PRESENT: Mayor Bo Dorough

Mayor Pro Tem Jon Howard

City Commissioners: Matt Fuller, BJ Fletcher, Chad Warbington, Bob Langstaff, Jr.,

and Demetrius Young

City Manager: Sharon Subadan City Attorney: C. Nathan Davis

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

SPEAKER APPEARANCE

1. Kelvin Crawford identified six people, including coaches and a relative of Mr. Driskell, asking that the Commission consider renaming Carver Park to Charles Driskell Park. He recognized Jimmy Hall, who gave a brief history of Mr. Driskell including the fact that Mr. Driskell coached football when he attended Monroe HS. Ingrid Driskell spoke briefly about her father and asked those who were coached by her father to stand (approx., eight people stood). She read from a resolution signed by former Mayor Tommy Coleman recognizing her father and read an email from Judge Phipps supporting this request and asked that the Commission consider renaming the park. James Williams also spoke in favor of renaming the park and gave his history of interacting with Coach Driskell.

Mayor Dorough stated that when he ran for office, he commented that SPLOST money that is left should be spent at Carver Park, adding that this request will go through the process.

2. Shane A. Frazier was not present. Mayor Dorough stated that the Commission is not considering the saggy pants ordinance at this time and suggested having an informational meeting on this matter in the future.

ELECTION OF TAX COMMISSIONER

Mayor Dorough recognized citizen comment speaker Dana Brown.

Ms. Brown distributed information (copy on file) in support of an elected Tax Commissioner and allowing citizens to vote. She suggested that this will provide more revenues and will allow accountability to the taxpayers. She mentioned that Phoebe Putney owns 30% of the property in Albany/Dougherty County, but pay no taxes, which is unfair to the taxpayers. She asked that this item be presented to the legislature and said they have a petition and will obtain more names.

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Howard regarding the process, Mayor Dorough stated that this Act will require the City and County Commission to approve and encouraged Ms. Brown to also speak to the County Commission. He said he is not certain of the procedure, i.e., whether citizens in Albany/Dougherty County have to vote or if the legislature can vote and asked Mr. Davis to comment.

Mr. Davis explained that the request is for the local delegation to introduce the proposal to rescind the law regarding Dougherty County not having an elected Tax Commissioner, which will be subject to vote by citizens in Albany/Dougherty County. He advised that if this resolution is passed, he will send copies to the local delegation tomorrow morning.

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Howard, Mr. Davis explained that the item would have to go before the cross-over date (which Ms. Subadan advised is March 12th).

Mayor Dorough stated that the local delegation does not have to have a joint request (city/county) in order to present it to the legislature with Mr. Davis agreeing.

Commissioner Fletcher asked if there is a problem in Albany regarding the Tax Director being appointed by Dougherty County instead of being elected like each county in Georgia. She stated that her review of the history helped her in realizing that there is a problem and that the citizens will be the ones who will determine the outcome. She commented on qualifications that should be looked at and cautioned about having someone qualified instead of supporting 'friends', etc.

Mayor Dorough recognized James Pratt who had signed up to speak on this matter.

Mr. Pratt stated that this item, as well as curtailing the City Manager's spending limit, are about power and power balances. He commented on citizen participation and voter turnout as it applies to an elected Tax Commissioner and the spending limit of the City Manager and recalled his comments from past meetings, i.e., declaring Election Day as a holiday and said he supports having the Tax Commissioner elected.

Mayor Dorough stated that he had asked that this item (elected Tax Commissioner) be on the agenda and discussed the constitutional office, which is done throughout Georgia, but excludes Albany/Dougherty County. Regarding comments made by Commissioner Fletcher, he stated that he has heard people on the County Commission say we do not need an elected Tax Commissioner; however, there are problems with the tax digest and the amount of tax-exempt properties etc., including the fact that this is a constitutional office per state statute. He explained that property that is auctioned off is not pursued by the County if no one bids on the property and that the owner, with immunity, goes another five-ten years without paying property tax. He stated that this system can and should be better and t the citizens of Dougherty County should decide who serves in this office. He advised that if the Commission votes on the resolution, it will let the legislative delegation know that the City of Albany wants to allow citizens to vote on who serves as the Tax Commissioner. He asked Mr. Davis to provide additional comments regarding his review of this item.

