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CITY OF STATESBORO  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 20, 2022

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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 21, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers, 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 and Public Information Officer Layne Phillips.

### **1. Quarterly Financial Report**

Director of Finance Cindy West presented the fourth quarter financial report of Fiscal Year 2022, reviewing the revenues and expenditures in the General Fund, Fire Service Fund, Water/Sewer Fund, Stormwater Fund, Natural Gas Fund, Solid Waste Collection Fund and the Solid Waste Disposal Fund. Ms. West also reviewed the SPLOST and TSPLOST collections for Fiscal Year 2021 and 2022 stating there was an uptick in these collections. Additionally Hotel/Motel revenues have increased in FY 2022 compared to the previous FY 2021.

### **2. Police Department Training Video and Powerpoint**

Statesboro Police Chief Mike Broadhead gave a presentation on the improvements to the Statesboro-Bulloch County Law Enforcement Training Center. Originally it was just a gun range. Then in 2019 the Statesboro Police Officers Foundation and the Bulloch County Sheriff's Office Foundation funded the construction of a new classroom with bathrooms and a kitchen facility. Since then the classroom has expanded to include a Judgmental Use of Force Training Simulator, a Defensive Tactics Room, and Force to Force Shoot House. The goal in all this is to make sure we are putting officers on the street who are well prepared for any circumstance. Three of the grants awarded to fund these improvements include the 2021 CJCC Grant for \$160,000.00, 2021 BJA Grant for \$10,014.00, and 2022 CJCC Grant for \$116,640.00. Chief Broadhead showed a short video of the training facility in action.

### **3. Housing Rehabilitation Program Updates and Processing**

Planning and Housing Administrator, Justin Williams presented to Mayor and City Council the Housing Rehabilitation Program updates and processing. Last April the city began accepting applications for housing rehabilitation. The deadline for submission was June 23, 2022. We had a positive response and received 83 applications. Since that time Insight Planning & Development began conducting housing assessments for the houses that met initial income qualifications. Mr. Williams reviewed the Housing Assistance Policy stating that in Section V, the policy has set the rehab cost at \$50,000. However, we are finding the rehab cost are beyond that amount for a lot of these homes and they would be slated for reconstruction rather than rehab. The policy does have provisions within it to allow the city to do that, as well, as to provide relocation assistance for residents who may need it while their home is being built. There are program constraints as well, supply shortages and logistical issues. The cost for material is higher and there are roughly 28 homes slated for demolition and reconstruction which exceeds the estimated amount of \$50,000. Another program constraint is the shortage of contractors as this project is competing with other housing development projects within the

city. Mr. Williams presented a map of the Johnson Street neighborhood showing the homes that meet the criteria for rehabilitation as well as the ones recommended for reconstruction.

Currently the city's consultant for this project, Insight, is writing scopes of work for our bid packets and title searches have begun on 10 homes selected for rehabilitation. There are 11 homes in the Johnson Street area with a recommendation for demolition. In response to demolition needs staff is proposing an amendment to the Housing Assistance Policy by increasing the payback period for new construction.

City Manager Charles Penny stated because the houses are going to cost more instead of being able to repair those houses we are talking about replacement housing. So instead of \$50,000 we would have to invest \$120,000. The initial affordability period for rehabilitation is 5 years, reducing the amount by 20% each year. But for replacement housing the period of affordability could be stretched out at least 15 years. These are owner occupied properties we are talking about not investment properties.

Justin Williams presented two options we have for replacement housing. Stick built housing is one option with an estimated cost of \$145 to \$152 per square foot. We could use local contractors for construction and Insite has available plan sets to choose from. However contractor availability may be limited and residents will require relocation while their house is being built.

Councilmember Phil Boyum commented that with \$5 million would build about 25 houses which includes the cost for relocation while the house is being built.

Mayor Jonathan McCollar stated we aren't going to be able to fix places that have been neglected for generations in one swoop. We are just getting started with neighborhood revitalization. We have to start somewhere and it is a long term commitment.

Councilmember Paulette Chavers stated her thoughts are to take the funding to fix as many homes as we possibly can. With that we may have to cut down on the homes we do from the ground up and start with the low hanging fruit by fixing the \$50,000 homes to get them up and running and then look at the ones in need of replacement at a later date.

City Manager Charles Penny stated we could do just rehab and look at the CDBG money, CHIP funds for the replacement housing. The thing we are doing right now is establishing a track record because at this point we don't have one. Building a track record by either rehabbing homes or replacing homes gives us a better opportunity to receive funds when we apply for them.

Councilmember Venus Mack asked if a person's home needed to be replaced could they have an option to get the \$50,000 and put funds with it for the rest of the cost of reconstruction.

City Manager Charles Penny stated that in order for individuals to qualify for the program they had to income qualify. We are not talking about middle income families, they are low income with homes in these conditions. It is going to be a challenge, because if we can't do their replacement home they are still in a bad place. So the possibility of them being able to put up half is pretty slim.

There was continued discussion regarding this type of funding option. Staff will research further come back to update council about this funding option.

Direction was given to proceed with a focus on the \$50,000 rehabs in the current target area of the Johnson street neighborhood and to report to Council next March with the progress being made.

