

COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Council Chambers
C. E. "Red" McDaniel City Services Center- Second Floor
3111 Citizens Way, Columbus, GA 31906

January 30, 2024
9:00 AM
Consent Agenda / Work Session

C O N S E N T A G E N D A / W O R K S E S S I O N

PRESENT: Mayor B. H. "Skip" Henderson, III and Mayor Pro Tem R. Gary Allen (arrived at 9:41 a.m.) and Councilors Tyson Begly, Joanne Cogle, Charmaine Crabb (via Microsoft Teams), Glenn Davis and Toyia Tucker. City Manager Isaiah Hugley, City Attorney Clifton Fay, Clerk of Council Sandra T. Davis, and Deputy Clerk of Council Lindsey G. McLemore were present.

ABSENT: Councilors Jerry "Pops" Barnes, R. Walker Garrett, Bruce Huff and Judy W. Thomas were absent.

<p><u>The following documents have been included as a part of the electronic Agenda Packet:</u> (1) Chips4Chips: Empowering Our Region to Thrive and Grow Presentation; (2) Tax Allocation District Update; (3) Project Update: Judicial Center, Sheriff's Office, Muscogee County Jail, Fire Station #5; (4) Columbus Parks and Recreation Pool Update; (5) Golden Park / South Commons Redevelopment Presentation</p>
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CALL TO ORDER: Mayor B. H. "Skip" Henderson, III, Presiding

COMMUNITY MESSAGE:

Mayor B. H. "Skip" Henderson announced the passing of State Representative Richard Smith. He expressed his condolences to the family and friends of Representative Smith.

Mayor B. H. "Skip" Henderson also expressed condolences for the passing of the three servicemembers with ties to Fort Moore who were killed in the recent drone attack in the Middle East.

INVOCATION: Offered by Pastor Wayne Anthony, Saint Peter United Methodist Church of Columbus, Georgia

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Mayor Henderson

C O N S E N T A G E N D A

City Attorney Clifton Fay stated for the record, the items listed on the Consent Agenda will be delayed until the February 13, 2024 Council Meeting due to lack of physical quorum.

MINUTES

1. Approval of minutes for the January 23, 2024 Council Meeting and Executive Session. *Official Vote on minutes delayed until the February 13, 2024 Council Meeting due to lack of quorum present in the Council Chamber.*

ORDINANCES

2. **2nd Reading** - REZN-11-23-0218: An ordinance amending the text of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) for Columbus, Georgia to add a new Section 4.2.25 pertaining to key lockboxes and to add a new Article X to Chapter 4 pertaining to Electric Vehicle Infrastructure. (Planning Department and PAC recommend approval.) (as amended) (Mayor Pro-Tem) *Official Action on this ordinance delayed until the February 13, 2024 Council Meeting due to lack of quorum present in the Council Chamber.*
3. **2nd Reading** - An ordinance providing for the demolition of various structures located at: **2937 10th Street** (Robin Thompson & Robert J. Holston, Owner); **480 Timberlane Drive** (Estate of Kathryn/Jacquelyn Wiggins, Owner); **406 17th Avenue** (Lamroz LLC, Owner); **4131 2nd Avenue** (Jonnie L. General, Owner); **5210 Forrest Road** (Premium Oil Station No. 6, Owner); and **2904 9th Street** (Malissa Hall, Owner) and for demolition services for the Inspections and Code Department in accordance with the attached Tabulation of Bid sheet. (as amended) (Mayor Pro-Tem) *Official Action on this ordinance delayed until the February 13, 2024 Council Meeting due to lack of quorum present in the Council Chamber.*
4. **2nd Reading** - An ordinance amending Ordinance No. 23-038 which adopted the Fiscal Year 2024 Salary and Wages Pay Plan for the Consolidated Government to provide a \$5,000.00 pay increase to Sworn Officers and Emergency 911 Technicians effective February 3, 2024; to incorporate a new payscale for the Public Safety Personnel of the Columbus Police Department; and for other purposes. (Mayor Pro-Tem) *Official Action on this ordinance delayed until the February 13, 2024 Council Meeting due to lack of quorum present in the Council Chamber.*
5. **2nd Reading** - An ordinance amending the budgets for the Fiscal Year 2024 Beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024, for certain funds of the Consolidated Government of Columbus, Georgia, appropriating amounts shown in each fund for various activities; and for other purposes. (Budget Review Committee) *Official Action on this ordinance delayed until the February 13, 2024 Council Meeting due to lack of quorum present in the Council Chamber.*

