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## October 25, 2018, City Council Workshop

Savannah City Government

SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES

COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

October 25, 2018 – 10:00 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Eddie DeLoach, Presiding

**Aldermen:** Carol Bell, Julian Miller, Brian Foster, Bill Durrence, John Hall, Tony Thomas (arrived at 10:15 a.m.), Estella Shabazz (arrived at 10:15 a.m.), Van Johnson, II (arrived at 11:00 a.m.)

**Rob Hernandez, City Manager**

**Bret Bell, Assistant to the City Manager**

**Brooks Stillwell, City Attorney**

**Jennifer Herman, Deputy City Attorney**

**ABSENT:** William Shearouse, Assistant City Attorney

City Manager Hernandez welcomed everyone to the meeting and briefly reviewed the agenda stating the New Hampstead Land Use Map update will be plugged in later.

### Workshop Agenda Items

#### [1. Stormwater Ordinance Revisions](#)

##### [2018 Stormwater Ordinance Update.pdf](#)

Roger Raines, Stormwater Management Director, stated periodically the City needs to update its Stormwater Ordinance due to an update received from the State. A new permit was received in 2017, however the last revision to the ordinance was following the 2012 permit. He stated part of the permit is how we are going to comply with the ordinance. Additionally, an annual report has to be done each year.

Mr. Raines briefly went through the changes to the ordinance which are:

- new definitions that will match the definitions in the ordinance
- new permit language
- typo corrections

He also reviewed standard operating practices that staff is planning to codify in the ordinance including:

- driveway and walkway culverts - repairs will be the responsibility of the property owner
- private drainageways - will not be maintained by the City if they are not given to the City
- adding in language regarding legal right of entry
- Mayor DeLoach and Alderman Miller asked for clarification. Mr. Raines replied the City cannot maintain the property without an easement.

- natural tidal streams and addressing the natural environment – the City doesn't have any right to be on them without the proper permits

Mayor DeLoach expressed his concern about easements and right of ways. He suggested providing property owners with a letter notifying them that they will be charged if the City has to clean up private property due to issues that could have been avoided.

City Manager Hernandez stated staff would need to discuss that with the City Attorney's Office to determine the legalities.

Alderman Durrence asked if that would be the same as when the City cuts the grass on blighted properties.

City Manager Hernandez replied in this case the property is public property that the City just can't get access to versus it being private property.

Alderman Miller asked about access stating he understands if the City doesn't have access we have a problem, but there are instances when the City has access and doesn't use it. His second concern was in reference to tidal streams. He stated he understands the City has any issue with them but he has a fear that there is a blanket statement that the City doesn't do anything about the tidal streams, and trees fall over on someone's property.

City Manager Hernandez replied the State has come in and told the City that we don't have legal authority to go into those types of waterways to remove any debris.

Alderman Thomas stated he thinks the City has done a great job with the boom and keeping trash from going into the estuary. He suggested the City should do a film project to air on the Government Channel showing citizens the amount of trash that is collected by the boom that would enter the rivers if it wasn't there. He stated when the City has thunderstorms it overflows the boom and the water flows all the trash over to the river. If a tree is down it essentially blocks it and causes additional flooding concerns. He continued stating Clean Coast and people in kayaks do clean it up but if the City has any issues we need to engage in conversations with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) about the issues. He concluded stating because the maintenance over the years has not been the best marsh grass has become an issue which can become an environmental issue.

City Manager Hernandez replied the point is well taken, and staff will reach out to DNR to work on some of the issues. He stated he's familiar because right after Hurricane Matthew the City received complaints from the neighborhood to remove trees and DNR did not authorize staff to remove them.

Alderman Miller stated the City has an opportunity to communicate with the public about the importance of this issue. He stated this is the first time a discussion about driveway and walkway culverts and private drainageways has been held. He suggested putting an insert in water bills highlighting their responsibility because he doesn't believe they know.

Alderwoman Shabazz asked about westside basins and stated she wanted to put it on the table. City Manager Hernandez stated staff will schedule a work session for the discussion.

