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CITY OF STATESBORO  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

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Mayor & Council Work Session

50 East Main Street

4:00 PM

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A Work Session of the Statesboro City Council was held on September 19, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 50 East Main Street. Present was Mayor Jonathan McCollar; Council Members: Phil Boyum, Paulette Chavers, 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 and Public Information Officer Layne Phillips. Absent was Councilmember Venus Mack.

**1. Special Event Permit**

City Attorney Cain Smith presented the requirements for Temporary Special Event permits as written in the Statesboro Code of Ordinances Chapter 6, Alcohol. At the time the ordinance was written the Georgia Department of Revenue did not allow alcohol sales at a catered event, however current guidance from the Department of Revenue allows alcohol sales at a catered event. In Sect. 321(d) of the proposed event center ordinance has a requirement for temporary special event or catered event permit for any type of alcohol being served at an event. Options we can do are 1) no alcohol at all at event centers or we can say only catered event permits for alcohol, or keep it the way it is with the suggestion of changing with everyone there having to have valid certification at the time of application. Council gave direction to remove special event permits from the proposed event center ordinance.

**2. Alcohol License for Convenience Stores**

Assistant to the City Manager Olympia Gaines began the presentation with the approval processes of several other communities including Milledgeville, Kennesaw, Tybee Island, Macon-Bibb, Valdosta, and Athens. Olympia went over the approval process. They require the fingerprints to be submitted for the initial application and if there was a change in the registered agent or change in ownership. In some cases if there were multiple locations the jurisdiction would use the same fingerprints and criminal background if the agents were the same, they would also do criminal background checks initially and on the annual basis. In the event that the building had a rebuild or renovation, if the rebuild had the same address they would not be required to submit a new application. In the event that the rebuild or renovation took place outside the licensing year that business would have to submit a new application. City Attorney Cain Smith went over the current ordinance. Recommended ordinance changes to 6-5(f) stating application may be brought before Mayor and Council for consideration prior to acquiring a certificate of occupancy, but no license allowing sales shall be granted until such times as the certificate of occupancy is granted for location. In addition to the amendment adding 6-5(r) stating licensees currently holding package-beer and wine licenses for two or more locations in the City of Statesboro shall be exempted from fingerprinting and background check requirements contained in section 6-5 (b). Council gave direction to find out what the cost would be to have annual background checks done on alcohol licensees. This information will be presented at the next work session in October.

**3. Blight Tax**

City Attorney Cain Smith stated that blight tax is allowed under Georgia Code and is effectively a multiplier of real property tax designed to discourage the maintenance of an incentivize the remediation of blighted properties. The multiplier used is at the discretion of the local jurisdiction. The GMA model ordinance has a multiplier of 7.0. The standard for the blight tax to be imposed would be for reasons such as, uninhabited property, inadequate provisions for ventilation light or air sanitation have imminent harm to life, illegal activity on the property and/or maintained below City standard for a year. After council discussion direction was given to increase the multiplier to 7 and remove single – family residential and bring forward for first reading at the next meeting.

#### 4. Scooters Discussion

Caleb Racicot with TSW stated that Georgia has a Personal Device Law that applies to devices with engines greater than 50 cc. They are legal to own and drive without a license, without insurance, and registration is not required. A person must be at least 15 years old and wear a helmet. These devices are allowed on streets with a max speed limit of 35 mph, bike paths and lanes, and they must follow all traffic rules. Shareable mobility devices were covered with the Option allow everywhere with standards, standards including permit and license requirements, insurance, annual fee, Numeric Limit, Operation standards, Storage/parking standards, reporting standards and termination standards, and potential code based on Brookhaven Ga. Direction was given for staff to continue working with Caleb to draft an ordinance regulating “scooters” in Statesboro.

#### 5. Elks Lodge Discussion

City Attorney Cain Smith presented the alcohol licensing history of the Elks Lodge located on James Street and that the grandfathering for non-conforming use has expired. Currently the issuance of a license would require resolutions as to zoning and proximity for both the initial application as well as for the issuance of a license would be in contradictory of our own ordinance. After some discussion council requested to hear from the neighbors and nearby church with their thoughts of the Elks Lodge having an alcohol license. City Manager Charles Penny stated staff will reach out to Mr. Taylor asking him to reach out to his neighbors and the church for their input and staff will report back before moving forward any further.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 pm.

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Jonathan McCollar, Mayor

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Leah Harden, City Clerk