

APRIL 5, 2022
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

PRESENT: Mayor Bo Dorough
Mayor Pro Tem: Vilnis Gaines
City Commissioners: Jon Howard, Jalen Johnson, Chad Warbington and
Demetrius Young
Virtual Attendee: Bob Langstaff, Jr.
City Manager: Steven Carter
City Attorney: C. Nathan Davis

Mayor Dorough called the meeting to order at 8:32 am, followed by a roll call vote for attendance.

AGENDA ADOPTION

Commissioner Howard moved to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Johnson. Commissioner Warbington made a substitute motion to include executive session to discuss pending litigation. Commissioner Howard accepted the addition to his motion and following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried. Mayor Dorough advised that the motion is to approve the agenda with adding executive session.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

SPEAKER APPEARANCE

Casey Tyson discussed the noise levels at the Oasis Express Car Wash and a study that was conducted in 2012, with nothing being done. He referenced a photo (copy on file) and commented on the noise from the blowers and asked that something be done, adding that the value of his home has decreased and, it is a nuisance.

Mayor Dorough asked staff to test noise levels and referenced a letter he sent Mr. Tyson regarding this matter.

REPORT OF THE CITY CLERK

TRAVEL:

1. Mayor B. Dorough; Newly Elected Officials; Athens, GA; Feb. 23-25, 2022; \$1,027.16
2. Commissioner J. Johnson; Newly Elected Officials; Athens, GA; Jan. 22-25, 2022; \$1,258.99
3. Commissioner V. Gaines; Newly Elected Officials; Tifton, GA; Mar. 16-18, 2022; \$918.93
4. Commissioner D. Young; Albany/Dougherty Day at the Capitol; Atlanta, GA; Feb. 23-24, 2022; \$376.80

APRIL 5, 2022
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

Mr. Hicks advised that the travel is for those as noted.

Commissioner Howard moved to approve the travel, seconded by Commissioner Warbington, and following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried.

MEETING DATE CHANGE:

1. June and July 2022 Meeting Date Changes

Mayor Dorough discussed the rescheduling of the regular meeting from June 28 to June 29 due to the GMA convention and with July 4th being on a Monday, the meeting will be rescheduled to July 5 to accommodate those with plans to be out of town for the holiday. He noted the suggestion to have only one work session in July also due to the MEAG conference.

Commissioner Warbington agreed with the June 29 meeting and moving the meeting to July 12 rather than Thursday July 21.

Commissioner Young commented on budget discussions in June and asked to be aware of this when moving the meeting.

Commissioner Warbington noted that the vote will be taken at the regular meeting on the fourth Tuesday of the month.

REPORT OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

EASEMENT AGREEMENT RE: VERIZON WIRELESS

Mr. Davis commended Mr. Maples for his work on the project and discussed information as noted (copy on file).

Lee Daniel, Engineering Utility Superintendent, and Mr. Maples agreed with information as noted by Mr. Davis regarding the easement agreement.

In reply to Commissioner Young, Mr. Daniel discussed the mounting on the pole which is 34' tall. Mr. Maples stated that a photo can be sent to provide a visual of the layout.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Daniel stated that he is not certain about the signals, with Commissioner Young stating that areas in the south side have spotty service and that the school systems wireless connections are also sketchy. Mr. Maples commented on the requests and promotion of the small cell technology, which will increase signal strength in the area. In reply to Commissioner Young, Mr. Daniel noted the location of the pole. Discussion continued regarding the amount paid for the easement.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. 2022/2023 Emergency Solutions Grant

John Hawthorn, Director of Community and Economic Development, discussed information as noted (copy on file) regarding seeking and accepting the grant, which supports fair housing and homelessness programs.

Commissioner Warbington asked if this is an annual grant, with Mr. Hawthorne agreeing and, in reply to Commissioner Warbington, he advised that all funds were spent from the grant last year.

Commissioner Young asked how the funds are spent, with Mr. Hawthorne explaining the process and partnership with local entities which refer clients to them for affordable housing, etc. Discussion continued regarding the homeless and problems incurred in finding quality housing. Commissioner Young suggested allocating more funds for housing and using Legislative contacts to assist with funding. Mr. Hawthorne agreed with the comments and stated that his department is working on a draft for a comprehensive, affordable housing policy in Albany.

RECREATION

1. Recreation Master Plan

Craig Potter, Interim Recreation Director, noted the plan from Wood [the consultant] being sent out to the Commission and asked for approval.

Commissioner Warbington commented on the link to access the master plan and asked what is expected of Commission today. Discussion followed with Mr. Carter stating that he sent information to everyone, adding that he will resend another copy. In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Carter stated that public hearings were held, and that the information can be put on the website for additional comments. Commissioner Warbington asked for ten bound copies for his constituents.

