



**BOARD OF MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION**

January 22nd, 2020

5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

Members Present: Jonathan Elmore, Mayor
Brian Fisher, Mayor Pro Tem
Dee Merriam, Commissioner
Lionel Laratte, Commissioner
Lisa Shortell, Commissioner

Staff Present: Patrick Bryant, City Manager
Paul Hanebuth, Asst. City Manager
Shannon Powell, Asst. City Manager
Stephen Quinn, City Attorney
Lynn Thomas, Police Chief
Gina Hill, City Clerk

Item No. 1 Meeting Called to Order

Item No. 2 Adoption of Agenda
Commissioner Shortell moves to adopt. Commissioner Laratte seconds. All ayes.

Item No. 3 **Compensation & Classification Study Presentation**
Representatives from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVI) at the University of Georgia will present the results of their study regarding the pay and classification of city staff.

City Manager Bryant said that conducting these studies is required in the city's charter. He introduced Alex Daman, the project manager on the study. Mr. Daman describes what CVI does and provides his professional background. He went on to explain how the study was conducted as well as the results and recommendations. Mr. Daman and Mr. Bryant field questions from members of the Board of Mayor and Commissioners (BOMC) at various points throughout the presentation. At the end, Mr. Bryant requested that the BOMC vote at the next regular meeting to adopt the study, including the position grades and pay bands. He also said he suggests instituting the average of the pay bands plus the 2020 cost adjustments. The 2020 budget already allows for these changes and they could be implemented immediately. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher said he wanted to see long-term employees compensated fairly compared to newer hires and Mr. Bryant responded that the compression analysis

portion of the study takes that into account. Mr. Fisher also asked if there will be discretion in the future as to raises. Mr. Bryant said that future raises will depend on the financial health of the city. He also offered that CVI will be doing a new policy manual for the city and there are more issues to work out in that process. However, he envisioned a cost of living adjustment of 2% every year and then a merit increase of 1-3% on top of that. Finance Director Paul Hanebuth explained how the Consumer Price Index (CPI) played a role. Mr. Fisher asked more questions, including how other cities handle the compensation and classification. Commissioner Shortell thanked Mr. Bryant and CVI for this study. She felt the move is objective, fair, sustainable, and a big improvement. Commissioner Merriam asked a question about classification in instances where an employee's role changes. Mr. Bryant said that as the city's needs change, a job can be reclassified at any time. Moreover, the study will be revisited every five years optimally. Commissioner Laratte asked which economic indicator staff would be linking compensation changes to. That could be dependent on the city's economic conditions, said Mr. Bryant, but the CPI will be used this time. Mr. Laratte supports the changes. Mayor Elmore was happy about this move and wished it was done sooner. In response to a question from Mr. Shortell, Mr. Bryant said the starting wage for a public works employee would be \$14.68 per hour.

Jack Krost felt the city should be more professional and this was a step in the right direction. He asked how much this will cost overall. Mr. Bryant said it would be approximately \$145 thousand which is below what was budgeted. Larry Minnix was supportive of the changes. Jane Howe asked if higher paid employees were included in the pay bands. Mr. Bryant explained the city manager is the only position excluded because it's a contract position. Candace Jones ask how much was budgeted for implementation and Mr. Bryant offered that amount was about \$230 thousand. Kerry Quinn asked about taxes and continued raises. Mr. Bryant explained that staff does not want to outpace inflation and that's why raises would be dependent on economic conditions. For resident Jan Hover, Mr. Bryant clarified that the goal is to continually review job classifications and adjust accordingly. Joe Anziano felt downtown development will increase the city's revenue curve so there will be no trouble paying for this in the future. He added thanks to public works employees. Mayor Elmore concluded this would be voted on at the next regular meeting.

Item No. 4

Approval of the Town Green Design Process

The Board of Mayor and Commissioners (BOMC) has approved the selection of Site Solutions to design the town green. Representatives from the firm will propose a design process to include public involvement.

