

DECEMBER 6, 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.
Asst. City Manager: Bruce Maples
City Attorney: C. Nathan Davis

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

AGENDA ADOPTION

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

PUBLIC HEARING (re: Street Closure)

Bruce Maples, Asst. City Manager, briefly discussed the following:

1. W. Third Ave. between N. Jefferson & N. Jackson Streets

Tod Lanier stated that he is present to answer questions.

Commissioner Johnson asked for a map of the location, with Mr. Maples stating that he will provide one.

In reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Lanier stated that the traffic count is relatively low and commented on questions regarding construction in the area.

In reply to Commissioner Young regarding residential input from in the area, Mr. Lanier stated that he is not certain of anyone being contacted. Commissioner Young asked if notification can be sent to those residents, with Mr. Maples replying affirmatively.

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Lanier stated that there will be no interruptions to Phoebe Health Care.

Mr. Maples advised that Phoebe was asked to provide a traffic analysis of the area and that information will be provided. He asked for modifications to the resolution regarding infrastructure having a building constructed over it. Mayor Dorough agreed to consider re-routing of City utilities, with Mr. Lanier advising that there is no building associated with this project going over Third Ave., adding that he does not foresee any building going over or re-routing of City utilities being involved. In reply to Mayor Dorough, he advised that there will be sidewalks.

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In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Maples stated that this item will be on the Dec. 13 agenda for vote.

There being no further comments, Mayor Dorough closed the public hearing.

INFORMATIONAL MEETING re: Redistricting Maps

Mayor Dorough asked those desiring to speak to limit their comments to five minutes.

James Fitzgerald spoke in favor of having the meeting/being transparent, adding that he has been a resident of Albany for 43 years and asked that map 4 be considered. (copy of his notes on file).

William Wright spoke to the current map vs. the two maps that are presented, the percentages per ward and suggested putting the maps throughout the city for citizens to be prepared.

Commissioner Young explained that the maps are based on population and the decrease per ward (ward one in particular), adding that the map was structured to maintain parity, which was approx., 11,500 per ward. He advised that the Commission has been working on this since the spring.

Discussion continued with Mr. Wright expressing his opinions regarding the disparity of the maps and Commissioner Young and Mayor Dorough explaining the process. Mayor Dorough stated that the process will be provided to Mr. Wright within the next 48 hours.

Aaron Favors asked which wards and citizens will benefit and commented on the process of having more sessions for citizens to be aware (five people stood from Country Club Estates who were in support of Mr. Favors' comments).

Commissioner Howard stated that ward one had the most decrease in citizens due to many dying and asked Mr. Davis to provide information regarding the restructure of the Voting Rights Act, which removed public hearings, filing appeals, etc., regarding the process of redistricting. He noted a case being heard by the supreme court tomorrow to do away with gerrymandering and redistricting if it is passed.

Discussion continued with comments also from Commissioner Johnson regarding the process and not confusing the matter; Mayor Pro Tem Gaines noting that he will be voting for map 4; Commissioner Warbington explaining the process and discussing 'one person – one vote', which is based on population and the census, adding that he feels ward 4 benefits the most. Commissioner Young explained that this is politics and priorities come into play regarding how many people vote and finding parity/equalization in the ward by population. Mayor Dorough also explained the process and the need to have a map adopted before the next municipal election.

Commissioner Howard again asked Mr. Davis to provide court cases information so that information can be provided to their constituents and commented on having public input.

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At 9:40 a.m., Mayor Dorough stated that there will be a special call meeting to discuss authorizing and submitting a list of City priorities to the local state legislative delegation.

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING (see special called minutes)

At 10:00 am, the work session resumed.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Sherrell Byrd discussed the impending housing crisis and commented on an email that was received from Trista Wiggins, who asked for assistance for those who may be facing this matter, requesting that an emergency fund be established to assist those who are evicted to prevent them from becoming homeless.