Mr. Davis gave a brief history regarding how this matter (appointed Tax Commissioner) came up through the legislature in 1974, which means that this request is to allow voters to vote to rescind the current statute to allow a vote to take place in Albany/Dougherty County.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard stated that some of this has to do with Phoebe Putney Hospital taking over Palmyra Park Hospital and then Attorney Bo Dorough fought against this matter. He asked Mr. Davis

to explain constitutional officers. Mr. Davis advised that constitutional officers include the Sheriff, Superior/Supreme Court Justices, etc., and read from the state statute, which states that constitutional officers are elected/have to run for office. As it stands now, in Dougherty County, the Tax Director [Commissioner] is appointed by Dougherty County.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard continued discussion on Phoebe Putney Hospital and other corporations regarding things being done due to the 'good old boy's system'. In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Howard, Mayor Dorough stated that Phoebe Putney has over \$700,000,000.00 in reserves. Mayor Pro Tem Howard agreed that this is a problem and he said he is confident that Mayor Dorough will get to the bottom by being straight forward, adding that in Albany, there are a large amount of churches and non-profit organizations that does not pay taxes.

Commissioner Young stated that has been in place for many years and suggested that the arguments does not clarify, i.e., that the person in charge now should be accountable, etc. If this is made a constitutional officer, he asked if it will make things better and, what will be gained by politicizing the position in the hope that this person will do better simply because they are elected.

Discussion followed with Mayor Dorough and Commissioner Young commenting on the pros/cons and/or how having an elected Tax Commissioner will correct the problems that we currently have. Mayor Dorough explained that the constitutional office should be working for the community, with voters having a say. Commissioner Young asked if there is another approach to solve the issue. Mayor Dorough said he cannot make assurances and reiterated that this is a constitutional office and if the position is elected, the person will be more aggressive in making sure property is properly assessed. Mr. Davis explained tax exemption of properties with the point of going to the Tax Commissioner's office to find the application for exemption, with the code section that supports the exemption.

Commissioner Fletcher agreed with Commissioner Young and also commented on tax exempt properties as set forth by the State. Mr. Davis explained the current process, which is a retired APD officer who now works in the Tax Department and is looking into the tax-exempt properties to make certain the code sections are being followed. Commissioner Fletcher asked if the person is doing their job properly, with Mr. Davis stating that there is only one person who is performing the duties of reviewing properties. Commissioner Fletcher asked to see a dollar amount of what has been put back on the tax roll.

Commissioner Fuller clarified that if a non-profit is the landlord for the property but is leasing to a business or an entity that is not a non-profit, by Georgia law, they should be paying property taxes on that property. Mr. Davis agreed and explained the process.

PROCESS re: CONSULTING/RETAINING OUTSIDE COUNSEL

Mayor Dorough discussed information as noted (copy on file) regarding establishing a procedure for consulting and retaining outside legal counsel. He said his position is that legal matters should come

to the Commission before the City Manager and City Attorney incur an expense and, to prohibit Commissioners conferring with outside counsel, as has been the practice.

Commissioner Langstaff asked if the City Manager/Attorney will have to come to the Commission for vote. Mayor Dorough agreed. Commissioner Langstaff stated that there could be matters that require immediate action and are not within the City Attorney's expertise. Mayor Dorough stated that the proposal relates to initiating contact with outside counsel. If the City Manager, City Attorney or any member of this Board seeks legal advice, the majority ought to sanction that retention; the City Commission is entitled to an explanation. The City Manager should not have the authority to seek an opinion before the Commission addresses it. Legal matters are discussed in closed sessions and a policy should be implemented. Commissioner Langstaff countered that there are urgent matters in which Mr. Davis needs immediate assistance from an attorney with expertise such as aviation, employee theft, Worker's Compensation, etc. Mayor Dorough said that if something has to be addressed within 24-48 hours, as Mayor, he should be called in the event of emergencies; this is his position and a policy is needed.

