

JANUARY 8, 2018  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100

PRESENT: Mayor Dorothy Hubbard  
Mayor Pro Tem Roger Marietta  
City Commissioners: Jon Howard, Bobby Coleman (arrived at 6:18 pm), BJ  
Fletcher, Bob Langstaff, Jr., and Tommie Postell  
City Manager: Sharon D. Subadan  
City Attorney: C. Nathan Davis

Mayor Hubbard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., and reminded the audience of the process to address the Commission (Citizen Comments/Speaker Appearance Forms).

ELECTION CERTIFICATION (WARD II)

The Clerk advised that this item is notification from the Elections Superintendent that Matt Fuller was declared the winner in the Ward 2 run-off election held on December 5, 2017. Mr. Davis added that having won the election, Mr. Fuller is eligible to be sworn in this evening. There were no other comments on this item.

SPEAKER APPEARANCE

Using a power point presentation, (copy on file) Ken Bevel discussed the efforts of Albany Relief and Recovery, including the long term recovery Faith-Based Initiative. At his request, seven volunteers, who were instrumental in assisting with storm recovery, stood up and were recognized for their work with the program. He commented on community partners as noted, discussed the mission statement, those who provided basic necessities (Cutliff Grove/World Vision) and mentioned efforts as they move forward, i.e., 279 remaining cases, future meetings to discuss continuing efforts, evaluating new cases until February 9, the close-out date for the program and funds to be expended.

In reply to Commissioner Postell, Mr. Bevel explained that they receive all requests, which goes through the case manager for review/evaluation of documents, including renters/homeowners.

Mayor Hubbard thanked the group for the work that they have done in assisting with storm recovery.

In reply to Commissioner Fletcher, Mr. Bevel advised that the upcoming meeting is for staff and that information can be provided to anyone upon request. There were no additional comments on this item.

2018 ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem Marietta referred to #14 (appointments Pension Board), stating that he will remain on the EDC and suggested that Commissioner Fletcher agreed to replace him on the Pension Board. There were no additional comments on this item.

TRAVEL

Commissioner Howard moved to approve the following, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher; the motion unanimously carried.

JANUARY 8, 2018  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100

1. Mayor D. Hubbard, Chamber of Commerce Eggs and Issues; Atlanta, GA; January 9-10, 2018
2. Mayor D. Hubbard, 2020 Complete Count Committee Meeting; Atlanta, GA; February 8-9, 2018
3. City Clerk S. Tolbert, Annual IIMC Training Conference; Norfolk, VA; May 18-24, 2018

MIKE'S PROPERTIES, LLC/RELEASE OF 2 Ac./PRESERVE SANITARY SEWER EASEMENT

Mr. Davis discussed information as noted (copy on file) pertaining to Mikes Properties a/k/a Mike's Country Store and advised that the request is to release the two acres, with the lien remaining on the other nine acres. He referenced page 16 and discussed loan payments, etc. In reply to Commissioner Postell, he again explained the loan, balances and liens.

William Hancock, Realtor, representing Mike's Country Store was present to answer questions and, in reply to Commissioner Postell he discussed the acreage, loan amounts and advised that the remaining eight acres and store are still collateral on the same loan, etc. He explained that this takes a \$1,300/year tax value/revenue for the City and turns it into a \$13,000 tax revenue, if the release is granted. Daryl Salter, Economic Development Program Manager, added that there is nothing on the two acres; the entire project for Mike's County store was originally \$2.3 million.

In Reply to Mayor Pro Tem Marietta, Mr. Hancock mentioned the 3,000 sq. ft. building on E. Broad, which will be sold and a distribution plant built and a day old bread store added in the front. He said this means \$1.1 million to the tax digest, which currently is \$80,000. There were no additional comments on this item.

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU GOVERNANCE

Mr. Davis noted page 21 and discussed information (copy on file) regarding governance of the CVB. He discussed the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG) study and advised that the recommendation is to set up a separate 501(C)6 corporation and terminating the current agreement with the Albany Chamber.

Mayor Pro Tem Marietta clarified that this is the first phase with the make-up of the board being the next phase after the 501(c)6 is created. Mr. Davis agreed, adding that there is a legal process. Mayor Pro Tem Marietta asked if the community will have a voice in the makeup of the board with Mr. Davis advising that this would be a Commission decision.

Commissioner Coleman said he feels this is another layer of bureaucracy and asked that this be looked at in order to guard against politics. Mr. Davis advised that contracting with anyone establishes another layer as it pertains to funding allocations. Commissioner Coleman asked if the report suggested that there were no misappropriation of funds; Mr. Davis agreed.