Alderman Hall stated in regards to DNR and having a discussion with them, he believes Council should have a discussion with our legislative delegation, stating he finds that anything DNR brings to the legislature they codify it without question.

Mr. Raines clarified it's not all tidal streams, if they have been previously maintained the City will continue to do so.

City Manager Hernandez asked Mr. Raines what the timeline is to bring back the item on first reading.

Mr. Raines replied November 5<sup>th</sup>.

## [2. Savannah Shines](#)

### [Savannah Shines One Year Update Council Workshop FINAL.pdf](#)

Taffanye Young, Chief Community Services Officer, stated she is excited to provide Council with the one year mark update on the progress that has been made in the Edgemere/Sackville Neighborhood. She stated it has been a group effort, as an interdisciplinary team in the City was created. Ms. Young asked the members present to stand to be recognized by Council. She stated when the group was first formed last year they

met biweekly, this year they began meeting monthly. She stated she understands it takes some time to get momentum, however community engagement happened earlier than expected.

She briefly reviewed the task they were given which included the Savannah Shines initiative and addressing barriers Citywide, and gave a recap of 2017.

Martin Fretty, Housing & Neighborhood Services Director, provided an update on housing, and public property improvements. He stated there were four areas they focused on which included:

- Promotion of home ownership, development and repair
- Prepared/distributed 300+ marketing door hangers in October 2017
- 48 inquiries were received
- 17 homeowners are currently participating
- 5 volunteer organizations repaired 7 houses
- Soliciting local volunteer support to improve properties
- Held Tenant Rights and Responsibilities meeting in December 2017
- Held landlords informational meeting in April 2018
- 15 landlords attended informational meeting

Mr. Fretty stated they are currently working with 11 landlords which is a total of 95 rental properties.

- Providing financing opportunities for non- and for- profit developers
- 2 blighted duplexes purchased by Land Bank Authority
- 5 houses being constructed
- 3 houses purchased by first time home buyers

Alderman Foster asked what the price was on those homes. Mr. Fretty replied the Habitat house was about \$150,000 and the private houses are selling for about \$160-170,000.

Alderman Johnson asked what the average cost of a home was prior to the intervention. Mr. Fretty replied if it's in the nine block area where the duplexes are 10 years ago it was about \$25,000, now they are \$50,000. The single family homes are about \$160,000.

Alderman Hall stated people are moving back to the neighborhood because of what is being done on the front side of the neighborhood.

- Prioritizing housing assistance to address:
- Property maintenance and housing code violations
- Exterior repairs to homes that protect the property from the elements
- First time home buyers in need of down payment, closing cost and gap financing

Mr. Fretty moved on to the second focus area which is public property enhancements. He thanked members of City staff for their assistance on the project. He briefly highlighted infrastructure improvements to include: a playground and sidewalks that connect the Parkside Neighborhood and Daffin Park; sidewalks; curbs/gutters on Live Oak Street; and improvements on Waters Avenue. The signature project is the new park which moved at a little slower pace because of the purchase of three vacant lots on 58<sup>th</sup> Street for expansion purposes. Mr. Fretty stated excavation work has been done, and briefly discussed the design. He also stated tree removal has been completed. The playground installation is tentatively planned for December 2018. The walking trail is tentatively planned for early 2019. Cedar Street improvements include connecting the park that will be put in to 52<sup>nd</sup> Street with sidewalks which will connect to Daffin Park. He stated Cedar is the only street that runs north and south through the whole neighborhood.

Alderman Miller mentioned on the other side of 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, SPLOST funds have been put in to extend the sidewalk all the way to Daffin Park at the request of the Parkside Neighborhood. He stated those neighbors have really been supportive of the project.

Mr. Fretty stated it is his understanding that the two neighborhood leaderships work very well together. He stated sidewalks will only go on the east side of Cedar and by doing so hopefully it will create traffic calming by narrowing the street width. He continued stating they are also going to put in lighting on the walkway and at intersections of main streets with crosswalks, additionally there will be landscaping on both sides of the street. The Sanitation Department has also been a partner, and the neighborhood sign is tentatively planned to go up in November.

