
May 10, 2018, Council Work Session

Savannah City Government

SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES

COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

May 10, 2018 – 10:00 a.m.

Present: Mayor Eddie DeLoach, Presiding

Aldermen: Carol Bell, Julian Miller, Brian Foster, Tony Thomas, Van Johnson, II (arrived at 11:08 a.m.), Bill Durrence, John Hall, Estella Shabazz (arrived at 10:20 a.m.)

Rob Hernandez, City Manager

Brooks Stillwell, City Attorney

Jennifer Herman, Deputy City Attorney

Mayor DeLoach called the meeting to order.

City Manager Hernandez briefly reviewed the agenda.

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Multi-Agency Resource Center](#)

[MARC_Update_COS_Council_v05082018.pdf](#)

Carol Bell, Mayor Pro-Tem, stated for the past 23 months she has been working collaboratively to bring to fruition the establishment of a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC). She stated this is one of the greatest collaboratives in this community as it will affect the way we handle juveniles who have strayed and have minor offenses.

Mayor Pro-Tem Bell asked everyone present that worked on the collaborative effort to introduce themselves:

Present from the Juvenile Court: Chief Judge Leroy Burke, III, Judge Lisa Colbert, Judge Tom Cole, and Adam Kennedy, Court Administrator.

Paula Kreissler, Healthy Savannah, Jonas Subaar, Savannah Police Department, Lizann Roberts, Executive Director, Coastal GA Indicators Coalition, Terry Enoch, Board of Education Police Chief, Adam Walker, St. Joseph's/Candler, Assistant Police Chiefs Kerry Thomas and Robert Gavin, Savannah Police Department, and Deputy City Attorney Jen Herman.

A PowerPoint Presentation was presented by the following:

Lizann Roberts stated she wanted to mention other members of the team that were influential but not present during the meeting, former Police Chief Joseph Lumpkin, former Mayor Otis Johnson, who still attends meetings and Whitney Shephard, Transport Studios. Ms. Roberts stated this was a true collaborative process and discussed how the process began. She stated the collaborative now involves both the Savannah Police Department and the Chatham County Police Department, Savannah/Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS), Healthy Savannah, Chatham County Juvenile Court, and St. Joseph's/Candler. Additionally, she showed the project partners list which was too extensive to name. She stated Invest Health is about bringing together diverse partners, to

develop strategies to improve neighborhoods facing the biggest barriers to better health. The purpose of the MARC is to divert youth that are called CHINS (Children in Need of Services) from being processed through the court system and rather assessed and referred appropriately. Ms. Roberts also thanked Alderman Miller, who has also helped with the process.

Ms. Roberts then showed a picture of a youth by the name of Preston who lives on Savannah's Westside with his family. She stated his mother took the picture which was featured on the cover of a magazine. The purpose was to show how isolated children can become in their at-risk communities when they can't go outside to play. She concluded stating this needs to change.

Judge Colbert stated one of the reasons Juvenile Court has been so involved and passionate is because they realize their existing response to juvenile delinquency is ineffective. She stated too many youth with low risk behavior are put into custody with youth who exhibit high risk behaviors, which typically causes the low risk behavior youth to then display high risk behaviors. She also stated community resources are not accessible to effectively target the root causes of delinquency and recidivism. She concluded stating our systems often lack early intervention for youth mental health, physical health, and emotional well-being. This leads to more arrests as youth advances in age.

Jonas Subaar stated this process has been data driven and that is what has gotten them to the point where we are today. He stated as youth advance in age more arrests are typically made. The peak age of interest for the MARC is 11 to 14. He discussed the areas of arrests, stating arrests occur throughout the City of Savannah and not in one localized area. Knowing this data is what drove the decision for the location of the MARC in terms of where it should be. Mr. Subaar then briefly reviewed the home locations of the youth, in terms of where the MARC would be most accessible. He concluded stating he conducted an analysis of family members, to determine if family members would be willing to use the MARC.