Commissioner Langstaff asked to have staggered agendas to allow public input, i.e., have it [the agenda item] listed on the work session and vote in two weeks/at the next meeting which will give the public an opportunity to review. He then discussed the report regarding: any improprieties being listed, agreeing with Commissioner Coleman that there were none, etc., and his concern of the cost of

JANUARY 8, 2018  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100

employee benefits/insurance being part of a shared group, i.e., the Chamber/CVB, which will more than likely increase if there is a split. He reminded the Commission of former City Manager Jim Taylor's review of this matter and determining that it was being handled appropriately and that he was satisfied with the arrangement. He suggested that the cost to do this is an issue, adding that the City needs a good reason for separating the CVB if extra money is being spent to take this action. He questioned who will set up the 501(c)6 with Mr. Davis stating that his office will file appropriate papers to do this with the Commission deciding on the structure of the Board, etc. Commissioner Langstaff stated that, as the organizer, he feels that the City cannot apply for the 501(C)6. Mr. Davis explained that the City would have to tell the State its intention in establishing this type of corporation. A brief discussion of the model the City will use ensued. Commissioner Langstaff asked if anyone has been to the advisory committee of the CVB to ask if they are willing to be a 501(c)6 or if they want any part of it. He also questioned if we are starting one from scratch and if so, who will be on it, who is willing to serve, etc.

Mayor Hubbard advised that two people signed up to speak. Commissioner Langstaff moved to table to the next work session in January, seconded by Commissioner Postell; the motion failed 3-4 with Commissioners Coleman, Langstaff and Postell voting in the affirmative.

Discussion followed with Commissioner Postell suggesting that not enough information has been presented to vote tonight and agreeing that it should be tabled until everyone has a clear understanding. Commissioner Fletcher countered that she has spoken with many people, has studied and understands the matter, adding that this is an important decision that has to be made, especially since it does involve insurance/benefits of those at the CVB. She commended the performance of Rachelle Beasley as the CVB Director. Commissioner Postell asked if we know where the monies are going. Commissioner Fletcher replied that we rely on the information regarding the hotel/motel tax that is submitted, but have no way to know how accurate it is. Mayor Pro Tem Marietta interjected that the CVB provides a quarterly financial report advising that this have been going on for a few years, adding that a study conducted in 2015 recommended this path. This has been discussed at retreats and the City contracted with CVIOG to study and make a recommendation. He stated that if this passes tonight, staff will come back with citizen, Chamber and business input to review the makeup of the board; there will be less City involvement with an independent Board than there is currently. He suggested a regional board also be considered in moving forward because of the regional aspect of tourism, adding that CVIOG spoke with the Chamber, etc., people when conducting the study. He asked to carefully move forward. Commissioner Postell countered that he read the CVIOG report as well and there were 12 groups that had the same CVB model as ours and suggested that theirs is not working and they do not know where the money was going.

Commissioner Langstaff mentioned that Commissioner Fletcher said she had investigated the cost and benefits and he asked her to share the information. Commissioner Fletcher said she was told everything will remain the same (retirement, health insurance, etc.), adding that she called Valdosta to compare and indications are that it will not create any additional expense. Commissioner Langstaff asked how the board will be comprised, who will be on it, etc., with Commissioner Fletcher suggesting that it will be a solid board made up of citizens who depend on the tax dollars/tourism. She suggested people from hotels/restaurants industries sitting on the board as they have a better understanding of what works. Mayor Pro Term Marietta suggested that the Commission will not appoint people, but rather

JANUARY 8, 2018  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100

the Chamber will appoint one person, another government entity could appoint someone and having people from hotel/restaurants, including one-two reps from the City and/or County.

Mayor Hubbard also mentioned that this has been discussed for a long time (from 2015-2016), adding that since she has been on the Commission it has been brought to her attention that the CVB needs to be restructured. She stated that many she talked with felt it is time to look at a different structure and commented on various recommendations that have been made in the past to separate the CVB from the Chamber, adding that many would not speak publicly, but are in support of a separation. She asked that a vote be taken, input be allowed and a new structure be put in place, adding that she has spoken with people who know the structure and foundation of both and feel that a structural change should have taken place when the Chamber and EDC were separated. She asked that we move to the next level and give an opportunity to bring a recommendation, including having input from the public. She stated that people from both sides have contacted her and that she understands the feel of what is going on, but also understands that to move this community forward decisions must be based on facts, in spite of snide remarks. She stated that she made contact with various restaurants and hotels with discussions centering on those who work at the Chamber, adding that those she spoke with know the history of this issue. She explained that her primary goal is for the City to move to the next level, whatever it is at this point. In response to Commissioner Postell, she said that having input from the public is vital in order to do what is best for our community. After information/input has been gathered, it very well could be that the Commission decides that the structure should remain as it is.

