



Where Community Connects

COUNCIL RETREAT
5785 Peachtree Dunwoody Rd.
Sandy Springs, GA 30242
February 6, 2024
10:00 a.m.
Summary Minutes

Mayor & City Council

Mayor Anthony S. Ford
Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Berry Sr.
Councilmember Elton Alexander
Councilmember Yolanda Barber
Councilmember LaKeisha Gantt
Councilmember Alphonso Thomas

Administration

Frederick Gardiner, City Manager
Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk
Vacant, City Treasurer
Quinton Washington, City Attorney
Samantha Embry, 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.

Staff Present: Decius Aaron, Public Works Director and Kim Allonce, Economic Development Director.

DAY ONE AGENDA

Mayor Ford called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m.

Invocation by Mayor Ford

Pledge of Allegiance recited by all in attendance.

City Clerk, Vanessa Holiday was asked to proceed with the roll call. All members were present except Councilmember Alexander and Councilmember Gantt.

Motion to adopt the Agenda made by Councilmember Thomas; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Berry. The motion passed unanimously 3-0.

Mayor Ford read the Civility Pledge that has been adopted by the City: *The way we govern ourselves is often as important as the positions we take. Our collective decisions will be better when differing views have had the opportunity to be fully vetted and considered. All people have the right to be treated with respect, courtesy, and openness. We value all input. We commit to conduct ourselves at all times with civility and courtesy to each other.*

Mayor Ford notified the Council of his sole appointment to the Stockbridge Ethics Committee, Attorney Alicia Barney-Duck, who will be sworn in on February 9, 2024.

Councilmember Alexander joined the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

Mr. Gardiner gave an overview of today's meeting Agenda, including Homestead Exemptions, the Downtown Alleyway Project, Mixed Use Projects, Wayfinding, and an Economic Development update; and suggested the Council consider a 5-day retreat to cover all of the information and projects.

Homestead Exemptions

Mr. Gardiner noted Senator Jones has requested the Homestead Exemption List remove the redundancy of the exemptions and re-submit the information to the Legislature for approval and to be placed on the November 2024 ballot.

Motion to approve the revised Homestead Exemption List made by Councilmember Alexander; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Berry. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Downtown Projects

Mr. Allonce reviewed the city's Vision Statement and gave an overview of the department staffing of four members and the structure of the department, including the Main Street Program and Economic Development; highlighted the 4th Quarter successes noting business visits, RFI's, increased business participation, networking events, increased Small Business Blitz participation, awarding of BRICS incentives, and the business newsletter, fostering partner collaboration, promoting Stockbridge as a Destination, the Stockbridge Fast Trac Entrepreneurship with 17 enrollees scheduled to graduate in the spring of 2024.

Councilmember Thomas asked what has been the feedback from business owners and is there a concern regarding code enforcement, crime, or police patrolling?

Mr. Allonce noted the workforce seems to be the greatest issue with businesses struggling with hiring and maintaining staff, along with grants and loans.

Downtown Alleyway Project

Mr. Allonce noted offer letters have been signed by property owners and noted there is a meeting planned with Falcon Design Consultants to discuss the utilities.

Councilmember Alexander asked what is needed to start the Alleyway Project, and asked who is responsible for relocating the utilities.

Mr. Aaron noted the Economic Development Director has changed hands a number of times during the project from James Touchton to Alan Peterson and now Kim Allonce, and that has slowed down the project.

Mr. Gardiner noted the Economic Development Director, Kim Allonce, is the Project Manager, and commended Mr. Allonce on the progress made in his short tenure.

Councilmember Thomas stated the importance of the City Council being kept informed on the progress and/or delay of projects with bi-weekly updates from the City Manager. All members agreed.

Downtown Mixed-Use Project

Mr. Allonce noted there had been an RFP issued in the 3rd Quarter of 2023 and he and the City Manager have met with a number of interested developers, noting parking and the impervious surface continue to be an issue, and that parking would need to be increased substantially, and that the TAD could help facilitate with the cost of building a parking deck.

Mr. Gardiner noted the TAD has the oldest homes within the boundaries and date back to the 60's.

Councilmember Barber noted her support for redevelopment of the downtown but does not support pushing residents out, noting District 4 was drawn without her input.

Mayor Ford noted Districts were drawn by the legislature and each District is based on population and was presented to the Council at the Retreat.

