



CITY OF STATESBORO
WORK SESSION MINUTES
MARCH 01, 2022

Mayor & Council Work Session

50 E. Main St. Statesboro, Ga

10:00 AM

A Work Session of the Statesboro City Council was held on March 01, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 50 East Main Street. Present was Mayor Jonathan McCollar, Council Members: Phil Boyum, Paulette Chavers, John Riggs via Zoom and Shari Barr. Also present was City Clerk Leah Harden, City Attorney Cain Smith, City Manager Charles Penny, Assistant City Manager Jason Boyles and Public Information Officer Layne Phillips. Absent was Councilmember Venus Mack

1. Design Proposal for the Creek on the Blue Mile

City Manager Charles Penny began the presentation with details of what the design proposal includes. The proposal is broken up into six phases, site survey, promenade and channel design, bridge design, dam and reservoir concept design, USACE permitting and FEMA Flood map revisions for a total cost of \$2,650,450.00. This project is essentially a storm water management project. It will pull land out of the flood plain to be developed. It will create energy and life between the University and Downtown, create 20 3- story mixed use units and 4 townhome units. The economic impact is estimated at \$80,000,000 fully built out with the creation of 650 jobs during its construction. Over the next 30 years the project could create \$13,895,740 in property taxes with \$3,601,106 of those taxes new to the City in addition it would create an additional \$12,928,996 in sales tax revenue over the same amount of time. The cost of the design proposal will be funded from the original grant of \$5.5 million received from the Governor's office.

Councilmember Phil Boyum inquired about a statement in the cost benefit analysis which says "Although Statesboro does have many transitory individuals that are coming to town to work, play or shop it is unclear from the available information if adding new business to the area would increase the current level of spending or encourage additional visitors to come to this community." So instead of new businesses and restaurants coming in we may just see movement around the city?

Dominique Halaby, Director of BIG stated that is a great point you bring up and actually that is true from our perspective. What we are hoping for is that new businesses would have a much broader draw than the businesses that are in place.

Councilmember Boyum inquired about the property taxes and revenue collection in the report are reliant on the build out happening with in the first two years, correct?

That is correct.

Councilmember Paulette Chavers asked is it possible for the project to be built out in two years?

Keely Fennel with the Creek on the Blue Mile Foundation stated it is possible and very probable due to the amount of interest in the project. Andy Burns with the Creek on the Blue Mile Foundation stated when you start a project like this there is no guarantee however there is no chance of success if you don't take some risk. This particular project is about addressing a storm water issue and the design is being funded from funds allotted to the project. If the project is not done those funds will need to be returned.

There was discussion regarding the flood plain map

This proposal includes the study of the entire basin from veteran's memorial parkway all the way up. Then we go back to FEMA and have this map redone to match what it should be. The way that map is everything upstream of the railroad

would be just as it is today the only change will be downstream of the railroad. Right now we are recommending improvements all the way down to Gentilly and do not expect any impacts below there.

City Manager Charles Penny stated the original plan was to bring this design proposal to Council in January however we waited until we had the economic impact analysis done and presented before we asked for approval of the design plan. Today we are involved in a call with Senator Ossoff's office regarding an EDA grant we will be preparing and the Senator has asked that we use direct funding process through congress for the project. We would like to be able to tell them we are moving forward with the design work however if we are not going to move forward with the design work then that would pretty much end the project.

Councilmember Phil Boyum stated he is in support of this project but we need to look at the numbers realistically, a 100% buildout is not feasible. The Market District isn't fully built out and Statesboro Crossing still has spots available over there. It is much more likely that this is going to be 50% or 60% percent built out in the first five years and then it will slowly trickle in. We can't make decisions based on the maximum possible return because that most likely is not going to happen.

City Manager Charles Penny stated this is a storm water project with the addition issue.

Mayor Jonathan McCollar stated that Senator Ossoff's office is very excited about this project they were able to understand the vision. This is a project that is supported at a local, state, and federal level. This project not only addresses a need as it relates to storm water, the economic opportunity is a plus for the city of Statesboro. This is a good opportunity for the City to position itself and take advantage of some funding opportunities. When we come out of the work session we will ask that we remove the creek design proposal from the table and make a motion to pass it so we do not miss out on funding opportunities that will save us money.

Councilmember Boyum stated he has concerns about the impact this will have on our storm water fund. There are other storm water issues throughout the city that need to be addressed as well and we need to make sure the funds are going to those areas and not being funneled into one project. I am prepared to move forward and see the design but there are some serious financing concerns we still have to consider.

Mayor McCollar stated that he is not alone with his concerns and I don't think this council is going to position the city where we are in financial jeopardy.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:46 am.

Jonathan McCollar, Mayor

Leah Harden, City Clerk