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CITY OF STATESBORO  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
JANUARY 17, 2023

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Mayor & Council Work Session

50 East Main Street

3:30 PM

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A Work Session of the Statesboro City Council was held on January 17, 2023 at 3:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 50 East Main Street. Present was Mayor Jonathan McCollar; Council Members: Phil Boyum, Paulette Chavers, Venus Mack, John Riggs, and Shari Barr. Also present was City Clerk Leah Harden, City Attorney Cain Smith, City Manager Charles Penny, Assistant City Manager Jason Boyles, Assistant to the City Manager Olympia Gaines and Public Information Officer Layne Phillips.

Mayor Jonathan McCollar called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

City Manager Charles Penny apologized for the mix up today as we had hoped to have the transit vehicles here at 3:30 for you to see and tour. However CRC was unable to get them here for us today so we will plan that for a future work session.

### **1. Art Park Presentation**

Assistant City Manager Jason Boyles presented an update on the Art Park located on the corner of East Main Street and Railroad Street. Key features include a large BORO sculpture, integrated sidewalk features like hopscotch, a sundial, large stone accents, and concrete pads for revolving sculpture installations, kiosk with information, wayfinding sign, and gnome garden. The park also has natural concrete, decomposed granite, bleached river rock and colored recycled plastic rock hardscape infill. The Art Park project began in November 2019 with the pursuit of an Art Initiative Grant and a Phase II ESA study and reports. From August 2021- December 2021 a soil analysis and soil remediation was done, coordinating with the railroad. January 2022 began with preparations of construction plans and coordinating with railroad for approval for construction. Site preparation began June 2022 with grading, forming, and pouring of concrete sidewalks. The final stages of completion include recycled plastic and stone infill, landscaping and art installation. The park is slated to be completed by February 2023.

### **2. Transit Update**

Director of public works and engineering, John Washington gave the transit update. The buses were delivered to CRC and then there was a recall on the buses. Since then the recall has been taken care of. We are still working on the wraps for the buses GDOT has requirements. Presented a route map, there will be two buses per route. The base start up plan will begin with free ridership for the first six months and a \$2.00 fare after those first six months. The buses will run Monday – Friday 6:00 am to 6:00 pm. Each route has a 40 minute round-trip travel time with an option of a 24 hour advance notice for pick up. The first year of operation is being funded by the CARES Act funding.

Councilmember Paulette Chavers asked if there was a stop on Johnson Street on one of the routes. John Washington stated not at this time, the routes were created from a study that was done when the transit process began a couple years ago. After some discussion direction was given to reroute one of the routes in order to have a stop on Johnson Street. Direction was also given to charge \$1.00 from day one instead of free ridership for six months.

### **3. Subdivision/Zoning Ordinance Update**

Director of Planning and Development Kathy field gave an update to the City of Statesboro Unified Development Code. The technical chapter is complete and is under review by Public Works. The formatting that we agreed upon is 100% completed whereas the Introduction is 80% completed. The zoning portion of the code includes, Introduction & General Provisions, Uses and specific use standards, and administrative and procedures are which are 80% complete. The zoning districts portion is 50% complete and is working on Blue Mile overlay, new districts, consolidated R-Districts, and mixed use districts. The nonconformities section is 70% completed and the Generally Applicable Regulations section is 65%

completed. The subdivision portion of the code the introduction is complete, the design & construction standards are under review by public works and we are working on Minor Subdivisions and Administration & Procedures. Section II, Zoning Districts is 50% completed. On the Environment section of code the introduction needs to be done, there will be no changes to the noise portion. Drainage is 90% complete and soil erosion, sedimentation is awaiting diagnostic feedback before updating. Flood damage, Stormwater, and Vegetation are all awaiting feedback from Public Works. The glossary is 60% completed. Supporting code updates are needed as well and includes Cable Communications, Cemeteries, Solid Waste, Street, Sidewalks, Public Areas, Traffic & Vehicles, and Utilities. From now until March staff will review the draft sections as they are completed. The first public draft will be available sometime in March. The first Public Hearing will be held in April with a final Public Hearing being held in May or June.