Adam Walker stated it is important to bring services to your community, but it's not feasible to have every service located in that one building. He stated within blocks of the proposed location for the MARC, there are three outreach centers which include: St. Joseph's/Candler's African-American Health Information & Resource Center, Saint Mary's Community Center, and Saint Mary's Health Center. He stated these are three very important community outreach programs that will link the children and their families to health care services, education and workforce development. He concluded stating St. Joseph's/Candler has a program called Johnny's Bridges to Hope, which is a mental health counseling program that will attempt to link with the MARC, to provide counseling services for the children in need and their family.

Ms. Roberts returned stating the proposed site is 2203 Abercorn Street. This was suggested by Dr. Otis Johnson in a meeting. She stated they believe it is the right building, as it has the square footage needed to grow the MARC, it is centrally located, and they believe it will be a good partnership between the City and the County to make the MARC a reality.

Judge Colbert discussed the MARC solution model. She stated the creation of a MARC provides early intervention for youth at risk and increases healthy family functioning. She stated the MARC, unlike Juvenile Court, can be a self-referral spot or they can be referred by law enforcement, school or court. Once there, they will be assessed to determine social and health conditions to include parents/guardians areas of interest. She stated they are anticipating having in-staff counselors to meet with the youth, if needed. The MARC staff will meet with youth and families to discuss needed services and develop a plan for accessing services. She stated the most important part of the plan is the MARC staff follow up with the youth and family concerning the implementation of a service plan. She then briefly discussed the timeline, stating they are currently in phase one where they are still meeting with stakeholders and completing MOU's. She stated they will begin looking to hire a director, and do some staff reassignments, along with building renovations, and complete MOA's with social service providers. The plan is to open the MARC when school resumes in August of this year.

Ms. Roberts asked Judge Colbert to share one of her stories with Council. Judge Colbert recalled an incident when one child was shot in this neighborhood while carrying a younger child. He was an innocent bystander that was caught in the crossfire. She stated she has lost count of how many children have been shot that are involved with the court. She stated she has been with the Juvenile Court for five years and each time they get a case if the child's family has ever been involved in they get the family file. She concluded stating they are not doing a good job of breaking those cycles.

Ms. Roberts stated they have had some achievements throughout this 20 month project and briefly reviewed the list which included: the Most Collaborative City Award; they were selected as one of the six cities to host a national Invest Health; they were awarded additional grants for data sharing and best practices; and they received a Georgetown University Center grant, just to name a few.

Ms. Roberts stated the next steps include: getting the final approval for the Intergovernmental Agreement for the facility; finalize the MOU for service providers for the Advisory Group; hire a Director; form a Youth Advisory Group; and the grand opening in August 2018.

Mayor Pro-Tem Bell thanked City Manager Hernandez, staff, and Council for helping to establish and identify a facility to house the MARC. She also thanked Alderman Miller for his ongoing help, she stated he has been working with this process since he was an employee with the police department. She stated she has lived in Savannah for many years and has never been involved in a process that involved so many different partners. She concluded stating the building is it for the City, everything else to include staffing, will come from other sources.

Judge Burke thanked everyone for their participation stating he has been a judge in this town for 25 years, and this is the greatest collaboration he has ever seen of people simply trying to get a job done. He stated the MARC is the village, we are the village, you are the village and he is excited that this is happening. He stated he is pleased the City of Savannah is participating. Judge Burke stated this is getting national recognition and people are looking at what we are doing and looking to replicate it. He concluded stating the end result is not just helping children but creating a safer community.

Mayor DeLoach asked do we follow-up with services to the parents after the file is viewed in the court?

Judge Colbert replied often-times those parent cases are closed, but no they haven't been following up and that is a part of the issue. She stated they are hoping that if the parent still has unaddressed trauma they can service that now.

Mayor DeLoach thanked Judge Burke, stating he has been pushing this ball for ages, he also thanked City Manager Hernandez for assisting with the development of the use of the property, as it is another example of the City working with others to help to end the cycle of poverty and crime in our City.

