

Atlanta Documenters

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Instructions

Your notes should be between 2 and 6 single-spaced pages (not including this one) using 12-point font, including 8-10 hyperlinks. You'll do most of your writing during the meeting, but we recommend you spend a total of 30-60 minutes on the “before” and “after” sections described below:

Before

- **Pre-research:** Understand the agency and agenda before you arrive ([Get tips](#))

During

- **Notetaking:** Focus on direct quotes, debate, decisions and details like ordinance numbers, names, and titles. Collect all available handouts for reference. Remember: You can't get everything, so prioritize the most important bits. ([Get tips](#))

After

- **Revision:** Organize and fact-check your raw notes ([Get tips](#))
- **Summary:** Briefly distill meeting highlights in 1-3 sentences per bullet point ([Get tips](#))
- **Follow-up:** Briefly distill your remaining questions about this meeting in 1-3 sentences per bullet point. What questions weren't answered? What processes or next steps weren't clear? What additional data or information is needed? ([Get tips](#))

Submit

- Submit your assignment using your assignment page on Documenters.org. (It's also in the “Your Next Assignment” email you received—the link next to your name.)

Assignment Resources

- **Find meeting-specific resources** on the [meeting page at Documenters.org](#).
- **Have a problem or question about this assignment?** Reach out to the Atlanta Documenters team at documenters@canopyatlanta.org. Or call or text us at (404) 487-8195.

Atlanta City Council - Regular Meeting

Documenter name: Sophia Toussaint-Scott

Agency: Atlanta City Council

Date: Feb. 20, 2023

[See more about this meeting at Documenters.org](#)

Write all notes below

Notes

Write and revise your “before” and “during” notes here. Try to keep them between 1-6 pages. [Get tips here](#). Make sure to attribute who said a particular statement, using the relevant speakers’ names, titles, and/or affiliations, as well as links to or images of legislation. If using a recording, please include timestamps for any direct quotes.

- List the board or committee members who **attended**.
 - Council representatives include: **Council President:** Doug Shipman; **District 1:** Jason Winston; **District 2:** Amir Farokhi; **District 3:** Byron Amos; **District 4:** Jason S. Dozier; **District 6:** Alex Wan; **District 7:** Howard Shook; **District 8:** Mary Norwood; **District 9:** Dustin Hillis; **District 10:** Andrea L. Boone; **District 11:** Marci Collier Overstreet; **District 12:** Antonio Lewis; **Post 1 At-Large:** Michael Julian Bond; **Post 2 At-Large:** Matt Westmoreland; and **Post 3 At-Large:** Keisha Sean Waites
- If there was an **agenda or meeting video**, please include the links here.
 - [Meeting Agenda](#)
- Was there any **public comment**? If so, summarize what was said.
 - Discussion about Grove Park community took place. Several community members take to the podium to voice many concerns of houseless and unknown neighbors. Most allegations and accusations were identified with Councilman Dustin Hillis. Current residents express feeling frustrated and betrayed by false promises from the councilman. Specifically the residents are concerned that what were advertised as nonprofits are in fact million dollar making rental companies.

Sentiments are shared about the legacy of the community and questions regarding the funding and renovating the homes were voiced. While frustrated members of the public speak out it is observed the members of council are not displaying any signs of listening. Councilmen are having side bar conversations, all looking down and/or on their phones or computers only looking up to reset the timer. One member of the public speaks out “You have to respect us when we talk to you. Your look at us has been disgusting.” Ignoring the remark it is at this moment it becomes evident the councilmen are antagonists and not advocates of the public. This particular legislation was contested during public remarks- [23-O-1096 : AN ORDINANCE BY COUNCILMEMBERS DUSTIN HILLIS, JASON WINSTON, AMIR FAROKHI, BYRON D. AMOS, JASON DOZIER, LILIANA BAKHTIARI, ALEX WAN, HOWARD SHOOK, MARY NORWOOD, ANDREA L. BOONE, MICHAEL JULIAN BOND, MARCI COLLIER OVERSTREET, ANTONIO LEWIS AND MATT WESTMORELAND AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BOARD FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING PUBLIC TRUST IN THE REUSE OF THE FORMER SITE OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE BRICK COMPANY AND ENGAGING IN A TRANSPARENT, THOUGHTFUL, INCLUSIVE, AND COLLABORATIVE PROCESS FOR THE VISIONING, PLANNING, AND DESIGNING OF THE SITE AS A MEMORIAL, GREENSPACE, AND PARK; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.](#) *Adopted By Consent Vote [Unanimous]*

