

Summary/Final Minutes – Work Session – May 26, 2016

Savannah City Government SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER’S BRIEFING May 26, 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
John Hall, Bill Durrence, Tony Thomas (arrived at 10:15 a.m.),
Estella Shabazz, Van Johnson, II (arrived at 10:35 a.m.)

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

Mayor DeLoach called the meeting to order.

Food Truck Ordinance

Susan Broker, Citizens Office Director, Julie McLean, City Engineer, presented a Power Point Presentation on the Food Truck Ordinance. (**Presentation on file in the Office of the Clerk of Council**)

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

Mike Vaquer, representing the Georgia Restaurant Association and the Savannah Restaurant Owners Group (Fast food Restaurants Operators in the City) came forward stating they appreciate the language that states 200 feet from a brick and mortar restaurant however, they are concerned about the language which states that sells the same or predominately similar food products. The interest isn't in limiting the product itself but limiting the mobile restaurant from locating within a 200 foot radius from a brick and mortar restaurant. He ended stating if that phrase can be removed they are fine moving forward.

Mayor DeLoach stated a new wheel isn't being invented as this is done in other areas and suggested not getting bogged down in the specifics rather identify them and work through them.

Alderman Thomas stated he understands the concerns and is in favor of Food Trucks but questioned what would occur in his District where Home Depot, PetSmart and Lowe's are in an instance where one of those locations may want to have a weekend event as there is an Outback, B&D Burgers, Chick Fil-A and Applebee's in the same area.

Ms. Broker replied the measurement may need to be fine-tuned but as long as they're more than 200 feet away they would be legal.

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Ms. Broker introduced Ryan Giannoni, Director of the Savannah Food Truck Festival and President of Savannah Food Truck Association who greeted Council and thanked them for their consideration of this ordinance.

Alderman Johnson asked how the City plans to deal with squatting as there are some places that will be more popular than others. How does staff plan to ensure each food truck owner gets an equal opportunity.

Ms. Broker responded trucks cannot be on the public right of way except during the specified times. She stated she spoke with many of the owners and they want to make money therefore they plan to follow the rules.

Alderman Johnson stated location is everything, as with most thing policy isn't the issue it's the enforcement.

Ms. Broker thanked Alderman Johnson and stated they will put a caveat in the policy that speaks directly to that.

Alderman Shabazz stated when this ordinance is passed it will take off. She then asked will there be a lottery system of sorts for owners to have a fair chance at making money I the popular areas? Ms. Broker stated that is something staff has thought about, they have looked at the policies of other communities which do things on a first come first serve basis. She stated there are many variables that are still unknown and she will take the questions back to the team for further discussion.

Alderman Shabazz asked how many Food Trucks are in the City currently. Ms. Broker replied she believes there are 18 permitted through the Health Department some of which are from other counties that come to various festivals. Ms. Broker referred to Mr. Giannoni who stated he represents 17 food trucks in Savannah many of which that are doing catering events. Alderman Shabazz expressed her concerns about the number of trucks in the Savannah area and the amount of trucks being allowed in areas. Ms. Broker stated staff will go back and look at the ordinance and make changes accordingly.

Alderman Hall expressed his concerns about individuals setting up food trucks in the area near Whole Foods in his district stating those established business owners pay are paying City taxes far more than the \$150 food truck owners will be charged. He stated he doesn't want the business owners to be affected by the food trucks as they can move from location to location.

Alderman Thomas stated the food trucks may encourage the restaurants in the Downtown area to stay open later. In addition, he expressed his concerns about local preference and asked is there anything in the ordinance about local preference versus someone coming in from a surrounding County for the weekend. He stated he would like to see more local people be given more of an opportunity than someone from out of town. He also asked what would happen in an instance where a church decided to have a food truck in their parking lot as it would eliminate one of the opportunities in the area. Alderman Thomas concluded stating there could be an instance where multiple trucks arrive at a particular location at the same time and asked who will determine who stays and who goes.

Alderman Foster asked would churches be allowed to rent their parking lot to food truck owners. Ms. Broker replied yes.

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Ms. Broker stated Council has given staff a great deal of feedback, they will send a memorandum to the City Manager's office for further review.

Mayor DeLoach stated he would like a list of questions and answers back from the City Manager for discussion at the meeting of June 23, 2016.

Alderman Durrence expressed his displeasure with the timing of receipt of the Taxicab Ordinance information. He stated he is happy to listen to the presentation but anything related to it would require more time and attention. He asked if Council can receive the Work shop Agenda and all relevant information by Friday when the books are received for the Council meeting. City Manager Cutter stated Alderman Durrence's concerns have been noted, when dealing with ordinances they have to go through legal reviews before being given to Council.

Taxicab Ordinance

Sean Brandon, Management Services Bureau Chief presented a PowerPoint Presentation on the Taxicab Ordinance. Mr. Brandon introduced Mark Adelman, Attorney for the Taxicab Association. **(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 expressed his displeasure with the proposal to charge a service fee for using credit cards. He stated taxi drivers could increase their fare to cover the service charge. The taxi fare should be all inclusive. Mr. Brandon made note of the concern.

Alderman Thomas expressed his concerns about it being difficult to find a taxi on Friday and Saturday nights. He stated the taxi stands are not visible enough for people to find. He suggested instead of having taxi stands throughout the City have a functioning taxi stand such as the ones at airports with a person that could call more taxis if necessary. Alderman Thomas stated the City needs a healthy taxi industry as Uber has damaged the industry.

Mayor DeLoach asked staff and the taxi owners to get together and come back with suggestions on how a functioning taxi stand could work in the City.

Attorney Adelman appeared asking to properly enforce laws against Uber because they are constantly eviscerating the industry and taking drivers off the road. This legislation represents what Council will do right. There have been many discussions about the details of the ordinance and no action. He suggested utilizing the City Ambassadors to possibly man the taxi stand.

Executive Session

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

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

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City Manager Stephanie Cutter presented the City Manager’s Briefing of the agenda items for the Council Meeting of May 26, 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