence stated in some of these requirements one of the things people could do is count on street parking. Mr. Lotson replied that is no longer being proposed.

Alderman Hall stated right now he has some neighborhoods with no curbing, and if a house is built on an existing lot where would these cars park. Mr. Lotson stated that may be a Property Maintenance issue. Ms. Lidy stated she will get with him later to discuss the issue.

Ms. Lidy continued the presentation briefly reviewing the map simplification, and the proposed zoning map changes.

Mr. Lotson stated everything is not in a place where it needs to be in the current ordinance, the NewZo will streamline everything and put it together.

Ms. Lidy stated the City is proceeding with purchasing EnCode. The code will be online and it will have an interactive map where citizens can type in an address and it will pull up all the requirements related to the zoning for that particular property. She stated the goal is to get a proposal to Council in March.

Mr. Lotson stated the districts in NewZO compared to the districts they are replacing are fewer because they have been consolidated into fewer districts. He stated hopefully this will be easier to understand and by reducing the number of districts and categorizing them it will make it a friendlier document to read.

Alderman Thomas asked would this rezoning affect a person's use or are they grandfathered in. Mr. Lotson replied anything that is established now going forward is grandfathered in and will be part of the adoption resolution, anything going forward would fall under the new ordinance and Council will decide the process for that. Right now staff is slating for an effective date in July. Council could decide when the effective date actually is. But in terms of the adoption resolution it is currently being drafted by the consultant.

Alderman Hall asked for clarification on residential mobile home parks. Mr. Lotson replied they could be nonconforming if established prior to zoning, so they are allowed to continue to operate. He stated the other thing is they could be illegal which is an enforcement issue.

Ms. Lidy stated staff did meet with Code Compliance about nonconforming mobile homes in order to address some of the issues.

Alderman Hall stated some of these mobile homes have been added on to and asked how this is being addressed. Mr. Lotson stated, without seeing a specific example, typically if someone has done that they have done that outside of the building permit process and have not gone through the proper process. Ms. Lidy stated she will send him the code enforcement section. Alderman Hall stated the area he is referring to is on Pennsylvania Avenue and asked Council to ride by and look at them.

Alderman Foster asked how does this take in the various neighborhoods like the Victorian and Mid-City. He asked will they all be similar. Mr. Lotson replied stating in the current ordinance, they all have separate zoning ordinances that apply to each. In the NewZO, they have been combined into Traditional Residential 1, 2 and 3, so you will have a more consistent group of zoning classification. He concluded stating they worked closely with those neighborhoods.

Ms. Lidy stated the existing codes will be found in the overlay chapters, if there is ever a conflict in the base district the overlay district will trump.

Mr. Lotson stated the next step for staff will be to respond back to the Planning Commission and to the public comments.

Ms. Lidy briefly reviewed the areas of the Strategic Plan in relation to the NewZO and how it will be addressed as follows:

- **Public Safety**
 - **Call Response** - density and infill
 - **Residents feeling safe in their neighborhoods** - facilitate infill construction, increase density and mix of uses (eyes on the street)
- **Neighborhood Revitalization**
 - **Reestablish and preserve neighborhoods** - better and more flexible design standards, zoning that better suits historic neighborhoods
 - **Mobility and neighborhood connectivity** – parking reforms, bicycle parking
 - **Access to quality housing** - design standards and higher density, more affordable housing
- **Economic Strength and Poverty Reduction**
 - **Commercial corridors** - allow a greater range of uses and mixed uses, create dedicated districts for historic commercial areas
 - **Resilient diversified economy** - allow a wider range of uses in different places, which supports entrepreneurship, allows people to live closer to work, and creates more vibrant public spaces
- **Good Government**
 - **Organizational culture** – create an ordinance that is much more straightforward, understandable and user-friendly
 - **Efficient government operations** - fewer variances and rezoning requests
 - **City code update and review** - NewZO

Ms. Lidy briefly summarized stakeholder collaborations since 2018 stating three draft documents have been released: Staff has been taking in some additional feedback and comments since the MPC meeting last week, and there have been several stakeholders meetings. Ms. Lidy took an opportunity to thank the Chamber of Commerce who helped schedule individual meetings with different groups. She stated in addition to individual groups they have reached out to different neighborhoods that have contacted staff with questions and concerns. 60,000 + letters were sent out to all persons that receive a City of Savannah water bill. She also thanked the Office of Public Communication for putting the information out on the City's government channel and social media. Several public meetings were held to include: open houses; district meetings; town halls; Planning Commission meetings; and City Council workshops.

Ms. Lidy stated at the last MPC meeting the following concerns were raised:

- Neighborhood notification and distance requirements
- Application completeness
- Grandfathering of off-street parking spaces
- Interim protection when applying for historic district designation
- Discrepancies on large-scale development
- Composition of new HP Commission
- Aesthetic issues related to signage and impervious pavement
- Review procedures for Airport

Alderman Durrence stated the language grandfathering of off-street parking spaces may not be clear as there are some businesses that have existed since before a zoning ordinance. He asked should we continue to grandfather when the use changes dramatically for the property.

Ms. Lidy clarified that these were just points that were brought up at the MPC meeting and are things staff will be working through.

Mr. Lotson added that some can be easily addressed and others are policy issues that will have to be addressed later.

Ms. Lidy briefly reviewed the current timeline as follows:

- MPC Public Meeting: March 12
- City Council Zoning Hearing: March 28
- City Council 1st Reading: April 11
- City Council 2nd Reading: April 25
- Educate Residents & Staff: April-June
- Implementation of Code & Map: July 1
- Rollout of EnCode: July 1

Alderwoman Bell asked will staff provide Council some time to digest and get back to them. Ms. Lidy replied yes, and if individual meetings are needed that can also occur.

Alderwoman Bell stated having heard the Mayor's State of City address last night she wonders how this relates to the development on Abercorn corridor and the City's plan and how this would impact this process. Mr. Lotson replied both of those are really big ideas that we will have to tackle. As it relates to the Abercorn corridor all we have done is placed what staff believes is the appropriate zoning classifications and whatever the future development is will be driven by that. Mr. Lotson added that Council can use zoning to manage growth. Ms. Lidy stated a good example of that is the Martin Luther King/Montgomery plan, zoning can help with the implementation of a plan.

Alderman Thomas stated from discussions he has been having with the City Manager about economic vitality of the changing retail landscape of the southside, and the concern about when car dealerships start moving and pulling out and the mall issue we have right now, and looking at anchoring the southern end of the City to fill the gap.

Mr. Lotson added having identified areas of the City that will need specific planning efforts for smaller parts of Savannah, that's not just neighborhoods, but commercial areas, and this is a prime example.

Alderman Thomas reminded staff about getting him the information he requested earlier as it relates to personal care homes and group homes and how it will change in NewZO. He stated he would like to have a meeting with staff. He stated that is the answer to the mental health crisis, communal living.

Mr. Bell asked that he and the City Manager be copied on requests to Bridget and Marcus by March 1st.

Alderman Hall asked if there is a chance that the group homes are protected by the Free Housing Act.

Ms. Lidy stated they will look into Federal and State codes and let Council know.

Executive Session: Litigation

Upon motion of Alderman Foster, seconded by Alderman Durrence, and unanimously carried Council went into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Litigation.

Upon completion of this session, a motion was made to come out of Executive Session by Alderman Hall, seconded by Alderman Durrence, and unanimously carried.

There being no further business, Mayor ProTem Bell declared this meeting of Council adjourned.

The video recording of the Work Session can be found by copying and pasting the below link in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=y0DqEa4Lqg3I>



**Luciana M. Spracher,
Acting Clerk of Council**