Ms. Young stated from Mr. Fretty's presentation it gives an idea of how many offices are involved, and how neighborhood and resident focused Savannah Shines is. She stated the types of things being looked at are how to make life more pleasant, how to improve the quality of life, aesthetics and so forth.

She stated the third focus area is Code Compliance which partners with the Housing Department to bring properties up to standard. Ms. Young briefly reviewed some of the goals of this focus which included:

- Develop a "Citizens Resource Guide" with information about cleanliness, code requirements, sanitation services, trash and bulk item collection schedules and fees.
- Host a "Community Academy" to teach homeowners and renters how to maintain and beautify their property.
- Work with the neighborhood to recognize good stewards, such as Yard of the Month, Block of the Month and Good Business Neighbor.
- Partner with Housing, Savannah Police and other departments to offer training classes for renters and landlords on responsibilities, related City codes, and City resources to help address issues.

Code Compliance Outcomes included: (some statistics may be outdated as the presentation was rescheduled)

- Developed and distributed a Citizens Resource Guide to Common Code Compliance Issues
- Developed a Yard of the Month Incentive Program for execution by neighborhood associations
- Participated in the April 2018 Landlord Education Forum
- Initiated/closed 266 Compliance Cases
- Over 100 cases fewer than the previous year
- 24 Active Compliance Cases remain open

Denise Cooper, Assistant City Attorney, discussed focus area four which was expanding our legal toolbox. Ms. Cooper stated she works closely with the Code Compliance Department on a day to day basis to assist them as well as citizens. She stated they have been able to increase the City's visibility in court and allow officers to assign cases. The "playbook" is in place and staff has begun to work on the procedural guidelines. Additionally, staff has been updating local ordinances to give them more teeth. Court dates have been moved to Wednesday in the morning and afternoon, this increased the case load to about 40 cases per week. Staff meets weekly to prep for the cases to possibly work through them and come up with other alternatives that don't involve going to court. Compliance officers are now able to schedule their own court dates. Ms. Cooper concluded by discussing the first eminent domain case which is on Cumming Street.

Ms. Young discussed focus area five, public safety, and recognized Star Corporal Tracy Walden and Corporal Sharif Lockett, who have been dedicated to the Savannah Shines program and the neighborhood. She thanked Savannah Fire as well. Ms. Young stated Savannah Police (SPD) Officers regularly attended neighborhood meetings and area events. An SPD Juvenile Officer was recently hired to focus on programs involving juvenile concerns in the neighborhood. She briefly reviewed the downward trend in Part One Crimes.

Kerri Reid, Human Services Director, discussed focus area six, Community Engagement. She stated Human Services has been very active in partnership with all other departments on the team. They were responsible for community outreach and education activities, and working with neighborhood associations to secure volunteers to assist with various neighborhood improvement efforts. Additionally, they have provided leadership training throughout the year. Ms. Reid stated they began working and engagement efforts began right after the kickoff providing a neighborhood self-assessment to leadership so they could determine where their areas of need were. Three sessions were held which included grant writing workshops and organizational development and leadership training opportunities. Ms. Reid stated there have been a number of clean-up efforts in the past year, she stated it's not done in isolation it is in partnership with Sanitation, Keep Savannah Beautiful, and all departments on the Savannah Shines Team. She highlighted a clean-up event that occurred in June, Slam Dunk the Junk, where there was over 50 youth participating, 25 of which came from the neighborhood. The event was held in partnership with Keep Savannah Beautiful and private partners in the community. Ms. Reid concluded stating WorkSource Coastal was another partner she worked with that provided information throughout the year of the services they provide. From that nine residents are actually involved in their programs.

Alderwoman Bell asked if the Yard of Month and Block of Month were ongoing and asked how staff is incentivizing it with the neighborhoods and residents to keep the community clean.

Ms. Young replied the program is being recreated and staff still has one more year to go in this program. For a first year of activity this is a lot. She stated they are now turning the attention to how to carry this forward. She stated Yard of the Month and Block of the Month were programs that were managed by the associations and not something the City did, so staff is trying to restructure a committee so those programs can be re-established, across the City of Savannah.

