

DeLoach emphasized the mutual support between the City of Savannah and Skidaway Island. He first described his journey to being elected Mayor of Savannah in November 2015. He helped author the Stevens Day real estate tax system that benefits longer term residents of the County, and also served as a Chatham County Commissioner. He owns and runs a small business in Chatham County and is a staunch believer in the free market as a general solution to most community needs.

Nevertheless, as Mayor, he has continuously pushed for a cost-effective role of government where appropriate, such as needed spending on infrastructure (e.g., roadways and drainage).

He also recognizes that the Arts make quality of life better, and is now pushing for a more permanent home and long term support for the Savannah Symphony.

He even pushed for and got a tax reduction for Savannah residents. His goal is to get the millage rate within two mills of the surrounding areas. He believes a vibrant and successful city as a hub improves the quality of life to all who live near it, recognizing there are some 13 million visitor days a year to Savannah.

SPLOST is a major aid to raising capital for needed functions. For example, \$70 million was raised to do drainage, and \$20 million for paving. He also allocated some \$160 million of SPLOST funds back to the districts for their unique needs.

A future major project is the building/development near the Arena that was authorized back before 2016, but not started then. He had several major planning studies on where to build such an arena, and the overwhelming consensus was at Stiles and Gwinnett, near the canal. He gave the example of how not to build an arena as Greenville South Carolina, which put theirs two miles outside of town, with virtually no effect on promoting business nearby. In Savannah, there is a potential \$1 billion of development possible on the west side from gentrification to counter the flight of residents from there over the past two decades. He cited the success of San Antonio's Riverwalk area helping to refurbish the downtown area, and making it much more of a tourist attraction.

Enterprise Zones

A fellow electee in 2016 following DeLoach being mayor of Savannah was President Donald Trump. Behind the scenes but without much fanfare, Trump has expanded greatly the concept of enterprise zones to vitalize cities in America. DeLoach has visited the White House several times, and has frequent discussions with Administration officials on how to bring private investment back into inner city development, Trump himself having vast experience in urban development, Having moved to downtown Savannah



from the suburbs, he relished the idea that Savannah can become a major residential town once again, close to the fabulous restaurants that are here. He also knows that buttressing the police and fire services are a major goal. He also recognized that violent crime was an issue that had to be solved. He has seen the homicide rate cut by 40% during his tenure. He acknowledged that DA Meg Heap had much to do with it, by making it very hard for gang members to function. He noted that the remaining homicides were virtually all among the gang community, with no random deaths to innocent bystanders in the past three years. He realizes that there is still much to be done, and doesn't want to rely on poor marksmanship as a leading cause of lower homicide rates.

Need For Volunteers

A major contribution of Skidaway Island residents is their selfless volunteering and fundraising for key needs of Savannah. Not only for the arts, but education as well. He openly solicited more skilled volunteers for a number of oversight Boards to accomplish new successful ventures.

Q&A Session

Q1. While the historic district has improved safety in the past four years, what about neighboring districts?

A1. He acknowledged that there is a need to restore stable residencies in the nearby areas, to prevent reversion to slum or teardown status. He earmarks some \$10 million to refurbish small homes to allow residents to remain in those areas. The "eminent domain" restrictions had to be changed to allow this to happen.

Q2. What about establishing a "Land bank"?

A2. This conversion of abandoned properties for future development has already started, with the goal of doing eight houses a year, recognizing this is a long-term project. One of the attendees was quite familiar with this issue and promptly volunteered to help steer this project.

Q3. While acknowledging that SCAD was a major factor in restoring Savannah to its former successes as a vibrant city, their tax exempt status on vast numbers of buildings does not help the tax base. Can SCAD help in any financial way to future building of Savannah?

A3. Good question but not much of an answer right now.

Q4. Much new building may have funding from SPLOST, but are the maintenance costs also funded.?

A4. Still a major problem

Q5. Is the police staffing at targeted levels?

A5. No, there are 40 openings right now for the police department, and 80 for the Sheriff's office. State funding for state police creates a gap in compensation that can be paid, sometimes as much as a 20% difference.



