



AUGUST 10, 2023, 12:00 p.m. - WORKSHOP and CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

CITY GOVERNMENT

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

OF THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

The work session and City Manager's briefing was held at 12:02 p.m. Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order and recognized Alderman Purtee to offer a prayer.

PRESENT:

Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding
 Alderwoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2
 Alderwoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1
 Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2
 Alderwoman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3
 Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4, Vice-Chairman
 Alderwoman Dr. Estella Edwards Shabazz, District 5, Mayor Pro-Tem
 Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

ABSENT:

Alderwoman Kesha Gibson-Carter, At-Large, Post 1

ALSO, PRESENT:

City Manager Joseph A. Melder
 Chief of Staff Daphanie Williams
 City Attorney Bates Lovett
 Clerk of Council Mark Massey
 Deputy Clerk of Council Margaret Fox

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Hurricane Preparedness](#)

[Exhibit 1: Hurricane Preparedness.pptx](#)

PRESENTED by City Manager Melder and Emergency Management Services Director David Donnelly.

Following the presentation, there were questions and comments from members of the City Council:

- Mayor Johnson discussed how important it is to register on the hurricane registry and the evacuation process.

- Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked for the names of the three contractors hired by the sanitation department, if they are local, and if they are DBE's (Mr. Donnelly will send Council the information). She asked for the locations of the City shelters. Mr. Donnelly stated residents are encouraged to evacuate, but if the need arises, a refuge of last resort will be established based on the condition of the storm. Alderwoman Miller Blakely expressed concern for Alderpersons evacuating at the same time as residents. City Manager Melder stated during a mandatory evacuation, it is important for Alderpersons to heed the warning as they are not critical workforce.
- Alderman Leggett asked Mr. Donnelly at what portion of the evacuation does the OPCON contra turn for all vehicles to go north (it starts at OPCON 2 and continues in OPCON 3). Alderman Leggett and Mr. Donnelly discussed the City's partners during preparedness, the County, School Board, other cities, power and phone utility companies, transportation services, contractors, hospitals, nonprofit agencies, etc.
- Alderwoman Lanier discussed neighborhood sirens and asked Mr. Donnelly when the sirens sound, what would be the procedure to evacuate disabled residents. Mr. Donnelly indicated the sirens would not be used for hurricanes but for tornadoes. Residents should be alert to normal media, print, radio, tv, social media, and neighborhood associations.
- Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan announced the Housing Authority is working on a plan to notify their residents during hurricane preparedness. She admonished the City to have a plan in place to notify residents. During recovery, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan recommended a separate phone number for residents to call for damages. Mr. Donnelly stated residents should call 311 and there will be a recovery website established.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz stated this workshop is necessary and the information is urgent. When the call goes out to evacuate, then residents should leave. Now is the time to prepare for an emergency.
- City Manager Melder thanked Mr. Donnelly and stated the information will be on social media.

The PowerPoint presentation is on file and available for viewing in the Clerk of Council's office.

[2. Federal Quiet Zone Designation Update](#)

[Exhibit 1: Quiet Zone Update.pdf](#)

PRESENTED by City Manager Melder and Policy and Governmental Affairs Director Joseph Shearouse, Jr. Mr. Shearouse thanked all the City partners including the Federal Senators and Congressmen, and the City Council & City Manager for support and for keeping the momentum going during the process.

- City Manager Melder stated the West Savannah Woodville tracks are engaging in a feasibility study. City Manager Melder thanked Joe Shearouse for his twelve years of working on the project. He thanked Ms. Virginia Mobley of the Thomas Square Neighborhood, resident Mr. David Blaine, and governmental & commercial supporters; Federal Railroad Administration Grade Crossing Manager Elizabeth Hudd, Kevin Callan and GDOT State Railroad Crossing Engineer Jason Mobley, WATCO Company General Manager Terrence Snell & Assistant Vice President of Government Relations Ailsa Von Dobeneck, and CSX Regional Vice President Craig Camuso.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz thanked Ms. Mobley for her service to the City. She confirmed with Mr. Shearouse that the District 5 railroad crossings at 52nd Street, Barnard Street, and Victory Drive in Phase II will start soon.
- Alderman Leggett expressed his gratitude for the public-private partnership during the process. The major concern was to keep the quality of life and neighborhoods safe for the residents. Alderman Leggett thanked Ms. Mobley and Mr. Blaine for their work during the long process.
- Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan stated the project was awesome and it started during this administration. She asked City Manager Melder if the crossing does not have a crossing gate can the City use signs to warn the public. Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan expressed concern for the crossings in the Woodville neighborhoods without active warning devices. She recommended signage at those crossings.
- Alderwoman Miller Blakely stated the process for the project started in 2012. She asked City Manager Melder why a feasibility study was done for certain areas and not for the entire City. City Manager Melder indicated he would check prior records for why a feasibility study was not conducted for the entire City.
- Alderman Palumbo stated how difficult the application process was for the City to achieve a quiet zone designation. He commended Joe Shearouse and all persons who worked on the project. He asked Mr. Shearouse to give more information on Phase II of the project and give the residents a sample of what the warning sign will be when completed.
- Alderwoman Lanier expressed concern that discussions and projects are in her district (Woodville neighborhood), but she was not invited to the table to negotiate for her constituents during those discussions/decisions. The approach should be holistic, this is a public crisis. The

quality of life on the Westside is causing deaths for residents. Alderwoman Lanier stated she is advocating for the District 1 residents, but after sending emails, letters, making phone calls and trying to arrange meetings she still has not been heard.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz thanked Mr. Shearouse, City Manager Melder, and Council for their participation.

The PowerPoint presentation is on file and available for viewing in the Clerk of Council's office.

[3. City Manager's Update](#)

Not Presented.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz adjourned the Workshop at 1:42 p.m.

A video recording of the workshop can be found by copying and inserting the link below in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=PZTXBH1EKhr6n82h>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Signature: _____

