

NOVEMBER 4, 2021
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

PRESENT: Mayor Bo Dorough
Mayor Pro Tem Matt Fuller (virtual – signed on at 9:48 am)
City Commissioners: Jon Howard, BJ Fletcher, Chad Warbington (Bob
Langstaff, Jr., virtual) and Demetrius Young
City Attorney: C. Nathan Davis
Interim City Mgr.: Steven Carter

Mayor Dorough called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Dorough recognized William Wright.

Mr. Wright commented on information that he emailed yesterday (copy on file) regarding the Voting Rights Act, asking not to rush through the process and to understand the redistricting process. He discussed drawing a new plan, having to go to court and the makeup of the proposed committee. He noted page 1 of the information, federal grant money, discrimination by using sales tax monies and referenced pages 3-6 of his handout.

Mayor Dorough thanked Mr. Wright for his comments.

Mayor Dorough stated that this item is on the agenda per the request of Commissioner Warbington and referenced an email he sent to the Commission regarding the request to appoint Commissioners to the Joint City/County/School Board Redistricting Committee.

Discussion followed regarding the reporting of information back to City Commissioners with Commissioner Warbington suggesting that the City be represented on this committee.

Commissioner Howard expressed concern of the ward lines being drawn and suggested that the City redistrict outside of the committee. Commissioner Warbington explained the process as he understands it to have the lines drawn and submitted to the current legislative session. He suggested having representation on the committee to hear what is being proposed. Commissioner Howard agreed that someone should attend/observe committee meetings. Commissioner Fletcher agreed with Commissioner Warbington to have representation and suggested three Commissioners be appointed to represent the City. Commissioner Langstaff also agreed with Commissioner Warbington and Commissioner Young agreed with Commissioner Howard's comments. Mayor Dorough expressed concern regarding the proposed process in which the committee draws the lines, adding that the City Attorney opined that the lines are to be drawn by each separate entity. He said that the lines will not be drawn by the Committee, which should be made known and, suggested that the County and/or School Board may not go along with City Commissioners sitting on the Committee and having to report back to the Commission before a decision can be made regarding city redistricting since the recommendation from the Committee is not binding. He suggested that someone talk with the School Board and County Commission to determine ground rules.

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Commissioner Young asked to hear from Commissioners Howard and Langstaff since they were here in the past during the redistricting process. In reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Davis commented on the process, using home rule to set the process, and agreed with the suggestion to send someone to the Committee but not to vote. Mayor Dorough again asked to get clarification on having a representative on the committee or having someone to go and observe only.

In reply to Commissioner Young, Commissioner Howard stated that he has participated in two redistricting processes, with the Commission setting city perimeters and having public hearings/input, noting that this proposed committee is unusual. He said he is in favor of having observation at the committee meetings and suggested not rushing into the process regarding population shifts.

Commissioner Langstaff stated that Linda Meggers was hired in the past to assist with navigating the process and that she came up with maps to be voted on. He stated that there was a committee ten years ago to go through the process adding that as long as there is no binding vote, he is agreeable to being on the Committee.

Mayor Dorough again stated that the County Chairman and School Board should be contacted to discuss the City's concern as noted (i.e., not having a binding vote, etc). He suggested not appointing anyone to the committee until ground rules are established.

Commissioner Warbington moved to send three Commissioners to the Committee with no powers or say so, i.e, speaking on behalf of the Commission and having a seat at the table, recommending that he and two others volunteer to serve, as well as bringing back information to the Commission. Mayor Dorough countered that the committee must understand that Commissioners on the committee are not binding the City with any votes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Langstaff.

In reply to Mayor Dorough, Commissioner Howard said that he will go to the meetings and take notes. Additional discussion followed regarding having ground rules and when the committee meetings will begin. Commissioner Fletcher expressed concern of having a new Commissioner in January, with Commissioner Warbington stating that he feels the committee is ready to meet and that the Commissioners will attend the meetings and bring back updates at each work session. Having a special called meeting was discussed if a decision must be made soon. Mayor Dorough stated that he will send a letter to the Committee advising that Commissioners Howard and Warbington will serve with the understanding that decisions made by the Committee are not binding. Discussion followed with Commissioner Langstaff agreeing to serve on the Committee as well.

SURPLUS REAL PROPERTY (Lily Pond Site)

Don Gray, Facilities Director, discussed information (copy on file) regarding the sale of property at Lily Pond Road and gave the location between 1710 and 1708 Lily Pond. There were no comments on this item.

DONATION OF S. VAN BUREN PROPERTIES BY EQUINOX PROPERTIES, LLC

Mr. Davis discussed information (copy on file) regarding the donation of properties as noted, adding

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that structures have been demolished.

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Davis commented on having an audit of the property to ensure there are no issues (environmental).

Commissioner Warbington suggested that Driskill Park is an area that can be used for housing development, along with the proposed properties, etc., opportunities for development. He agreed that an environmental study should be conducted on the proposed properties on S. Van Buren.

Commissioner Young asked which City department will be responsible for development of the properties. Commissioner Warbington stated that he feels Mr. Carter will be included in the process, with Mr. Carter agreeing that this will fall under the Community and Economic Development Department and that recommendations will be brought back for Commission consideration.

Mayor Dorough stated that a phase I study should be conducted on the property, adding that there is great potential to create a neighborhood near Driskill Park.