In reply to Commissioner Johnson, Ms. Byrd stated that the request is to have an emergency relief fund to assist those in a housing crisis. In reply to Commissioner Johnson, Ms. Byrd stated that funding sources include ARPA funds, Community & Economic Development, etc., that could help address the issue. Discussion continued regarding the situation in Albany with those losing income, catching-up from being laid off due to the pandemic, etc., with Ms. Byrd adding that she is advocating for those who have hardships and not those who abuse the system by not using funds for rent, etc.

Mayor Pro Tem Gaines stated that he is in support of the request.

Commissioner Warbington commented on the request from Ms. Wiggins and stated that the company she works with owns approximately 30K multi-family apartments. He asked if Ms. Wiggins is asking all municipalities/communities that their apartments are located in for assistance with Ms. Byrd explaining that Ms. Wiggins is a property manager for properties in Albany and is appealing for these people.

Commissioner Young commented on the request from Ms. Wiggins and referenced DCA/supporting families and asked if Ms. Byrd has information regarding the DCA program process. Ms. Byrd explained that Ms. Wiggins works with the tenants to provide information to access funding from DCA, etc. In reply to Commissioner Young, Ms. Byrd commented on criteria needed to receive funds, which eliminates some from taking advantage of funding, adding that funds go fast due to the need and influx of applications. In reply to Commissioner Young, John Hawthorn, Community Development Director, explained that Community Development is limited and have up to \$45,000 in emergency funds with the allocation being \$36,000. which needs to be matched with public service funds. He discussed the process of providing funds for the homeless, adding that this will not assist those who currently have housing, etc. He also commented on the pandemic ending, the public service grant that can be used (15% max.) and stated that funds that were provided for COVID has been pulled back due to the pandemic ending even though the effects of COVID remain. He advised that he is in contact with HUD to see if funds can be allowed

for COVID related matters; however, there is no indication that this will happen, adding that there are obstacles that must be adhered to which many times disqualifies those who need help. In reply to Commissioner Young, Mr. Hawthorne agreed that if the City provided funds, guidelines can be looked at to make the funds available. Commissioner Young asked for information regarding paying off back-rent for people and if people are still evicted, with Mr. Hawthorne stating that landlords have increased rent, and many do not require leases. Commissioner Young commented on quality-of-life issues and instability of neighborhoods and families, lack of shelter and the need to provide funding.

Mayor Dorough asked staff to provide information regarding what funds are available and termination of funds, adding that he will support programs that can be funded through Albany Housing Authority and Community & Economic Development.

REPORT OF THE CITY CLERK

A. Appointments

The Clerk discussed the following appointments as noted (copy on file) and recalled the resolution adopted a few months ago that gave the City two extra appointments to the EDC. She explained that the CDC has a cap of 19 members, with the City trying to reach the maximum number. She stated that an appointment to the Jt. Board of Elections will also be on the regular night meeting and added that the list of appointed officials was included for appointments in January.

1. Two appointments: Community Development Council
2. Two appointments: Economic Development Commission
3. Appointed Officials
4. (added) Joint Board of Elections

Commissioner Warbington commented on the Interim public defender and asked if this will be voted on with the process being discussed.

Discussion followed regarding Commissioner Young questioning the agenda item regarding voting on an ordinance for Commissioners to use City funds, rather than Utility funds, for travel to MEAG, MGAG and ECG and a second reading. Discussion continued regarding the advertising for positions of Asst. City Attorney and Public Defender (Mayor Dorough); need for executive session to discuss a personnel matter (Commissioner Warbington); the need for the Municipal Court Director as a liaison to keep Commissioners alerted to issues (Commissioner Young).

REPORT OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

1. City Charter/Code of Ordinances Re-Codification

Mr. Davis and the Clerk discussed information (copy on file) regarding the continuation of using Municode/Civic Plus and/or Carl Institute of Government to begin work on the charter. The consensus was to continue with Municode/Civic Plus and to notify CVIOG.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Public Safety:

Chief Deputy/License Inspector Anthony Donaldson discussed information as noted (copy on file):

1. 2023 Annual Alcohol License Renewals

Commissioner Howard noted the correction from 184 to 210 that will be renewed.