RESOLUTIONS

6. RESOLUTION - A resolution excusing Councilor Jerry "Pops" Barnes from the January 30, 2024 Consent Agenda / Work Session. *Official Action on this resolution delayed until the February 13, 2024 Council Meeting due to lack of quorum present in the Council Chamber.*
7. RESOLUTION - A resolution excusing Councilor R. Walker Garrett from the January 30, 2024 Consent Agenda / Work Session. **(Add-On)** *Official Action on this resolution delayed until the February 13, 2024 Council Meeting due to lack of quorum present in the Council Chamber.*
8. RESOLUTION - A resolution excusing Councilor Judy W. Thomas from the January 30, 2024 Consent Agenda / Work Session. **(Add-On)** *Official Action on this resolution delayed until the February 13, 2024 Council Meeting due to lack of quorum present in the Council Chamber.*

Councilor Glenn Davis made comments regarding supporting documents and other information that are made available during meetings being included with the agenda packets for the public to access. He also made comments regarding the investigation called by Mayor Henderson for the Muscogee County Sheriff's Office to conduct on the audit for the Revenue Division and his opposition to the investigation request.

Mayor B. H. "Skip" Henderson responded to comments from Councilor Davis, stating he is surprised not to have the support of Council for an investigation on the incident of someone releasing personal financial information on an employee. He also stated the citizen that received the information had previously been denied by the City Attorney due to the information being confidential according to the Open Records law set by the State of Georgia.

City Manager Isaiah Hugley stated he, and his wife are extremely concerned that their personal and confidential financial information was leaked by an unknown individual.

WORK SESSION AGENDA

I. Chips 4 Chips - Ben Moser, President and CEO, United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley

President & CEO Ben Moser (United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley) approached the rostrum to introduce the presentation and speakers of the Chips4Chips Council.

U.S. Army Brigadier General (Ret) Andy Hilmes came forward to share information on the grant funding that has been applied for to aid in the investment necessary to attract semiconductor manufacturers to the area. During his portion of the presentation, General Helms provided information on workforce development and education collaboration opportunities.

Principal Owner and Consultant Jennifer Bickerstaff (Bickerstaff Law and Consulting) came forward to conclude the presentation by providing information on the part the City Council plays in attracting the semiconductor industry to the area.

II. Tax Allocation Districts / TADs - Pam Hodge, Deputy City Manager, Finance Planning & Development

Deputy City Manager Pam Hodge approached the rostrum to provide an update on Tax Allocation Districts (TADS) and where each one that has been established in Columbus currently stands. She explained out of the eight TADS established, Uptown, Midland Commons, and South Columbus River District currently have projects aligned.

Councilor Glenn Davis expressed his concerns regarding TADS and the property taxes generated in these designated areas going back exclusively for that TAD. He explained this being the best time to look into our operational revenue impact with all the projects currently moving forward.

Finance Director Angelica Alexander came forward to respond to questions from Councilor Davis on payments to developers involved with the Midland Commons TAD. She explained there are requirements based on the contract. She stated they have held meetings and are working through the additional information and documents required before disbursing the money.

