

**Savannah City Government
SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES
COUNCIL WORK SESSION &
CITY MANAGER’S BRIEFING
February 18, 2016 – 10:00 a.m.**

PRESENT: Mayor Eddie W. DeLoach, Presiding
Mayor Pro-Tem Carol Bell
Alderman Julian Miller, Chairman of Council
Alderman Brian Foster, Vice-Chairman of Council
Van Johnson, II, (arrived at 10:30 a.m.), Tony Thomas
John Hall, Estella Shabazz (arrived at 10:30 a.m.), Bill Durrence

City Manager Stephanie Cutter
City Attorney W. Brooks Stillwell
Assistant City Attorney William Shearouse

Mayor DeLoach called the meeting to order.

Upon motion of Alderman Hall, seconded by Alderman Foster, and unanimously carried the agenda was amended to add a brief discussion on Boards, Commissions and Authorities for Alderman Durrence, Summer Intern Program Update by Alderman Bell and the SCMPD Merger by Mayor DeLoach.

Arena Advisory Subcommittee Reports

City Manager Cutter began the presentation with an overview and history of the Arena Process. She then stated the Arena Advisory Committee has 6 Subcommittees as follows:
Utilization of Current Civic Center, Rev. Chester Ellis, Chair; Community Education & Engagement, Richard Shinhoster, Chair; Programming Potential, Bob Coffey, Chair; Business Developmet, Dr. Kenneth Zapp, Chair, Mobility and Transportation, Tom Thomson, Chair; and Greenway Planning, Michael Owens, Chair however, could not be present due to the Tourism Leadership Council’s Annual Banquet. Marty Johnston presented in his absence (**Presentation on file in the Office of the Clerk of Council**)

The following questions and comments were made during and after the presentation

Mayor DeLoach asked City Manager Cutter when the study was completed to determine where the site would be selected. Alderman Thomas stated it occurred when Rochelle Small-Toney was the City Manager. Mayor DeLoach stated the original assembly began in 1996 and a study has not been completed as to where it would go until years later under the leadership of Former City Manager Small-Toney. City Manager Cutter stated the city lot is in the area and there may have been other proposed uses in the past for some of the land. Alderman Thomas stated for the past 16 years it has been stated that the new location for the arena would be on the Westside of

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Savannah. Much of the assemblage being done in the area off Louisville Road was with the intent of building an arena in that part of the city and the residents were promised. Mayor DeLoach stated he wants to see a study that states the arena is supposed to go in that location. City Manager Cutter replied there is a 2001 study about an Urban redevelopment Plan and the arena was a part of the plan.

Alderman Thomas asked Mayor DeLoach if Council knows where the arena will be built. Mayor DeLoach replied he's trying to determine the answer to that. Alderman Foster stated the due diligence has not been done to determine where it will go. Alderman Thomas stated he understands that but he's hearing different opinions around the table. City Manager Cutter reminded everyone that this is an update on where the process is. A resolution was adopted by Council in or around 2013 that stated where the site would be. She agreed on any Capital Project there is due diligence before any move towards construction is done to ensure the site is suitable. Alderman Thomas stated he believes before a lengthy discussion is held today, new Council members need to know a site was selected in 2013. Mayor DeLoach stated he doesn't understand how it was decided that an arena was needed when in 1996 it was unsure where the Trade Center would go. City Manager Cutter stated back then the Westside was a part of an Urban Redevelopment process and any time a parcel of land became available for sale to support urban redevelopment the previous Mayor's and Council's approved the acquisition of the property as a part of the whole, the arena is a component of it and there is a lot that will go with it.

Alderman Shabazz stated if there are concerns of the arena location being changed from the site voted on by the previous administration she believes it needs to be discussed now. In her opinion, it doesn't need to be changed as it would be a great addition to the Westside.

