



MAYOR'S MONTHLY EDITORIAL

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Mayor's Monthly Minutes – May 2019

"This City is what it is because our citizens are what they are." – Plato

Greetings Citizens of Douglas! This month, I have another long editorial. So, please put the newspaper down and go refill your coffee or get another bottled water. Whomever is praying for the City of Douglas please DO NOT STOP! IT'S WORKING! God is truly blessing our City and County. Please keep the City of Douglas and Coffee County lifted up in prayer. Our citizens are forward thinking and progressive in the construction of new ideas and concepts. The present worth of Douglas and Coffee County is the direct by-product of this mindset. This is our moment.

Congratulations to all our graduates of the Class of 2019. Your parents, grandparents, and family members are super proud of you. As Mayor of the City of Douglas, I would like to encourage every senior to get involved in public service. In a few years, your generation will be the leaders of this community.

Congratulations to the Douglas Mayor's Youth Council and Douglas-Coffee County Teen Court for a successful and amazing first year. God has truly blessed our City with a youth movement. Mr. Michael Bazell is a dynamic young man. Mr. Bazell is the founder, instructor, janitor, instructor, counselor, mentor, and motivational speaker of Ambitious Young Men (AYM). Another passionate advocate for our youth is Ms. Jessica Williams. She is driven by her passion to teach young girls how to navigate through this journey called life. The FLY Girls (First Love Yourself) is on the move. If you are a youth pastor or advocate for the youth, you need to call Mrs. Wynetta Bolder at 389-3405 or 389-3401 for information on the Mayor's Youth Council, Teen Court, AYM, and FLY Girls. The aforementioned programs are positive environments that promote self-love, self-respect, leadership, and community involvement. My schedule on May 4, 2019, will be busy and full of great things for our community. I will be attending **Teen Court** at 9:00 am at the Sheriff's Office. Then I will be leaving at 11:00 am to attend the Community Foundation's **Open House** about park improvements at Wheeler Park.

As a member of the Touchdown Club, I would like to encourage all former Trojan football players to join the Touchdown Club. So, if you are a former Trojan football player, I would like to encourage you to become a member of the Touchdown Club, mentor for current players, and get involved in our football program. You could be the missing piece that propels our football program to a new level or you might be the mentor that keeps a young man in school.

The Touchdown Club is running a new fundraiser, so get ready! Earl Mayo will be smiling, dialing, and asking for donations to support our mighty Coffee High Trojans. I am an avid supporter and member of the Touchdown Club, so let me share the details of our current fundraiser. The Touchdown Club will be raffling off a 14 ft Alweld Steering Boat with a 20 hp Tohatsu Motor, Seats, Trolling Motor and Trailer for \$10 per ticket. The drawing will be held on June 14, 2019. Please purchase a bunch of tickets from the following locations: Johnny's Pizza, Ameris Bank, McRae Pharmacy, Hungry Howie's, Fireside Sub, Broxton Colony Bank, More Than Graphic, Elmo's Bait Shop, and Earl Mayo's Insurance. For those that fish – BUY some tickets, you know this is a steal! Just remember if you go to Earl Mayo Insurance to purchase a bunch of tickets, please take your checkbook because Earl is going to ask you for much more than just raffle tickets payment. By the way, my friends will not allow me to go fishing with them, under any circumstances, because I talk too much and I am too loud. BUT, I love to eat fish. So, if you just enjoy fishing, buy a raffle ticket from the Touchdown Club and bring me a mess of fish! Seriously, please support the Touchdown Club and if you are not into sports, support any youth group to show these kids we support you!

"Attention to health is life's greatest hindrance." - Plato

In 2017, I went to the emergency room in Waycross while experiencing a shortness of breath. I made the mistake of saying that I was experiencing chest pains. Immediately, the hospital staff went into an established protocol to properly evaluate the symptom of chest pains. A few years ago, Coffee Regional Medical Center was not equipped to handle certain types Cardiology events, but now, CRMC has made tremendous improvements to better serve our community. I am praying that our community will take a firm and determined devotion to establishing a protocol to address our citizens experiencing mental illness. What happens when a citizen experiences a psychotic crisis at 3:00 am? As the Mayor of the City of Douglas, I am determined to be at the table discussing this important issue. Unison, CRMC, the City of Douglas, coupled with numerous other agencies, are going establish a protocol to address our citizens living with mental illnesses. On May 18, 2019, a **Community Mental Health Fair** will be held at Central Square from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Please come and support this event. Your input is very important. Come and tell your story about caring for a family member with a mental illness and how providing care impacts your everyday living.