City Manager Isaiah Hugley responded to the discussion by further explaining the TAD process and explaining how the City Council has full control over TADs to include approving the projects within those TADs.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE CITY MANAGER:

- Get with NeighborWorks to discuss the debt accumulating for the TAD in regards to Elliott's Walk.
(Request of Councilor Davis)

III. Judicial Center, Jail Assessment, Sheriff's Administration Building - Ryan Pruett, Director of the Building Inspections and Code Enforcement Department

Director Ryan Pruett approached the rostrum to provide an update on several of the Capital Improvement Projects that are currently in progress. During the presentation, he provided an update on the Judicial Center, the jail assessment, and the Muscogee County Sheriff's Administration Building.

IV. Sports Authority/State Recreational Authority - Pam Hodge, Deputy City Manager, Finance Planning & Development

City Manager Isaiah Hugley explained that he heard from four Councilors requesting a discussion on this topic. He stated that he approached many officials on a sports authority or state recreational authority, but none of those he spoke with knew anything on the topic.

Councilor Joanne Cogle explained this is something that she and several other councilors want to look into with the intention of opening a discussion to begin to work through the potential of creating a sports and entertainment authority. She explained with baseball coming to the community, this is a unique and good opportunity for growth with athletic endeavors in our community. She added that creating an authority would take some of the pressure off of Parks & Recreation and the Sports Council.

Mayor Pro Tem R. Gary Allen stated it is his desire for Columbus to begin to market for travel youth baseball. He explained travel youth baseball is going to communities all around Columbus, but never here due to there being no opportunity.

City Attorney Clifton Fay explained to the members of Council that if it is their desire to create a Sports or Entertainment Authority, it will need to be handled much like the Trade Center Authority and the Golf Authority. He added that the Council will have to figure out how the authority will be funded to support their operation.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE CITY ATTORNEY:

- Bring something back at the next meeting for Council to begin appointing individuals and either three or five councilors to a sports authority. (Request of Councilor Cogle)

FOR THE CITY MANAGER:

- Check into travel youth baseball for Columbus. (Request of Mayor Pro Tem Allen)

- Wants to see an analysis on the P&L (Profit & Loss) for the Civic Center. (Request of Councilor Begly)

V. Pool Update - Holli Browder, Director, Parks & Recreation

Inspections & Code Director Ryan Pruett approached the rostrum to provide information on the construction portion of the pool update. He addressed the delay in the original projected schedule for the new pools to open by explaining how it took some time for the design team to meet the requirements and comments from the Muscogee County Health Department.

Mr. David Hawkins came forward to also respond to questions and comments regarding delays in the construction of the new pools.

Deputy Director of Parks & Recreation Becky Summerlin approached the rostrum to provide an update on the public pools in the community. She shared their efforts to recruit lifeguards, managers and concessionaires by contacting the high schools, retired CCG employees, retired teachers, and current employees of the Muscogee County School District.

VI. Golden Park/South Commons Property Options and Financing Options - Pam Hodge, Deputy City Manager, Finance Planning & Development

Deputy City Manager Pam Hodge approached the rostrum to provide an update on the redevelopment of Golden Park and South Commons. She provided a timeline for the redevelopment of Golden Park with the authorization of a lease agreement with Diamond Baseball Holdings, LLC to lease the stadium to bring the Atlanta Braves' AA affiliate to Columbus.

During the discussion, **Councilor Glenn Davis** stated he is going to send the Mayor, City Manager and members of Council a comprehensive study that was conducted on public policy towards professional sports stadiums that was reviewed by the leading professionals. He stated he is also going to send it to the Clerk of Council so it can be posted.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE CITY MANAGER:

- Look at taking out a bond specifically for Parks and Recreation and putting it on the ballot for either the May or November election so the citizens can decide. (*Request of Councilor Cogle*)
- At the next Work Session, allow the Council the opportunity to go over the list of referrals and to address the ones they still have concerns about. (*Request of Councilor Tucker*)

With there being no further business to discuss and due to lack of a physical quorum, Mayor Henderson declared the January 30, 2024 Consent Agenda / Work Session adjourned with the time being 1:09 p.m.

Sandra T. Davis, CMC
Clerk of Council
Council of Columbus, Georgia