#### **4. PUD & R-2 Presentation**

Director of Planning and Development Kathy Field stated that last month staff was asked to present to the Statesboro Planning Commission two proposed zoning amendments. Amendments to the R-2 zoning district deals with changing the percentage of amenities space from 5% to 10% and adding additional amenity attributes, such as observation decks over storm water facilities, splash pads, walking trails, dog parks, and pervious surface encouragement. These amendments were brought to the Planning Commission for review and their recommendations are that staff check with other developments for samples of open space percentages. They are not sure if 10% is feasible as an overall percentage especially as it relates to the size of the development. They also do not recommend observation decks over storm water facilities as they could end up being poorly maintained or dry for part of the year. Staff took their comments and ran them by the City's

zoning consultant TSW. They proposed that lots under five acres in size, use a 5% requirement and lots of five acres or more in size, use the 10% requirement. In addition these areas should be treated as “high quality” open spaces.

Mayor Pro Tem Shari Barr stated she has no objection to removing the observation deck as that was an adjustment made to grant approval of the last two R-2 rezoning applications. And I understand it’s not really feasible as retention ponds may be dry sometimes. In addition after some research amenities space includes the items listed like the dog park and play area which are important and I would like us to require 10% there. However the greenspace is totally different that I don’t tend to worry as much about because the City’s tree ordinance requires new developments maintain a 35% tree canopy as well as requirement for 15% of green space.

Director of Planning and Development stated the green space requirement could be wetlands, ponds, and buffers anything not a building, sidewalk and parking areas. As part of the development review process all the different departments are invited to come forward to make sure their respective regulations are being enforced as part of the proposed development.

After further discussion direction was given to rename Sec. 2506-A to Amenity Space and to strike out “observation decks over storm water facilities” and “pervious service encouragement.”

Mrs. Field stated in past discussion council decided that the Planned Unit Development (PUD) should be reviewed by the Statesboro Planning Commission for their input. So after review the Planning Commission feels strongly that PUD’s should not be used to increase residential density rather they should only be used for mixed-uses, such as residential, commercial, and office. They also do not feel that mixed housing types such as townhomes, single family homes, or multifamily homes should qualify as a PUD. Lastly there was not support to institute a moratorium on PUD’s. The Planning Commission voted to recommend that City Council consider an amendment to the PUD ordinance to state the following: “a mixed-use requirement, encompassing the following uses must be included to apply under the PUD zoning district: commercial, residential and/or office.”

Mayor Pro Tem Shari Barr stated areas like Statesboro Pointe is a PUD because they are small habitat houses all close together and we don’t want to prohibit that if the opportunity presents itself. If it is changed to state it has to be mixed use it would prohibit that.

Councilmember Phil Boyum stated those are different types of neighborhoods depending on where they are placed. We do not want to discourage those pocket neighborhoods of ten or twelve homes. The problem is the development of neighborhoods with three hundred homes.

City Manager Charles Penny stated the Planning Commission recommends council to adopt this change now instead of waiting for the zoning ordinance amendments which will be sometime next year. That way it would clearly give developers direction for a PUD. If it is not adopted a moratorium would be needed we want a PUD to be used in the correct manner. Now there is a recommendation on the regular council agenda for approval of a PUD development under the current ordinance.

After further discussion direction was given to move forward with the amendment after going back through the Statesboro Planning Commission.

## **5. GDOT Road Safety Audit**

Director of Public Works and Engineering John Washington presented the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) road safety audit they performed on State Route 67/Fair Road and on State Route 26/Northside Drive. In the case of Fair Road the city sent a request to GDOT to perform a road safety audit that involves traffic operations, flow of traffic and any other concerns that presents a safety issue. In the case of Northside Drive audit, GDOT requested that we allow them to perform an audit. A road safety audit results makes recommendations. It is not a design of roadway measures but it identifies measures that can be done to help improve safety. Some of the safety concerns on Fair Road from Tillman Road to Pitt Moore Road are limited site provision for vehicle storage and/or occupancy to access drive-through, high volume for service

demand resulting in vehicle line up of up to 10 vehicles, left turns into oncoming traffic, rollovers and crash events. GDOT has proposed to put in a seven inch raised median along this stretch to prevent any left turns out and there would be U-turns at Tillman Road and Pitt Moore Road. Staff also proposes adding a dedicated right turn lane entering into all the businesses along the route starting at Arby's and ending at Zaxby's, this would allow for two through lanes. GDOT by policy cannot put in a dedicated right turn lane for commercial businesses but we can as a city. There was discussion about constructing the right turn lane at the same time the median is constructed.

The next audit area is on Northside Drive from East Main Street to Belair Drive. The improvements needed include eliminating multiple conflict points at commercial drives, the addition of a right turn lane from Jet Drive to Lovett Road, realign intersections with Northside Drive to improve viewing, and convert minor intersections to right in/right out. Mr. Washington showed a map of each section of Northside Drive depicting proposed improvements. GDOT proposes a raised median starting at Lee Street and ending at Belair Drive. Savannah Avenue would be reconstructed to include two turn lanes going south. The intersection at Northside Drive and the by-pass would be improved to have two through lanes going east and two turn lanes onto Northside Drive. GDOT needs the city's acceptance of these two projects in order to move forward if their proposals are not accepted they will not move forward with them.

City Manager Charles Penny asked what the timeframe is for the city to accept these proposals.

Mr. Washington stated sometime in the next month.

City Manager Charles Penny stated that concludes presentation by staff. Although we have to items remaining we can talk about them afterwards, so we can start the regular meeting.

## **6. Health Commission Discussion**

## **7. Discussion of Limitations on Number of Permits to Exceed City Noise Ordinance**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:28 pm.

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Jonathan McCollar, Mayor

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Leah Harden, City Clerk