



**BOARD OF MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL CALLED WORK SESSION**

**August 8, 2018
5:30 to 7:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

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

Staff Present: Ken Turner, Interim City Manager
Gina Hill, City Clerk
Keri Stevens, City Planner

Item No. 1 Meeting Called to Order

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

Item No. 3 **Downtown Hydrology Study**
The City requested a comprehensive stormwater study to be performed for the Central Business District and Mill District. The purpose was to provide a baseline inventory of existing stormwater infrastructure and its capacity to sustain future development in the basin. The report will be used to assist in establishing future stormwater needs and plans for development. Representatives from Skyline Engineering will present their findings.

Brenda Johnson of Skyline Engineering presented their findings. She said they studied how rainwater moved through the area. The goals of the study were to do an inventory of stormwater infrastructure, determine its capacity, and predict future needs. They determined the older drainage systems around Lake Street are where most of the problems occur. She showed slides with pictures of some of the problem areas after a recent rain. Ms. Johnson recommended that public works and individual property owners do some maintenance to keep drainage systems clear of debris. She also suggested some infrastructure upgrades in certain areas. Ms. Johnson answered questions from the Board of Mayor and Commissioners (BOMC) and recommended public education efforts regarding water. She said we're not in a large flood-prone area so all the City's efforts would be to facilitate water movement. Mayor Pro Tem

Fisher asked about the impact of future development of the City and was told that is governed by the zoning, guidelines and education of the developers. She added that maintenance and partnership with developers is key. Also, she feels the western gateway needs curbing and gutters. Resident Dee Merriam asked about the possibility of having a detention pond as an amenity. Ms. Johnson said that would be best achieved if the City partners with a developer. She also mentioned green infrastructure as an alternative to traditional methods. Mayor Elmore says they need to start discussing the next steps with this information.

Next steps: Mayor Pro Tem Fisher suggested adding it to the agenda for the next joint meeting between the BOMC and Downtown Development Authority (DDA).

Item No. 4

Proposed Trammell Crow Development

All documents can be found on the homepage of the City website. Representatives from the Bleakly Advisory Group – authors of the Economic Impact Analysis and Fiscal Impact Report paid for by the developer – will give a presentation.

A Trammell Crow architect briefly presented some adjustments they've made to the plan, including to the front sidewalk, road along the railroad tracks, and lowering the number of units. Jonathan Gelber with the Bleakly Advisory Group describes what the company does as well as his background. He explains that with this and other projects, they look at direct and indirect effects of the development by using certain scientific models. That includes the impact not just locally but in statewide and regionally. They predict the development would support or generate 526 regional jobs just through the construction phase, for example. They predict the average income of residents will be about \$60,000 with few seniors or children. Mr. Gelber adds that the road in the back of the development adds at least \$425,000 in value and their maintenance costs will be about \$8,000 annually. Trammell Crow's offer to upgrade the City-owned four acres is valued at about \$150,000 and this should raise adjacent property values by 10-percent, raising tax income for the City. Commissioner Shortell says she wishes there was a way to determine how much disposable income would be spent in Avondale. Mr. Gelber says it's a chicken or egg scenario – you need people to support businesses and businesses for people to patronize. He goes on to explain the differences between the two studies that Trammell Crow commissioned. Interim City Manager asked about the definition of discretionary spending used in the study. Resident Erika Brown asked if something else were built on that space, would it capture discretionary spending from neighboring developments. Mr. Gelber said that sounds like a reasonable assumption. Jan Hover comments that the numbers in the study that deal directly with Avondale seem to focus too much on construction workers, who are not the type of people to patronize some of the local businesses. Resident and business owner Stacia Hopek is supportive of the development. In response to a question from Lyda Steadman, developer Justin Adams says he plans to

have an author of the other study available at the next meeting to present their findings. Kathy Kingsbury asks if there has been any analysis of the financial impact from the construction of the South City Partners development. Mr. Gelber says anecdotally there are lots construction workers in restaurants near his office when construction is underway. She asked him Avondale received any fees from building inspections. Mr. Turner answers that the City receives 40-percent from those fees. Resident Richard Joseph says a lot of potential income sounds speculative. He also doesn't know of a place near Mr. Gelber's office where one can buy a reasonably priced lunch. Resident Matt Delicata comments that he is a developer and much of this is speculation but much of it is not. He feels certain that Subway is selling more sandwiches during construction and the study uses industry standard methods taking all these metrics into account. He adds that it's frustrating to see others also being speculative. The firms doing these studies are reputable and the businesses want this development, he says. Resident and business owner Bob Means offers that perhaps everyone should be more focuses on the time that the development is finished and stabilized and the impact from that. Resident David Sacks says the impact varies determined by the number of units and not that number compared to zero. Resident Dee Merriam offers that not all of one's discretionary income will be spent in Avondale. Mr. Gelber says more discretionary income will promote the opening of more businesses.

Item No. 5

Downtown Street Grid Update

Having the project designed is the first step in establishing the downtown street grid. A request for proposals (RFP) has been posted and a pre bid meeting is scheduled for August 7th. The deadline for bids is August 27th.

City Planner Keri Stevens says the RFP has been put out for bid and there has been a pre-bid meeting that two firms attended. She added that the meeting was not mandatory so more than two firms may bid.

