



**BOARD OF MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS  
WORK SESSION  
October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
5:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

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

Staff Present: Patrick Bryant, City Manager  
Gina Hill, City Clerk  
Keri Stevens, City Planner  
Lynn Thomas, Police Chief  
Bryan Armstead, Director of Public Works

Item No. 1 Meeting Called to Order

Item No. 2 Adoption of Agenda  
Mayor Pro Tem Fisher moves to adopt. Commissioner Shortell seconds. All ayes.

Item No. 3 **2019 Budget Discussion**  
City Manager Patrick Bryant says he wants to make sure all the projects the Board of Mayor and Commissioners (BOMC) want completed are listed in the next draft of the budget. He added that funds budgeted for additional personnel are tentative and he's still evaluating City staff and how they can be most effective. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher responds that that framework works for him. He does feel that the City needs additional staff, however. He adds that there needs to be a solution to the rising health insurance costs for City employees. Mr. Fisher says he wants to see the North Woods drainage project completed and he thinks it's still appropriate to not budget for SPLOST funds. Mr. Bryant offers that he would like to get to a point where consultant costs are anticipated ahead of time. Mr. Fisher says he'd like to see more sidewalks in the residential area added to the budget. There is discussion that some residents don't necessarily want sidewalks on their streets. Commissioner Shortell says the amount of traffic a street gets should be a factor in whether or not they receive sidewalks. She also supports the North Woods project and asks if extra police officers were still in the budget. Mr. Bryant answers that they are but that may change and that it's too soon to tell. Ms. Shortell brings up a tax exemption for seniors

and hopes that is researched in the future. Commissioner Yelton says that along with the budget she would like to see a narrative from each department tied to back to the BOMC's strategic goals. She would also like to see more graphics and a position summary schedule. Ms. Yelton is interested in being able to quantify what the City offers employees besides salary. She adds that she doesn't like to add employees without showing that current staff is fully utilized. While these measures would likely not be possible currently, Ms. Yelton said this type of information could be helpful in making budgetary decisions. Mr. Bryant says he thinks the City should do a compensation study at some point so see how Avondale compares to other cities. That could be budgeted no earlier than for 2020. Ms. Yelton says she would like to see some metrics from departments such as traffic fines broken down by demographic. Mr. Bryant offers that it's difficult for him to provide a fully informed budget in such a short amount of time after his arrival. He suggests putting together a list of projects in priority order. Any costs associated with strategic financing and getting a Moody's rating is something Ms. Yelton would like to know. Mr. Bryant says he will have more information on bonds to bring back to the BOMC soon. Commissioner Laratte says he is not sure if the budget reflects the Board's strategic goals. He adds that he feels the capital planning budget may need to be expanded. He asks when phases of stormwater management beyond the Kensington detention pond will take place. Mr. Bryant says he doesn't feel comfortable making a recommendation to the BOMC until he does more research. Mr. Laratte also notices there are no City Hall upgrades in the budget. He would like to see the meetings broadcast. He also asked about the lake dredging. Mayor Elmore mentions the costs associated with hiring consultants. He also wants to explore alternatives to dredging the lake. Mr. Bryant says he predicts knowing how much money the City can borrow within a month. The budget will become much clearer afterwards, he predicts.

Joe Anziano list the North Woods, zoning rewrite and sidewalks are important to him. Jan Hover says crossing College Avenue is dangerous. There is discussion about upcoming improvements to that road. Kathy Kingsbury notes that she sees people not abiding by the pedestrian rules. She suggested a public education campaign. Klaus Van den Berg asks about the timing of some projects and money set aside for them.

**Next steps:** Mr. Bryant says he will continue to evaluate the structure at City Hall to see where changes can be made in staffing, budget, etc. He also plans to conduct a capital forecast and determine borrowing power. He requests that the BOMC prioritize projects.

Item No. 4

#### **Update on Re-establishing Downtown Street Grid**

The City received four (4) responses to the RFP for Phase I of this project. Staff -- along with identified members of the Board of Mayor and Commissioners (BOMC) and Downtown Development Authority (DDA) -- have reviewed the submitted RFPs and interviewed applicants. Staff will recommend one of the firms to receive the contract.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher recaps the process on this project up to this point. He says he's happy their group decided to interview the firms that had responded to the RFP and they had decided to recommend contracting with POND. Part of the reason, he adds, is because they can offer an array of services. They can also bring in developers who could advise the City. Avondale resident Brad Jones would be the City's project manager for POND which Mr. Fisher said was another plus. City Planner Keri Stevens added that POND did a very good presentation. Commissioners Shortell and Laratte had questions about what a developer's role would be in the process. Mr. Fisher responded. Commissioner Yelton asked if land owners would be part of this process and Ms. Stevens responded that they would. Resident Jan Hover has concerns about developers being involved in this manner. Klaus van Den Berg comments about the street grid and street typology. Mr. Laratte asks who recommended a developer get involved. Kathy Kingsbury comments that having others involved in a process like this is not uncommon based on her experience.