Utilization of Current Civic Center, Rev. Chester Ellis, Chair

Rev. Ellis stated it is the recommendation of the committee that the Savannah Civic Center to include the Martin Luther King Junior Arena, Johnny Mercer Theatre, Ballroom and the meeting rooms should be retained.

Alderman Miller asked if at any time the cost of maintaining the building versus the revenues it would bring in were considered. Rev. Ellis replied yes, renovations are "right now expenses" and revenues are generated over time. They believe the present Civic Center can operate and be an asset and not a liability. The expenses are presently on the board and if maintenance is kept up as the process goes along it will not be a fund drainer on the City.

Alderman Bell asked if the revenues generated by the Civic Center currently cover the operation and management. City Manager Cutter referred Joe Shearouse, Leisure Services Bureau Chief who stated 2015 was the first year that the Civic Center did not require a General Fund subsidy. Alderman Bell then asked, if the Savannah Civic Center is brought up to par what the cost would be. Mr. Shearouse stated they did a study on that a few years ago and he is sure it has changed by now, he will get the information to Council.

Alderman Durrence asked if the revenues from hotel/motel tax and rent a car tax which is currently being used to fund the Savannah Civic Center be split between it and the support of the new arena. City Manager Cutter replied they will be looking at the hotel/motel tax split this year. If the existing Civic Center is retained and plans move forward for the new arena, funding will

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need to be looked at for both which will be a combination of things. The Civic Center is supposed to be an enterprise fund where the revenues pay for the upkeep and maintenance. There are new revenue sources which will be discussed in some of the other reports that will be given today which will mention how the new arena will be self-sufficient. As Mr. Shearouse stated, 2015 is the first year that the Civic Center did not require a general fund subsidy.

Alderman Foster stated he is unsure if a City of this size can support two arenas. He suggested that Council should be cautious when thinking about the project as there will be a loss in the first couple years.

Alderman Thomas stated the reality is the City of Savannah misses a great deal of cultural opportunities because we don't have an arena large enough or the equipment to support a show that could hold 10 to 12K people.

Community Education & Engagement, Richard Shinhoster, Chair

Mr. Shinhoster presented the recommendations from the committee.

Alderman Foster asked if the area where the new arena is being built in a flood zone. City Manager Cutter replied she does not believe it is. Alderman Foster asked that someone confirm.

Programming Potential, Bob Coffey, Chair

Mr. Coffey presented the recommendations from the committee.

Alderman Miller asked are there any ideas on how to bring accessibility into the Downtown fabric. Mr. Coffey mentioned widening West Gwinnett and improving the Stiles Avenue corridor, he stated conditions need to be improved so people would want to walk or bike into the area.

Business Development, Dr. Kenneth Zapp, Chair

Dr. Zapp presented the recommendations from the committee. He stated if the City of Savannah decides to keep the Savannah Civic Center it would lose the millions of dollars the land could be sold for and the tax revenue which could derive from the residential and commercial development on the site. Dr. Zapp stated the goal is to attract people so people will want to come.

Mobility and Transportation, Tom Thomson, Chair

Mr. Thomson presented the recommendations from the committee.

Greenway Planning, Marty Johnston staff

Ms. Johnston presented the recommendations from the committee.

Alderman Johnson asked if it has been determined how deep the canal is at any given point. Ms. Johnston replied no, it has not been determined.

Council recessed and returned at 1:00 p.m. to complete the remainder of the agenda.

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Executive Session

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

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

Mayor DeLoach stated he along with Alderman Miller have been talking with Commissioner Tony Center about possibly moving forward with the merger agreement. He stated both entities will hire someone to come in and determine what the true cost is that is owed. Alderman Miller stated the discussions were informal and their major concern is tracking officer's whereabouts. In addition, the Mayor and Chairman wanted to be able to appoint someone to go to the Policy Committee meetings in the event either one of them cannot attend.