Alderman Thomas stated he likes the Yard of the Month, as it brings back neighborhood pride. He stated he thinks Council needs to reenergize Keep Savannah Beautiful, as there are about 88 neighborhood associations. He stated every neighborhood should have a KSB person that can

promote that in their neighborhood meetings. He continued stating he thinks it is important to bring back those programs because it instills the belief that the City wants people involved and engaged. He concluded stating the City used to have an event at the Civic Center where we brought people together and feels the City should go back to that because he believes for a while the City has gotten lost with that connection with the neighborhoods as those programs are important.

Ms. Young stated staff has proposals in for Council to consider during the next budget process for a neighborhood convention which is a moment for associations to highlight all the work they have done. She stated it is a wonderful fellowship opportunity, many of the City's partners engaged and gave prizes. She concluded stating they are also looking at a grant program and certification program.

Alderman Hall thanked every department who participates in Savannah Shines, and thanked the Mayor and Council for funding the project. He stated he believes when Savannah Shines moves to another neighborhood he thinks the results will be even better, because we have a benchmark and the City will see improved neighborhoods citywide.

Alderman Johnson asked if there are elements of Savannah Shines that are portable now?

Ms. Young replied some of the proposals coming forward especially when discussing neighborhood associations, the leadership training models, all can be duplicated now.

### [3. Department Overview: Code Compliance](#)

[Code Compliance Department Council Workshop FINAL.pdf](#)

Presentation will be given at a later date.

### [4. Executive Session / Lunch](#)

Upon motion of Alderwoman Bell, seconded by Alderman Johnson, and unanimously carried Council went into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Real Estate, Litigation, and Personnel.

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

### [5. City Council Agenda Review](#)

City Manager Rob Hernandez presented the City Manager's Briefing of the agenda items for the Council Meeting of October 25, 2018. The agenda can be found online and will be made a part of the permanent record.

### [6. Downtown Worker Alternative Transportation Pilot Program](#)

Sean Brandon, Mobility & Parking Services Director, stated in a future meeting Council will get an agenda item related to this discussion as a fulfillment of a promise made as part of the parking study.

He stated for workers that were displaced when the parking rates went up the City offers garage discounts to an expansive shuttle system. One of the last elements the City said it would look at are workers that work night schedules. He stated CAT offers a shuttle service that cuts off everything at midnight, therefore it is impractical to try to run the shuttles after midnight.

Mr. Brandon stated, taking a cue from other cities, staff would like to run an experiment. There is a company similar to the ride share services that operates with governments and transit systems. Staff would like to propose a six month experiment to contract with one of these firms and market with downtown workers to get them to and from their car or home within a certain area. He stated they will evaluate after six months, look at ride share as these services provide great data for us to review and then we make decisions from there.

City Manager Hernandez stated the plan is to bring this to Council on November 5<sup>th</sup>.

Alderman Johnson asked how procurement will be dealt with in terms of a trial?

Mr. Brandon replied this will be bid out as normal, Council will see a scoring sheet. The companies were informed that this would be a six month experiment, and at the end of the six months the City will either extend the current contract or rebid.

Alderman Miller asked about the costs associated. Mr. Brandon replied for the six month trial period the City would bear the cost from the parking fund.

Alderman Durrence stated all service contracts should require sharing data. The City hasn't always done that but should consider doing so.

Alderman Johnson stated this could be a sort of template for the City on ways to get our citizens to work at warehouses and centers that are farther out.

City Manager Hernandez stated he wants Council to be careful that we don't expand into transit services because that is not our core business, there is a connection with what is being proposed and the City's Parking Matters Study. He concluded stating he would be hesitant to expand City services into the transit business.

## [7. New Hampstead Land Use Map](#)

### [New Hampstead Presentation 10.25.pdf](#)

Heath Lloyd, Chief Infrastructure and Development Officer, provided Council with information about what is going on in New Hampstead.

Mr. Lloyd stated the area was annexed into the City in 2004, and growth is beginning to occur in the area again after a previous slowdown. He stated the area is approximately 17 miles from City Hall.

