

Press Release



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Date: September 2, 2008

City Council Establishes Public Vending Management Program Aimed at Enhancing City's Image *Program to be Managed by Internationally Recognized Firm*

ATLANTA – The Atlanta City Council approved the establishment of a public vending management program designed to promote economic opportunities and increase the variety and quality of goods and services sold to pedestrians along public sidewalks.

The measure (*Legislative Reference No. 08-O-1220*) was adopted on substitute as amended by Full Council on Tuesday night by a vote of 13-1.

Councilmembers indicate the program will allow the City to have a financially self-sustaining vending program that promotes economic opportunities, increases the variety and quality of goods and services for sale and contributes to the vitality, safety and quality of public spaces.

"I would like to commend members of the Public Safety and Legal Administration Committee for their hard work in reviewing the design of a vendor management program that will be in the best interest of our City," said Council President Lisa M. Borders. "Atlanta is poised to see program in place that offers more opportunities for local vendors and one that enhances the City's sidewalk shopping experience for tourists that will be consistent with great cities across the country like San Francisco and Chicago."

The measure was approved after months of due diligence by members of the City Council's Public Safety Committee and the administration.

"We are pleased that we were able to gain the City Council's support on a vending program that will take our City to the next level in terms of the variety and quality of retail items sold on our streets," said City Councilmember Ceasar C. Mitchell, a sponsor of the legislation creating the new management program. Mitchell initiated the effort to revamp the city's vending program through a comprehensive vending plan five years ago with the assistance of the Vending Policy and Advisory Committee.

"We must offer the best experience, particularly for downtown shoppers and for the millions of tourists who visit our city each year," Mitchell said.

The City also developed a public vending program to enhance the overall appearance and environment along public streets, pedestrian ways and other properties in the manner that will enhance the city's international image.

An evaluation of the current vending program and associated laws was conducted by the City Council through the Vending Technical Advisory Group (VTAG) and that group recommended that the City secure a third party vending management company to manage public vending in the City. The Council also approved amended legislation by a vote of 9-5 authorizing the Mayor to hire General Growth Properties, Inc. to manage the program. (*Legislative Reference No. 08-R-1209*)

Chicago-based General Growth Properties has experience in the management of shopping malls and downtown urban marketplaces throughout the world including Brazil and Turkey.

"Other great cities, such as Atlanta, have proven that well-managed sidewalk vending programs, with attention to product mix and display for the customer, can actually enhance the sidewalk experience. We believe it is Atlanta's time to move forward and the vote Tuesday by City Council exhibited that leadership and vision," said A.J. Robinson, President of Central Atlanta Progress and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District. "General Growth Properties is a proven leader in the retail industry. We think everyone will benefit greatly from this new contract with the City and the look of the 'pedestrian experience' of our community will be enhanced."

The Atlanta Development Authority will assist with transition services for existing vendors under the new vending program. The legislation also allows for discounted rental rates for disabled veterans.

City Council Overrides Veto of Legislation 08-0-1540

By a vote of 11-3, the City Council overrode the Mayor's veto of legislation designed to re-open and maintain Atlanta Fire Station No. 7 by transferring \$1.12 million in appropriations from various consulting, supply, travel and other non-personnel accounts to the Department of Fire and Rescue Budget Fund.

At the City Council's regularly scheduled meeting held August 18, 2008, Councilmembers adopted substitute ordinance 08-O-1540 by a roll call vote of 13 yeas; 1 nay. However, Mayor Shirley Franklin returned the item with a veto on August 26, 2008.

The legislation now goes back to the Mayor's desk.

City Council Honors Commitment to Improve Green Space

With the scheduled ground breaking of Atlanta's newest intown park set for the fall, members of the City Council approved, by a vote of 14-0, naming the proposed site located along the southside of North Avenue near City Hall East, the "Historic Fourth Ward Park." (*Legislative Reference No. 08-0-1690*)

The city currently owns 9.2 acres of what will ultimately be a 35 acres park. The City intends to procure the additional land for the park in phases.

The first component of the park will be an innovative lake that will capture storm water runoff. The lake will include a pedestrian boardwalk and natural vegetation.

