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https://www.mdjonline.com/neighbor_newspapers/south_metro/news/new-south-fulton-group-seeking-diversity-in-development/article_2b402ac2-9cd4-11e9-a9ec-4b0635c847d0.html

FEATURED

New South Fulton group seeking diversity in development

By Bill Baldowski @NorthsideNbr Jul 2, 2019



From left, city of South Fulton Mayor William "Bill" Edwards swears in members of the city's new development authority: Mayor Pro Tem Mark Baker, Stacy Blackley, Arnold Jiggetts, Shelley Lamar, Ric Ross and Jamal Grooms. Not pictured: member Andrew Pierson.

Special Photo

MORE INFORMATION

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The city of South Fulton is as proud of the diversity of its residents as it is any other element of this municipality, from housing to the businesses which call it home.

That same diversity is guiding the efforts of the municipality's first development authority, which was sworn in June 11. The city incorporated in 2016.

Members of the group include Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Baker, who also serves as the District 7 city council member, as well as Stacy Blackley, Jamal Grooms, Arnold Jiggetts, Shelley Lamar, Andrew Pierson and Ric Ross.



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Blackley is a civil engineer with TY Lin International, Grooms is executive territory business manager at Bristol-Myers Squibb, Jiggetts is director of operations at 25andOlderInc., Lamar is senior project manager at Corporate Environmental Risk Management, Pierson is director of operations at Atlanta Restaurant Partners and Ross is national director of Urban AC at Capitol Records.

According to a news release on the authority's founding, it was formed for the purpose of developing and promoting the public good and general welfare, trade, commerce, industry and employment opportunities in South Fulton.

Duties of the authority members include preparing analysis of economic activity taking place in the city, studying the city's impact on growth and creating plans or the development of public or private facilities.

Baker said the authority represents a great opportunity to increase the tax base for the city through development there.

"The city of South Fulton has the highest amount of undeveloped land, maybe, in the state," he said. "In addition, 80% of our tax base comes from homeowners, and I believe the development authority is going to change the landscape of our city as we create a positive atmosphere for commercial development and make this a city in which people can live, play, work and be proud of."

According to City Manager Odie Donald II, the authority held its first introductory meeting in May.

"Right now, the authority does not yet have a permanent meeting location and will announce its next meeting when it has developed a calendar and its by-laws," he said. "We are currently working with Fulton County and the city of South Fulton to acquire additional parcels, and we expect to acquire properties which will be a permanent location for the development authority to meet."

As to the type of development the city would be interested in attracting, Donald said the city is interested in all kinds.

“The reason I say that is because our city is so diverse and, because of that, businesses throughout the city could be completely different,” he said.

Donald said there are opportunities for development and redevelopment in the city, “and our city is in need of all types of development.”

Baker said there are many different dynamics that come “wonderfully packaged in the city, and we will be taking steps to make sure that everyone has a seat at the table, including minority business owners, male and female, so we can create our own future.”