

MAY 23, 2017
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100

PRESENT: Mayor Dorothy Hubbard
Mayor Pro Tem Roger Marietta
City Commissioners: Jon Howard, Bobby Coleman, BJ Fletcher, and
Bob Langstaff, Jr.,
City Manager: Sharon D. Subadan
City Attorney: C. Nathan Davis

Mayor Hubbard called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Property Acquisition

Mr. Davis advised that executive session is needed to discuss property acquisition and a personnel issue. At 6:03 p.m. Commissioner Howard moved to enter into executive session, seconded by Commissioner Langstaff; the motion unanimously carried as follows:

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

At 6:45 p.m., Commissioner Marietta moved to exit executive session, seconded by Commissioner Howard; the motion carried as follows:

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

Mayor Hubbard reconvened the work session at this time and reminded those in attendance of the process to address the Commission (Citizen Comments/Speaker Appearance Forms).

COMMISSION EXPENSE REPORT

Triquenski (Que) Hicks, Administrative Specialist, advised that the reports were provided for informational purposes in Commissioners packages.

BUILDING NAMING POLICY

Commissioner Coleman stated that the building is a former day-care and that he would like it to be named in honor of J. C. Odom, Jr., who worked tirelessly to repurpose it as a fitness center. He added

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that Jackson Heights Elementary School was renamed Robert Harvey Elementary. Mr. Odom's health is failing and as a reward for his efforts and dedicated, he said that it is fitting to rename this facility in his honor. Mayor Pro Tem Marietta seconded.

Commissioner Howard stated that there may be a clause needing to be suspended to rename the building after Mr. Odom. Mr. Davis interjected that this action only suspends the two-year requirement; the regular process will continue to be in effect and followed. He said that the City Manager will appoint a committee, with their recommendation presented to the Commission to rename the building. Commissioner Howard asked if this action will be considered at the regular meeting; Mr. Davis replied in the affirmative. Commissioner Howard asked if policy should be suspended or deleted altogether. He mentioned past action, before the policy was adopted, in which buildings were renamed after sitting/retired Commission members, adding that it is fitting for this Commission to recognize those who have served this community before they die.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Hubbard stated that this will be considered in the regular meeting.

PUBLIC SAFETY MATTERS

ALCOHOL LICENSE APPLICATION

1. Aarzu22 Inc., d/b/d One Stop; 326 S. Mock Rd.; R. Patel/Agent; Beer and Wine Package; WARD I

Commissioner Coleman asked if the applicant has fulfilled all the requirements to be granted the license. Marshal Walter Norman replied that to this point, as far as the City is concerned, she has performed all the necessary steps.

There were no further comments regarding this matter.

PUBLIC WORKS MATTERS

WEST POINTE COURT ROW DEDICATION

Engineering Director Bruce Maples reported that this item pertains to the acceptance of a request for a right-of-way at West Pointe Court and that it complies with all City requirements. The recommendation is acceptance of the request.

There were no comments on this item.

PUBLIC FUNCTION MATTERS

ZONING APPLICATIONS

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Mr. Hicks read the following for informational purposes:

1. Special Approval Case #17-019 – Kiribhaie D. Patel & Hasubhat D. Patel/Owners; Tonya Terrell, Applicant; request Special Approval for property located at 900 S. Westover Blvd. to operate a training center offering programs in Allied Health in the C-3 District. PC approved 8-0
2. Zoning Case #17-017 – Mike’s Properties, LLC/Owner; William Hancock/Applicant; request to rezone property located at 3201 Gillionville Road from C-2 to C-2 (conditional). PC approved 8-0

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE MATTERS

PURCHASES:

Mike Trotter, Procurement Manager, discussed the following (copy on file), which is a yearly contract.

1. Grease & Oil Contract – Dilmar Oil Company, Albany, GA
Estimated expenditure of \$78,907.75

In response to Mayor Hubbard, Mr. Trotter stated that Dilmar will continue to have the contract.

Mr. Trotter discussed the following (copy on file).

2. Well #9 Chemical and Mechanical Cleaning, Donald Smith Company, Inc, Headland, AL
Total expenditure of \$42,820.00

There were no comments on this item.

FUNDING FOR ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

Ms. Subadan stated that in 2015, the City set aside \$5.0 million for redevelopment of downtown through the Job Investment Fund. The request is approval of a \$1.0 million deferred loan to the Albany Museum of Art for the purpose of relocating downtown and, the request includes allowing her and the City Attorney to negotiate the terms of the loan from the Revolving Loan Funds.

Commission Fletcher clarified that this is a loan, with funds earmarked in 2015; it’s not money coming from the upcoming budget; Ms. Subadan agreed.