Mayor Elmore introduces Eric Bishop of Site Solutions. City Manager Bryant explained this presentation is required by the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by the city. Mr. Bishop begins by saying

they are starting with concept #9, chosen by members of the community, as their framework. He said the public process moving forward will be robust but fast moving. Mr. Bishop cited groups they want to target, such as those who can't attend public meetings. There will be tradeoffs, he added, since two acres is not a lot of space to have all the desired elements. Maintenance needs to be considered. The legacy of the town green is very important, he added. Mr. Bishop said things to consider are inclusivity, usage, and environmental issues. The discovery phase is underway, said Mr. Bishop, and the design team has reviewed all the comments and designs offered by the public up to this point. He went into more detail about stormwater, utilities, programming, and other considerations. The goal is to put video of all the meetings and presentations online to reach as many people as possible. Mr. Bishop outlined the future meetings and goals of those meetings. Commissioner Laratte asked at what point they start talking about cost. Mr. Bryant said the baseline they're working from was an estimate from the Ad Hoc Committee for Greenspace. Mr. Bishop added that his group has a good feel of current construction costs and public meetings can help eliminate features that aren't a high priority. Mr. Laratte asked what methods would be used to illicit opinions from the public. Mr. Bryant explained the meetings would include presentations and be interactive. Commissioner Merriam suggested Mr. Bishop look at a survey previously conducted. She also felt business owners, seniors, and city boards should be included as stakeholders. Ms. Merriam said it's important to ask yourself what you're trying to accomplish as the first step in this process. She added that concise meeting recaps are important and building on them with each consecutive meeting and, in her opinion, open houses might need more structure. Commissioner Shortell asked if changes to Washington and Parry Streets were part of this plan. Mr. Bryant responded that the BOMC would be hearing from him soon regarding land acquisition and it would be discussed in executive sessions. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher also wished to include business owners. He also suggested meeting outside of city hall. Mr. Bryant said the plan was to do so. Ms. Merriam warned against trying to accomplish too much in one meeting.

Resident and Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Chair Dave Deiters said the plan is robust but he doesn't feel it's too fast. He suggested having a one-page graphic that shows the meeting schedule, purpose of each meeting, and a recap of the previous meeting. Jan Hover suggested mailing hardcopies of the information recommended by Mr. Deiters. Mr. Bryant said that option will be explored. Sharon Saliba suggested that the professionals give the public options to choose from in these meetings as opposed to starting with a blank slate. She also recommended reaching out to various groups, such as the garden clubs, and ask them to make sure they have at least one representative at each meeting. Kathy Kingsbury offered that the meetings needed to be structured. Mr. Bryant said staff recommends approving this plan and the BOMC will vote on it at the next regular meeting. Mr. Elmore and Mr. Laratte are supportive. Ms. Merriam agrees but wants an extra meeting

added to the schedule. Ms. Shortell and Mr. Fisher also wanted to vote on this at the next meeting and want to leave it up to Mr. Bishop and staff as to whether or not a second meeting is appropriate.

Item No. 5

Addition to Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) Between the BOMC and Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

The IGA would grant the DDA the ability to improve property at 90 North Avondale Road and the parking lot at the corner of Lake and Franklin Streets, both of which are city owned.

City Manager Bryant explains that because the city owns the property in question, the DDA needs permission to make improvements to it. This addition to the IGA would do just that. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher asked if there were plans for the building. Sam Collier, DDA Director, said those decisions have not been made beyond work on the parking lot. Commissioner Laratte asked who will be responsible for the maintenance of the parking lot. Mr. Bryant responded that has not been determined. It will depend on whether or not the city retains ownership of the property. He also reminded the group that plans for the lot are temporary. In response to another question from Mr. Laratte, Mr. Bryant said the parking lot's revenue generating potential hasn't been discussed. Mayor Elmore concluded by saying this item would be voted on at the next regular meeting.

