



# City of North Port

4970 CITY HALL BLVD  
NORTH PORT, FL 34286

## Meeting Minutes - Draft City Commission Special Meeting

### *CITY COMMISSIONERS*

*Debbie McDowell, Mayor*

*Jill Luke, Vice Mayor*

*Christopher Hanks, Commissioner*

*Pete Emrich, Commissioner*

*Vanessa Carusone, Commissioner*

### *APPOINTED OFFICIALS*

*Peter Lear, City Manager*

*Amber L. Slayton, City Attorney*

*Heather Taylor, City Clerk*

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Monday, October 19, 2020

10:00 AM

CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS

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### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor McDowell called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

### ROLL CALL

**Present:** 5 - Mayor Debbie McDowell, Vice Mayor Jill Luke, Commissioner Christopher Hanks, Commissioner Vanessa Carusone and Commissioner Pete Emrich

### Also Present:

City Manager Peter Lear; City Attorney Amber Slayton; City Clerk Heather Taylor; Recording Secretary Susan Hale; Parks and Recreation Director Sandy Pfundheller; Police Chief Todd Garrison.

**The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Lasprogato.**

### 1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Commissioner Emrich, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:*

**Yes:** 5 - Mayor McDowell, Vice Mayor Luke, Commissioner Hanks, Commissioner Carusone and Commissioner Emrich

### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Taylor read the following public comment into the record:

Debra Mays: Opposes special exemption for 7-11.

Roberta Brownwell: Opposed the ABCD group.

Anonymous: Supported Commission decision regarding Stephanie Gibson.

**3. GENERAL BUSINESS:**

[20-2750](#)

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Reorganization Options for the Neighborhood Development Services Department

Mayor McDowell spoke to the amended agenda.

Discussion ensued and a consensus was requested.

***There was consensus to have public comment prior to question and answers.***

Mr. Lear presented a proposed reorganization of the Neighborhood Development Services department including creating two departments, and budget adjustments to accommodate the change.

Mayor McDowell read the prior direction from July 21, 2020 Commission Budget Workshop into the record.

Mr. Lear continued his presentation including future plans for Option A, Option B existing structure, a City-wide organizational chart for Option A., and prior Commission direction to bring the item back within three months.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Allain Hale: Recommendations for environmental services and support for the reorganization.

Conni Brunni: Process for activating departments, outstanding directives, and organizational chart.

Chuck English: Support of separating Neighborhood Development Services, and need for an environmental and natural resources department.

Ms. Slayton replied to questions regarding anonymous public comments.

**PUBLIC COMMENT CONTINUED:**

Barbara Lockhart: Supports an environmental department.

Art Bilski: Postpone the agenda item until after the election in November or delay it until 2021.

Discussion ensued regarding a 2006 Commission discussion regarding anonymous public comment.

Mr. Lear responded to questions regarding alignment of organizational charts with Fiscal Year 2021, budget constraints, the 2001-2002 City-wide organizational study, previous General Services sub-departments, hybrid of options, distributed an organizational chart of authorized positions in Neighborhood Development Services and Planning.

Mr. Miles spoke to an Arborist's duties.

Mr. Lear continued to respond to questions regarding Arborist involvement with both Planning and Building departments, funding of positions in Option A Future, future budgeting, staff recommendations, financial impact, other options considered in June,

2020, funding the director portion by a budget amendment from Fund Balance, positions currently in budget but unfunded, and process of creating a new department.

Ms. Slayton replied to questions regarding ordinance requirements.

Mr. Lear responded to how documents move from one department to another, relocating departments requiring Commission approval, the reorganization being for the Building Department, no remodeling in City Hall at the present, investigation regarding the third floor being done, the Arborist position being funded by the Tree Fund and the General Fund, the Planning Director position is currently unfunded, directors reporting to the City Manager versus Assistant City Managers, and budget amendments needed.

Discussion ensued regarding different director responsibility options and combining of positions, and budget numbers needed prior to making final decisions.

Mr. Lear spoke to the process of creating staff positions, enhancing of a department not requiring an ordinance, policies defining the job functions of a position, and Option A vs. Option A Future.

A consensus was requested but not achieved to hold additional public comment prior to the motion.

***A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Commissioner Emrich, to direct the City Manager, to have City Attorney continue with the direction that the City Commission had given to divide Neighborhood Development Services into two departments; following the chart of Option A Future, having the flow go: City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Director and the two divisions of Planning and Natural Resource and Historical Services. Within that chart, removing Social Service and Economic Development Departments, placing them underneath the City Manager. And making the second department be the Building and Code Enforcement Services with the flow being: City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Director and the three divisions of Building, Administrative Services and Code Enforcement.***

Clarification was provided that there will be a Director for Natural Resources and Planning Manager and those will be under an Assistant City Manager; a Director for Building, Code Enforcement and Administrative Services. Social Services, Economic Development will go under City Manager will be under an Assistant City Manager.

Discussion ensued regarding when the Director position will be funded, the motion creating a department, and additional requests must be considered by the Commission.

***The motion carried by the following vote:***

**Yes:** 5 - Mayor McDowell, Vice Mayor Luke, Commissioner Hanks, Commissioner Carusone and Commissioner Emrich

***A motion was made by Vice Mayor Luke, seconded by Commissioner Carusone, to direct staff to inquire into the cost for a natural resource manager, including the financial impacts.***

Mr. Lear spoke to the information being provided in a memo.

***The motion carried by the following vote:***

**Yes:** 5 - Mayor McDowell, Vice Mayor Luke, Commissioner Hanks, Commissioner Carusone and Commissioner Emrich

Discussion ensued regarding a revised organizational chart to be sent by memo.

Ms. Slayton spoke to receiving direction to include this item on the October 10, and 27, 2020 Commission meetings.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Carusone, seconded by Vice Mayor Luke, to direct the City Attorney to prioritize the ordinance to be presented to Commission on Oct 27, 2020. The motion carried by the following vote:***

**Yes:** 4 - Vice Mayor Luke, Commissioner Hanks, Commissioner Carusone and Commissioner Emrich

**No:** 1 - Mayor McDowell

Mayor McDowell dissented due to the ordinance and the reorganization of the department is not a priority, and to moving forward requiring a majority vote.

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Allain Hale: The value of a Department of Natural Resources, and creating an archaeological sustainability position.

Connie Bruni: Voiced a public records request.

#### **5. COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS:**

Commissioner Hanks: nothing to report.

Vice Mayor Luke: spoke to the Yard Sale and Craft Sale, and Maker's Market fee being brought back as an agenda item for discussion.

Ms. Slayton spoke to waiving fees.

Ms. Pfundheller responded that Maker's Market date being posted in error.

Ms. Taylor spoke to a public records request.

Commissioner Carusone: nothing to report.

Commissioner Emrich using computers to access backup material, and Commissioners taking notes with laptops.

Ms. Slayton spoke to chair maintaining meeting decorum, cannot mandate how a public record request is received, and fee schedule is in review.

Mr. Lear spoke to reasoning pertaining to a unanimous approval for today's item.

Discussion ensued regarding making the ordinance a priority, and motion not being rushed.

**6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL REPORTS:**

Mr. Lear: nothing to report.

Ms. Slayton: nothing to report.

Ms. Taylor: nothing to report.

**7. ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor McDowell adjourned the meeting at 12:27 p.m.

City of North Port, Florida

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gisele "Jill" E. Luke, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Heather Taylor, City Clerk

Minutes approved at the Commission Regular Meeting this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_,  
2020.