

OCTOBER 5, 2021
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

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

Mayor Dorough called the meeting to order at 9:25 a.m.

MEETING DATE CHANGE

The Clerk advised that per Ordinance 95-145, the November 2nd work session should be changed to the November 3rd due to the election being on November 2nd. She also noted that per ordinance 20-116, there is only one work session in December which is the 7th and due to upcoming holidays, she asked if the regular meeting will be held on December 14th or December 21. The consensus was to schedule the night meeting for December 21.

Mayor Dorough mentioned the possibility of moving the meeting from Nov. 16 to Nov 15 due to trying a court case.

PUBLIC SAFETY MATTERS

ALCOHOL LICENSE APPLICATIONS

Marshal Walter Norman, Code Enforcement Director, discussed the following:

1. SAI Sonee 1 Inc; d/b/a Albany Mart; 2121 Radium Springs Rd.; D. Moore/Agent; Beer and Wine Package (Ward 6).

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Marshal Norman discussed the location and said renovations will be completed on the current structure.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Marshal Norman said that they are not currently open.

In reply to Commissioner Young regarding building plans, Marshal Norman stating that he has not yet asked for building plans. Commissioner Young stated that the license will depend on the type of structure that is planned and asked if something can be submitted regarding the plans.

In reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Davis discussed having a certificate of occupancy at the location, with the building having to be brought up to code first.

Marshal Norman discussed the following:

OCTOBER 5, 2021
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

2. One Life Liquor Inc.; d/b/a One Life Liquor; 1515 Clark Ave; J. Patel/Agent;
Liquor, Beer and Wine Consumption (Ward 2).

Commissioner Howard asked Commissioners to ride by the location before the vote and commented that the area is depressed, an eyesore, and suggesting that this is not a good location, he asked the Commission to vote no on this item.

Commissioner Warbington commented on the location and asked if they are doing renovations with Marshal Norman stating yes.

Discussion followed on the request for package store or consumption with Marshal Norman clarifying that the applicant is seeking to have a package store only and noting that the agenda item was incorrect.

ALCOHOL LICENSE APPLICATIONS - Transfer of Ownership

Marshal Norman discussed the following:

3. Greg Ventures LLC; d/b/a R & M #2; 2401 MLK Jr., Drive; G. Daniels/Agent;
Beer Package (Ward 6).

Commissioner Young clarified that ownership changed with Marshal Norman agreeing.

In reply to Commissioner Howard regarding information discussed at the recent retreat pertaining to issuance of a moratorium on alcohol license applications, Commissioner Warbington stated that a decision was made to put out an RFP for the study. Mr. Carter stated that this has not been moved on at this time and advised that they will move forward on this item if it is the will of the Commission. Additional discussion followed on the RFP and when this will be brought back for Commission approval. Mayor Dorrough asked for an update notifying the Commission of the RFP, etc. Commissioner Howard commented on crime and looking at the overall appearance of the city, suggesting that this be given a serious look moving forward.

PUBLIC FUNCTION MATTERS

POTENTIAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF CB KING BUILDING

Paul Forgey, Planning Director, discussed information (copy on file) regarding the process to designate the C.B. King Building as a Historic Landmark.

Commissioner Fletcher spoke in favor of this item and commented on the filth/trash, car lots, etc., currently in the area.

OCTOBER 5, 2021
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

Commissioner Warbington asked current plans for construction with Mr. Forgey stating that he does not have plans at this time. Discussion on building requirement/plans followed with Mr. Forgey explaining the process, including exemptions of rules that may surface.

Mayor Dorough expressed support for the project to move forward and noted cons on the agenda item. He recognized William Wright to speak.

Mr. Wright distributed information (copy on file) and discussed a history of funding (Ritz and the Carnegie Library), etc., stating that the architect who was hired by Community Development has the original 1930's design of the Ritz.

Regarding the CB King building, he discussed reverse Robinhood and discussed page 1 regarding another SPLOST, page 2 with additional details regarding City/County going through monies, etc., the Slater King Building (CB King's brother) and his proposal to put together a 501(C)3 application, that he will help with regarding this project. Regarding the designation, he noted page 4 and discussed.

Commissioner Howard thanked Mr. Wright for the information and agreed with his comments regarding the next SPLOST. He commented on the historical Harlem area and the need to have historical monuments.

Commissioner Fletcher thanked Mr. Wright for the information and discussed areas that need to be cleaned up with people not being receptive and suggested that Mr. Wright and his supporters go into neighborhoods to help with cleanup.