Before turning the presentation over to the Master Developer he stated today's presentation is an update of things that are planned for early 2019, and he wanted to provide Council with a high level look of what is coming soon. No decisions need to be made today.

Will Burgstiner, Development Director, stated New Hampstead began in 2004, with a series of properties annexed which brought 4,250 acres into the City. He stated the plan was put in place in 2005, and infrastructure began to be built. The ownership of the property was International Paper at that time. Today, ownership belongs to New Hampstead Holdings, LLC, a subsidiary of American Land Holdings, LLC.

Jeff Coggin is the Vice President of American Land Holdings, Director of Development and Chief Operating Officer, and the Consulting Engineer is Thomas & Hutton.

Mr. Burgstiner then showed Council a map of the location in relation to major roads and municipalities. Additionally, they were provided with a timeline/history of the project which included:

- 2004 – annexation of New Hampstead into the City limits
- 2005 – PUD approved by City of Savannah – 4,246 acres with 11,275 residential units
- 2006/2007 – private and public aspect of building the main infrastructure which would be New Hampstead Parkway and High Gate Boulevard, lift stations, wells, all done jointly between International Paper (IP) and the City

Mayor DeLoach asked who paid for the infrastructure. Mr. Burgstiner replied the main infrastructure of upsizing all the lines was paid for by the Master Developer. Water and Sewer and lift stations were paid for by the City of Savannah, the Master Developer had minority participation with the contract.

- 2008 – City accepted dedication of infrastructure after the one year ownership by IP
- 2013 – New Hampstead High School was built
- 2016 – property purchased by American Land Holdings
- 2017 – 863 acres were placed into a conservation easement under the control of the North American Land Trust (the intention is to dedicate the property to the City to be a public park in the future to be combined with what's already a 50 acre park that is currently a part of the plan for the PUD)
- 2018 – moving forward with the master plan amendment (nothing has changed it's still residential, multi-family, commercial, village, parks, and municipal sites; no industrial development will be allowed within the PUD)

Mayor DeLoach asked what value could be put on the conservation land. Mr. Coggin replied it's based on appraisal.

Mr. Burgstiner then showed Council the existing PUD plan and the proposed land use plan which showed the new plan with properties that have been sold to local builders and the conservation easement. He stated there is an elementary school currently under construction scheduled to open in fall 2019. Mr. Burgstiner briefly explained the municipal sites and the planned uses which are fire, police, and lift stations.

Rob Brannen, Legal Counsel, stated a petition was filed with the Planning Commission to amend the master plan that will come up next week to show the changes. Mr. Brannen briefly reviewed the changes to the land use plan. He stated the biggest change is the conversion of 863.26 acres of single family residential, institutional, multi-family and village areas to parks. These areas were submitted to a conservation easement and are labeled as "P Nature Preserve" on the Master Plan. Other changes include:

- Relocation of the village area westward outside of the new parks, labeled Vil-1, Vil-2A, Vil 2-B, Vil 2-C and Vil-3
- Conversion of multi-family parcel on Ga Hwy 204 to single family residential, labeled R-3A, and conversion of institutional parcel across the street to multi-family labeled MF-4
- Conversion of single family residential parcel on High Gate Boulevard to commercial, labeled C-6
- Conversion from institutional and residential to commercial of parcel labeled C-7 on Little Neck Road
- Conversion from single-family residential and institutional to multi-family and commercial of parcels labeled MF-5 and C-8 on Little Neck Road
- Conversion from single-family residential to institutional of parcel labeled I-7 on Little Neck Road

Mr. Brannen stated the net maximum density decrease will go from 11,275 units to 9,819.

A representative from Inland Capital Partners out of Atlanta spoke stating they are one of the largest conservation partners in the United States. He stated the second aspect of their business is development with residual properties after conservation easements have been placed and develop the properties or monetize the assets. He stated they also operate a very large private capital fund. He briefly discussed abuse of conservation easements discussing the process and qualifications. He stated their business model in all projects include a component of conservation for the following reason, it has to qualify for conservation and has to be for the protection of wildlife, plant species, greenspace, public space or recreation parks. He stated they like to set aside a certain amount of greenspace use. Due to the great recession the real estate market has changed and the PUD changes reflect that as they have to offer amenities that reflect the changes. He continued stating conservation is also used for capitalization of projects which provides tax incentives.