Judge Burke stated it is all about the team.

Alderman Miller congratulated Judge Burke stating he met him in 2014 to talk about this. In 2014, 974 kids were introduced into the justice system, 60% were for misdemeanors. He stated the MARC is not just a building for a staff, it's a change of process and a new state of mind. He stated the most important thing is the need. He concluded stating he is really excited and appreciates everyone who worked on the project.

Mayor Pro-Tem Bell thanked Mayor DeLoach for allowing Council members the opportunity to work in any capacity in the community they desire.

City Manager Hernandez stated item 44 on the Council meeting agenda is for the approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement to lease the facility at 2203 Abercorn Street to the County for the MARC.

[2. Proposed Alcohol Ordinance Revisions](#)

[REVISED MAY COUNCIL WORKSHOP ALCOHOL REVISIONS .pdf](#)

City Manager Hernandez stated the City has been going back tweaking the Alcohol Ordinance for several years. He stated Council instructed staff to begin drafting and reviewing the ordinance with feedback from a variety of stakeholders.

Bridget Lidy, Director of Planning and Urban Design, stated four sessions have been held that started in August 2017. She stated an online survey was launched to get feedback of options that were being considered and there were regular updates posted on the City's website. She stated today she will be presenting options for Council to consider, and possibly consider finalizing at the May 24th meeting. She stated there have not been any significant changes to the ordinance since 1998. In 2016, a comprehensive review began. Ms. Lidy stated some of the new requirements include a safety plan, added event venues, and underage requirements, all of which went into effect January 2017.

The purpose of the ordinance is to establish reasonable and ascertainable standards for regulation and control of alcoholic beverages in a manner to promote the health, safety and general welfare of community, while giving effect to zoning and land use plans, preserving residential areas with reasonable consideration for their character and with the general intent of promoting desirable living conditions and sustaining the stability of neighborhoods and property values.

Ms. Lidy stated since the ordinance was approved there have been changes made to it. She briefly reviewed the changes that were made which included the most recent change which occurred in February 2018, the addition of distance exemptions. She stated a few additional revisions that are under consideration include bar cards as it relates to background checks and server training, distance exemptions for event venues, persons under the age of 21, Sunday sales and having an administrative hearing officer.

Mayor DeLoach asked for comparison of the options. Ms. Lidy reviewed the differences in the background checks being done by the City of Savannah versus not being done by the City. She stated if they are done by the City, the City will pick up the GCIC model.

Alderman Miller asked why are we doing any background checks, and why are we trying to control the training? He stated it seems to him that is the business of the establishment. He suggested option 5, no change to the alcohol liability which would allow the business establishment to worry about all of that. He stated he feels this is the City getting into the business of running the establishment, when the establishment owner is already in charge of that.

City Manager Hernandez stated with option 4, what staff is trying to do is minimize the City's role in the process, by establishing minimum training requirements. There is currently an industry standard training and the City is saying establishments can go above it but not below. He continued stating in terms of background checks that's a policy issue. He stated this gets the City completely out of the process and puts responsibility on the owner.

Ms. Lidy stated regarding server training, when the topic was discussed there was no hesitation from stakeholders on continuing to have server training during the public discussion.

Alderman Durrence stated much of the back and forth as it relates to bar cards came from the hospitality/restaurant industry based on a few incidents which occurred, not the City initially. He continued stating the insurance industry will be much more diligent than we can be, as this is the responsibility of the person who will lose their insurance. He agreed with Alderman Miller's option 5 suggestion.

Ms. Lidy continued discussing the additional revisions, reviewing the language or event venue distance exemptions.

Alderman Thomas asked who is responsible for enforcement when you have an event venue in a neighborhood? Ms. Lidy replied the ABC team will monitor it.

Alderman Thomas asked how do you determine a wedding reception? Ms. Lidy replied in reference to smaller event venues, they can only operate until she believes 10 p.m. and can only have a maximum of six events per year.

