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**MARCH 9, 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 12:00 p.m. Alderman/Vice Chairman Palumbo recognized Alderman Purtee to offer a prayer.

**PRESENT:**

Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding  
 Alderwoman Kesha Gibson-Carter, At-Large, Post 1  
 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  
 Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

**ABSENT:**

Alderwoman Dr. Estella Edwards Shabazz, District 5, Mayor Pro-Tem

**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

Alderman Palumbo announced Mayor Johnson and Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz were on their way to the Work Shop.

Vice-Chairman Palumbo called the work shop to order.

**Workshop Agenda Items**

[1. Saint Patrick's Day Celebration/Festival Ordinance](#)

[Exhibit 1: St. Patrick's Day Celebration.pptx](#)

PRESENTED after the Parklets Program presentation, by City Manager Melder, Special Events, Film & Tourism Senior Director Susan Broker, Police Sergeant Jason Pagliaro, and Fire Chief Kitchen. Police Chief Gunther, Senior Director, Park and Tree Gordon Denney, Director Henry, Director of Parking Services Sean Brandon, and Assistant Director of Special Events, Film & Tourism Eddie Grant were available for any questions or concerns.

City Manager Melder indicated the information is related to St. Patrick's Day and St. Patrick's Day related facilities as it relates to City operations during the festivities. The City is expecting large crowds for the weekend with local hotels currently at or near capacity.

Ms. Broker requested Council's consideration to enact the festival ordinance for March 17 and 18, 2023 on today's agenda. Parade Chairman and the Grand Marshal will ask Council for the 2023 parade permit at the regular meeting.

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

- . Mayor Johnson expressed concern of bathroom use. Businesses along the parade route won't allow use. Mayor Johnson recommended a meeting with local businesses for a partnership to give consideration to City officials/employees for use of their bathroom facilities along the parade route. City Manager Melder indicated staff is currently working with local businesses for a partnership.
- . Alderwoman Lanier expressed concern for the following: 1.) Where the current design standards shown to Council last year (no); 2.) Where are the boundaries for Parklets (anywhere in the City on local roads, but must meet the requirements; 3.) Is the St. Patrick's Day green dye staining (no); 4.) The extended southern boundary of the zone, any pushback or feedback (no negative feedback); and 5.) What is the total City budget for the St. Patrick's Celebration (\$260,000.00).
- . Mayor Johnson requested the hotel/motel and related income from last year. City Manager Melder will provide Council with the income totals. He indicated, no charges are made to any of the parades which the City helps to sponsor.
- . Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked: 1.) Will the trash marshals be paid (yes, they are City employees); 2.) Will the presentation information be available to the public, including permitting and parking availability (yes, through mass media outlets); 3.) What other foundation will be green (all fountains from River Street to and including Forsyth Park); and 4.) For the Juneteenth Celebration, there is a request to color the fountains. Ms. Jackson of the Daughters of Mary Magdalene requested the fountains red for Juneteenth, and if not red, then possibly green. City Manager Melder received Ms. Jackson's letter of request and asked staff to investigate the possibilities of a safe dye. If red cannot be used, staff would look at using the green.
- . Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan expressed concern for the squares along the parade zones and asked about the strategies for police and security (this year Deputy Marshals will work in the squares to issue ordinance violations/tickets. If there is an incident, the Marshals are in direct contact with the command center). Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan asked, since the Marshals are not police, does the City expect any pushback from citation/ticket recipients (there will be at least two officers in every square to handle the criminal element).
- . Alderman Leggett asked about the status of motor coaches, RV's and campers (RV's only allowed at Visitors Center. If vehicles cannot fit in marked spaces, they cannot park).
- . Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked what is the City doing in regards to child sex trafficking, rape, sexual assaults, DUI's, and underage drinking. Since the last two years, there has been a 30% increase. Has the City prepared any new strategies. City Manager Melder indicated a meeting with alcohol license holders and bar owners took place to discuss the need for partnership for public safety. There will be an enormous amount of police presence downtown during the St. Patrick's Day celebration. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter discussed the correlation between alcohol, underage drinking, sex assault and sex trafficking, and the programs and policies the City can establish to help prevent burdening the police officers. City Manager Melder agreed with Alderwoman Gibson-Carter that upstream prevention is the best practice and the City is moving in that direction.
- . Alderwoman Lanier stated the City is being defaced with graffiti, its everywhere. City Manager Melder indicated the City will be having all the stakeholders to meet and

discuss how to resolve the issue.

- Alderman Purtee asked Police Chief Gunther if sexual assaults were up 30%. Chief Gunther will send Council the statistics. City Manager Melder indicated he sends Council a weekly crime update. Alderman Purtee indicated, if there is an increase of 30%, Council should be made aware of the increase.
- Mayor Johnson stated there is a renewed partnership with the Savannah Inter Agency Council which leads the way in terms of human trafficking, the City has extended more police being engaged in that area of training. It doesn't just happen on St. Patrick's Day, it's an everyday issue.
- Alderwoman Gibson-Carter presented to City Attorney Lovett information pertaining to several accidents on Broughton Street involving bollards. City Manager Melder indicated staff is monitoring the area for incidents, but everything is to code. Alderman Palumbo indicated the purpose of the wide turnouts is for the pedestrians safety. Staff will review data and make any necessary corrections.

Mayor Johnson addressed the Police Chief and Fire Chief: "That was some of the worst basketball playing I've ever seen!" As Mayor, he is ordering a rematch at the Grant Center (opening in May).

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

## [2. Parklets Program](#)

[Exhibit 1: Parklet Program.pdf](#)

PRESENTED by City Manager Melder and Special Events, Film & Tourism Senior Director Susan Broker.

City Manager Melder opened the workshop with the Parklets Program which included feedback requested by City Council late last year. He introduced Susan Broker to begin the presentation on the Parklets Program and indicated the St. Patrick's Day logistics and safety plan will follow.

Both The Parklets Program and St. Patrick's Day Celebration have an ordinance on today's agenda for Council's consideration.

Ms. Broker asked for Council's consideration of the regulatory requirements of the Parklets Program Ordinance on today's agenda.

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

See Item #1 for comments and questions.

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

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Workshop at 1:26 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=TBikUj6W1tFZ>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

**Date Minutes Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

