



Where Community Connects

COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES

January 28, 2025 6:00 P.M.

Mayor & City Council

Mayor Anthony S. Ford At-Large
Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Berry – Council District 3
Councilmember Elton Alexander – Council District 5
Councilmember Yolanda Barber – Council District 4
Councilmember LaKeisha Gantt – Council District 1
Councilmember Alphonso Thomas – Council District 2

Administration

Frederick Gardiner – City Manager
Vanessa Holiday – City Clerk
Cassandra Lester – Deputy City Clerk
Frank Milazi – City Treasurer
Quinton Washington – City Attorney

Mission: To provide visionary leadership and superior municipal services that enhance the quality of life for citizens while creating a welcoming business atmosphere focused on sustainability and expansion of tourism and cultural events.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ford at 6:04 p.m.

Invocation by: Mayor Ford

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.

City Clerk, Vanessa Holiday was asked to proceed with a verbal roll call. All members were present except Councilmember Berry.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Motion to adopt the Agenda was made by Councilmember Alexander; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gantt. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES

1. Review of the Council Meeting Retreat Minutes January 8, 2025
Review of the Council Meeting Minutes January 13, 2025
There was no action taken.

PRESENTATION

2. PATH Foundation presentation of Strategic Implementation & Master Plan for Trails.

Presented by: Eric Ganther, PATH Foundation and Decius Aaron, Public Works Director

Mr. Ganther noted the City of Stockbridge hired the PATH Foundation to conduct a Strategic Plan for the Implementation & Master Plan for Trails, building off the old plans previously approved by the city; reviewed the Master Planning Goals: The Stockbridge Strategic Implementation & Master Plan for Trails will provide guidance to implement trails that connect all residents in Stockbridge to parks, schools, greenways, commercial areas, and regional destinations.

Mr. Ganther presented the proposed plan noting the implementation, and the next steps for the 24-mile trail plan, noting guidance has been received from the City Manager, Frederick Gardiner and Public Works Director, Decius Aaron; and referenced public input from the community in-person, along with a public survey placed on the city's website, which was extended to allow feedback.

Mr. Ganther reviewed the Plan Process, Trail Destinations and Connections, and noted the proposed Stockbridge Trail Network consisting of 24 miles, starting with downtown, consisting of Greenways, Side Paths and Calm Streets; noting the trails need to be popular and separated from vehicle use, noting 24 miles is a lot for a city the size of Stockbridge; and noted Phase I would consist of 5 miles of trails, building off what was already started; and Phase II would consist of 10 miles after the core of the network.

Mr. Ganther referenced a proposed Tunnel, not too long, that would connect Clark Park and Gardner parks; referenced the proposed Red Oak Trail on Walt Stephens Rd. with Stockbridge signage over the bridge; referenced the Heritage Trail along M L King Sr. Heritage Trail, recommending the closing of Jennings way to one-way traffic entering Memorial Park; referenced the Stock Bridge Trail and the proposed pedestrian bridge in Downtown Stockbridge; noting the planning included a public meeting on October 23, 2024 with 11 attendees and a Public Survey placed on the city's website October 23 – December 4, 2024 with 40 responses.

Mr. Ganther reviewed the 2024 material and labor pricing and what is and is not included. The Phase It would include:

Trail construction per design standards; signage; landscaping; trail amenities; trail access to neighborhoods; survey, design and permitting; construction management and a contingency estimated at \$38,977,000.00, noting this is a long-term project ,and that if approved at the February 10th meeting, based on the proposed timeline, a substantial portion of the trails would be completed in two years, and would be meeting with Norfolk Southern regarding the proposed tunnel.

Mayor Ford noted he likes the connectivity of the trails throughout the city, and referenced the time it took to get the Quiet Zone approved between the City of Stockbridge and Norfolk Southern.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt commended Councilmember Alexander as an advocate for trails and is excited about the plan and its implementation and the potential connection to the Lake Spivey trails and upwards to the Panola Mountain trails; and referenced the city of Suwanee's underground tunnel.