Alderman Durrence asked if there was a change to the no Sunday sales description other than distance requirement? Ms. Lidy replied no just distance.

Alderman Miller expressed his concerns about the language being clear.

Alderman Thomas asked if the City enforces establishments that get food from the outside? Ms. Lidy replied the City needs to enforce at least 50% of sales. Aldermen Johnson and Thomas expressed their concerns about the mention of food brought in.

Alderman Thomas stated if the City isn't going to enforce everyone equally we shouldn't have it in the ordinance as a requirement.

Ms. Lidy continued the presentation stating they are recommending no change to the ordinance as it relates to persons under age of 21.

She stated the Administrative Hearing Officer will be appointed to handle licensing and permitting issues, and grant, renew, transfer and issue licenses.

She concluded the presentation with the Sunday Brunch Bill. She stated the Governor approved rolling back Sunday on-premise consumption sale hours from 12:30 p.m. to 11:00 a.m. Staff would like to proceed with the revision, Council must approve a resolution or ordinance supporting the revision.

Alderman Bell asked what the options are as it relates to background checks.

Alderman Thomas asked what are the penalties to a business that violates the ordinance for underage drinking?

Jen Herman, Deputy City Attorney, replied that's the insurance piece and it would affect their premiums. She stated they will police themselves better than we can. The experience the City had with bar cards was that judges weren't enforcing them.

Alderman Johnson stated before bar cards we could only hold businesses accountable for what happened in their establishment. Council's only means of dealing with the issue was to deal with the owner. He stated bar cards were kind of a contract of sorts between the City and that individual. The background check is part of the employee relationship between that bar, and that person and the City should not interject in that relationship. He stated City Council has certain authority and with that comes responsibility regarding administration and he doesn't feel comfortable giving that to an administrator.

Alderman Thomas stated the City has done a poor job of enforcing certain locations. Very few show cause hearings come before Council and when they do it's usually only after extraordinary crime.

Alderman Miller asked Ms. Lidy to go back to the administrative hearing officer slide, he stated it was glazed over pretty quickly. He stated he is personally in favor of that, and believes it needs more discussion.

Alderman Durrence stated Council can approve it because by the time it gets to them there is no legal basis to reject it. He stated he feels applicants are given false hope. He stated the administrator could handle it when there is no choice and Council could handle it when there is a choice.

Alderman Shabazz expressed her concerns about having an administrator handling licenses.

Alderman Johnson stated the law provides legal reasons by which we can deny a license, Council can delay hearings to facilitate discussions such as good neighbor agreements.

Attorney Herman stated it was conceived to keep the process moving.

Alderman Thomas stated the administrative hearing officer was not elected by the public.

Alderman Durrence suggested making protocols that the good neighbor agreements be required. He also stated Council will appoint the administrative hearing officer and it could be an attorney.

Ms. Lidy stated staff will come back in two weeks with a draft, with the ordinance revisions.

City Manager Hernandez suggested letting it be a retired judge.

Alderman Durrence suggested a pro-tem judge.

[3. Savannah Harbor Expansion Project Reservoir Project](#)

[Raw Water Reservoir.pdf](#)

Heath Lloyd, Chief Infrastructure and Development Officer gave Council a brief overview of the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project (SHEP project). He stated the Georgia Ports is deepening the harbor which had impact on the City's water system. He stated the project is a \$973 million project, and \$40 million was carved out to help the City of Savannah to construct a 100 million gallon reservoir, off Interstate 95. He stated the City worked with the Army Corps of Engineers and Georgia Ports and he is proud to announce that the City is close to being the owners of a reservoir that will help with the water treatment process. He gave kudos to Mayor DeLoach and City Manager Hernandez for getting us where we are today. He stated there are a few more things that need to be worked out but concluded stating the facility is in place and operational.

Alderman Shabazz stated these projects get overlooked and don't make headlines. She stated this is positive, and a lot of money was poured into our community to take place for the safety of our water.

Alderman Durrence stated this is great.