Commissioner Young asked for additional copies as well.

Mayor Dorough suggested that this item be for information at this time due to issues still needing to be addressed, i.e., golf course membership, etc. He gave numbers from 2000 indicating expenses continue to climb while revenues and numbers of participants declining, adding that citywide recreation needs repair. He mentioned the First Tee Program, having too many parks, transferring titles to some parks, closing parks, etc., which should be in the master plan. He asked if Turner Gym can be renovated at a reasonable cost or should it be closed, suggesting that CW Heath being a better location for an E. Albany Park. Other comments included: Carver Gym/National Guard property, meeting with the County regarding the Tennis Center, with funds being allocated for pickle ball and his suggestion to not adopt the master plan since it is comprehensive and to look at what items are feasible, adding that Carver Gym, Bill Miller, etc., gyms should be looked at and whether to have a multi-field soccer and baseball complex.

APRIL 5, 2022
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

He asked to address this at the next retreat in the fall for the consultant to recommend what parks to close, etc.

Mayor Pro Tem Gaines suggested having a plan and moving forward.

Commissioner Warbington agreed with Mayor Pro Tem Gaines and asked that we have a 12-month plan, adding that many of the items that Mayor Dorough commented on has already been talked about and staff needs direction for the next 6-12 months. He mentioned phases/plans, i.e., two/three years, five years, etc. Mr. Carter asked that something be decided due to funding (SPLOST VIII) with Commissioner Warbington agreeing to put on the next agenda regarding the next 12 months and discussing the next two-three years at the fall next retreat.

Commissioner Young agreed with Mr. Carter's comments due to the upcoming budget decisions and directing staff to implement in phases.

Mayor Dorough advised that he does not see delaying improvements; however, the master plan does not need to be adopted until questions are answered, i.e., being understaffed, etc. Regarding public hearings, he advised that it gets problematic because often citizens give suggestions that are not feasible for the City of Albany.

Mr. Carter clarified that this item will be on the next work session for discussion. Commissioner Warbington mentioned the slides from the retreat being helpful and suggested putting them on the website for citizens and for the Commission to re-review at the next work session.

MEMBER REQUEST/COMMENTS

Commissioner Howard asked for information on property demolished from 2021 to the present, including location and the amount left in the budget for demolition. Mr. Carter clarified whether he wants a history to which Commissioner Howard stated through the current budget year. Mr. Carter stated that the information will be gathered and distributed. Mr. Davis commented on the fi fas. Commissioner Howard asked about the disparity study, with Mr. Carter stating that a decision was not made on this yet. Commissioner Howard stated that some on the County Commission support having the study with a request to wait until after the election and when the county attorney retires. Mayor Dorough stated that he sent a letter to the School Board and the County a year ago with no response and suggested that if the City wants a study that it be voted on to move forward. Additional discussion followed regarding having the study and moving forward with bids and putting an item on the agenda for Commissioners to vote on.

Mayor Pro Tem Gaines commented on the Ritz Cultural Center and asked for a report.

Mayor Dorough commented on Gail/Acker streets that are located by the Oasis Car Wash with the car wash being in violation of the City noise ordinance, the filing of lawsuits and the business operating within the perimeter of the ordinance. Regarding the Master Plan, he asked that Commissioners list their top ten priorities to look at collectively and determine how to proceed.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Carter reported that the Government 101 classes started with a presentation on Municipal Court yesterday and next Monday they will meet at Community Development. He asked the Commission to attend if they have the opportunity. On May 16, citizens can apply and go through the classes between 6-8 pm. He Announced that Peter Bednar, Fleet Director, was chosen for induction into the Public Fleet Hall of Fame for 2022 with only three inductees nation-wide.

Commissioner Johnson commented on the retreat’s discussion regarding the public safety cameras and asked how many will be purchased, etc. He mentioned that he had a meeting with constituents living in the Palmyra Heights/Rawson Circle area regarding shootings and asked that this be looked at during the upcoming budget. Mr. Carter stated that a camera system will be budgeted and will be brought back regarding locations. Commissioner Johnson commented on protecting citizens and decreasing the number of citizens who are leaving Albany due to inadequate services.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:25 a.m., Commissioner Howard moved to enter executive session to discuss pending litigation, seconded by Commissioner Warbington, the motion unanimously carried as follows:

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

At 12:23 p.m., Commissioner Howard moved to exit executive session, seconded by Mayor Dorough, the motion unanimously carried as follows:

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

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

SONJA TOLBERT, CMC
CITY CLERK