In reply to Commissioner Fuller, Mayor Dorough stated that no legal matters will be discussed in an open meeting. If the City Manager wants to retain outside counsel for an opinion on whether to proceed or not on an issue that is coming up, the Commission needs to authorize the City Manager to do so. If the City Attorney wants to associate outside counsel, that is also another legal matter and would not be addressed in open sessions. Commissioner Fuller how will matters involving environmental matters be handled. Mr. Davis explained cases of discussing litigation.

Commissioner Young agreed with Mayor Dorough and said he does not see anything approaching legal matters that cannot be handled in special called meetings.

REFUNDING REVENUE BONDS SERIES 2020 ASU PROJECTS/TEFRA HEARING (Tax Equity & Fiscal Responsibility Act)

Mr. Davis discussed information as noted (copy on file) and requested approval for the necessary City resolution regarding ASU projects and public hearing that is scheduled after this meeting. He gave a brief history of the refinancing by ASU for the E/W campuses and gave the amounts of bonds to be issued and advised that the bond counsel is present to answer questions.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Davis explained the reasons that this is coming up tonight due to the April deadline, and, in reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Davis advised that federal law requires the City to hold public hearings, etc.

AMENDING THE CITY CHARGER RE: CITY MANAGER SPENDING LIMIT

Mayor Dorough stated that this item is a proposal to amend the Charter to restore the City Manager's spending authority to \$40,000.

There were no questions/comments on this item.

PUBLIC SAFETY MATTERS

Mayor Dorough again recognized Mr. Pratt to speak at this time.

Mr. Pratt asked for a moratorium on liquor stores and allowing alcohol licenses until there is a development of community partnership agreements. He suggested that these are crime spots and asked the Commission to mandate processes, including community service and internship opportunities and collaborations within the community. He asked the Commission to put a temporary moratorium on licenses today/now since this impacts the community, adding that this also applies to the saggy-pants ordinance that is being kicked down the road.

In reply to Commissioner Fletcher, Mayor Pro Tem Howard stated that these are new licenses. He commented on the location and stated that less than 75' behind another liquor store and his concern that it is on a main drag, which may create problems for other businesses. Commissioner Fletcher told Mr. Pratt that the Commission is in discussions regarding many items. Mr. Pratt cautioned that the Commission is complicit in maintaining harm to the community by not addressing items as proposed.

Commissioner Young also commented on a liquor store in Ward 6 that citizens did not want in the community. He stated that there are also six outlets in Ward 6, close in proximity in the Radium Springs area, with the issue being the density of these establishments creating crime. He suggested that at some point, these issues will have to be taken seriously and agreed with the comments of Mr. Pratt and shares his frustration that some of the issues coming before the Commission do not seem to be a priority. At some point they will have to be a priority and taken seriously, or, he suggested that some Commissioners may find themselves sitting on the other side of this dais after the next election; the priority issues of the minority/poor community must come to the forefront.

In reply to additional comments from Mr. Pratt, Mayor Dorough told Mr. Pratt that he cannot chastise the Commission and that he must address matters for which he signed up to speak about. Mr. Pratt continued to push his ideas and chastise the Commission saying that they continue to demonstrate that they are not willing to make bold moves that will greatly impact the community in a thoughtful and considerate rate, particularly regarding crime.

ALCOHOL LICENSE APPLICATIONS:

Marshall Walter Norman discussed the following information (copy on file):

1. Albany Food Shop; 2418 Sylvester Road; W. Harper/Agent; Beer and Wine Package; WARD 1

Commissioner Young asked for regulations regarding density from one alcohol establishment to another. Mr. Norman explained the 1,000' rule for on premise consumption and advised that there is not one pertaining to beer/wine package. However, there is a rule that liquor/beer/wine stores cannot

be within 1,500 feet of each other. In response to Commissioner Young, he said that this is beer/wine and does not fall within that rule.