Item No. 6

DDA Funding Request for Geotech Study of Town Green Project

The DDA seeks BOMC support for this expenditure in the amount of approximately \$21 thousand. Funds would come from extra permitting fees negotiated by the DDA from Trammell Crow Residential.

City Manager Bryant recounted how the DDA negotiated the higher fees with Trammell Crow Residential. The DDA may spend those funds subject to BOMC approval. Commissioner Shortell pointed out that the responsibility for conducting these studies falls on the city, per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Fabric Development. She added the DDA has agreed to pick up the cost. Mayor Elmore is supportive. Commissioner Laratte asked what information would be gained from the study and DDA Director Sam Collier responded. This item will be voted on at the next regular meeting.

Item No. 7

Sanitation Ordinance Revision

There has been one reading of the ordinance which changes the regulations and payment structure for commercial entities.

City Manager Bryant wanted to combine this item with item #8. He gave a quick overview of the proposed sanitation ordinance changes. Mr. Bryant also gave an update on the city's arrangement with Latham Home Sanitation for recycling services. Latham is raising their fees which would be passed along to residents at a cost of \$13 more per year. Mr. Bryant listed the decisions to be voted on at the next regular meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher had a question about how the Avondale Swim & Tennis

Club was classified under the sanitation fees. Finance Director Paul Hanebuth responded. As far as recycling goes, Mr. Fisher said he'd prefer not to have a break in service. He added that the economics of recycling is changing and this will probably need to be discussed again. Commissioner Shortell agreed. Commissioner Merriam asked if these changes could be communicated via a newsletter article or e-blast. Commissioner Laratte and Mayor Elmore are also supportive.

Kathy Kingsbury had a question about the recycling containers in Willis Park. She also asked if trash and recycling containers could be installed in other areas of the city. Bob Wess asked why the city's sanitation fee was higher than DeKalb County's. Mr. Bryant said Avondale's service is much more robust. Kerry Quinn asked if homes with garage apartments rented out were paying more than a regular residence. Mr. Bryant said that currently that is difficult to police. Mr. Hanebuth clarified that the fees are tied to usage and residential pickup is twice a week while commercial entities have service five days per week. Candace Jones asked a question about the fee structure for businesses. Mr. Bryant responded and added that the code enforcement officer would be policing them. Sharon Saliba felt the city doesn't need trash pickup twice a week. Rick Jarvis of Latham Home Sanitation gave some background on their business and said they want to continue the relationship with Avondale. Mr. Bryant concluded by saying the second reading of the ordinance will be Monday night and the BOMC will vote on the sanitation fee resolution.

Item No. 8

Establishing Sanitation fees for 2020

This resolution will call for a residential fee of \$495 annually per household. Business owners will pay a \$895 base fee and \$190 for each additional container.

Combined with item above

Item No. 9

Approval of BOMC Meeting Schedule for 2020

For this year, several regular meetings will be rescheduled due to travel and holidays. They are:

March 30th (rescheduled from the 23rd)

May 18th (rescheduled from the 25th)

July 20th (rescheduled from the 27th)

September 29th (rescheduled from the 28th)

December 14th (rescheduled from the 28th)

Commissioner Shortell said she would not be able to attend the meeting on May 18th. This resolution will be voted on at the next regular meeting.

Candace Jones thanks the BOMC for approving this schedule.

Item No. 10

Support of the DeKalb County Ethics Board

This resolution would urge the Georgia General Assembly to establish strong ethics legislation which addresses the appointment process for

this board. Also, it's requested that any additional proposals to amend the Code of Ethics be considered in an open and transparent manner.

Mayor Elmore said this is something desperately needed. City Manager Bryant clarified this action does not impact the city. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher felt this was needed to provide checks and balances. Commissioner Shortell commented on what other cities and legislators are doing to support ethics. Mayor Elmore said this will be voted on Monday night.