Commissioner Howard asked Paula Williams, Albany Museum of Art Executive Director, the reason for wanting to move downtown. Ms. Williams replied that there had been no further thought to moving downtown until the January 2, 2017 storm blew the roof off of the museum. There were two choices, either rebuild where they are currently located or use the opportunity to do something exciting for the community. In response to Commissioner Howard, she agreed that had the storm of January 2nd not occurred, this conversation most likely would not be taking place now, adding that the current building

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must be sold in order to help fund the purchase of a new location. She stated that they intend to raise as much funding as possible, including the sale of the building, for this goal. Commissioner Howard asked if there has been estimates taken on the cost to rehab the current building. Ms. Williams replied in the affirmative; however, the decision was made to only renovate the bottom floor since making the move downtown will take 18 – 24 months. Commissioner Howard mentioned other attractions downtown, with the City subsidizing most of them; he asked what about the Museum of Art will allow it to succeed since it will most likely have the same clientele. Ms. Williams agreed that having the same clientele is the exact reason they feel the move is needed and will be successful. She briefly discussed school trips in which busloads of children, from a 90 mile radius, will spend an entire day in downtown Albany. Going back to renovations of the current location, she said that the bottom floor will be renovated and opened because of the programs they plan to continue.

Ripley Bell, Vice President of the Board, stated that the Museum has been in operation for 50 years and never sought funding from either the City or Dougherty County; it has been self-sustaining through fund raising, endowments, etc. Commissioner Howard reiterated that there are already a number of downtown attractions; additionally, ASU's west campus, which will continue to grow, is in close proximity to the Museum's current location. Ms. Williams interjected that being downtown provides greater opportunity for the Museum to corroborate with ASU, especially in relation to the Fine Arts Center. Commissioner Howard reiterated that if not for the storm, the move would not have been considered; Ms. Williams agreed that is probably correct. Commissioner Howard mentioned a past opportunity the Museum had to move downtown, but decided against it.

Commissioner Fletcher mentioned the respectability provided by the Museum, which will complement the projects currently underway downtown.

Commissioner Coleman countered that if the City has funding for something of this nature, those monies should be put where needed most. While the Museum may bring visitors downtown and generate revenue, the prospect of a utility rate increase to offset financial challenges is being faced by the City.

Mr. Bell countered that if the City doesn't grow, in a similar fashion, the funds won't grow either; funds will continue to shrink with the City looking for revenue sources, most likely through the property tax base. Getting people into our city is vital. He mentioned Columbus, Tifton, and Moultrie, Georgia, all of which have grown through local government and private ventures. He listed current projects, which will have a great impact on the future of Albany.

Commissioner Coleman stated that the demographics separate Albany from the cities Mr. Bell mentioned, adding that those cities do not have a 40% poverty rate and are not continually facing the same increases as Albany does. He said that it is a known fact in government, poor people are taxed through user and consumption fees, which happens every year, causing a burden on Albany's poorer population, adding that the City cannot grow unless everyone grows.

Mayor Hubbard disclosed that she has served on the Museum's Board and was there during discussion to move downtown, with Dougherty County putting funds on SPLOST to help facilitate the move. However, downtown was at a standstill at that time and it was not in the Museum's best interest to make the move. She stated that bringing tourists downtown is vital and asked about the African-

American exhibit. Ms. Williams agreed that it is one of the Museum's signature pieces, adding that they will have a permanent gallery space for the exhibit. Mayor Hubbard clarified that it will be housed downtown; Ms. Williams agreed and mentioned other exhibits/shows/collections. Mayor Hubbard stated that the Museum was one of the few in the Southeast which is accredited and asked if the Museum is still accredited; Ms. Williams replied in the affirmative; they are third in the state to be accredited and out of approximately 30,000 museums nationwide, they are among the 1100 which are accredited. Mayor Hubbard mentioned that the Museum abandoned the charge it had at one time and asked when moving downtown will there be a charge to visit the Museum; Mr. Bell stated that they will continue to be free every day of the year. Mayor Hubbard asked the possibility of charging for special exhibitions. Mr. Bell mentioned the traveling King Tut exhibit, in which museums had to charge a surcharge for the cost of bringing the exhibit in and if Albany is fortunate enough to offer something such as that, most likely a charge would be necessary. Mayor Hubbard said that the Museum's work in connection with ASU is very important for the facility as well as the programs.

INDEPENDENT AGENCIES REPORT

Mayor Hubbard asked if there are any questions regarding independent agencies. Commissioner Howard asked if the EDC, Civil Rights Museum and RiverQuarium can come to the next work session; Ms. Subadan replied in the affirmative.

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

Ms. Subadan stated that she has three matters to discuss and asked Asst. City Manager Phil Roberson to come forward to provide an update on debris management and the 'root ball roundup'.

1. Mr. Roberson reminded the Commission about its challenge approximately three weeks ago to staff to determine ways to assist those affected by Storm #1 with root balls. Using a Power Point (copy on file), Stacey Rowe, Public Works Superintendent, briefly discussed the efforts to assist the public with this issue. He said that a lot of volunteer help was utilized in this daunting task, along with local companies.

Mayor Pro Tem Marietta asked the possibility of running the videos that have been shot on Channel 16 instead of the things that have been running for a number of years. Ms. Subadan said that she can work with PR to do that. She thanked employees, who worked their off hours; Judy Bowles, KADB Executive Director, who was instrumental in getting waivers signed; Utility crews and 811 did the locates, as well as vendors, which donated equipment to make this effort possible.