Councilmember Thomas noted for the record that he had no input into the drawing of the District lines and referenced the change in the boundaries when Senator Strickland removed subdivisions from District 5.

Mr. Gardiner noted the city could freeze the taxes and protect legacy homeowners without gentrification.

Councilmember Barber recommended the City re-draw the District lines based on the number of developments that have been approved in District 4, accounting for a significant increase in population.

Councilmember Alexander referenced the DDA Marketing Report which calls for high-dollar quality housing.

Mr. Gardiner noted the hospital has a problem with recruiting doctors who are looking for new housing in the Stockbridge area, also noting the city needs to strike a balance to also include affordable housing.

Downtown Utility Art Box Project

Mr. Allonce noted (4) residents were selected for the utility art box community contest and the next step is to obtain encroachment permits.

Wayfinding Project

Mr. Allonce noted the RFQ was issued in November 2023, with two Qualified Vendors selected in January 2024, and the RFP scheduled to be released in February 2024; noted staff has met with Sky Design and a cost and timeline to be presented.

Councilmember Alexander noted it was his understanding that Sky Design had already presented the city with a timeline and the Council agreed the Wayfinding was a Priority project.

Councilmember Thomas noted the Annexation Referendum was effective January 1, 2023, yet the city limits signs are not reflective of the city's current boundaries.

Councilmember Barber requested the deadline to award the Wayfinding be made known to the full Council.

Mr. Gardiner noted the city's GIS staff is working on the new maps and boundary lines, and designing parking similar to what you see in downtown Locust Grove.

Downtown Welcome Center

Mr. Allonce noted the building currently houses the Economic Development Offices, the Main Street Program Offices and a Conference Room meeting space, noting it bears the name, Ted Strickland Community Center, and noted staff receives a number of drop in visits from the community inquiring to rent the facility, as was done in the past; and noted the Main Street Advisory Board has worked to rename the facility as has landed on "Downtown Stockbridge Connection Center", and would like to make a presentation to the Mayor & Council to support the name change, noting a marker would be placed at the facility in honor of Ted Strickland.

Mr. Gardiner suggested the city meet with the community regarding the name change, similar to what is done when changing a street name.

Motion to approve the name change of the building to: Downtown Stockbridge Connection Center with a presentation by Main Street at the February 27th Work Session meeting made by Councilmember Thomas; seconded by Councilmember Alexander. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Downtown Beautification

Mr. Allonce noted the bridge is one of the biggest complaints of the downtown business owners, noting it is if face of the downtown and Main Street District and there needs to be a mechanism in place that routinely cleans the bridge and keeps it clean.

Mr. Aaron was tasked with reaching out to GDOT (Georgia Department of Transportation) to coordinate routinely pressure washing the bridge.

Mr. Allonce spoke about the proposed "new face" of downtown storefronts in the downtown area utilizing the Façade Grant Program and loans.

Downtown Business Incubator

Mr. Allonce proposed bringing in a Downtown Business Incubator and asked for Council support.

Mayor Ford agreed with the concept and members of Council agreed as well.

Mr. Allonce noted the idea would be presented at the next DDA meeting in February.

PATH Foundation Professional Services Agreement

Mr. Eric Ganther of the Path Foundation noted the will provide the City of Stockbridge services for the development of the Stockbridge Strategic implementation and Master Plan for Trails which will verify the feasibility of all proposed trails and identify additional trail opportunities within the city limits; noted during the strategic implementation and master planning process, the scope of basic

services will be completed by PATH within eight months; and reviewed the Scope of Basic Services, Project Kick Off, Deliverables, Timelines and Implementation of the Master Plan for Trails.

Mr. Ganther noted the next step is to go from Plan A to Action and referenced the Reeves Creek Trail Expansion; referenced the city's SPLOST List noting there are restrictions; noted that overall, trails contribute to the health and wellness of your citizenry, and the quality of life; and noted the PATH Foundation wants to work in coordination with the county and would start with city/county/state-owned land.

Mr. Gardiner noted the city bonded funds for trails, and noted there is funding in TSPLOST and will be included in the SPLOST VI List and staff will also seek grant funding; and noted there will be at minimum three meetings with Council to determine where the project will start.