[4. Executive Session: Real Estate and Personnel](#)

Upon motion of Alderman Foster, seconded by Alderman Shabazz, and unanimously carried Council went into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Real Estate and Personnel.

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

[5. City Manager's Briefing / Council Meeting Agenda Items for May 10, 2018](#)

City Manager Rob Hernandez presented the City Manager's Briefing of the agenda items for the Council Meeting of May 10, 2018. The agenda can be found online and will be made a part of the permanent record.

[6. Update on sale of property at Oglethorpe and Habersham](#)

[Bryson Read Design Progression 5.10.18.pdf](#)

City Manager Hernandez stated the purpose of this presentation is to provide Council with an update on where staff is on the sale of the surplus property located across from the City's Police Headquarters. The emphasis was not on the overall sale price but rather the redevelopment of the property. The selection committee

recommended and Council approved a RFP for Geyer/Morris, a firm out of Atlanta. Since then the firm has been going through its entitlement period and doing their due diligence and applying to the MPC to begin moving forward with a variety of variances that is needed to move forward with the development process.

City Manager Hernandez introduced Tyler Morris, Managing Partner with Geyer/Morris.

Mr. Morris stated it is important to them to get the project right before bringing it to the public eye. He briefly updated Council on the project showing conceptual renderings of the building, and concept plans. He stated the goal of the project is to produce a high quality project with commercial space on the ground floor, and residential above, with parking.

He reviewed the conceptual drawings with elevations, and the concept designs with a regional grocery that did not work out, as it wasn't feasible.

Alderman Thomas asked for clarification of Mr. Morris's statement that it wasn't feasible.

Mr. Morris replied the option with the grocer for various reasons, mainly parking related, through their due diligence wasn't a feasible option.

He continued stating they went back to the original design with ground floor residential and smaller shop uses. Parking is a challenge, he stated they spent some time pursuing a lift system. He stated it's a little early for this project to support the lift system. Currently, they are looking at plans that will maintain retail on Oglethorpe with parking nested between, with residential on Hull Street, with a pass through from Habersham to Price Streets. Mr. Morris stated it will be a six story building on Oglethorpe, but the current entitlement is five stories. Hull will be maintained at four stories with residential. He stated it still reads as a five story building as it is between residential and commercial, with parking nested, therefore you don't see it.

Alderman Shabazz asked how many parking spaces will be provided.

Mr. Morris replied they are still working on the final number, but it will be around 180 spaces. He showed a view looking down Hull Street, where the residences will enter off street level. He stated they will redo hardscapes, and preserve the trees on Oglethorpe Avenue.

Alderman Foster asked will they be apartments or condos on the renderings?

Mr. Morris replied they will be apartments and they will be mostly 1 bedrooms but some 2 bedrooms.

Alderman Foster asked if he had an idea what the square footage would be?

Mr. Morris replied they will average 800-900, and some 1100-1200.

Alderman Durrence asked if there was a price point.

Mr. Morris replied they have done a lot of research, upper water mark, premium product.

Alderman Durrence stated we need something at the other end of that, as much as premium products. He then asked does that give you all the parking or will you need to ask for a variance?

Mr. Morris replied parking is the most challenging part of the project as retail generally requires a higher ratio than residential. He stated between the two they think they will be able to provide enough parking without needing a variance.

Alderman Thomas asked what range are you talking about when you say upper watermark?

Mr. Morris replied based on square footage about \$1600-\$1700 per month.

Alderman Foster asked City Manager Hernandez in this process are we still waiting until July in this process or are there any other updates. City Manager Hernandez replied they applied with the MPC for appropriate approvals. At the moment we have a contract through July 16th, and it is highly unlikely that they will be able to get all of their entitlements and approvals from the MPC by then and he would like to continue the discussion in Executive Session.

There being no further business, Mayor DeLoach declared this Work Session adjourned.

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

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=qIFlarmfh73f>

Luciana M. Spracher, Acting Clerk of Council