Commissioner Howard asked if the votes are to move forward, when will there be implementation. Ms. Subadan suggested that this is a legal question and having something in place by July 1 would be a workable timeframe, especially since we are required to give the Chamber 30 day-notice to end the contract. Mr. Davis mentioned getting the corporate name from the Secretary of State and getting Articles of Incorporation; he referenced page five of Mr. Baggett's presentation regarding moving forward with a board, with or without elected officials, and as soon as that is decided, the structure will be complete. Commissioner Howard clarified that the recommendation in the presentation is that the board be free of elected officials with Mr. Davis explaining that he remembered that two or three times he (Mr. Baggett) stated that elected officials should definitely not be a majority of the board. Commissioner Coleman stated that based on past practices and history/facts, the Commission always end up as it started out; when they get to the end, it will be totally different from their initial intentions. He said he is all for moving the City forward and asked to guard against politics being part of the process. Mayor Hubbard added that she wants her fellow Commissioners to know that she respects the thoughts and opinions of those she spoke with.

Commissioner-Elect Matt Fuller spoke of un-intended consequences and taking action on something that cannot be undone if needed; he asked to table this matter to allow more input.

Barbara R. Holmes spoke in favor of not making a change and read from a prepared statement (copy on file). She spoke of Albany's flourishing tourism industry because of the Chamber's efforts; recreation, natural resources and greenspace investments; development of the downtown corridor; strong business sector, comfortable lodging; data regarding the economic impact of tourism; local growth; and hotel/motel tax revenue.

Mayor Hubbard recognized Chad Warbington, Bo Henry and M. Patel all who signed up to speak on this matter.

Bo Henry said he is vested and invested in the community having been in the hospitality industry (hotels, multiple restaurants, event centers, catering) and operating businesses for 15 years in Albany. He said he feels that the current operation is good and will continue to help bring about great changes. He asked why look at something that is running good and, why be hasty in making a decision, adding that he spoke with 12 hotels and seven did not know that this was up for discussion, suggesting that their voices and opinions should at least be heard. He stated that the CVB does a great job promoting Albany and supports businesses in many ways.

Milan Patel stated that being asked what is the right thing to do is something that is asked frequently. He said he has a neutral opinion; however, he asked if no one knows the impact, why it is being voted on. He related how this item affects those in the business, adding that he is familiar with the hotel industry.

Chad Warbington questioned why CVIOG was asked the specific question on whether or not to split, the Chamber and CVB and he briefly discussed the executive summary that was provided by the CVIOG. He suggested that what should have been asked is “what to do to take tourism to the next level” and suggested that they would have talked about a convention center, which Albany does not have, concentrating on recreation, addressing panhandling, etc. He asked why this is on the agenda now, suggesting that it will take a lot of time to implement.

Mayor Pro Tem Marietta mentioned the 2015 Randal Marketing Study, which was paid for by the Chamber and EDC without Commission input, adding that the study recommended having an independent CVB, which is why he asked CVIOG to do another comprehensive study.

Commissioner Coleman said that his questions is ‘who benefits; the masses or a selective few’?

## **PUBLIC SAFETY MATTERS**

### ALCOHOL LICENSE APPLICATION - Change of Address

1. Kip Hampson, d/b/a as United Distributors, 1611 Krug St. (Ward 1), request to move the license (liquor, beer and wine) to 1105 Albany Ct. (Ward 2). This location was known as National Distributor, owned by Dale Hamilton, which closed its doors March 2016. There were no comments on this item.

### ALCOHOL LICENSE APPLICATIONS - TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIPS

1. Easton Creek LLC, d/b/a Mellow Mushroom Pizza Bakers; 2825 Nottingham Way; K. Austin/Agent; Liquor, Beer and Wine Consumption; Transfer Ownership from W. Valentino; WARD 5. There were no comments on this item.

JANUARY 8, 2018  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100

2. Albany Food Mart Inc., d/b/a Albany Food Store Inc; 1800 E. Oglethorpe Blvd; S. Naik/Agent; Beer Package; Transfer Ownership to P. Pullela; WARD 1. There were no comments on this item.
3. Savoys Bistro & Lounge; 704 Radium Spring Road; B. Fletcher/Agent; Liquor, Beer and Wine Consumption; Transfer Ownership to D. Henderson; WARD 6

In reply to Commissioner Postell on item #3, Commissioner Fletcher advised that the business is being transferred from her to Mr. Henderson. There were no additional comments on this item.

## **PUBLIC WORKS MATTERS**

### COMMERCIAL DRIVEWAY INSTALLATION

Bruce Maples, Director of Engineering, introduced Tod Lanier, representing the owner, who discussed information as noted (copy on file) regarding the installation of a new commercial driveway for Dental Partners, LLC in the 1700 block of Dawson Road between Crittenden Lane and Valley Road. He advised that the developer is also requesting a second driveway on Crittenden Lane and briefly discussed that the move of the property line by 40' resulted in seeking Commission approval.

In reply to Commissioner Postell, Mr. Lanier explained that the request is for one driveway on Dawson Road, adding that originally there were five residential lots that are now two commercial lots. One is a vacant lot being developed as a dentist office and an attorney's office occupies the other lot.

There being no further business, Mayor Hubbard adjourned this meeting at 7:20 p.m., and immediately called the regular meeting to order.

---

SONJA TOLBERT  
CITY CLERK