PUBLIC SAFETY MATTERS

MOU WITH APD AND GA DPH (re: Data Sharing)

APD Chief Michael Persley discussed information (copy on file) regarding the sharing of violent crime data with various entities as noted, adding that the agreement is for two years.

Commissioner Warbington stated that this was discussed by the Public Safety Committee and thanked Chief Persley for bringing it forward.

A brief discussion regarding staff time was clarified by Chief Persley.

PUBLIC WORKS MATTERS

ROAD CLOSURE ADVERTISEMENT (W. 4TH AVE., BETWEEN MONROE AND JEFFERSON STREETS)

Bruce Maples, Director of Engineering, discussed information (copy on file) regarding the closing of the property at the request of Phoebe Putney Hospital.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Maples stated that closing it will make it private property and explained abandonment of the easement, etc., as it pertains to providing city services, i.e., fire, etc., adding that discussions are being held with the hospital at this time.

Mayor Dorough commented on infrastructure, with Mr. Maples stating that the discussion is to have

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infrastructure re-located or the City will retain easement with access provided to the City to do so. Mayor Dorough asked how many people use 4th Ave., other than accessing the hospital with Mr. Maples advising that a traffic count was done and all properties on 4th Ave are owned by Phoebe.

Commissioner Warbington commented on the expansion the hospital has proposed and suggested that it is a good project for the community.

ALLEY CLOSING ADVERTISEMENT BETWEEN 709 & 711 W. 6th AVE.

Mr. Maples discussed information (copy on file) regarding the alley closing and, in reply to Commissioner Warbington, he explained the process of advertisements, posting of notices, etc., notification to the public.

In reply to Mayor Dorough regarding selling the property to Vandalay, Mr. Maples stated that this is a decision the Commission can make. Mr. Davis stated that when closing an alley/street, the property goes to the adjoining property owner. Mr. Maples stated that they can look at adjoining properties to see what property is selling for in that area.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE MATTERS

PURCHASES

Joshua Williams, Buyer, discussed the following:

1. Fire Dept. Uniforms; Galls, Inc., Lexington, KY - Total exp. \$40,360.75

Chief S. Burns stated that uniforms will be supplied to 911 also. Additional discussion followed regarding material used and fitting each employee for their uniform.

Peter Bednar, Director of Fleet Management, discussed the following two purchases (which will be voted on at the special call meeting immediately following this work session), and noted the departments which will receive the trucks:

2. Super Duty Trucks; Sunbelt Ford-Lincoln, Albany, GA - Total exp. \$85,872.32
3. Super Duty Trucks; Sunbelt Ford-Lincoln, Albany, GA - Total exp. \$388,391.54

In reply to Commissioner Young, use of trucks for water, storm water, Light Dept., etc. was discussed. Mr. Carter advised that vehicles are assigned to departments and budgeted accordingly.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, the necessity of voting on these trucks at the special call meeting was explained by Mr. Bednar.

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Mayor Dorough mentioned discussion at the Utility Board meeting regarding having only one response to the bid request as it pertains to local preference.

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

Mr. Carter congratulated Commissioner Langstaff and Commissioner-elect Jalen Johnson for their election victories and commented on the low COVID numbers being reported, adding that normal business will resume city-wide. He advised that the City Manager's update will be posted this afternoon.

Commissioner Young asked for information regarding storm water, how much money is being spent and departmental setup, specifically which ponds serve an area, to include maps. Mr. Carter stated that information is forthcoming.

Mayor Dorough asked for detailed information from Ken Stock regarding the storm water project so that the public can understand funding, including maintenance expenses, equipment used by the department, employee salaries, etc. Regarding ponds, information is needed to help everyone understand the operation of the system, including the CSO project. He also asked for an update regarding the Gordon Hotel.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Fletcher stated that she will provide a letter regarding a review of data relating to violent crimes (property and personal) per ward from January 2019-Oct 2021.

Mayor Dorough stated that Cordele has ten charging stations with Tesla logo.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA(S)

Commissioner Howard mentioned emails he received from people living in apartments that are rodent infested and asked what can be done. He commented on infrastructure, the selling of ESG and how this affects the current contract. Mr. Carter explained the enforcement process regarding reports that are coming in on infestations and gave an update of the ESG contract status.

At 9:48, Mayor Pro Tem Fuller advised that he is now on the call (virtual).

Commissioner Warbington asked if there are policies that give the City control regarding apartment complexes and possibly requiring a bond, etc., as it pertains to having problems sent through the current process. Mr. Carter stated that this is a decision of the Commission and will potentially require additional ordinances. Commissioner Warbington asked if an agenda item can be brought back for recommendations. The consensus was to pursue this option with Commissioner Fletcher suggesting the

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creation of a Task Force to assist. Discussion followed regarding what the County and other cities are looking at, i.e., graduated fines for repeat offenders.

Commissioner Warbington commented on the upcoming Special Call meeting and asked that the dangerous dog ordinance and contract with the Humane Society be brought back for consideration. Mr. Carter suggested having meetings with Commissioners ahead of putting it on the agenda. Commissioner Warbington mentioned SPLOST VIII discussions beginning since this will be on the ballot next year. A brief discussion ensued regarding this item being on the December and/or January agenda.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 10:31 a.m.

SONJA TOLBER, CMC
CITY CLERK