



City of North Port

4970 City Hall Blvd
North Port, FL 34286

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Commission Joint 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, Interim City Clerk

Tuesday, December 17, 2019

5:00 PM

CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS

Joint Meeting with Environmental Advisory Board

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor McDowell called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: 4 - Commissioner Christopher Hanks, Mayor Debbie McDowell, Vice Mayor Jill Luke and Commissioner Pete Emrich

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Vanessa Carusone

Also Present:

City Manager Pete Lear; City Attorney Amber Slayton, Interim City Clerk Heather Taylor; Recording Secretary Susan Hale; Police Chief Todd Garrison, Public Works Director Julie Bellia, Engineering Division Manager Jerry Traverso.

Environmental Advisory Board Members: Edie Driest, Chair; Lauri Fern, Vice Chair; Tina Powell; Carolann Palm-Abramoff; Allain Hale; and Verna Blaine.

Absent: Nadine Baker; and Lora Ross.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Driest, and a moment of silence was observed for Louise Hall and James Bonsky, who passed away.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Carusone

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

3. GENERAL BUSINESS:

[19-1581](#)

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Recommendations of the Environmental Advisory Board

Chair Driest introduced the item and the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) recommendations, and requested a consensus to mail detailed recommendations to the Commission.

There was a consensus to direct City Manager to send the Board's ULDC recommendations to the Commission by the end of the week.

Chair Driest presented an overview of the Board's recommendation for the ULDC, including creation of a Natural Resources Department, purchasing conservation land, banning use of single-use plastics on City property, ULDC changes relating to certain endangered wildlife, tree canopy issues, testing canals, managing parks, sustainability focusing on electric vehicles, and discussion ensued regarding creating a Natural Resource Department.

Ms. Slayton spoke to legal uses of impact fees being limited to capital improvements.

Discussion continued regarding Sarasota County management of City parks expiring in 2021, hiring qualified people for the Natural Resource Department, conservation land near Spring Haven Boulevard, using tree funds to purchase conservation lands, the Panacea/Plantation roosting area for birds, providing a list of possible conservation areas to be purchased, and Warm Mineral Springs Master Plan status.

Mr. Lear provided additional information concerning Warm Mineral Springs development and will provide Board Members a copy of the Master Plan.

Discussion ensued pertaining to investing funds to conserve and manage land.

Mr. Lear spoke to moving forward to oversee City-owned land, and duties under a Natural Resource Department.

Discussion continued regarding land management vs. maintenance of land should be a budget conversation, importance of parks, park funding sources and pocket parks.

Mr. Lear spoke to the City's athletic parks, and finalizing sale of escheated lots.

Following a Commission request, Trustsforpubliclands.org (TPL) information along with original plotting of North Port parks will be provided for next discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding banning single use plastics and possible solutions, and sending recycling links to Commission.

Recess was taken from 5:45 p.m. to 6:53 p.m.

Discussion ensued regarding Code provisions relating to scrub jay, gopher tortoises and environmental studies, and solutions for silt fencing around the property.

Mr. Traverso spoke to purpose and timing of silt fences.

Discussion continued regarding tree canopy issues, valid survey months for scrub jays, ULDC Chapter 45 regarding tree code changes, planting trees in parks, expanding water quality testing, and Indian River County engineered wetlands reducing pollution.

Mr. Lear explained requirements for testing water.

Ms. Bellia spoke to Utilities Department daily testing of potable water, Public Works testing for nitrogen, quarterly for Mosaic outflows, and upcoming discussion on spraying canals is scheduled for a Commission Joint Meeting with the Environmental Advisory Board meeting in February.

Discussion continued regarding creating a rookery retention pond, Australian pines being invasive and a detriment to native flora and fauna, tree stand of pines at Warm Mineral Springs, recovery time after removing Australian pines, grant funding for their removal, renewable energy solutions, and planned progress.

Discussion ensued regarding the Environmental Board's memo to Commission, including adding a chapter for wildlife protection falling under Natural Resources Department, working closely with federal agencies, and a presentation from Stevie Freeman to Commission.

Mr. Lear spoke to \$50,000 surtax money being encumbered to purchase parcels near Spring Haven Boulevard.

Vice Mayor Luke requested a consensus regarding a policy when Board Members pass away and thanked City employees for their work during the Thanksgiving and Christmas season to help those in need.

Mr. Lear spoke to a policy when a Board Member passes away and the City Code regarding sending flowers clarified, and U.S. House passed bill raising age to purchase tobacco from 18 to 21.

There was a consensus to send flowers to the James Bonsky family and a card to the Louise Hall's daughter.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

5. ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor McDowell adjourned the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

City of North Port, Florida

By: _____
Debbie McDowell, Mayor

Attest: _____
Heather Taylor, Interim City Clerk

Minutes approved at the Commission Regular Meeting this ____ day of _____, 2020.