The storm water detention feature and the park have been designed over the past year through a unique community partnership between residents and business stakeholders, the City's Department of Watershed Management and Atlanta Beltline, Inc. The need to provide storm water runoff in an area slated for redevelopment has allowed several departments in the City to work together, creating a solution that addresses quality of life, environmental sustainability and economic efficiency. The east side of the property abuts the proposed BeltLine, a 22-mile transit loop under development.

Also on Tuesday, the City Council approved by a vote of 14-0 the acceptance of the 2008 Woodruff Park Master Plan which was prepared by the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District, Inc. (*Legislative Reference No. 08-R-1578*)

Central Atlanta Progress, through a \$3.5 million fundraising effort, is seeking to make improvements at Woodruff Park by adding a fast-food stand, a playground, a dine-in restaurant and a coffee shop.

Atlanta City Councilmember Kwanza Hall, the representative for the area, said downtown residents, businesses and visitors welcome the new improvements.

"Peachtree meets Auburn at Woodruff Park. As we prepare to break ground on the new Center for Civil and Human Rights, these plans bring us one step closer to connecting Centennial Olympic Park with the rich civil rights heritage of Sweet Auburn and the King Historic District," Hall said.

"Robert Woodruff, that great Atlantan and philanthropist, envisioned this greenspace as a unique Downtown oasis. The master plan includes a mix of programs and amenities capable of attracting students, residents, businesses, office workers, and tourists to this unique place in our city where Peachtree meets Sweet Auburn."

Named after the late Coca-Cola executive and city philanthropist, Robert W. Woodruff, the park is one of downtown Atlanta's most significant green spaces and is located at the heart of the city's entertainment and academic districts.

Recent improvements include increasing electrical power in the park, repairing drainage systems and removing overgrown shrubbery.

The original acres between Peachtree, Edgewood, Pryor (now Park Place) and the Candler Building were purchased anonymously by Mr. Woodruff then donated to the city in 1971 and the first incarnation of the park opened in 1973.

In other news, the following pieces of legislation were adopted by a vote of 14-0 respectively:

- A resolution requesting and authorizing the City Auditor through the Audit Committee to conduct an independent audit of the Arborist Division of the Bureau of Buildings, Department of Planning and Community Development. (*Legislative Reference No. 08-R-1695*)

- An ordinance requiring notification of the affected Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU's) and the City Council when any police zone facility, precinct or mini-precinct, or fire station is to be decommissioned or closed. (*Legislative Reference No. 08-0-1687*)
- A resolution expressing the intent of the Atlanta City Council to continue to provide financial incentives in order to achieve the objectives of the Westside Tax Allocation District (TAD) Redevelopment Plan; to issue an additional series of Westside Tax Allocation District Bonds in 2009; to confer with the Fulton County Commission regarding the extension of the County's increment pledge to the Westside TAD. (*Legislative Reference No. 08-R-1691*)
- A resolution expressing the intent of the Atlanta City Council to continue to provide financial incentives in order to achieve the objectives of the Eastside Tax Allocation District Redevelopment Plan; to use Tax Allocation Bonds and Tax Allocation Increment as needed and appropriate to accomplish these goals. (*Legislative Reference No. 08-R-1692*)
- A resolution authorizing the Mayor or her designee to enter into a Intergovernmental Agreement with the Atlanta Development Authority in an amount not to exceed \$300,000 under the 2007 Budget of the Westside Tax Allocation District Fund for an In Rem Condemnation/Demolition for the purpose of funding the demolition of structures within the English Avenue Neighborhood identified as abandoned and dilapidated by the Bureau of Housing Code Compliance. (*Legislative Reference No. 08-R-1694*)

The above legislation and a complete list of other items on the council's agenda can be viewed in their entirety on the Web at: <http://apps.atlantaga.gov/citycouncil/2008/fca0902.htm>

All adopted legislative items and any amendments to those items or substitute papers can be viewed at: <http://apps.atlantaga.gov/citycouncil/captions/>

City council minutes can be viewed at: <http://apps.atlantaga.gov/citycouncil/minutes2.htm>

Video of the Atlanta City Council meetings can be viewed at: <http://apps.atlantaga.gov/citycouncil/video.htm>

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