Item No. 11

Proclamation Supporting National School Choice Week (NSCW)

From public schools, charter schools, and magnet schools to private schools, online academies, and homeschools, NSCW is designed to raise awareness of the different K-12 education options and the benefits of school choice. NSCW, taking place between January 26th through February 1st, started in 2011 and is a nonpartisan, nonpolitical, independent effort.

Mayor Elmore said he believes we do this every year and it shows support for school choice.

Item No. 12

A Contract with Lord Aeck Sargent to Update the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Guidelines

A resolution in support of this item will be up for a vote at the next regular meeting. The contract will not exceed \$37,500.

City Manager Bryant explained the city received a \$10 thousand grant to put towards this project and there is a deadline for which it must be used. A request for proposals (RFP) was released and the city received two proposals. Mr. Bryant explained how Lord Aeck Sargent was chosen over the other applicant. Because the other proposal came from the HPC's consultant, that presented a potential conflict of interest. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher asked what's included in that quote. Mr. Bryant said because the estimate is higher than the budgeted amount, the budget will need to be amended at some point during the year. Assistant City Manager Powell expressed that Lord Aeck Sargent was well regarded in their field. Commissioner Shortell believed this was a good reason for going over budget. Commissioner Merriam asked where the extra funds would come from and Mr. Bryant responded that it would come from the city's general fund.

Kathy Kingsbury remarked how Lord Aeck Sargent included a photo of The Museum School in their proposal and the school is not in the city limits. Candace Jones thanked the BOMC and staff for moving forward with this since it's long overdue. This will be voted on at the next regular meeting.

Item No. 13

Stormwater Easement at 723 Stratford Road

The property owner is requesting that the city accept a stormwater easement to allow for access to and maintenance of a stormwater junction box connected to the Kensington Road detention pond.

City Manager Bryant described how this situation was discovered. He explained how the city cannot provide maintenance to the stormwater system without an easement – the junction box is part of the city’s stormwater system but not legally. City Attorney Quinn offered that the city would have to make repairs to the junction box as part of the easement. This will be voted on at the next regular meeting.

Item No. 14

Request for Consent to Assignment

SCP Avondale Owner, LLC has requested that the City consent to assignment of the Development Agreement concerning the Willis development at 2700 East College Avenue to Coastal Ridge Capital, LLC. The proposed Consent to Assignment document and information regarding Coastal Ridge Capital are attached.

City Manager Bryant explained why this is required for SCP to sell the property. This was spelled out in the development agreement between SCP and the city. Mr. Bryant added that because the sale price of the development will be higher, tax revenues for the city will increase. City Attorney Quinn added more detail. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher asked if the park adjacent to the property had already been deeded over to the city. Mr. Bryant said it was. Commissioner Shortell said the tax abatement will continue but tax revenue will rise. Resident Bob Wess asked why the city would want to own the greenspace. This will be voted on at the next regular meeting.

Item No. 15

Public Comment

Amy Leventhal felt something must be done about the condition of the public works building. City Manager Bryant told Ms. Leventhal that a firm is working on designs for some of the immediate problems at the building. Also, the one female employee will now be based at city hall. Staff is also looking for a new public works headquarters location. This is a complex issue that will likely need discussion in executive session since it deals with real estate. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher reiterates the importance of this project and he gave a timeline up to this point. Jack Krost voiced concern about the proposed redesign of US 278. Mr. Bryant and the BOMC discussed the status of the project and what’s happened to this point. It was pointed out several times that this item is not on the agenda and the BOMC is not prepared to discuss it. Candace Jones praised the most recent hardcopy newsletter delivered to residents. She said it was very informative. She also requested that the topic of tax relief for low income seniors be placed on an upcoming agenda. Mayor Elmore said this would be discussed at the upcoming strategic planning retreat and that it would require lots of discussion and analysis.

Item No. 16

Adjournment

Commissioner Laratte moves to adjourn. Commissioner Fisher seconds.
All ayes.

APPROVED THIS 22nd DAY OF JUNE 2020



Jonathan Elmore, Mayor

ATTEST:



Gina Hill, City Clerk