#### **4. Annexation**

City Attorney Cain Smith stated there are four annexation methods of real property into the corporate limits of the city. The first method is by 100% annexation, which is the exclusive manner in which the City of Statesboro currently annexes property. The second method is the 60% method which means that at least 60% of the elector's resident in the area and at least 60% of the owners of the land area, by acreage consent to annexation. This method is not currently used in the City of Statesboro but is common throughout the state. The third method is by Resolution and Referendum allowed for under O.C.G.A. 36-36-50 et seq. The fourth method is by a local act by the General Assembly. Annexations or deannexations which would create an unincorporated island are prohibited. In addition, noncontiguous annexation is barred absent a local act by the state legislature or an agreement between the city and county. All property annexed into the city has a default zoning of R-40 until a zoning map amendment is approved. Proposed zoning map amendments go before the Planning Commission for study and recommendation. The question of annexation if not in the purview of the Planning Commission. The planning Commission recommendation and report are then submitted to Council and shall be of an advisory and non-binding nature. As for site plans, site plans submitted for PUD zoning map amendment shall be binding. Any other zoning map amendments presented site plans are conceptual only and should not be considered binding upon the applicant or any future owner of the subject property. Zoning map amendments should focus solely on the appropriate zoning classification of the property without regard to specific site plans or concepts.

#### **5. Development Authority Presentation**

Benji Thompson with the Development Authority of Bulloch County reviewed with Mayor and Council the things the Development Authority has going on. Mr. Thompson began with the Authority's mission which is "to expand economic opportunities in the Statesboro-Bulloch County area by growing, attracting, developing, and supporting new and existing business in our community." The development authority is a statutory authority consisted of seven board members appointed by the Bulloch County Commissioners who serve four year terms. We spend most of our time pursuing traditional economic development, large business recruitment traditionally manufacturing and distribution. Mr. Thompson presented a map of Gateway, I began back in early 1990's with the Walmart Distribution Center, being the first to develop there. Next came Briggs and Stratton and Viracon. After that we had a period of twelve years with no new manufacturing business coming to this community. We did not stop working, economic development takes time and is evolving and based on things that are outside our control. However you can't wait for the next thing to come and not prepare for it. So, in 2003 began Phase II with Great Dane Trailers, and WL Plastics.

In 2010 the Development Authority purchased what is now the Bruce Yawn Commerce Park consisting of 204 acres located at I-16 and 301. We worked to prepare the area for development, extending City water, sewer, and gas to service the area. Utilities are critical for new prospectors looking. For the next twelve years we hit this area hard preparing it for development. We had many prospects look at this site and in 2015 Aspen Aerogels came to us to look at it. We were competing with places around the world. Economic development is an elimination game, you stay in the game until the end. We ended up being chosen as Georgia site for Aspen. At the time it was a \$70 million investment and 106 jobs with a \$50,000 average salary. However we ended up losing that project because the market wasn't right. In the fall of 2021 it was rumored they were looking for more manufacturing capacity so we reached out letting them know we would love to have them back. In late February 2021 we heard back that they were very interested in Statesboro. This time the investment is \$325 million and 250 jobs with an average annual salary of \$62,000. Mr. Thompson showed photos of the Aspen facility under construction.

In 2014 there was a Savannah Joint Development Authority created that includes Chatham, Bryan, Effingham, and Bulloch counties. The Joint Authority combines resources to attract and facilitate regionally significant projects. Bryan County had an industrial site that was perfectly situated for a very large project. After years of hard work in May of 2022 was the announcement of Hyundai coming to the mega site. The project is a \$5.54 billion commitment with 8,100 jobs and approximately \$1 billion in investment from suppliers. Construction began almost immediately and they are planning

on starting production of vehicles in January 2025. This site will be Hyundai's major electric vehicle plant in North America. An example of how things bring things, ReValyu a German company will start their first US production plant here. In addition Ecoplastics which is a large Hyundai supplier is coming; both projects will bring an additional 1407 jobs with \$897 million in capital investments. The Joint Development Authority is working on addressing the issues of workforce, housing, and roads. They have hired a workforce director who will work with all four of the counties to help us.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 pm.