Marshall Norman discussed the following (copy on file):

2. Rusty Hook Bait & Tackle; 922 Radium Springs Road; D. Cannon/Agent; Beer Package; WARD 1

Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked for clarification on the 1,000 ft. rule with Mr. Norman explaining that it applies to on premise consumption, which is from door to door. A brief discussion followed on the office and home of ASU's President with Mr. Norman advising that he is not familiar with the location of Albany State University President's residence.

In reply to Commissioner Fuller, Mr. Norman discussed the strip mall and advising that the owner purchased the entire parcel, etc., adding that it may be a gas station and convenient store. Commissioner Fuller asked if that bait and tackle shop will be selling beer, etc. Mr. Norman agreed, adding that only the sale of beer is requested.

Additional discussion followed regarding the strip mall, bait and tackle shop, calls for service, etc., with Mr. Norman providing information to questions regarding the license, locations, etc. Commissioner Warbington asked if Commissioners have to provide reasons if they vote no on alcohol licenses and are they liable. Mr. Davis agreed and advised that there are seven/eight objective reasons listed in the Code Book for not granting a license. Briefly explaining the process, he advised that the applicant is given notice and a hearing is required. Commissioner Warbington asked for a copy of the reasons. Mr. Davis said he will provide.

PUBLIC WORKS MATTERS

STORMWATER EASEMENT BOARD OF REGENTS (Grantor) – CITY OF ALBANY (Grantee)

Bruce Maples, Engineering Director, discussed information as noted (copy on file) regarding the request by MD Development and the Board of Regents to accept a stormwater easement for the development known as The Scene at Sand Hill.

Mayor Dorough asked for a list of officers for the corporation and identify principals. Mr. Maples stated that this information can provided.

Matt Davis, MD Development, Inc. owner/developer said that they are building 216 bed student housing apartment complex for ASU. In reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Maples explained that the Board of Regents owns the easement, with the City taking it on because it pertains to storm drainage.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard commented on the siding with Mr. Davis explaining that the material is hardy board plank siding. Mayor Pro Tem Howard commented on redesign of the plan with Mr. Davis advising that ASU asked that he redesign so that the complex can open in 2020. Mayor Pro Tem Howard stated that he is concerned about the aesthetics.

Discussion followed with Mr. Davis advising that a complex at Valdosta State and Auburn University is designed the same way with the same type of material.

Commissioner Fuller stated that hardy board is high quality, durable to the elements and is standard.

Commissioner Young asked if there were discussions with the University regarding the color and agreed with Mayor Pro Tem Howard's concern about the aesthetics. Mr. Davis stated that it will be painted, with Commissioner Young stating that this should make it look better.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked if there will be additional housing on abutting property; Mr. Davis stated that his plan is to add more housing, which is a privately owned and funded project.

Commissioner Fletcher thanked Mr. Davis for coming to Albany.

STREET CLOSURE OF W. OAKRIDGE DRIVE

Mr. Maples discussed information as noted (copy on file) regarding the upcoming public hearing re: proposed closure of an unimproved city right-of-way starting at 3011 W. Oakridge Drive.

There were no questions/comments on this item.

PARKING WELLS ON E. WHITNEY AND E. HIGHLAND AVENUES

Mr. Maples discussed information (copy on file) as it pertains to the ASU development that was just discussed. He advised that MD Development is requesting approval to construct parking wells on E. Whitney and E. Highland Avenues.

In reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Maples explained that this is a dead-end area and that it is not suitable for right-of-way extension. Discussion followed on the location with no existing roads, i.e., improved to city standards.

PUBLIC FUNCTION MATTERS

ZONING APPLICATION

The Clerk read the following:

1. Zoning Case # 20-003 - Evangelical Faith Vision Ministry, Inc./Owner; Terrence

Jones/Applicant; requests to rezone property located at 1506 S. Slappey Blvd. from R-3 to C-3. PC approved 6-0, Ward 3.

Commissioner Fletcher stated that the request to rezone is regarding signage and asked if conditions can be in place. Paul Forgey, Planning Director, discussed information why the Planning Commission did not recommend conditions.