Alderman Thomas asked City Manager Cutter if she reviewed the documents and what are her thoughts. City Manager Cutter stated she has some concerns which are the history of the County dishonoring contractual agreements, \$2M in 2017 is prefunding where the City absorbs the amount awaiting a reimbursement, when history has proven they don't pay, the City passed the framework agreement in 2015 as well as the County, however now the County wants different language and she wants to know why the City is moving first, she feels what happened in the past will occur again. She stated there are some things missing such as there are no provisions to terminate the agreement if it doesn't work, what happens if a funding formula cannot be agreed upon, the agreement indicates 19 vehicles for the County for 2 years and 30 for the City what happens after the 2 year period, do they not have to replace the vehicles. She stated those things need to be cleaned up however, it is Council's decision. She continued stating she doesn't understand why the City is jumping out there when the County has the issue. Alderman Shabazz asked Mayor DeLoach and Alderman Miller why the City is moving first. They replied someone has to start and Council meets before them. Alderman Shabazz stated City Manager Cutter is the only person that is present that was on the front line of every meeting held during the previous administration and asked why Council isn't listening to her concerns. She also asked who created the document. Alderman Miller stated it's the old document with changes made by Commissioner Tony Center. Alderman Shabazz stated Commissioner Center never wanted the agreement and feels the new agreement should not be accepted.

Mayor DeLoach stated when the agreement comes back from the third party everyone will know what is owed and by whom. A study will be completed and can be voted on by Council.

Alderman Miller stated the things that are lacking in the contract that she mentioned were never in the original document. City Manager Cutter replied those concerns were in the original document.

Alderman Hall asked when this was presented to the Body. Alderman Thomas stated he saw it yesterday at 2:00 p.m. Mayor DeLoach stated he would like the item added to the council agenda to be voted on today.

Mayor DeLoach appointed Alderman Johnson to Chair the executive search for a new City Manager and he along with Alderman Foster will work alongside. Alderman Johnson stated Alderman Shabazz asked if she could be on the committee as well. Mayor DeLoach stated the

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committee only needs three people. Alderman Johnson stated he thinks there needs to be some balance. Mayor DeLoach agreed and stated they will be responsible for recommending a search firm to Council for its approval, working with the search firm and subsequently making recommendations on a selection process to the Council for its approval. The RFP has been completed and Council hopes to receive good firms to be able to present viable qualified search firms for approval.

Alderman Bell stated Martin Sullivan will give Council a one sheeter update summarizing where they are with the Summer Intern Program. She stated Dr. Paul Pressley, Past Head Master for Savannah Country Day has agreed to head the program. The committee has been meeting weekly for the past 5 to 6 weeks which consists of the City Manager and Mayor's Office, along with representation from Chamber of Commerce, SEDA, Gulfstream and the Coastal Georgia Educator's Coalition. The basics are as follows:

- Up to 500 rising seniors
- No felonies
- Can be in public school, private school or home schooled
- Must submit to and pass a drug screening

Students will be paired with the private or non-profit sector to work four days with them being in a session on the fifth day, using Junior Achievements Curriculum. They will be taught soft skills and life skills. The program is 9 weeks with a minimum salary of \$7.25 per hour for a 40 hour work week. Kevin Jackson, EnviroVac has agreed to recruit for the 500 jobs. The advertisement will be done on the city's website and there will be an application on the city's website for businesses to register and the public school system will conduct the lottery.

Alderman Shabazz asked how the program will be funded. Alderman Bell replied that has not been determined as of yet, but possibly a grant.

Alderman Bell stated the Savannah Apprentice Program will be running simultaneously with the Summer 500 Program.

Alderman Johnson asked will all residents come from the City of Savannah. Alderman Bell replied no.

City Manager Stephanie Cutter presented the City Manager's Briefing of the agenda items for the Council Meeting of February 18, 2016. The agenda is attached and made a part of the permanent record.

Mayor DeLoach adjourned this meeting.



Dyanne C. Reese, MMC,
Clerk of Council