Motion to approve the Professional Services Agreement between the City of Stockbridge and the PATH Foundation, Inc. in the amount of \$121,425 made by Councilmember Alexander; seconded by Councilmember Barber. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Falcon Design Eng. & Consultants Projects Update – Adam Price, John Palmer & Mike Crawford

LMIG Resurfacing Project

Mr. Adam Price noted there was a Change Order issued for East Coast Grading whereas they will begin the resurfacing of Walt Stephens Rd. on February 20, 2024 and has until the end of March to complete the project; and noted the increase in funding at the state level, and the city's LMIG List may need to be adjusted if additional funds are distributed.

Amphitheater Pond Repair Project

Mr. Price noted the Amphitheater Pond has been repaired by the City's On-Call Engineers, Site Engineering in the amount of approximately \$40,000 replacing the rocks and noting the vegetation is also being replaced.

Mr. Gardiner noted the clay was not put in initially, and that there is now a depth meter installed, and there is also a water source to tap into the city's water line, and that was not the case before.

Councilmember Thomas asked if this is something that should have been known.

Mr. Price responded yes, noting the clay layer was on the drawings, however, never installed.

East Atlanta Rd./Lee Street Road Widening Project

Mr. Price noted the East Atlanta Rd./Lee Street/N. Lee Street projects are expected to be completed by April 20, 2024, if not before; noting there are 6' wide sidewalks on Lee Street with stairs.

Councilmember Barber expressed the importance of rebuilding relationships with members of the First Baptist Church and other members of the community.

Tye Street Area Sidewalk/Curb & Gutter Project

Mr. Price noted Rosenwald has been added to the list; noted there are 190 properties involved in the project and that there are issues with property records; and noted the project is slated to install sidewalks on the Glynn Addy subdivision side of the street to Red Oak Road.

Mr. Price noted there will be Beauty Strips along Tye Street along with a 2 foot wall and fence with non-irrigated sod; noted the driveway leading into Smith Barnes Elementary School may have to be redone; noted the project will repair stormwater runoff at Rosenwald, restating that there are issues with right-of-way acquisitions; noted curb & gutter 6" high- currently non-existent; noted Childs Street to Red Oak Rd. will have 10' paths; noted there is no room for a 10' path at the Pump Station on Tye Street (currently 4' – 5' sidewalk); and noted it will require a re-do of the pump station and the accel lane, and noted M L King, Sr. Heritage Trail/Berry Street would have 10' to 5' to Second Street and Second Street would have 5' sidewalks adjacent to the curb with no landscaping.

Mr. Price noted Tye Street would be completed in March and Second Street would be completed in May. Councilmember Thomas expressed concerns regarding the interior streets.

Transfer Station – Memorial Park

Mr. Gardiner noted the proposed new entrance to Memorial Park and the main entrance will be where the current Transfer Station is now and there will be an increase in parking spaces and a small pedestrian bridge.

Councilmember Thomas spoke about the long-term vision for M L King Sr. Heritage Trail, and the idea of making the trail a destination leading into and including the historic areas and landmarks of the city.

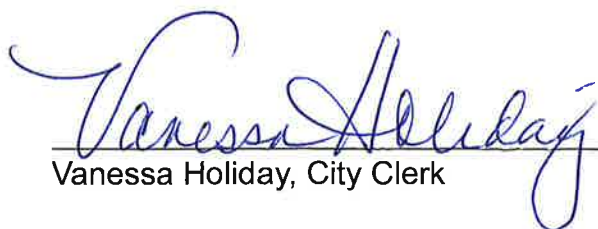
Bridges of Jodeco

Mr. Palmer noted he spoke with Mr. Jeff Grant who advised that the apartments are leasing fast and that Stockbridge is getting higher income/higher rent than areas on the north side of Atlanta; noted 1 Bedroom Studios are leasing for \$1,700; noted Costco is very busy and Sprouts broke ground today; and the prototype Chick-Fil-A will be a great addition as well as First Watch (serving breakfast and lunch) and Waterbury; noted Stockbridge has proven that the market can carry the higher rental rates and is doing better than Fayetteville.

Mr. Gardiner noted this is great news and will elevate the entire city.

Motion to adjourn at 4:41 p.m. was made by Councilmember Thomas; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Berry. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Respectfully submitted by:


Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk


Anthony S. Ford, Mayor