2. Ms. Subadan mentioned the LED retrofit project and advised that a few reps from the Albany Development Partners Group are present this evening after the meeting to discuss some of the details.

Eric Steavens stated that the group continues to work with City staff to develop an implementation plan. He advised that vendors partnering in this project are SESCO Lighting, the largest manufacturer in the country putting the lighting package together; Hannon-Armstrong, multi-million dollar financing company specializing in energy conservation projects and helping finance; NTE Insurance, third-party

monitoring, guaranteeing energy savings; NG Services, operations and maintenance partner who will work on lighting as well other projects that will be proposed to the City. Introducing themselves were: Donnie Kincaid, Sesco Lighting; Robert (Bob) Johnson, Hannon Armstrong; and Tilman Holloway, NTE Insurance.

Mayor Pro Tem Marietta mentioned hearing ‘energy savings’ and asked when the final report is brought to the Commission, that cost savings are included. Commissioner Langstaff asked when the Commission will hear from the group again; Mr. Steavens replied that they are working to have the legal portion reviewed, but are getting close. In response to Commissioner Langstaff, Mr. Davis stated that he has not seen the documents regarding lighting, but has seen a draft on the Civic Center. Ms. Subadan interjected that Dan McRae, who has been involved in the master development agreement, is working with Mr. Davis on this. She reminded the Commission that the intent is for the City to not to incur any additional cost for the full lighting retrofit; the cost of street lighting now is intended to be the cost to retrofit brand new technology with considerable energy savings. She added that in addition to the savings, it will help in the City’s effort to reduce crime.

3. Ms. Subadan stated that through meetings with Commissioners, it is obvious they are sensitive to their constituent’s concerns and, in looking at the budget again, she has identified ways to make suitable changes, which she feels the Commission will be able to accept. She said that all department heads are here tonight and ready to answer questions regarding their budgets.

Commissioner Howard asked APD Chief Persley to come forward and urged him to hire additional officers ASAP. Senior citizens have paid their dues in life and deserve a safe, clean, crime-free area in which to live. He said he is concerned about this issue, especially in the area in which he lives. He noted that there are less than 30 days before the Commission votes on the budget and that it will be impossible to fill all vacancies, but asked for an update on hiring.

Chief Persley advised that he just hired seven more officers, with one already being P.O.S.T. certified. He explained that he intend to fill vacancies, but cannot hire anyone just for the sake of filling vacancies, adding that the next hiring process is underway. He suggested that the Commission will have to instruct him to relax his standards in hiring new recruits because his concern is doing what is in the best interest of Albany. In the past, people were put on the force, only to end up being arrested themselves; therefore, he is selective in who he hires. He briefly discussed recruitment/retention and said if he is being asked whether or not he can fill all vacancies by June 30th the answer is that he cannot. In reply to Commissioner Howard Chief Persley discussed the possibility of reassigning some of the upper level officers to street duty and the possibility of hiring retired officers. Commissioner Howard briefly discussed the public’s misperception of the police department and wanting to know that the taxes they pay are being allocated properly and said one of his top priorities is protecting the public and ensuring safety.

Referring to educating the public, Mayor Pro Tem Marietta asked the possibility of APD publishing a weekly column on Channel 16 addressing such issues as counterfeit money, identity theft, etc. Chief Persley replied that APD can do this; however, they constantly remind the public about keeping valuables out of sight and locked in their vehicles, but the public just doesn’t seem to heed these tips. He mentioned the Citizen’s Police Academy, which is geared toward educating the public, but it has very low attendance. In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Marietta, he said that APD had good responses from the Clean Car Campaign works; however, the public continues to leave valuables in unlocked vehicles.

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But, every effort will continue to be made to help educate the public and bring awareness to effective crime prevention.

Commissioner Howard mentioned an article in this week's *Albany Herald* in which there were complaints about permits not being issued or inspections made in a timely manner because of the lack of personnel and asked Engineering Director Bruce Maples how short he is staff-wise. Mr. Maples agreed that his department is short, specifically plumbing and electrical inspectors, but he is reviewing other options and doing what he can to fill the void. Commissioner Howard mentioned that citizens are unable to get back into their homes because of this situation. Mr. Maples countered that inspections are being scheduled daily, which take place that day or the next day. In response to Mayor Hubbard, Mr. Maples said that people come in every day, but there is no list, adding that it is an infrequent occurrence that a scheduled inspection does not take place the day it is made or the day after. Ms. Subadan interjected that there are times that the inspection fails, adding that the department is staffed for normal conditions, but conditions have been anything but normal since January. She briefly discussed steps being taken to address this issue; however, rumors of a huge backlog are inaccurate.

Mayor Pro Tem Marietta mentioned recent discussion to help the low-income with utility bills, similar to programs of the EMC's and Georgia Power, in which the public 'rounds up' their utility payment to help those who are less fortunate with their utility bills. He suggested that this will also help the City reduce the annual amount written off for unpaid utility bills and said he would like to have something in place when the next budget is approved

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:51 pm.

SISSY KELLY
ASST. CITY CLERK