

APRIL 24, 2018
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100

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

Mayor Hubbard called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m., and reminded the audience of the process to address the Commission (Citizen Comments/Speaker Appearance Forms).

APPOINTMENT

1. One appointment to Chehaw Park Authority to fill an unexpired term ending July 2018

The Clerk advised that two individuals submitted information expressing interest in serving: Sean Hendley and Marcia Studley. However, she said she received an email today advising that Ms. Studley is withdrawing her name due to her recent employment with the City of Albany.

Commissioner Marietta stated that the Chehaw Board recommended Sean Hendley.

BYLAWS OF THE ALBANY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU, INC.

Ms. Subadan advised that this item comes from the recommendation of the Commission as previously discussed and advised that Mary Ligon was hired to assist with the bylaws. She stated that the Bylaws are being brought today for adoption.

Mr. Davis discussed information (copy on file) pertaining to Bylaws for the Convention and Visitors Bureau, and gave a brief update of what the bylaws include, i.e., transition team, Board members, etc. Ms. Ligon thanked the Commission for the opportunity to work with the transition team, Rashelle Beasley, etc., and to work toward increasing tourism in Albany. She commented on the transition team, which drew up bylaws (advising that Ms. Beasley is the President of the Georgia Convention and Visitor's Bureau), diversity of those serving on the transition team, which represents sports, hotels, hospitality, restaurants, retail, etc. and rotation of board members. In reply to Mayor Hubbard, she advised that the maximum number of years to serve is six.

Commissioner Howard asked Ms. Ligon to name the individuals as noted on page 21, and asked those serving on the team to stand (approx. four stood). Commissioner Howard mentioned his concern of not having enough diversity on the transition team and asked Mr. Davis what it will take to add two more to the team making the number 13 board members. Mr. Davis advised that a motion will have to be made to increase the team to 13 members.

Mayor Hubbard thanked Ms. Ligon for the work she has done in assisting with this matter.

There were no additional comments on this item.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

ANNUAL ACTION PLAN AMENDMENTS - 2018-2019

Shelena Hawkins, Director of Community and Economic Development, discussed information as noted (copy on file) regarding the annual amendments (2018-19). She also discussed additional information regarding public hearings that were held, attendance, etc.

In reply to Mayor Hubbard, she gave examples of how they were able to get the word to citizens, resulting in 318 responses, i.e., ads in the paper, use of social media, etc., methods

Commissioner Marietta commented on 200 homeless children in the school system and asked if there is a role that the City plays in assisting. Ms. Hawkins said she is not aware of those in the school system, but that they work with the Homeless Committee, etc., to target areas. She mentioned the \$65,000 that are matching funds and partnering with non-profits, etc., to provide home assistance to individuals. In reply to Commission Marietta, she advised that the school system was part of the Homeless Coalition and had two members who attended meetings.

Commissioner Howard questioned Section 108 loans, with Ms. Hawkins explaining that they are loan repayments to HUD (Hilton Garden Inn approximately \$27-28,000/month paid to the City and the MacGregor Golfing Company, paid by the Payroll Development Authority, which is approximately \$2,000/month). Commissioner Howard if the MacGregor's building is still vacant with Ms. Hawkins stating that she is not sure. There were no additional comments on this matter.

FY 2014-2017 ACTION PLAN SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS

Ms. Hawkins discussed information as noted (copy on file) regarding action plan amendments (2014-2017) and commented on public hearings, line items budget amendments, etc.

There were no comments on this item.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE MATTERS

E. BROAD AVE. SOIL AND GROUNDWATER INVESTIGATION

The Clerk stated that Ms. Subadan advised that this item is being pulled from the agenda.

TRANSIT PROCUREMENT POLICY

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Yvette Fields, Central Services Director, discussed information (copy on file) regarding the approval of a Procurement Policy for the Transit Department to be used when making purchases utilizing Federal funds as required by FTE and GDOT. In reply to Mayor Hubbard, Ms. Fields advised that it will be attached to the current City policy, and gave information regarding the policy. There were no other comments on this item.

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

Ms. Subadan stated that the EDC and Chehaw Authority will give updates.

Justin Strickland, Executive Director of EDC, distributed information (copy on file) regarding the mission, objectives, statistics of the last three years, 2018 Board Members, information on Albany/Dougherty Industrial Park; Georgia Quail Hunt; Webstraurant Store update; Locate South Georgia initiative; involvement in Georgia Economic Developers Assn.; partnership with UPS, as well as one with MCLB to bring 3-D printing and active manufacturing onboard; Made in Albany GA campaign (featuring Pretoria Fields; with other businesses promoted monthly); Georgia High Demand Career Initiative (Sector Partnerships 2017 Conference participation); MCLB's future, LOGCOM as the base of the future; hosting of Georgia House of Representatives Rural Development Council; Albany/Dougherty industry Roundtable; Workforce/Leadership Development (hosting Young Gamechangers, etc.); Albany/Dougherty Day in Atlanta and the annual trip to DC at the Capitol; , 2018 Industry Celebration Awards, with Global Commerce, P&G, MCLB Logistics Command, Miller Coors, and Phoebe Putney being award recipients.

Commissioner Howard mentioned Bainbridge being selected as the location of a new manufacturer and asked if Albany was on the radar for that project. Mr. Strickland explained that the 'Taurus story' is one of the uniformed Economic Development examples and it is a story that Bainbridge should tell. He added that Taurus considered metro Atlanta roughly 12 years ago, but the project faded away. Five years later, the project was revitalized; subsequently, Bainbridge beat out Atlanta. In response to Commissioner Howard, he said that he does not know if Albany was ever in the running for that project.