Next steps: A resolution allowing the City Manager to enter into a contract with POND will be voted on at the next regular meeting.

#### Item No. 5

#### **Update on Public Works Building**

There will be a discussion of options for the future headquarters of the public works department.

City Manager Patrick Bryant says he cannot recommend to the BOMC to relocate the public works department at this time. He says staff has not been able to identify a suitable facility. He's also hesitant to use resources to relocate when they could be used to update the current building or erecting a new one. Mayor Elmore says he's aware of the obstacles and would like to make this a priority. Mr. Bryant says the BOMC needs to decide if they want to rehabilitate the facility at the current location, build a new one, or buy one that's suitable. He adds that staff has been unable to find a suitable temporary facility. It would be better to find a permanent solution to the problem, says Mr. Bryant. Commissioner Shortell notes that the public works department needs a facility temporarily regardless of the solution and Mr. Bryant says a phased approach may also work. Mayor Elmore says he's leaning towards having the facility moved permanently. Mr. Bryant says he should have a capital forecast in November that will need to be narrowed down. Commissioner Yelton says this project is a priority and short-term deficiencies need to be addressed. Commissioner Shortell agrees with addressing any pressing issues while deciding what to do in the future. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher says he wants there to be a more suitable restroom option for women. He also believes the current property is not best suited for the public works building. Mr. Bryant says he's assuming he'll get immediate issues at the current location fixed while looking for a long-term solution. There was discussion of selling the property in the future. Ms. Yelton says there is a sense of urgency. Mr. Bryant adds an executive session about real estate might be in order. Ms. Yelton would also like to see something on paper.

Item No. 6

### **Annexation Discussion**

In a previous meeting, the BOMC expressed interest in exploring the pros and cons of annexing certain areas adjacent to the City. Staff has updated a draft annexation map to include those parcels. The cost of having the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia conduct a feasibility study of the areas will also be discussed.

City Manager Patrick Bryant discusses the annexation feasibility study being conducted by the Carl Vinson Institute. He said DeKalb County was also having a study done and he will find out if the results of it can also be available to City staff. A communications plan should be developed after getting the study results to include all the stakeholders involved, he adds. There may be a resolution voted on at the next regular meeting to enter into a contract for the study. Commissioner Yelton asked if there was much collaboration between cities within the county. Mr. Bryant responds that there is a lot of cooperation. Mayor Elmore agrees. He says there's lots of conversation about who is best to deliver services to some of the areas being considered. Mr. Elmore asks about some specific properties on the map and some other details. Ms. Yelton requested that schools be highlighted on the map. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher says he'd like to move forward with the study. He talked about different methods and reasons for communication with the public. Commissioner Shortell offers that the City should take its time in making sure each step is the right one. Ms. Yelton is supportive of the study. She thinks communication and outreach is critical and she envisions everyone being a part of it. Commissioner Laratte agrees that the BOMC should be able to articulate clearly what they want to accomplish and why. Clai Brown asks if the money set aside for this study is in the 2018 budget. Mr. Bryant responds that it's in the current budget. Klaus van den Berg asks if property owners will be forced to be annexed if they don't want to be. Mr. Fisher says they have spoken to residents in the various adjacent areas to the City and they are more comfortable with the idea of annexation than they were in the past. Mr. Bryant adds that communication efforts would at least inform those being annexed as to what being part of the City would mean. Mr. Elmore highlights some of the benefits he thinks the City has to offer other areas. Mr. Fisher adds that many of these areas are ripe for development and the people impacted should have a say in that as opposed to county government.

Item No. 7

### **Public Comment**

Resident Kathy Kingsbury asks for an update on the meeting with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) about the US 278 redesign. Mayor Elmore said they were told by GDOT that the City could move forward. Mary Ann Anziano shared about place she recently visited that had a road diet. Commissioner Shortell discussed a case in New York where a pedestrian was killed and successfully sued the city over

the design of the road. John Mizell asks some questions about the proposed annexation map.

Item No. 8

Adjournment

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

APPROVED THIS 10<sup>th</sup> DAY OF DECEMBER 2018



---

Jonathan Elmore, Mayor

ATTEST:



---

Gina Hill, City Clerk