



JUNE 27, 2024 11:00 a.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 11:00 a.m., in the 2nd Floor Media Room. Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Shabazz called the meeting to order and recognized Alderman Purtee to offer a prayer.

PRESENT:

Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding
Alderwoman Carolyn H. Bell, At-Large, Post 1
Alderwoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1
Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2
Alderwoman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3 - Vice Chair
Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4 - Chairman
Alderwoman Dr. Estella Edwards Shabazz, District 5 - Mayor Pro Tem

ABSENT:

Alderwoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2

ALSO, PRESENT:

City Manager Joseph A. Melder
Chief of Staff Daphanie Williams
Deputy City Attorney Jen Herman
Clerk of Council Mark Massey

Workshop Agenda Items[1. Transportation Update: Vision Zero Initiatives and Road Resurfacing Update](#)

Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Shabazz began the meeting by stating Mayor Johnson is in route. She identified the workshop topics, as indicated below, then turned the meeting over to the City Manager and his team to make their presentations.

- Transportation Update
 - Vision Zero Initiatives
 - Road Resurfacing Update
- Tide to Town Update
- City Manager's Update, if needed

City Manager Melder thanked everyone for the City Council meeting break/recess. He then introduced the new Chief of Planning & Economic Development Faye DiMassimo.

Chief DiMassimo gave a brief overview of the presentations being made and introduced Transportation (Traffic Engineer) Services Senior Director Stephen Henry. Mr. Henry introduced Traffic Engineering Coordinator Harold Taylor, Jr. to make the Vision Zero presentation.

City Manager Melder thanked Mr. Taylor for the presentation and his work on these projects.

Thereafter, Mr. Henry provided a RoadBotics presentation which covered roadway assessment and road resurfacing.

Listed below are some of the comments/concerns made.

- Ald. Lanier:
 - Appreciated progress with traffic calming;
 - Expressed concern re: traffic lighting namely at the W.Bay/Tuten intersection (GDOT looks at overall traffic volume, volume delays, and crashes for signals on state roads), because drivers aren't really following the beacon/hawk signals; and,
 - Asked staff to provide the crash data which she can share with the community.
- Ald. Bell:
 - Inquired about any improvements/process for obtaining input re: Traffic tables within the neighborhoods/residents (traffic calming committee); and,
 - Appreciated the flashing lights and speed limit vs. speed boards.
- Ald. Purtee:
 - Expressed concern re: lack of traffic calming measures within his district on the Southside; and,
 - Expressed distrust of the process used for prioritizing needed and timely traffic measures.
- Ald. Shabazz:
 - Appreciated having dedicated staff, focus, and equity on traffic calming measures;
 - Expects that evaluation will be the driver for future work and she welcomes the bike lanes;
 - With respect to SR 25 connector at W. Bryan St median, requested the type of median (raised) to be used for safety and protection of citizens;
 - Appreciated community engagement/education that is planned;
 - Expressed appreciation for the flood lights;
 - Asked for further explanation, along with an equity review, regarding the road surfacing/assessments by district (City Manager will provide the mileage in a different format, like percentages, given each district has different geographic miles).
- Ald. Wilder-Bryan:
 - Inquired about the process and timing of determining where traffic calming measures will be installed;

