



NOVEMBER 23, 2021, 12:00 noon - 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 12:01 p.m. Mayor Johnson recognized Alderman Miller Blakely to offer the invocation.

PRESENT: Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding

Alderman Kesha Gibson-Carter, At-Large, Post 1, Chairman

Alderman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2

Alderman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1

Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2

Alderman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3

Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4, Vice-Chairman

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

Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

ALSO, PRESENT:

City Manager Joseph A. Melder

Assistant to City Manager Daphanie Williams

City Attorney Bates Lovett

Clerk of Council Mark Massey

Deputy Clerk of Council Margaret Fox

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Presentation on Food Deserts in Savannah](#)

[Exhibit 1: Presentation - Innovation Track city.pptx](#)

PRESENTED by Mayor Johnson in partnership with the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative – Innovative Track, along with a Team of City employees as follows: Willie Mae Knight; Candra Teshome; DeAnni Gibbs; Amanda LaBrot; Chip Colley; Ann Cannon (absent); Jeff Shaffer (absent); and Sgt. William Barnett (absent).

Following the presentation, there was a question and answer session with Team Members and Council. There were discussions which included, but were not limited to the following topics:

- Questioned the small corner stores versus the larger stores on major streets. Food desert versus food apartheid. Revisit NewZo creating policies to justify densities (Alderman Lanier).
- Asked were other areas considered during the project or just the Westside. Each neighborhood is unique so the model might not work for other areas of the City (Alderman Leggett).
- Food issues are important as it impacts everyday life. Most neighborhoods were food secure when originally built, but through deliberate design decisions they became food deserts. It's good to see a blueprint for city-wide food security. What are the next steps to sustain the urban plan once the grocery stores are implemented (Alderman Palumbo).
- Asked will there be opportunities for community gardens for youth (Alderman Wilder-Bryan).
- If NewZo changed requirements for communities to create density, she recommended amending the NewZo Ordinance to allow enough density in the areas for grocery stores (Alderman Miller Blakely).
- Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz congratulated Mayor Johnson on completing the Bloomberg Harvard program and thanked team members for all the hard work on the prototype.

Mayor Johnson referred the program back to City Manager Melder for adjustments and creation of a timeline. He thanked Bloomberg Harvard, The Connick Group and the Centre for Public Impact for the opportunity and support. He asked team members to give their individual impressions of the program. Each member responded.

Mayor Johnson thanked all supervisors for allowing their staff to participate in the study/program.

[2. 2022 Legislative Agenda for Savannah](#)

[Exhibit 1: Presentation - 2022 Legislative Agenda.pptx](#)

PRESENTED by City Manager Melder and Assistant to City Manager Joe Shearouse.

Following the presentation, there was a question and answer session with presenters and Council Members, along with various discussion items which included, but were not limited to the following topics:

- Would like to see the term limits for Council Members on the legislative agenda before the current administration's terms end (Alderman Purtee).
- Asked for clarification on the following items: confiscated weapons can be auctioned but the City would like the option to destroy the weapons; percentage of the hotel/motel tax given to Savannah Chamber of Commerce; will there be racial requirements when selecting the board members for the Development Authority; can the Workforce Housing Initiative include/add rooming houses; and extend short-term vacation rental zones (Alderman Miller Blakely).
- Mayor Johnson indicated there will be a session in December to review board appointments. He will provide Council Members with updates.
- Public Service Commission has an impact on the day-to-day lives of residents. It's important for the City to have a strong presence (Alderman Palumbo).
- Recommended changing Workforce Housing Initiatives definitions and advocacy items and include State and/or local polices to protect residents. Questioned if there is a jurisdictional component to DDA, SDRA & SEDA (Alderman Lanier).
- Discussed child sex trafficking; asked to resurrect child protection act; hotel/motel tax percentage going to Visit Savannah reduced; and protection regarding gambling & casinos entering the Savannah area (Alderman Gibson-Carter).
- Language on Item #1 revised; weapons could be placed in a museum; reinstate fair housing programs; and create a program for storage of abandoned property for citizens who are evicted (Alderman Wilder-Bryan).
- Discussed confiscation of weapons being destroyed or auctioned; allow City Council to set rate for hotel/motel tax; and Workforce Housing Initiatives put on priority list (Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz).

Council Members will receive a survey (support or remove item) to complete and to prioritize items on the list. The session begins on January 10, 2022.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Workshop at 1:40 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=vyyYBQUKI2Yj>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Signature: _____

