



**CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
VISIONING SESSION (RETREAT)  
Civic Center – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor – O’Connor Room  
301 Oglethorpe Avenue, Savannah, GA 31401  
March 25, 2024 – 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Van R. Johnson, II  
Alderswoman Carolyn H. Bell, At-Large, Post 1  
Alderswoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2  
Alderswoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1  
Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2  
Aldermen Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3 – Vice-Chair  
Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4 - Chairman  
Alderswoman Dr. Estella E. Shabazz, District 5 – Mayor Pro-Tem  
Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

**OTHERS PRESENT:**  
City Manager Jay Melder  
City Attorney Bates Lovett  
Clerk of Council Mark Massey  
Deputy Clerk of Council Margaret Fox  
Rashad Young, Consultant, Elevated Development Concepts

The Special Called Meeting was held at 9:15 a.m. at the Savannah Civic Center, O’Connor Room. The invocation was offered by Alderman Purtee.

**Opening Remarks and Introduction of Facilitator:**

Mayor Johnson thanked and welcomed everyone to the visioning session.

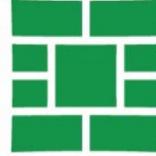
Mayor Johnson gave a brief overview of the first three months of operation for the new administration. He discussed the development of a vision for the City of Savannah:

- This will be used as a guiding principle for the City, and the Council should formally adopt as the City’s Vision Statement.
- The City Council chooses the priorities and the direction for the City.

Mayor Johnson first thanked Mr. Young for attending and participating in the visioning session, and then he introduced Ms. Ruth Demeter, Ruth Demeter Consulting, and thanked her for returning to the City to help facilitate the visioning session.

**Welcome:**

Ms. Demeter thanked the Mayor and Council for giving her the opportunity to return and facilitate the visioning session. She informed the Mayor and Council what the intent would be for the Visioning Sessions and detailed the rules during the session.



**Discussions:**

Utilizing round-robin style, Ms. Demeter asked each Council Member to express “how you feel”.

**Vision Session #1:**

Ms. Demeter then asked the Council Members for priority issues for the current administration. The priorities from each Member of the Council were gathered and added to the wall as priorities. Under each priority, Council Members added various categories. The items gathered will be compiled by Rashad Young to translate the submitted priorities into a working plan.

**Lunch:**

**Vision Session #2 and #3:**

Following the lunch break, with direction and parameters from Ruth Demeter, the Council Members continued the visioning sessions with group and individual reflections, observations, and input.

**Closing:**

Mayor Johnson thanked the Council for their participation and indicated the visioning session will continue tomorrow at 9:30 a.m.

There was no action taken during the visioning session.

The session adjourned at 4:19 p.m.

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

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

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



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**CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
VISIONING SESSION (RETREAT)  
Civic Center – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, O’Connor Room  
301 Oglethorpe Avenue, Savannah, GA 31401  
March 26, 2024 – 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding  
Alderswoman Carolyn H. Bell, At-Large, Post 1  
Alderswoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2  
Alderswoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1  
Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2  
Aldermen Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3 – Vice-Chair  
Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4 - Chairman  
Alderswoman Dr. Estella E. Shabazz, District 5 – Mayor Pro-Tem  
Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

**OTHERS PRESENT:**  
City Manager Jay Melder  
City Attorney Bates Lovett  
Clerk of Council Mark Massey  
Deputy Clerk of Council Margaret Fox  
Rashad Young, Consultant, Elevated Development Concepts

The Special Called Meeting began at 9:39 a.m. at the Savannah Civic Center, O’Connor Room. The invocation was offered by Alderman Purtee.

**Welcome and opening remarks by Mayor Johnson:**

Mayor Johnson thanked everyone for returning to the visioning session and asked all in attendance to remember families of victims impacted by the collapsed bridge in Baltimore, MD, and he extended his support to their leaders. Ald. Bell extended her thoughts and prayers for the recovery of Kevin ‘Catfish’ Jackson who remains in ICU, a well-known member of the Savannah community, and a generous philanthropist.

**Vision Session #4:**

Utilizing a round robin concept, Ms. Demeter asked Council Members to discuss their individual issues/concerns, and how to resolve the issue. She then reviewed the priority topics from the previous day.

**Strategic Planning Kickoff:**

Facilitator Ruth Demeter articulated the major priorities presented and discussed by the Council during the previous sessions and asked Council Members to prioritize those goals over a four-year term.



Ms. Demeter congratulated the Mayor and Council on a successful visioning session for the past day and a half. She indicated after the lunch break Mr. Rashad Young will discuss with the Council the strategic priorities and how to accomplish a plan of action to address those priorities in a timely manner.

**Lunch:**

**Review of Strategic Priorities:**

Rashad Young discussed the priorities submitted and discussed by the Council Members and asked Members to identify ways the staff and administration can prioritize those goals over the next four-year term. Council Members submitted suggestions on paper and discussed options. Mr. Young will compile the information and submit a working plan for Council.

City Manager Melder summarized the session. He expressed his gratitude to Council Members for taking the time to identify their priorities and values. He asked Council Members for their consensus on accepting the six major strategic priorities. City Manager Melder will report back to Council Members on the progress and/or completion of the plan by Mr. Young.

**Mayor's Closing Remarks:**

Mayor Johnson asked Council Members and City Manager Melder if the agenda for the workshop for Thursday needed any revision. City Attorney Lovett indicated there was no need for an Executive Session. Consensus from the Mayor and Council Members was to have a working lunch workshop at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 28, 2024, prior to the 2:00 p.m. Regular City Council Meeting.

Mayor Johnson thanked Ms. Demeter, the Council Members, and all in attendance for their support.

With no further business coming before the assembly, Mayor Johnson adjourned the meeting at 2:05 p.m.

There was no action taken during the visioning session.

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

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

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