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CITY OF STATESBORO  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
MAY 16, 2023

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Mayor & Council Work Session

50 East Main Street

3:00 PM

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A Work Session of the Statesboro City Council was held on May 16, 2023 at 3:00 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.

### **1. Unified Development Code**

Caleb Racicot with TSW presented a summary of updates to the City of Statesboro Unified Development Code since the last conversation in April. Beginning with sustainability, the UDC diagnostic objective is to promote environmental sustainability. The ways to achieve that is through zoning and town planning standards, landscaping standards, tree protection, and parking standards. A voluntary way to protect local character would be through preservation incentives. Four key incentives include parking relief, relaxed zoning standards, and residential in historic homes in the Office and Business (O) district. Proposed parking standards include lowering the threshold for landscaping, perimeter landscape buffers, and tree islands. In addition required 20% pervious paving, medium or large canopy trees and full cutoff light fixtures. The Urban Forest builds on the 35% tree canopy requirement by creating an incentive for preserving large canopy trees and by requiring larger replacement trees. It also includes removing the irrigation requirement, updated tree maintenance standards and a lower threshold for under brushing approval from 20 acres down to 4 acres. Other potential policies include requirements for bio-swales/rain gardens in parking areas, elimination of small canopy trees from calculations, and placing a cap on genus of trees used on a site. Tree diversity will better protect the city's canopy from disease. The recommendation is to place a 33% maximum on one genus tree on a site.

There was Council discussion regarding residential neighborhoods and the lack of tree requirements in them.

Mr. Racicot stated he could include wording that requires trees to be planted back if some are removed.

The next topic for discussion was shareable mobility devices. Mr. Racicot presented four options the city could choose to implement. The city could allow everywhere without standards, allow everywhere without standards, prohibit everywhere, or allow in some places with standards. Typical standards are to require a permit or license, insurance, annual fee, numeric limit, operation standards, storage/parking standards, reporting standards, and termination standards. Council had decision about the different options and which would be the best for the City of Statesboro.

The next steps for the Unified Development Code are to finalize the draft and present it to the Statesboro Planning Commission on June 6, 2023. A public hearing would be held on June 13, 2023 and July 10, 2023. It would then be brought back to Mayor and Council for first reading on July 18, 2023 with a second reading on August 1, 2023.

### **2. Housing Rehabilitation Program Update**

City Manager Charles Penny gave some background on the Housing Rehabilitation Program. In total the city received 83 applications. The housing assistant policy allows for a rehab cost of \$50,000 per home. Homes above that limit must be considered for reconstruction. There are some program constraints due to supply shortages and elevated cost for materials. A large number of the homes are slated to exceed the \$50,000 cost for repair. In addition it is hard getting contractor response as this program is competing with new housing construction. So far title searches have begun on the first 10 homes slated for bid. Contracts have been awarded for three homes and work should begin in about three weeks. Insight Planning & Development is writing the scopes of work for bid packets and are preparing them for distribution

on 20 homes. Lastly, 11 homes in the Johnson Street area have been recommended for demolition. Mr. Penny recommend using ARPA interest funds in the amount of \$300,000 for the replacement of two homes.

A motion was made use \$300,000 in ARPA interest funds for two replacement homes.

<b>RESULT:</b>	Approved (Unanimous)
<b>MOVER:</b>	Councilmember Venus Mack
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Councilmember Paulette Chavers
<b>AYES:</b>	Chavers, Mack, Riggs, Barr
<b>ABSENT</b>	Councilmember Phil Boyum

### 3. Apartment Security Issues

City Manager Charles Penny state that security is important and technology is a good resource and recommends using \$80,000 of ARPA interest funds for security technology improvements in targeted areas. We would have to develop a program to provide safety through technology in some of the high crime areas so we can ensure video cameras are placed in the right location and whether they would want gates to control access.

City Attorney Cain Smith stated that cities can require apartment complexes to have cameras. For each one of these requirements it would be problematic to retroactively require them in existing complexes. However, there is no issue with requiring them for new construction or if construction is enough to require a building permit. Many cities do require them as a way to deter crime and improve public safety. The city of San Francisco requires apartment complexes with 50 or more units to install security cameras in common area whereas New York requires the same with the addition of the lobby and hallways. Studies have shown that the presence of security cameras can reduce crime rates by up to fifty percent. In addition cameras can help solve crimes and can provide a peace of mind for residents. Some of the potential drawbacks to requiring cameras on apartment complexes is the concern that it may invade the privacy of residents. Regulations can be put in place to protect residents' privacy. Overall the benefits of requiring apartment complexes to have cameras outweigh the drawbacks.

Mr. Smith continued with another option cities have to improve public safety and deter crime is complex security which is the requirement of security gates. The city of Los Angeles and Chicago require apartment complexes with 50 or more units to install security gates at all entrances and exits. As with the cameras security gates can deter and solve crimes it also provides a peace of mind for residents. One concern is that security gates can be a fire hazard however security gates can be equipped with fire alarms and they can be unlocked from the inside in case of an emergency. The benefits of security gate requirements outweigh the drawbacks.

