

**BOARD OF MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS
STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT
FIRE STATION -- 24 N. CLARENDON AVE.
JANUARY 25, 2018
8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

MINUTES

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

Staff Present: Clai Brown, City Manager
Gina Hill, City Clerk

Guests: Katherine Moore, Georgia Conservancy
Johanna McCrehan, Georgia Conservancy
City Manager Kay Love, Roswell
Mayor Jim Thornton, LaGrange (by phone)

Welcome and Call to Order
Mayor Jonathan Elmore

Kay Love and Mayor Jim Thornton spoken about lessons they've learned in their jobs.

Katherine Moore: The way we've outlined the agenda today is we have four discussion slots of about 40 minutes each. You choose the topics. You can do fewer slots for longer periods of time. Come up to the board and put a sticker by the topics you want to discuss....so clearly we see interest in discussing downtown development, communication, and infrastructure. There is also relationships, education and development pressures. We can do the first three and then touch on another topic if there is time. We'll start with communication, including relationships, then infrastructure and downtown development after that. I hope today will lead to more efficient work sessions and you can be as proactive as possible. You can also choose point people and time frames.

Discussion
Item 1:

Katherine Moore: Communication can be verbal conversation, email, communication to the public, with each other, website, etc. Social media could encompass website.

Mayor Elmore: People are asking for monthly financial information. Not sure where that should go.

Katherine Moore: One of the past goals was to develop a process for communicating with county, state, school board and other government agencies. Is that still important?

Mayor Elmore: I think it is.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: I don't think it should be our focus of communication. Commissioner Yelton has done a good job of communicating with those groups. I think our biggest challenge is getting out accurate information to the public so that inaccurate sources don't prevail.

Commissioner Laratte: I agree.

Commissioner Shortell: Not just communicate, but educate.

Commissioner Yelton: We should institute a communications plan to be developed and executed by city staff.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: There would need to be coordination with the DDA.

Katherine Moore: Town hall type meetings might be good for educating. You could make a goal of having one per year. If someone owns this it could be a work session topic at some point.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: Some people can't make it to meetings and don't use social media. So we need to make sure we get information out to them and get it back in return.

Katherine Moore: You need to decide that as you develop your communication plan. A social media policy would fall under that as well. With inquiries, you have to know when to stop a thread. Who will own this?

City Manager Brown: I think the Board should come up with priorities and then it could go to City Clerk Hill and Communications Manager Rebecca Long. They could come up with a plan and present it in a work session.

Katherine Moore: It may take several work sessions.

Commissioner Yelton: I think we need a Board level point person for all of these.

Katherine Moore: Commissioner Shortell!

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: We should include the Avondale Estates Business Association as a stake holder as well.

Katherine Moore: Who will be a point person for the public forum?
Commissioner Yelton! What about legal clarity on things like "reply all" to the rest of the Board? Have the BOMC meeting agendas gotten more efficient?

Mayor Elmore: We have been more descriptive with our agenda items.

Katherine Moore: Are you comfortable with where public comment goes?

Mayor Elmore: I think the concern is just with the length of the meetings. Some of that is due to the number of agenda items and it's partly because of the amount of public comment. Public comment lengthens the meetings but it's important. We've talked about putting some ground rules at the bottom of every agenda.

Commissioner Shortell: We could also discuss doing a consent agenda at the end of the agendas.

Katherine Moore: An action item could be consider placement and structure of public comment in a future meeting. Who will be the point person? Gina Hill! Also from last year was establish a system of internal communications between the BOMC, city manager and each other. Some of this could be tackled in your communications plan. What about the commissioners' guidebook?

Commissioner Yelton: I would like city manager evaluation policy to be included along with information about our annual strategic planning sessions.

Commissioner Shortell: When it came to communication amongst ourselves I wish it would've been more specific.

Commissioner Laratte: I didn't know before I was elected that there is a protocol.

Katherine Moore: We could say update the commissioner guidebook with more details about internal communications. Also from last time, city manager and city planner job descriptions. That still needs to be done. Has the commissioner guidebook been posted on the website? I think anything like that should be put on your website. Gina Hill can research placement. The Mayor can be the squeaky wheel. Do we have a DDA roles and responsibilities document and, if so, is it online yet? That should be done and I think that's Commissioner Yelton's responsibility.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: Where does the Team Avondale approach come in?

Katherine Moore: It sounds like the DDA would own that. The DDA could pitch how the process looks when they receive a call from developers, for example.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: I think we need to look more at how we communicated information about what Team Avondale is to the public.

Katherine Moore: I think that, plus the work done by other committees, should get put into your overall external communications plan. One action item from last year was to institute best practices where annual evaluations are concerned and looking at other cities.

Commissioner Yelton: We have done some work on that. I will follow up.

Discussion
Item 2:

Katherine Moore: What do you consider infrastructure?

Mayor Elmore: The greenspace committee is looking at green infrastructure. The BOMC is looking at storm water. We need to talk to the DDA about storm water in the downtown. It's a work in progress.

Commissioner Shortell: I consider infrastructure the entire public realm.

Katherine Moore: Last year, you said you wanted to do an annual infrastructure report and have short-term and long-term goals.

City Manager Brown: We did a strategic infrastructure plan.

Katherine Moore: Do you want to do an annual report?

Mayor Elmore: We may want to take it to the next level and include other committees. We don't really have anything all encompassing.

Katherine Moore: It could be a state of infrastructure type report. I think the city manager should be the point person. Commissioner Laratte will also be a point person. You will also need to look at the results of the completed hydrology study.

City Manager Brown: The Kensington retention pond project is still underway. We're caught up in the easement part of the process.