VACANT PROPERTY REGISTRATION PROCESS

Mr. Forgey discussed information (copy on file) regarding the implementation of a vacant property registration process and advised that this item came from the Quality-of-Life Task Force.

Commissioner Howard asked if the task force will monitor vacant property throughout the City/County or just City. Mr. Forgey advised that the County participated in the meeting with the vendors and said he feels they will participate in the program. In reply to Commissioner Howard, he explained that if a person is not in the city/state/country, the owner will be contacted. Commissioner Howard commented on the National Linen building on S. Slappey, with municipal court cases being continued, complaints, etc. Mr. Forgey explained that the vacant property registration is a tool that will assist with fighting blight and explained the vendor process they are looking at.

Mayor Pro Tem Fuller questioned those not paying the \$100 to register and recalled that fines up to \$1000 was mentioned. He asked if the City be able to lien the property if they do not participate in this program; Mr. Forgey explained the process including code violations, going to court, etc.

Commissioner Fletcher commented on private investors and finding an area to be used as a development project, asking if this will assist with this type project. Mr. Forgey agreed and commented on having a data base to contact owners.

OCTOBER 5, 2021
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

Commissioner Warbington stated that meetings were held regarding vacant property and the problem is identifying those properties; this gives a definition of property that is vacant and having tools to assist in identification. He said this will help Code Enforcement, but not necessarily with court procedures. Regarding the \$100, he explained the process and cost to administer the program, adding that the fee is not a penalty, but a way to keep track of vacant properties/owners. Additional discussion followed on remodeling vacant property and possible exemptions with Mr. Forgey and Commissioner Warbington explaining the process.

Commissioner Young commented on discussions of the Task Force and his concern regarding a fee being tied to vacancies, adding that he does not see how we could go to court with that. The real issue is AWOL landlords who will not register and basically imposing a back-door tax. He discussed property owners who abide by rules, but their property is not occupied at the time and suggested that they should not be penalized if they are following code regulations and that the City start its own registry, adding that he needs more discussion on this matter as the ordinance does not have a violation attached to it other than the home being vacant. Mr. Forgey agreed in being cautious, with the aim being equity and applying it throughout the community. He noted that most City demolitions have been vacant for multiple years. The upside of catching vacancies early is the potential to prevent demolitions. He said that there may be the possibility of vacant properties with no code violations being exempted.

Mayor Dorough stated the most beneficial outcome of the program is reducing the time a property is vacant, adding that the program will reduce dilapidated/demolished properties and an understanding of the long-range cost underscores the need of the program. Noting the cons and expressing support for the program, he asked Mr. Davis for assurance that there are no legal issues. Mr. Davis mentioned a registration process that the State used at one time, with there being a new one now and advised that he sees no issues exposing the City to liability for following the ordinance, if passed.

Regarding the \$1000 fine, Commissioner Warbington stated that this will more than likely not be collected and that a lien will be put on the property, which is consistent with state law. Those who will be fined are the ones who cannot be located, are non-responsive and eventually end up in Municipal Court fighting with Mr. Davis. He stated that the intent of imposing a fine is to give teeth to the program, but its effectiveness remains to be seen until it is implemented.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE MATTERS

HEALTH LITERACY GRANT

Mr. Forgey discussed information (copy on file) regarding accepting the \$3.9 million grant award from the US Dept. of Health and Human Services for community education, designed to increase the vaccination rate. He advised that the grant requires the City to work with a local entity designated as a minority-serving institution; therefore, ASU, the primary implementor of the program, will work with the City. The City is responsible for monitoring and making reports to the federal agency. He said if subcontractors are hired, they will be monitored and that ASU is on board with the MOU, adding that there are a lot of agencies working on this type of project and pulling together.

OCTOBER 5, 2021
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Forgey stated that it is a two-year project that started in June. Commissioner Howard suggested involving faith-based groups and stakeholders with Mr. Forgey explaining that the grant will assist with educating citizens and; hopefully, build trust in medicine/doctors, and provide factual information. Additional discussion followed on the process and monitoring.

Commissioner Fletcher asked how it is determined who is in control of grant monies and suggested more monitoring. Mr. Carter stated that the City and ASU are partners on the grant, with both monitoring the program. He explained the monitoring process in place, with Yvette Fields, Central Services Director, being responsible for grants. Regarding Administrative Fees, he stated that hiring an administrator will be required, processes being put in place, etc.