Lastly there is landlord criminal liability. Landlords in Georgia can face criminal liability for crimes that occur by knowingly allowing criminal activity on their property and does nothing to stop it. An example would be if a landlord knows a tenant is selling drugs out of their unit and does nothing to evict them the landlord may be charged with drug trafficking. Also if a landlord fails to take reasonable measures to protect tenants from crime they may be held criminally liable for any injuries that result. In addition if a landlord fails to maintain the property in a safe condition they may be held criminally liable for any injuries that result. These are just a few examples of the types of crimes for which landlords in Georgia can be held criminally liable.

Councilmember Phil Boyum joined the meeting.

Councilmember Paulette Chavers stated she has concerns about a place in her district, Morris Heights, stating they need cameras now and that she is for requiring cameras as soon as possible.

Councilmember Venus Mack agrees it is the owners' responsibility to keep tenants safe.

Mr. Penny stated that is why he led with the opportunity to use the interest from the ARPA funds. We have to deal with the property owner but we can use those funds to make sure the cameras are where we need them to be. Guidelines need to be developed to make these funds available for properties that we deem need to have the cameras installed.

A motion was made to direct City Attorney Cain Smith to draft an ordinance in regards to camera systems, security gates, and security personnel for apartment complexes.

<b>RESULT:</b>	Approved (Unanimous)
<b>MOVER:</b>	Councilmember John Riggs
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Councilmember Venus Mack
<b>AYES:</b>	Boyum, Chavers, Mack, Riggs, Barr
<b>ABSENT</b>	

#### 4. Event Venues in Statesboro

City Attorney Cain Smith presented to Mayor and Council for their consideration on an ordinance regulating event venues in Statesboro. The presented ordinance would require event centers who do not have a valid alcohol license to obtain a permit from the city. The permit would allow access to police and fire at any event for inspection of life/safety hazards. It would require a responsible person on behalf of the ownership/management of the facility to be present for every event for which they would be responsible for the safety/welfare of the people at the event. Any private party must have a written contract and submitted to the Police Department seven days prior to the event. No alcohol may be present unless there is a valid catered or special event permit. The facility must follow Fire department occupancy requirements and the entire inside and outside perimeter must be covered by cameras. The ordinance would also allow for a permit to be pulled temporarily by the Chief of Police or designee to correct any life/safety issues.

A motion was made to direct City Attorney Cain Smith to draft an ordinance for event venues.

<b>RESULT:</b>	Approved (Unanimous)
<b>MOVER:</b>	Councilmember Venus Mack
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Councilmember Paulette Chavers
<b>AYES:</b>	Boyum, Chavers, Mack, Riggs, Barr
<b>ABSENT</b>	

#### 5. Mission, Vision, and Values

Human Resources Director Demetrius Bynes began his presentation with the definitions of mission, vision, and values. A mission is a concise explanation of the organization’s reason for existence. Vision is a forward-looking statement which creates a mental image of the ideal state the organization wishes to achieve, and values are a list of core principals guiding and direction the organization and its culture. The current mission statement of the city is “to provide the most responsive and progressive public services so that our residents, businesses, and visitors can enjoy the highest quality of life Statesboro has to offer.” The proposed mission for the City of Statesboro is “to provide the most efficient and effective public services” and the proposed vision is “we strive to be a vibrant and inclusive community for all people.” During the department head retreat we worked with a facilitator to come up with a mission as well as vision for the City of Statesboro. A subcommittee was created to continue to fine tune the information talked about at the retreat.

After some discussion a decision was made to keep the current mission statement for the City of Statesboro and to add the word “safe” to the vision statement to read “we strive to be a vibrant, safe, and inclusive community for all people”. Mr. Bynes continued stating that currently we do not have values organizational wide. The proposed values are integrity, innovation, stewardship, inclusivity, and mission-focused. The statement behind each word is integrity – we operate in

an honest transparent manner, innovation – we encourage employees to identify creative solutions, stewardship – we value the resources provided by citizens, businesses, and visitors, inclusivity – we respect each other’s differences; diversity of thought, diversity of experiences, and diversity of cultures, and mission – focused – we understand our responsibilities and work to get the job done.

Councilmember Phil Boyum suggested adding the word “protect” to the statement for stewardship to read “we value and protect the resources provided by citizens, businesses, and visitors”.

Mayor Pro Tem Shari Barr asked about reducing some of the wording of the mission statement. After some discussion it was agreed for the mission to read “The City of Statesboro’s mission is to provide responsive, progressive public services, so that our residents, businesses, and visitors enjoy a high quality of life Statesboro has to offer”.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 pm.

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Jonathan McCollar, Mayor

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Leah Harden, City Clerk