"The beginning is the most important part of the work." - Plato

I cannot even cover all the blessing that God is providing to our community in one article. Unemployment is at 3.8%, PCC is expanding, Optima Chemical is expanding, Elixir is expanding, 20 million dollars of City projects, another possible new industry, and over 60,000 people have viewed the article about the possibility of the Douglas Shopping Square. Chick-fil-A, Marshall's, Hobby Lobby, Starbucks, Rack Room Shoes, Jersey Mike's Subs, and Cookout locating in Douglas has truly been the talk of the city. "Operation Boom-Boom" is dominating the conversations in our community. I cannot go anywhere without citizens wanting to discuss operation Boom-Boom. Our community is truly excited about this future opportunity. On November 5, 2019, the citizens of Douglas will vote to determine if the area will be established as a Tax Allocation District (TAD) to assist in funding the infrastructure.

When these new businesses come to town, they will need quality workers in their establishments. Our unemployed-able-to-work citizens need to get ready to start job searching. Get your life in order and that resume' ready! When we ask industries, what is your number one concern when hiring? The response is very simple and the same, "We need a quality work force." The three main negative impacts on our work force are citizens smoking left handed cigarettes or using other drugs, no high school education/diploma, and

criminal records. It is very difficult to join the work force when you are smoking marijuana because you cannot pass a urinalysis test. Please stay in high school or further your education and cease from criminal activities. Also, don't forget future employers can see what you post on social media so be mindful if you are job searching.

"We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light." – Plato

Okay, let's discuss the Tax Allocation District (TAD). The TAD provides our community the opportunity to enjoy Hobby Lobby, Starbucks, Marshall's, Rack Room Shoes, Cook Out, Jersey Mike's Subs, and Chick-fil-a. Since the last article, I have talked to Georgia Municipal Association (GMA), emailed the University of Georgia, googled TAD a thousand times, and talked with classmates from my Economic Development training class. This is parallel to doing a research paper in college or finals week! On April 22, 2019, I met with the developers of the property for an extended period of time. Below are some of my take-aways from the meeting:

- (1) If passed, the TAD will finance the infrastructure with an estimated/projected cost of 2.7 million dollars (No Buildings)
- (2) Financing the 2.7 million dollars over a 25-year period translates to an estimated/projected final cost of \$9.9 million dollars.
- (3) A TAD board/commission will be established to oversee the TAD and ensure the bond is being repaid timely. However, can the bond be paid off early? Or, let's say the TAD is performing better than projected, does the extra revenue get applied to the bond? And if we pay the bond off early, will there be penalties? I am awaiting a response from the developers regarding these questions and as soon as I have the answers, I will share them with you.
- (4) Over the same 25-year period, Douglas and Coffee County will receive an estimated \$15 million dollars.
- (5) Developers have agreed to make a public presentation to our citizens on **June 5th at 7:00 pm at the Central Square Gymnasium in the Dogwood Room. Please add this event to your calendar.**

Regardless, the bottom line is we have 3 options for this re-development.

Option 1: Robert Preston, owner of Douglas Now, writes a check for \$2.7 million dollars. So, if you see Robert, ask him for the check. On second thought, ask Robert for a cashier's check or cash. The bank may put a 10 day hold on a personal for \$2.7 million dollars. Robert knows I'm using his name, but seriously, we need a local citizen to step up and write a check for \$2.7 million dollars.

Option 2: Everyone helps by voting "YES" to establish a TAD and finance \$2.7 million dollars for 10 to 25 years. Citizens receive \$15 million over 25 years and enjoy Hobby Lobby, Chick-fil-A, Marshall's, and Starbucks with potential new developments.

Option 3: Vote "NO" and do nothing and collect estimated/projected property taxes of \$1.25 million over the same 25-year period.

On November 5, 2019, the citizens of Douglas will have a decision to make by voting for or against establishing a TAD. As the Mayor of Douglas, I do not have the authority to state the City's position on the TAD. On November 5, 2019, YOU, the citizens of Douglas (the Mayor and City Commissioners bosses), will state the City's position on the TAD with the power of the majority vote.

Thanks for reading this editorial and I can't wait to update citizens again next month.