Commissioner Warbington commented on the executive summary, with \$2.5 million of the \$3.9 million going to an entity called Community Engagement and asked if it will be the City bidding it out. Mr. Forgey agreed and explained the City's responsibilities regarding procurement, with Commissioner Warbington confirming that the process will be handled by the City and will be brought back (expenses over \$40,000) for Commission review. Commissioner Warbington noted a \$93,000 line item for an educational van, expressing concern regarding who will be driving it and, liability if covered under the City's insurance. Mr. Carter explained that that the contractor will be responsible for the van.

Commissioner Young spoke in favor of the grant and how it will assist the African American/minority communities to help with education and health care regarding the COVID crisis, etc., He commented on hardship of those needing assistance and information and noted that the grant was brought to the City by SOWEGA Rising/Sheryll Byrd, who reported information about the grant to the former City Manager and worked with Mr. Forgey to move the grant forward as a community project. He stated that many in the health community, including himself, were in on the calls, with a lot of planning and work being put into the application and commended SOWEGA Rising for initiating this. He commented on the partners doing the work and things put in place that are reflective of the plan and the grant and those who have discussed and flushed out the process a lot of different ways. He stated that he looks forward to looking within the parameters of the grant to ensure that the initiators of the grant and those who have already done the work are included in the process, which includes the implementation, as well as compensation for administering this grant, which is standard practice etc. Regarding the RFP, he asked if this is necessary as it pertains to finding a community partner/non-profit agency, which could just be granted and not necessarily bid out by RFP and commented on the figure that came from the Federal administration was \$250,000 and reiterated the possibility of granting this based on a lot of the work performed by SOWEGA Rising and the work they did with Mr. Forgey to bring this project to its current status.

Regarding the process and scheduling, Mr. Forgey stated that they will be meeting with ASU to have the program set up within four-six weeks.

Mayor Dorough discussed the cons, i.e., the uncertainty regarding the procedure to administer the program and most importantly, the possibility of the City being responsible for any mismanagement by subrecipients that may occur, which the City must know in advance. He mentioned federal programs, with the City acting only as a conduit for the funds, but federal authorities hold the City responsible,

OCTOBER 5, 2021
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

resulting in the City being more engaged in the operation. He mentioned people who will not get vaccinated and noted SOWGA Rising spending \$25,000 that they were awarded with no accounting being brought back as he requested. He suggested that the two institutions which are most attuned to what is going on are the Health Department and Albany Area Primary Health Care, which could assist with vaccinations and suggested addressing health and wellness programs. He commented on information at a GMA HUB City meeting he attended last week regarding growth/population and those going into the nursing profession and suggested beefing up health care programs at ASU.

Commissioner Young stated that what the Mayor is speaking to is not within the perimeters of the grant and is for a specific targeted population (African American community) to increase vaccinations and trust in the health system. This refers to using folks who have been on the ground, working in the community using different, innovative approaches to get the message across. The grant opportunities were written with a specific intent and target audience, which comes from the Federal government. He suggested that educating the community and getting the vaccine rate up is important. Reiterating that SOWEGA Rising spearheaded efforts on the grant, which was received, he stated that another look at the proposal should be inclusive of using the work by SOWEGA Rising. What needs to happen now is to get it into the hands of those primarily responsible for getting approval, the City needs to hand it over to them and get out of the way.

In reply to Mayor Dorough pertaining to exposure the City has regarding mismanagement and failure to account for funds, Mr. Carter stated that the City has exposure and is responsible for the grant. Mayor Dorough asked to have something in writing to this effect and commented on provisions regarding responsibilities, etc. Mr. Carter reiterated that the City was awarded the grant and is responsible for it

AFTER SCHOOL & SUMMER PROGRAMS

Ms. Fields discussed information (copy on file) with the request to approve an application and acceptance, if awarded, for up to \$250,000 in grant funds from the Georgia Recreation and Parks Association.

Commissioner Howard asked if another site could be in east Albany near Thornton Gym. Craig Potter, Interim Recreation Director, advised that Thornton's program is owned and operated by the Boys and Girls Club. Commissioner Howard asked if the Dougherty County Middle School/Alternative School can be considered with Mr. Potter stating that they will look into this. Commissioner Howard asked Mr. Carter to look at partnering with schools in east Albany. Mr. Carter explained that there are already programs and staff for this grant and to go outside of this grant will require programming starting from the beginning, i.e., staffing, etc.