Mayor Hubbard asked for update on Coats and Clark, with Mr. Strickland advising that the agreement will be finalized next week and thanked the Commission for providing funding through the Job Investment Fund. He briefly discussed Coats & Clark's assertion that they could rebuild anywhere, which prompted the EDC to entice the company to remain in Albany/Dougherty County. The end result is that the company remains here with its 200 employees and moving 100 jobs back here.

In reply to Commissioner Marietta, Mr. Strickland advised that information regarding Coats & Clarks will be on the website after all agreements are signed and that a ribbon cutting will be held to celebrate the re-opening.

Mayor Hubbard thanked Mr. Strickland for the update.

Don Meeks, Director of Chehaw Park, briefly discussed his history with Chehaw, which began in 2005, with him becoming the Executive Director in 2016 (copy on file). Updating the Commission, he said that one purpose of him being here tonight is to ‘square away some business,’ based on the Commission’s desire for Chehaw to become financially independent. While that has not been achieved, he stated that serious efforts have been made to ensure that status. Discussing the data (as noted) from 2000-2018, he advised that progress has been made by changing the way business is conducted, increasing park attendance; volunteerism; successes; growth in costs/expenses, etc., with the focus on the task of becoming more independent financially from the City. He commented on SPLOST Projects/revenues that have, and will further, assist them to become independent financially and said the contract since 2003 has had amendments, adding that they are working to update this contract and while he is not asking for more money, he said he is asking that the Commission consider not reducing the current contract amount. The Park will see significant revenue over the next five years through the proposed projects, but will continue to depend on the City’s allocation until they are complete and bringing in the added revenue.

Mayor Pro Tem Langstaff stated that the numbers do not include the utility budget, with Mr. Meeks agreeing that numbers are not accurate, they were used as a reference for the increase in expenses. Mayor Pro Tem Langstaff contended that the comparison was not apples to apples.

Commissioner Marietta complimented the team at Chehaw, the success of the Native American Festival and asked the final attendance numbers. Mr. Meeks said they do not have the final number of attendance, but advised that Friday/Saturday brought in \$60,000, which is their budget number, adding that had it not rained Sunday they would have exceeded this number. He suggested that approximately 80,000 attended the festival, adding that there were 100 volunteers from MCLB and Turner Job Corps.

Mayor Hubbard suggested including the number of volunteers, how goals are being reached, events, etc., in the report/update. Mr. Meeks explained that he was uncertain about the amount of time he had to gather and present the information tonight and that he wanted to be sure to stress the goal of becoming financially independent.

Commissioner Marietta commended the board members and the City Manager for working/assist the Chehaw Park Authority, adding that the Friends of Chehaw help them to move in the right direction. Mayor Hubbard asked that information be provided on fund raising, etc., with Mr. Meeks advising that Friends of Chehaw just restarted; they have been inactive for three approximately years. He added that Chehaw has multiple volunteer organizations that support Chehaw; and mentioned events held at the park on weekends, semi-annually, etc., to assist with raising money for the park, with approximately 150 volunteers to help with these events. Commissioner Marietta asked to be briefed on the Splash Park and Morgan Burnett, who has a festival coming this fall. Mr. Meeks gave an update stating that the Splash Pad is under construction and is a SPLOST VI project that will open in May that will help with revenue during the summer months. He commented on the fall event that will be a true arts and crafts show with local artists, etc., with all revenue being donated back to the park.

Mayor Hubbard asked the number of visitors at the e park over the last three-five years with Mr. Meeks stating that there is not an exact number, but 100,000 visit the park/zoo annually; he added that they have a new record keeping system that will keep track of visitors

Commissioner Howard commented on points made in the presentation regarding holding off further reductions for five years and re-evaluating profitability in five years. Mr. Meeks explained the increased marketing, adding to the park revenue and his belief that they will add \$350,000 annually.

Commissioner Fletcher commented on the Indian Festival, which Mr. Meeks stated comes from having students, etc., in the park with ticket prices approx. \$12. Commissioner Fletcher suggested not having 'free events,' which sell the Park and taxpayers short, adding that she feels the need to see what others pay at events.

Mayor Hubbard asked if there are plans to increase fees, with Mr. Meeks stating not at this time. Mayor Hubbard asked if park prices are comparable to other parks, with Mr. Meeks agreeing. In reply to Mayor Hubbard regarding the numbers in his presentation, Mr. Meeks explained that the numbers were to show the significant increase in expenses. Mayor Hubbard questioned the plan to decrease funding from the City and asked if he was aware of this. Mr. Meek said he was aware and his goal was to work towards this goal. Mayor Hubbard asked what the plans are to get more people to the parks, which is an issue. Mr. Meeks explained that marketing will help, adding that he doubled the marketing budget when he took over in 2016 to include social media presence, adding a membership coordinator, digital signage being used, etc. In reply to Mayor Hubbard, he stated that they coordinate with CVB.

Commissioner Marietta commented on the goal of Chehaw to make it everyone's park, including getting surrounding counties involved. Mayor Hubbard said she will have additional discussions with Mr. Meeks regarding funding.

There were no additional comments on this item.

Ms. Subadan announced that she has hired Chief Cedric Scott as Fire Chief who will report to work in June. She advised that the budget will be presented at the next meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Commissioner Marietta asked about the Nottingham Widening with Mr. Davis stating that he will provide updates on this, the Three Oaks project, Opioid Litigation and aggressive panhandling ordinance.

Commissioner Howard asked to have Chief Persley to give an update on recent arrests.

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SONJA TOLBERT
CITY CLERK