Commissioner Johnson commented on the 210 that have met requirements, including calls for service, suggesting that some on the list have issues and asked to see a copy of the report. Mr. Donaldson explained the review process and statistics as noted, adding that a report can be provided. Marshal Walter Norman discussed the process regarding incidents and for staff approvals (APD, City Attorney) before the report is submitted to the Commission, adding that if there are major concerns, this is brought to the attention of all, including the Commission, with a recommendation to revoke the license.

Marshal Norman presented information (copy on file) regarding the following:

2. Inoperable Vehicle Presentation

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Marshal Norman explained the process of identifying inoperable vehicles, finding/notifying owners, vehicles on property not owned by the resident/owner and the court process. Commissioner Howard asked to meet him at 707 Moultrie Road to ascertain if there is a concern and commented on other concerns in his ward.

Commissioner Johnson asked to revisit alcohol license discussion since Mr. Davis was not present when it was his turn to speak. Referring to Georgia Tech students who conducted the alcohol study regarding the number/location of alcohol licenses, he asked that a comprehensive review be conducted of the City's alcohol license ordinance and procedure of issuing alcohol licenses. He mentioned the procedure other cities have in place that are very effective (limiting the annual number of alcohol licenses granted, requirements, such as storage, minimum square footage, stand-alone, appearance of establishment; etc.). He suggested that the City could have a study conducted, i.e., a comparison of city ordinances to other cities which have 'done it right' and make changes. Mr. Davis advised that the City has an objective criterion based on ward population with a limitation of on-site consumption establishments. Commissioner Johnson stated that specific requirements will hold license holders accountable; Mr. Davis agreed. Commissioner Johnson

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asked Marshal Norman to identify a group to conduct the research within the next 60 days and a report once a group is identified.

B. Public Administration / Finance

Charlie Clark, Civil Engineering Superintendent, discussed the following information (copy on file):

1. Magnolia Sidewalk Change Order

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Clark discussed the previous change order.

Commissioner Warbington commented on the good job of the sidewalk project.

Mayor Dorough commented on his concern of the bidding process (low bidder comes back with change orders, resulting in their cost exceeding the higher bidders) and staff not letting the Commission know in advance of the change order. He asked to see any correspondence between the contractor requesting additional funds and staff's response.

Derrick Brown, Chief Finance Officer discussed information (copy on file) regarding the following:

2. American Rescue Plan Act Allocations

Commissioner Howard asked if an appraisal had been done on the Herald Building with Mr. Davis replying in the affirmative. Commissioner Howard asked to have additional information (the appraisal) before the night meeting.

Commissioner Young asked that information be gathered regarding the housing crisis and to consider ARPA funds for a rental assistance program.

Mayor Dorough suggested moving forward with the funds and projects.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Maples gave comments on behalf of the City Manager regarding 1) participating in the Christmas lights 2) mediation on LOST negotiations; 3) Community Development sending info regarding groundbreaking: 900 block of Jefferson St re: construction of two new homes.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA / MEMBER COMMENTS

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Mayor Pro Tem Gaines said he is getting complaints re: school zone tickets and tickets being issued on holidays and when school was out.

Commissioner Howard commented on recognizing HS football teams at the next meeting and to have a reception before the meeting on December 13. He asked that Mr. Coleman, state lobbyist give remarks.

The Clerk discussed the ad regarding the Municipal Court Director position, which will be voted on at the regular meeting, noting that HR will be advertising for an Assistant City Attorney, etc. Mayor Dorrough commented on completing the E. Broad Ave. project, retaining a firm to do inspections/appraisal for Carver Gym, applications for impoverished neighborhoods that was set aside by Governor Kemp, and an update on finding a firm to stabilize/remediate the Herald building.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

SONJA TOLBERT, CMC
CITY CLERK