Commissioner Fletcher commented on Domestic Violence and Cancer Survivors being recognized during the month of October.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Potter stated that the funds will enhance programs and will allow hiring more staff. Discussion followed regarding the programs last summer, having more children involved, adding more sites, etc., having a small number of participants last summer due to the pandemic

OCTOBER 5, 2021
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

(80 total for all four sites), lessening or eliminating social distance requirements in place for this year, with the number of participants doubling, etc.

Commissioner Young asked if transportation is included, with Mr. Potter stating that no transportation will be provided at this time, adding that he will provide numbers.

Mayor Dorough stated that staff and attendance will be increased with meals and costs of programs being included. In reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Potter explained that the summer camp program runs ten weeks, the grant will fund through this fiscal year and is a three-year grant.

In reply to Commissioner Howard, the hours of operation of JC Odem Wellness Center were discussed with Mr. Potter stating that he will provide additional information. Commissioner Howard asked if the JC Odem Center can be looked at for programs for students as well.

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

Mr. Carter thanked Commissioners for attending the groundbreaking at the new transportation center yesterday.

Commissioner Young thanked all those who participated and assisted with the new transportation center groundbreaking. He recognized the contractor for the phenomenal job that was done, especially for getting feedback from the community.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Howard asked that Marshal Norman look at two sites, which are completely closed and are eyesores - National Linen on S. Slappey and 1100 block of E. Broad Ave., the meat processing plant, as well as the cotton gin adjacent to it. Mr. Carter stated that all three will be reviewed.

Commissioner Fletcher mentioned various entities which can be major assets regarding the Health Literacy grant and urged Mr. Carter to consider them. She stated that for Other Business, she wants to reach out to David Blackwell, Albany Primary/Health Department, to determine if there is anything to help the homeless population.

Mayor Dorough discussed the lack of an adult softball league this year and asked for a report and an explanation, especially with Albany having a \$4.0 million investment in Gordon Park. Regarding the January 2017 tornadoes, he stated that three counties were awarded a total of \$37.0 million for recovery. Dougherty County was responsible for administering the funds earmarked for the unincorporated area; however, the City has residents in E. Albany whose homes have not been repaired. He mentioned sharing a letter a friend of his received with Ms. Subadan, who wrote to Community and Economic Development. The response was that 'these funds are exhausted'. A week later the message was 'that was a mistake, and a contact was given. He suggested that the status of the program needs to be determined and a town hall meeting scheduled for residents, who are communicating with each other, to

get accurate information. He asked Commissioner Warbington the possibility of some funds being reallocated to the other two counties. Commissioner Warbington stated that discussions are ongoing, including amendments to reallocate unused funds. Mr. Carter asked that Mayor Dorough share the correspondence; this is the first he has heard of this. Mayor Dorough mentioned miscommunication between the City and County, as well as among City departments.

Commissioner Young interjected that if this is the funding the County received, they stated that they will use it to finish up hurricane repair and were not including representative of the City in the funding, adding that he asked and was told that residents inside the city would not have access to those funds. Mayor Dorough stated that if that is the case, the citizens of E. Albany need to be notified, adding that he would feel more confident hearing this from a State representative who is more familiar with the program than we are.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

In response to Commissioner Warbington regarding policy and procedures being on the agenda, Mayor Dorough asked to delay it until December, with Mr. Carter asking that small meetings be held before it is put on an agenda. Discussion followed with Mayor Dorough asking to put it off until December due to his schedule and suggested exchanging thoughts before the meeting. Commissioner Warbington suggested the December work session and for the Clerk and Mr. Brooks to reach out to Commissioners to meet with them individually. He asked if GMA facilitators submitted a report from the retreat showing action items. The Clerk advised that they have not yet; usually the minutes she prepares and the report from the facilitators are released at the same time, adding that she will reach out to GMA.

EXECUTIVE SESSION -Potential Litigation

At 11:41, Commissioner Fletcher moved to enter executive session to discuss potential litigation,

seconded by Commissioner Howard and, following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried as follows:

Ward I	yes
Ward II	yes
Ward III	yes
Ward IV	yes
Ward V	yes
Ward VI	yes
Mayor	yes

At 12:26 p.m. Commissioner Fletcher moved to exit executive session, seconded by Commissioner Howard and following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried as follows:

OCTOBER 5, 2021
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

Ward I	yes
Ward II	yes
Ward III	yes
Ward IV	yes
Ward V	yes
Ward VI	yes
Mayor	yes

At 12:29, Mayor Dorough announced that litigation and a personnel matter were discussed in executive session, with no action taken and adjourned the meeting.

CITY CLERK
SONJA TOLBERT