Commissioner Warbington asked if churches can exist in all zoning blocks. Mr. Forgey agreed that churches can go in all blocks. Regarding signs, Commissioner Warbington expressed concern on setting precedence and asked if the City should put the brakes on churches in residential applying to rezone to C-R purely for the signage. Mr. Forgey explained that approval would not be recommended if they did not think that the zoning change is appropriate in the area, adding that they are evaluating the sign ordinance and looking at it as a distance restriction as opposed to being based on zone as it pertains to electronic signs in residential areas. Commissioner Warbington asked the number of signs allowed, with Mr. Forgey stating that we have not reached the limit of 100 and are currently at 92 signs

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE MATTERS

PURCHASES:

Yvette Fields, Central Services Director, introduced Ken Stocks, Asst. City Manager, to present information as noted (copy on file).

1. Engineering/Power Utility Services – Quanta Utility Engineering Services; Kansas City, MO

Not to exceed total \$352,200.00

Using a power point presentation, Mr. Stock gave an extensive history of facts/ issues, including project deliverables, circuit map video of the proposed locations from the eastside crossing into the west side, the parcel map and project funding. He advised that the entire project will be slightly less than \$11.0 million; \$8.0 million is a grant opportunity and SPLOST VI funding the balance. The funds being approved today are solely for the engineering portion of the project.

Commissioner Fuller commented on Quanta outscoring the others, etc.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Stock stated that this will include branches and all parcels in the area. Commissioner Warbington asked if citizens will have to pay extra with Jimmy Norman, Director of Utility Construction, advising that it will be up to the customer to pay the expense to convert to underground power, with most properties being commercial. Commission Warbington asked how utility customers can benefit and suggested, i.e., offering a one-time incentive fee to 20 homeowners to sign on simultaneously to bury their utilities. Mr. Norman explained that most of the

commercial customers already have underground utilities, but it could be something to consider for residential customers. Commissioner Warbington expressed concern regarding the cost exceeding the \$3.0 million in SPLOST VII, asking if there is a contingency in that event. Discussion followed on funding with Ms. Subadan providing amounts already used for underground funding, etc.

Ms. Fields discussed information as noted (copy on file):

2. 2020 Ford Interceptor Utility Vehicles – Sunbelt Ford, Albany, GA
Total exp. \$381,931.00

Commissioner Fuller noted more savings after the first year with discussion following on the life cycle, etc.

Mayor Dorough thanked staff for looking at the option.

FORMER RADIATOR SHOP – ENVIRONMENTAL COVENANT

Mr. Davis discussed information (copy on file) in which the City received approval for the Compliance Status Report and explained that there will be no liability on the City for any future issues due to acceptance of the report. When remediation like this is done, they require a covenant or public notice be put on the deed records that the property was subject to environmental problems at one time. Mr. Maples added that the requirement of EPD were met and when going through the process the City accepted the covenants, which were filed and recorded then sent to EPD, which runs forever with the project/property. He mentioned having to go through the appropriate processes of closing the 14 wells and once closed, the final report will reflect the closures. The expectation is that by fall/winter, EPD will send the letter showing that the property is no longer on the hazardous site inventory listing.

Commissioner Langstaff asked if there was a \$100,000 liability cap when the City accepted the donated property; Mr. Davis agreed. A brief discussion followed on the liability cap with Mayor Dorough stating that if he remembers correctly, when they gave the property, they had an opinion that said it would cost \$10,000 to remediate, but they had only gotten to Phase II and the subsequent report discussed the extensive contamination with the advice that Phase III was needed for a full evaluation. Commissioner Langstaff asked if the City could have sued someone for what the City is now subject to. A brief discussion followed on rejecting the gift or requiring the Phase III before accepting and the City now engages its own consultant to provide a report on any issue regarding property the City is contemplating to acquire.

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

Ms. Subadan advised that a written report will be forwarded. She shared a video on 'good news' which showcased David Hamilton, Transportation Director and herself discussing CNG fueling. In reply to Commissioner Young, Ms. Subadan advised that there are ten lines and 21 buses.

OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked if the nurse practitioner from the clinic can come to the meeting to discuss the coronavirus and give an update.

Commissioner Langstaff asked to review outsourcing portions of the City Attorney's function.

MUNICIPAL COURT CLOSING

Mayor Dorough stated that this is Commissioner Warbington's item to discuss.

Commissioner Warbington stated that the face of Municipal Court changed in December and that an update was received at the last meeting, adding that the Court has staff appointed by the Commission, who report directly to the Commission. He mentioned the corruption, embezzlement, lack of staffing and how the Commission can effectively manage that office, adding that he feels it prudent to draft a resolution to clarify the direction going forward, with this being a top priority for the next ten weeks due to the court closing tracking the next few weeks. He advised that the court closed yesterday and the resolution (copy on file) that he prepared (with the City Attorney and Mayor Dorough adding their comments) is up for review and then commented on the provisions outlined in the resolution, adding that he feels that the City should conduct its own investigation as well.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Judge Weaver stated that he concurs with the proposed resolution.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked Judge Weaver if he is ok with Ms. McWhite reporting to the City Manager with Judge Weaver stating that he feels she should report to the Municipal Court Judge and all other staff reporting to Ms. McWhite. He discussed the process of finance going through documents pertaining to the ongoing investigation by the GBI

Commissioner Langstaff expressed concern on hand entry of matters and asked who will make decisions on software to be used in automating the system. Commissioner Warbington stated that he would think this would be the City Manager. Commissioner Langstaff commented on a specific situation with Judge Weaver advising that municipal court does not have a treasury and asked if it will be more efficient to have City Treasury receive monies rather than Municipal Court.

Commissioner Warbington said his recommendation is for all court to be handled by Judge Weaver with the monies/collections, etc., being handled administratively and under the City Manager. Judge Weaver stated that he works with the City Manager and TAC Department when reviewing any new software.

Additional discussion followed regarding other agencies communicating with the courts (GA State Patrol, etc.), that requires hand collections.

Ms. Subadan explained the prior money handling process, the software used, the processes of court vs. the duties of the Clerk of Court, adjudicated cases, etc., adding that there are currently two types of paper tickets in place with one not being automated. She advised that more updates are needed, and that they are working on the moving parts. She asked for clarity on who is responsible for what.

Discussion followed on who is in charge at Municipal Court (Commissioner Langstaff) and the disconnect (Mayor Dorough). Mayor Dorough commented on having designated positions as listed in the charter with the suggestion to have Ms. McWhite being responsible to the City Manager and the issue of who makes decisions regarding software. Commissioner Langstaff advised that most cities, the judge adjudicate cases and control the docket with another staff handling administrative functions. He asked if all people under Ms. McWhite will report to the City Manager; Commissioner Warbington agreed. Commissioner Langstaff asked Judge Weaver if this makes sense. Judge Weaver replied that she is ultimately in charge of them, but they will report to whomever is appointed over them, with that person reporting to the City Manager.

Additional discussion followed on the hiring of replacement judges regarding age/years of experience as noted in the proposed resolution and/or how this will be handled. The suggestion was to take the age off and focus on experience. Judge Weaver recommended that the person have a law degree and be a member of the State Bar. Their experience can be determined when they are interviewed.

Commissioner Langstaff stated that the age should not be a factor but rather focusing on experience; he asked Judge Weaver's recommendation on wording the minimum requirement. Judge Weaver recommended: 1) being born in the state of Georgia, 2) a practicing attorney, 3) at least one-year experience in the practice of law.

Commissioner Warbington expressed concern regarding the ticketing process and a need to eliminate conflicting data. He stated that he has heard time and again, that when a ticket is issued, it states on the ticket to report to court at 8:00 a.m., but people start lining up outside because the courthouse does not open until 8:00 a.m. Judge Weaver explained the process including an ordinance on file that mandate court starting at 8 am. Mayor Dorough stated that the ordinance can be corrected. Judge Weaver asked to have two judges; one for the court and one for the jail.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

SONJA TOLBERT CITY CLERK