Item No. 6

Discussion of Potential Zoning Code Rewrite

Last year, the City hired Calfee Zoning to audit the zoning code and find areas that were barriers to development. Another concern was inconsistencies between the zoning code and other adopted planning documents and guidelines, such as the Downtown Master Plan.

Mayor Elmore says the BOMC has committed to doing the rewrite and now it's a matter of figuring out how to pay for it. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher says it would be ideal to start the project by the end of the year. Commissioner Shortell adds that it still needs to be decided how thorough the rewrite will be since there are several options. She says she'd like the opinion of the City Planner, Keri Stevens. Interim City Manager Ken Turner says that Ms. Stevens isn't prepared to answer those questions. There was discussion about the DDA participating in funding the project. Mr. Turner said a recommendation from Ms. Stevens would take a couple of weeks and it would mentioned she could share

her recommendation at the joint Downtown Development Authority (DDA)/BOMC special called work session on September 5th. The Board discussed various scenarios and the associated costs. Mr. Fisher asked that as little burden as possible be placed on City staff. Resident Lyda Steadman commented that the process for development approval should be refined. She is against the Team Avondale approach and the practice of commissioners meeting with developers prior to review by the various boards. Dee Merriam suggests building streetscapes into the process and that the Planning & Zoning Board (PZB) be able to review the scope of work before it's finalized. Joe Anziano feels the City should opt for the most thorough option when it comes to rewriting the zoning. Elizabeth Goodstein agrees. David Sacks commends the BOMC for taking this project on. He asks for special attention be paid to public investment, such as more open space and recreation.

Item No. 7

City-Owned Four Acres Update

This was last discussed at the July 18th work session.

Sheri Locke, creator of concept #9, presents the plan and aspects of it she thinks are important. She included the new street, mid-park promenade, patio, the buildings themselves (size, position, etc.), parking/access, and pathways. Commissioner Shortell thanks Ms. Locke and comments that it is very exciting. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher loved the plan and says the biggest question is how to pay for it. He doesn't feel that burden should be put on the residents. Commissioner Yelton asked Ms. Locke to explain the drop-off zone. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher adds that more grass could offset any storm water problems in the area. Commissioner Laratte says he likes the plan as well. In response to a question, Ms. Locke said the Ad Hoc Committee for Greenspace estimated the project (without the actual buildings) could cost about \$4 million. Mayor Elmore asked about next steps and mentioned a letter of intent about how to proceed. Mr. Fisher says the DDA will be involved. Ms. Yelton mentioned the questions from DDA consultant David Burt and City Planner Keri Stevens that the BOMC needs to answer. They discussed the best way to circulate input. It was discussed what upcoming meeting would be best to discuss this again. Elizabeth Goodstein is concerned about transparency. Ms. Shortell clarified that no discussions or decisions would take place outside the public eye. Mary Ann Anziano says all emails are subject to open records requests. David Sacks offered some suggestions for making the process as transparent as possible. Mr. Burt recommended having this next discussion before the joint meeting with the DDA on September 5th.

Next Steps: Members of the BOMC will submit the answers to the questions submitted by David Burt and Keri Stevens regarding their wishes for the four acres.

Item No. 8

Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Boundaries

There has been discussion about amending the boundaries of the downtown area under the DDA's purview to include US278 and a few

other properties. The Georgia Regional Commission assisted City staff to create a new proposed boundaries map.

City Planner Keri Stevens told of the discussions and thinking behind this move. Mayor Elmore asked if this was something the DDA wanted to do. DDA Chair Dave Deiters answered that the authority did vote in favor of the amendment. He also praised Ms. Stevens for her work on this. Mayor Elmore said he would be in favor of it. In a response to a question by Commissioner Yelton, Ms. Stevens says this move has nothing to do with zoning.

Next Steps: This will be voted on at the next regular meeting.

Item No. 9

DDA and BOMC Shared Interest Projects in Downtown

Ahead of the DDA/BOMC special called work session for downtown development scheduled for September 5th, the Board will discuss projects on which the two groups may collaborate.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher says he thinks the biggest overlap in shared interest is the area between Skip's Hot Dogs and the Tudor Village. He adds there is some misunderstanding about how much money the DDA has. Commissioner Shortell says it's important that both groups work together as a team and start prioritizing projects. She goes on to ask if City Planner Keri Stevens and DDA consultant David Burt could facilitate that meeting. Mayor Elmore says the four acres and zoning are the biggest priorities for him. There is more discussion about how a list of agenda items will come about for the upcoming joint meeting. Mr. Burt said he would ask the DDA for their ideas as well. Dee Merriam requested that areas on the west side of Skip's also be considered. Christine McMann mentioned how the façade of city-owned 90 North Avondale was damaged. The City is awaiting an insurance settlement.

Item No. 11

Public Comment

Resident Mike Herzog spoke in support of the BOMC and their decision making in regards to downtown development. He added there is a petition circulating with 400+ registered voters' signatures. He feels this is being used as a bullying tactic with implied threats future loss of votes. Resident Erika Brown requested the streetlight be fixed along US 278. Kathy Kingsbury said she is temporarily residing on South Avondale Road and she's surprised at how much noise is heard from US 278. Klaus van Den Berg requests the presentation from the Trammell Crow architect be struck from the record because it was not on the agenda. The Mayor said he would look into it.

Item No. 12

Adjournment

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

APPROVED THIS 30th DAY OF AUGUST 2018



Jonathan Elmore, Mayor

ATTEST:



Gina Hill, City Clerk