The residents refuted that there was any transparency, thoughtfulness, inclusive, collaborative involvement in the process and say the project has become “green spaces to remove black faces”. There is evidence of distrust between the public and the councilmen when they bring to attention the fact their neighbors are unrecognizable because they are all investors and air bnb tenants. The public claims they were “bamboozled” with false promises or rebuilding communities only to be sold out to investors and driven from homes. Public remarks include “how many of the buyers look like us” “the majority of grove park doesn’t look like us” suggesting systemic racism subtly taking place allowing for a surge in homelessness for the black community.” In the crowd members shout out “shameless” in frustrated tones. Public remarks include mentions of feeling exploited for their vote and carelessness with the councilmen. Councilman Antonio Lewis asks for permission from his peers to address a public comment and says “I live in the community and I do not know my neighbors as well”. It appears as an attempt to acknowledge the validity of the accusations and he spoke of no solution, only confirmation. The public says that it was advertised “affordable housing” however they are breaking houses into units and compare the living spaces to slave quarters. There is mention of absentee landlords and the community being turned into a “short term rental district”

- *Add the result of any **important votes, decisions, or agenda items** that came out of this meeting. Did it pass or fail? How did each official vote?*

-Important votes were passed unanimously and they include donation of \$500,000 from City to Atlanta in American Rescue Plan Act to support the

Community Safety Housing Program, an ordinance to authorize \$12.1 million to acquire police fleet of various car make and models, a resolution to encourage a new state approved course “Atlanta History” in public schools to satisfy a unit of social science education.

- *If the agenda includes lots and lots of items, you don't have to include all of them. Focus on the most important ones (maybe 3 to 10) and explain what they are and what happened.*

Summary

After you've taken your notes, summarize the 3 most important outcomes or takeaways from your notes.

- The public remarks were a public display of desperation by community members who plead for the sustainability of true community in Grove Park. As members spoke and they noticed they were being ignored they grew frustrated and the whole scene was demoralizing and uninspiring.
- Members of the council were distracted, genuinely uninterested and bothered by some remarks. Dustin Hollis was targeted several times by various members of the public. The president of the council did not know his counterparts names and marked one member absent up until voting time when councilman Bond waves his hand in the air he is indeed present.
- These elected officials do not appear to have shared intentions with the constituents which is causing dissension, friction and it is evident a need for more leadership and less politics.

Follow-Up Questions

What are you left wondering? Ask up to 3 of your own follow-up questions.

- Is there a way to update the system for these meetings that involve the members of council to engage with the public, answer a question or confirm/refute their claims?
- Who advocates for the public if the councilmen are viewed as antagonists?
- Can there be a liaison, a professional to convey messages/unlawful accusations that are hidden in emotional rants and dismissed?

Conversation Highlight

Was there a quote said by a member or attendee during public comment that embodies the spirit of the meeting, a big idea, or adds color to the experience? Please ensure the quote and title (i.e., "Southwest Atlanta resident") is accurate by referring back to any recording, and please include the timestamp if using a video or recording.

- *"I do not have a PHD but I have G-O-D." — member of Grove Park Community
This shows the level of desperation in the helpless community members' tones. They have no faith or trust in the government so they exclaim and call on the help from religion for some sort of divine intervention. It is shared that the community do not feel knowledgeable enough yet they are deserving of being included in decisions that affect their quality of life.*

Unless quotation marks are used, all text is paraphrased. If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at documenters@canopyatlanta.org. If you use this work to power your own reporting, please credit Atlanta Documenters.