Councilmember Thomas echoed the sentiments of the Council, and noted the city's T-SPLOST projects in the Tye Street area for curb, gutter and sidewalks, the widening of Flippen Road project, and the proposed access changes to Memorial Park, noting he supports trails and the health and wellness of the community, however, it is important to make sure the PATH Foundation coordinates with staff and the Project Managers of those projects that are currently underway.

Mr. Aaron confirmed the PATH Foundation, Falcon Design and Engineering Consultants, and TSW (Tunnel, Spangler & Walsh) have conducted joint meetings, and referenced the Council's approval to close the Transfer Station to allow for new access to Memorial Park; and also purchased the lot next to the Transfer Station, noting Falcon is working on the infrastructure.

Mr. Ganther noted smaller projects are easier to build and allow staff to deliver a successful project; and stated a 20% match on a \$3 million dollar project could be used as a match and attract ARC (Atlanta Regional Commission) funding.

Councilmember Alexander stated his support of the Trails Plan, and referenced the points of interest connecting schools, grocers, retail and neighborhoods, and that the city should pursue funding, noting Governor Kemp announced an additional \$250 million in infrastructure funding during the GMA Cities United Summit Conference; noted the PATH Foundation has secured \$1.9 million toward the trail plan, and the city has allocated T-SPLOST and SPLOST funding of \$22 million dollars, with SPLOST VI collections to begin in April 2025,

Mr. Milazi noted the importance of local match funding, and the SPLOST and T-SPLOST projects are funded as approved and allocated.

Mr. Ganther agreed with the importance of seeking grants, noting the challenge with federal and state money is the funds are primarily to build highways and comes with restrictions; and that it is best to use local money and go back to agencies and ask for additional funding.

Mayor Ford noted the Governing Body would discuss funding sources at the upcoming Retreat in March.

Councilmember Thomas asked Mr. Milazi to confirmed that the Tye Street area curb, gutter, and sidewalk project has funds that have been earmarked specifically for that project.

Mr. Milazi confirmed the funding has been earmarked and cannot be changed unless the priorities change.

Councilmember Thomas asked how the President's Order on the halt of federal funding to programs affects the city's current projects.

Mr. Gardiner stated there would not be much of an effect on the city's monies, however, CDBG and GEFA loans may be affected, and that the Governor, GMA and ACCG should be preparing a response to cities and counties on this matter.

Mr. Gardiner noted Norfolk Southern approved a Tunnel Project in 2008, with \$800,000 earmarked from Congressman David Scott, and the information has been included in the NLC (National League of Cities) packet for the conference in Washington, DC in March, and that projects that connect neighborhoods receive support from both sides of the aisles.

Councilmember Thomas asked if the PATH Foundation plans to conduct additional citizen engagement opportunities.

Mr. Ganther noted there are no additional meetings planned.

Councilmember Alexander referenced the townhall meetings held in District 2 by Councilmember Thomas that included discussion of the Trail Plan with a focus on downtown and also referenced the trail plan around the STEM school, noting as the school is under construction, there is an opportunity to create a cultural shift with students walking or riding bikes to school; and noted that while there are no trails in District 5 in this plan, there are trails coming that are included in other developments in the district.

Councilmember Berry joined the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Councilmember Barber asked if the survey like is still available for comments.

Mr. Ganther stated the survey had been closed, noting it had been previously extended and promoted on the city's social media platforms.

Mr. Ganther asked members of the Governing Body to review the plan and submit feedback by February 4th, and place item on the February 10, 2025 Agenda, and upon approval, Phase I would begin, followed by Phase II noting funding is in place.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Council Consideration for use of the Merle Manders Conference Center on Saturday, March 29, 2025 for the Youth Council Expo.
Motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Mayor Pro Tem Gantt; seconded by Councilmember Barber. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Council meetings will be held in the City Council Chamber. Meeting dates, locations and times are subject to change or contact City Hall offices at 770-389-7900 or visit the website www.stockbridgega.org for updates.