- Concerned about when police get involved and then the residents complain;
- Requested staff to keep the district representatives in the loop when working with the residents of those districts;
- Inquired whether staff had the needed tables (15) and materials needed to work/complete the list provided; and,
- Requested an implementation timetable/timeline, given the funding provided, so she can share that information with the community. The City Manager stated he will provide process improvements, communication improvements, and an implementation plan. Ald. Wilder-Bryan requested to keep the citizens involved in this process.
- Ald. Palumbo:
 - Stated changing the methodology and saving lives is the priority, stronger investments are needed within this realm;
 - Big picture, traffic death is preventable through better engineering and design;
 - Perplexed why there was no mention of Mr. Rick Hall, contractor hired to conduct an outreach strategy and two public engagement sessions. The City Manager says his report is coming in two weeks;
 - Expressed the taskforce needs to be revamped to include a member of Council, along with citizens to drive the process and decision-making, and open the meetings to the public;
 - Appreciated the use of AI technology, but with a different focus on auto behavior, as opposed to pedestrian behavior. There should be some roads that focus primarily on the needs of pedestrians and cyclist; and,
 - Requested to receive regular reports on these topics based on approval of the Vision Zero Initiative/Resolution.
- Ald. Leggett:
 - Asked about the supply chain issues previously mentioned re: traffic tables;
 - Expressed there is a lack of effectiveness and progress of projects highlighted;
 - Concerned about potholes and other areas where the city has not been more effective with maintenance of city streets; and,
 - Requested staff and others to give a true assessment of the needs to avoid demolition by neglect.
- Ald. Lanier:
 - Mentioned the need for traffic to slow down, re-routing, and signage to move traffic away from small, sub-standard, neighborhood streets;
 - Expressed that neighborhood leaders, residents, and her sought traffic calming measures in the past were met with little success;
 - Some neighborhoods are looking at doing their own signage to deal with the industry traffic issues;
 - Expressed appreciation for including the radar traffic signage; and,
 - Expressed issues with safety, resurfacing, repairs, and design, to help with the 18-wheelers entering neighborhood streets.
- Mayor Johnson:
 - Stated traffic calming and Vision Zero is all a part of public safety;
 - Reminded everyone the budget determines priorities;
 - Expressed priorities have been identified underground, above-ground, and for him striping;
 - Shared there is history where measures have been installed and then residents complained;
 - Expressed the upcoming opportunity to do something in the near future, via the FY2025 budget or the setting of the millage rate; and,
 - Expressed the concern heard from people about heavier enforcement and policing.

City Manager Melder introduced Assistant City Manager Heath Lloyd to discuss the Tide to Town project.

Following a brief introduction, Assistant City Manager Lloyd introduced Capital Projects Management Senior Director Cristy Lawrence to give the overview/update of Tide to Town.

City Manager Melder stated the project is wonderful and transformative, with several partners.

Listed below are some of the comments/concerns made.

- Ald. Wilder-Bryan:
 - Stated July 1st will be a ribbon-cutting for Phase B Truman Linear in the 3rd District.
- Ald. Lanier:
 - Inquired where the federal funding was coming from (CORE MPO, Transportation Alternatives Program or TAP funds);
 - Mentioned wherever trails were placed in low-wealth areas/cities, there also exists gentrification which can cause displacement; and,
 - Expressed her interest to keep people in place, not displaced (equitable growth).
- Mayor Johnson:
 - Stated there are levels of gentrification which occur naturally, in the evolution of a neighborhood.
- Ald. Palumbo:
 - Expressed he is a fan because this project connects 30 schools, hospitals, universities, and reconnects neighborhoods (silo buster);
 - Inquired whether the next phase of the project leading up to Daffin Park will be constructed from South to North, or from North to South (South to North - per project manager Tina Bockhold);
 - Expressed excitement about the 52nd St bridge; and,
 - Asked to look at Carey St, a private developer expressed interest to develop a portion of the trail leading to Bee Rd to connect with the Police Memorial trail.
- Ald. Lanier:
 - Stated displacement is not a natural byproduct of gentrification, rather displacement is by design whether allowed or fueled;
 - Expressed there are measures that can be taken/implemented to ward off displacement and keep people in place; and,
 - Expressed there are economic policies/tools that can be utilized, so investments/upgrades to neighborhoods can be made without having to displace residents who are currently there.
- Mayor Johnson:
 - With a wider world view, people don't have to stay where they are forever, but they have choices or the opportunity to move, as their education, income, or family situations allow; and,
 - Expressed we still have to improve those communities, provide housing, business, road, and food choices.

[3. Closed Executive Session: Litigation, Personnel, and Real Estate](#)

There was no executive session held/needed.

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

City Manager Melder indicated the petitioner for zoning agenda items 14 and 19 (District 2 - 1100 East 31st St) requested to continue those items until the second meeting in July, held on July 25.

There was no action taken during the Workshop.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the workshop at 12:55 p.m.

The 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=BlhqwiVadzGpN5wH>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Signature: _____

DRAFT