In New Hampstead, 863 acres were put into conservation in conjunction with the 55 acres of active park area to the City which they have committed to in the PUD agreement. He stated active and passive uses were built in contiguous to that site which gives much more latitude in terms of use. He briefly discussed different conservation easements they have done. He stated with the conservation easement it also reduced the overall density, which is good because people want more efficient housing and smaller lots. The village area will provide the gathering spaces and retail needs as no one wants to drive 20 miles to a grocery store which is why neighborhoods are designed in this way as they are encapsilized and self-serving.

He then showed Council a conceptual plan of what could be done under the conservation easement to include the covenants and restrictions. He also showed the possible design of the 55 acre park area. There is an existing lake on the site that will be shaped and reformed.

Mayor DeLoach asked if this was going to be done before the City picks it up. The reply was yes, the lake is already there and is contoured for an amphitheater which was done in conjunction with the City in planning in 2005/2006.

Alderman Thomas asked if it was a burrow pit. Mr. Burgstiner replied yes, it was shaped based upon a plan developed with the City.

Next steps were discussed which include:

- Anticipated City approval of Amended Land Use Plan in late 2018
- Home sales in existing neighborhoods – construction has already started
- Anticipated parcel sales for future development first quarter of 2019
- Entry monumentation second quarter of 2019

The development and absorption schedule was also showed to Council.

Mayor DeLoach asked what the value of the conservation easement is. The response was that it is valued based on approved development appraisal and is discounted back for present value.

Alderwoman Shabazz asked the importance of that. Mayor DeLoach replied they sell them to help finance the overall project.

Mayor DeLoach expressed his concern about the large amount of area the City will be responsible for maintaining, stating the City needs to keep that in mind.

Alderman Thomas stated he thinks the park is great, as the City already has a template for it. But he shares in the Mayor's concern about the conservation easement and asked if it was wetlands. The representative replied the bulk is highlands, otherwise an appraisal would not be available. Alderman Thomas stated the key is what Mayor DeLoach referenced which is the maintenance. He continued stating the City would still have to maintain a plot of land that size. He then asked what's going on in those woods, and questioned if a fire breaker would be needed. Alderman Thomas asked if the land is deeded to the City, as a gift deed. The representative replied yes. Alderman Thomas then asked with the restriction and it being a conservation easement if it will restrict the City from building recreational ballfields. The representative replied yes.

Alderman Durrence asked when the residential units were reduced was it primarily multifamily. The representative replied no, it's allocated pretty much across the board, and is allocated almost proportionately. Alderman Durrence then asked with 9,500 units what does that translate into people? The representative replied approximately 25,000 people, but it will depend on the retirement factor.

Alderman Foster asked what the price point will be. Mr. Burgstiner replied there are several units approaching completion, with a price point of \$175,000-300,000.

Alderman Miller expressed his concern about the easement. He stated the City is developing an amenity for the development and the City will be pressured to do something with it. He asked the City Manager if the City has a plan for this and will the development be contributing any funding for it.

City Manager Hernandez replied the City doesn't necessarily have to accept the easement. He stated if the City cannot develop it that limits our ability to do anything with the property. He continued stating if the City does accept it, a special service district can be created to help those residents offset the costs of maintenance.

Alderman Miller mentioned taxes, stating this area will have to be policed, will need fire, and other services and he is nervous.

Alderman Thomas stated this is an extraordinary opportunity with this conservation easement. Georgia Southern University has a forestry program that the City can partner with them on to educate students on environmental issues and forestry.

Alderwoman Shabazz thanked the presenters and also thanked the City Manager and staff for the update prior to the MPC meeting. She concluded stating the Fifth District is excited.

City Manager Hernandez briefly discussed outsourcing municipal services in that area to include fire protection and sanitation.

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=Y0iGe5tZUNuM>

Luciana M. Spracher  
Acting Clerk of Council