- Youth Council Meeting 1st Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. - City Hall Levi Meeting Room (Feb 3)
- Stockbridge Citizens-Police Advisory Council meeting 1st Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Stockbridge Police Community Room 4545 N. Henry Blvd. – (Feb 6)
- City Council Meeting, 2nd Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. - City Hall Council Chamber (Feb 10)
- Citywide Development Authority Meeting 2nd Tuesday of each month at City Hall in the Levi Meeting Room at 6pm (Feb 11).
- Community Zoning and Information Meeting: from 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at City Hall in the Council Chamber (Feb 12)
- The Main Street Advisory Board Meeting on the 2nd Friday of each month at 9am – Location is the Downtown Connection Center 130 M L King Sr. Heritage Trail. (Feb 14)
- Downtown Development Authority Meeting, 3rd Tuesday of each month at the Downtown Connection Center 130 M L King, Sr. Heritage Trail (Feb 18)
- Youth Council Advisory Committee Meeting, 6:30 p.m.- 3rd Tuesday of each month Levi Meeting Room - City Hall (Feb 18)
- Planning Commission Meeting, 3rd Thursday of each month, 6:30 p.m. - City Hall Council Chamber - (Feb 20)
- City Council Work Session Meeting held on the last Tuesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. - City Hall Council Chamber (Feb 25)

UPCOMING CITY EVENTS/INITIATIVES

- Join Councilwoman Barber for the Annual Prom Dress Collection and Giveaway at the Merle Manders Conference Center. Accepting donations of new and gently used prom dresses on Sunday, February 9th & 16th, and the FREE Giveaway of dresses to local teens on Sunday, February 23rd. More information to follow.
- Join Councilman Thomas for the monthly Bingo Bash on Wednesday, February 19th from 10am – noon at the Merle Manders Conference Center. Lots of fun to be had by all.
- Join Councilman Alexander for a Quarterly Town Hall on Thursday, February 20th at 7PM. More information to follow.

- Join Councilman Thomas for the Annual African American Celebration on Saturday, February 22nd. The program will stream from 5pm – 7pm on the city's Facebook page.
- Join Mayor Ford for the monthly *Meet the Mayor* on Monday, February 24th from 10am – noon at City Hall. Meetings are by appointment.
- Councilman Thomas is honoring Veterans with a Continuous Salute all year long. Please send your pictures of Veterans with their name, branch, rank, and years of service.
- Join Councilman Thomas for the *Don't Trash Stockbridge* initiative centered around education highlighting the causes and effects of Littering and Illegal Dumping. More information to follow.

Please contact Rosalynd Rawls to schedule an appointment for *Meet the Mayor* and for more information on Council Initiatives at 678-833-3348 or via email: rrawls@stockbridgega.org

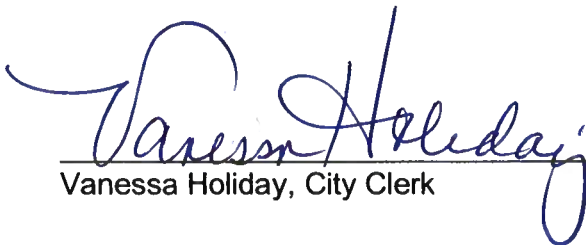
MAYOR'S COMMENTS

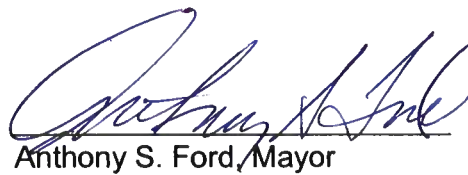
Mayor Ford noted we are in winter months, cold and flu season, and encouraged everyone to get vaccinated and booster shots; referenced the 2nd rare snow event in Georgia; noted the Council is returning from the 2025 GMA Cities United Summit where officials connected with fellow colleagues throughout the State and received training; referenced a new business opening and the ribbon cutting for the Hacienda Bar & Grill at Jodeco; and referenced the upcoming Superbowl game featuring the Kansas City Chiefs and the Philadelphia Eagles.

Councilmember Alexander noted the District 5 Town Hall on February 20th will take place at the Oaks at Eagles Landing located at 2700 Patrick Henry Blvd.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. was made by Councilmember Alexander; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gantt. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Respectfully submitted by:


Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk


Anthony S. Ford, Mayor