Commissioner Yelton: We need to address and communicate.

Commissioner Shortell: We should make the zoning audit a goal.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: I'm not sure if that falls under infrastructure and/or the DDA. A lot of the sign rules are different because 278 is a GDOT road. I also think there's a lack of sidewalks in some areas. I don't want to ignore the residential side while focused on downtown development.

Katherine Moore: So we have initiate the recommendations to complete the street grid. The potential for sidewalks could be included in the infrastructure report and involve public engagement. These could be goals under task #1. Commissioner Shortell can make sure that gets brought up again in a work session. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher can own public engagement after the infrastructure report.

Discussion
Item 3:

Katherine Moore: We discussed downtown development being about relationships and development opportunities.

Commissioner Shortell: I think the zoning code audit will lay a good foundation for downtown redevelopment.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: It also adds the planning and zoning board (PZB) as a stake holder.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: I think what we've been doing with the four acres is a microcosm of what will happen with future development.

Katherine Moore: Maybe the action item could be support the DDA in implementation of strategy for the downtown master plan. Or you could ask them to develop an implementation strategy.

Commissioner Shortell: Maybe we should identify specific recommendations.

Commissioner Laratte: I thought the same thing.

Commissioner Yelton: We need to make sure everyone has the right resources to support what we're asking them to do.

Katherine Moore: If you ask the DDA to come up with implementation strategy ideas then they can come back to you with those ideas and you can talk about what they would need to do that. They can come up with those based on the recommendations in the downtown master plan. Let them come up with the ideas.

Mayor Elmore: I volunteer to own it.

Katherine Moore: Are two joint DDA/BOMC meetings a year enough?

Mayor Elmore: I think two is ambitious. But two would be good.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: Can you have a joint executive session if the topic is real estate?

City Manager Brown: You can have an executive session and invite whoever you want.

Mayor Elmore: We may need help from the GMA about how to best re-establish a street grid.

Katherine Moore: Who should be the point person for making sure the joint meetings happen?

Commissioner Yelton: I will do it.

Katherine Moore: What's going on with the DJJ building?

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: We have a task force and are in talks with the DDA. The BOMC wants to have oversight and the DDA doesn't want to be hamstrung from doing some of the things they were created to do. We agree that any income from the building would best be spent in the central business district. It's an ongoing thing and we're waiting to hear if the state will renew their contract for another year. The long term future is unclear. There are several options. The DDA can't make real estate decisions without approval from the BOMC. The value of the building is a moving target. We need to communicate and manage expectations with the public.

Katherine Moore: You might want to outline the various scenarios for public consumption.

Commissioner Shortell: It's like it's two different things. The ownership of the building is the DDA but the intent is spelled out in the IGA.

Katherine Moore: There is urgency with the IGA and roles and responsibilities.

Mayor Elmore: I would like to find a way to encourage green construction. That's a whole different topic, however.

Katherine Moore: You've made a lot of progress on the four acres. Maybe you can pick back up the monthly development meetings.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: I would like for us to be able to turn over plans for the town green to the Green Space Ad Hoc Committee so they can get public input on programming. We need to address parking as well.

Katherine Moore: It might be a good idea to get a scope of work for the town green from the Green Space Ad Hoc Committee as well. You need a final design. What is the action item related to that?

Mayor Elmore: We have to decide what we're doing.

Katherine Moore: I suggest sooner rather than later, in a work session, you need to decide what comes first, the green space or the development. Do you as a Board want to plant a flag and say this is our civic space?

Summary:

Johanna McCrehan: Let's start from the beginning and put time frames on these tasks. What about the communications plan?

Commissioner Shortell: I think we could come up with a general outline in one to three months.

Johanna McCrehan: How about having at least one public forum?

Commissioner Yelton: Twelve months.

Johanna McCrehan: Analyzing public comments in meetings and consent agendas?

City Clerk Hill: I think one to three months is good.

Johanna McCrehan: Continuing to update the commissioner manual and get it on the website?

City Clerk Hill: I think one to three months is good.

Johanna McCrehan: Completing DDA roles and responsibilities and posting that on the website?

Commissioner Laratte: One to three months.

Johanna McCrehan: Processes for the DDA as a whole and individually.

Commissioner Yelton: One to three months.

Johanna McCrehan: Infrastructure priorities report?

Mayor Elmore: Six to nine months.

Johanna McCrehan: Hydrology study?

Commissioner Laratte: I would put all of those at six to nine months.

Mayor Elmore: When will the hydrology study be ready?

City Manager Brown: Hopefully in the next month. We'll post it on the website as soon as we get it and the engineers can come out and present it at a meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher: The Kensington Road project is probably nine to twelve months.

Commissioner Shortell: I will talk to the DDA about the street grid in the next one to three months.

Johanna McCrehan: Ask the DDA to come up with implementation strategies from the downtown master plan.

Mayor Elmore: We can do it at the same time as the street grid. Put three to nine months just so we have something to start with.

Johanna McCrehan: Goal to have the first joint DDA/BOMC meeting of the year?

Commissioner Yelton: Six months.

Johanna McCrehan: First downtown development meeting of the year?

Mayor Elmore: One month.

Johanna McCrehan: Meetings with Avila?

Mayor Elmore: One month.

Johanna McCrehan: Working with the green space committee on the four acres?

Mayor Elmore: Eight to twelve months.

Commissioner Shortell: I will coordinate.


Johanna McCrehan: Topics covered last year but not this year will still carry over.

Mayor Elmore moves to adjourn. Commissioner Yelton seconds. All ayes.

APPROVED THIS 23rd DAY OF MAY 2018


Jonathan Elmore, Mayor

ATTEST:



Gina Hill, City Clerk