



City of North Port

4970 CITY HALL BLVD
NORTH PORT, FL 34286

Meeting Minutes - Final 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

Thursday, June 4, 2020

1:00 PM

ZOOM

Virtual Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor McDowell called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.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, Administrative Services Specialist Laura Reed, Finance Director Kimberly Ferrell, Human Resource Director Christine McDade, Neighborhood Development Services Director Frank Miles, Planning Division Manager Nicole Galehouse, Parks and Recreation Director Sandy Pfundheller, Deputy Police Chief Chris Morales, Public Works Director Julie Bellia, Lien Specialist Trysta Cassell, and Deputy Police Chief Chris Morales.

Ms. Slayton provided a brief introduction relative to the virtual meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Hanks.

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:

There was no public comment.

3. PRESENTATIONS: TIME LIMIT OF 15 MINUTES

A. [20-2272](#) Presentation by Virginia Haley from Visit Sarasota County on COVID-19 Statistics and Recovery Strategies

Virginia Haley, Visit Sarasota County, provided an update regarding the tourism industry including hotel occupancy, vacation rental properties, tourist tax collections, employee reductions, supporting local businesses, visitor consumer research surveys, phased recovery efforts, renewed efforts for economic recovery, and rebooking events.

Commissioner Carusone lost connection with the meeting.

Vice Mayor Luke expressed gratitude for the expertise and professionalism of Ms. Haley.

B. [20-2266](#) Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization Town Tour Presentation - Long Range Transportation Plan (Not subject to the 15 minute time limit)

Mr. Lear introduced the item.

Leigh Holt, Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), presented an overview regarding the long range transportation plan including future projected revenues, eligible funding for roads for North Port, addressing regional issues, future budget issues due to the pandemic, transit needs, interchange needs, and priorities requested from North Port.

Discussion ensued regarding priorities including an Emergency Evacuation Study in the priorities, Yorkshire Street interchange project to include Raintree Boulevard, connecting North Port to Charlotte County through Hillsborough Boulevard to Veterans Boulevard, infrastructure funding in connection with shovel-ready projects, and prioritizing Yorkshire Street for an interchange.

Ms. Bellia spoke to expanded connectivity keeping both Yorkshire Street and Raintree Boulevard as priorities, Charlotte County favoring Raintree Boulevard, and keeping all options open.

Mr. Lear addressed in-house work vs. hiring a consultant, property-owner inclinations regarding development, new information received, and an agenda presentation item in July.

Commissioner Carusone re-joined the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

There was a consensus to direct the City Manager to create an agenda item to discuss the I-75 interchange at Raintree Boulevard/Yorkshire Street.

Discussion continued regarding other options including zoning change to facilitate the interchange.

Commissioner Carusone lost connection at 1:46 p.m.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS:

A. [CC](#) Discussion and Possible Action Regarding North Port Neighborhood
[GEN-17-026](#) Revitalization Plan Implementation Strategy

Mr. Lear introduced the item.

Ms. Galehouse presented information regarding the neighborhood revitalization plan including signage options.

Discussion ensued regarding advantages of the sign "toppers", replacing existing monument signs, being flexible for each neighborhood, possible confusion with dual street names during emergency communications, wasteful spending, the cost of the city-wide project, and identifying neighborhoods.

Ms. Galehouse spoke re-evaluating City neighborhoods.

Discussion continued regarding other signage options and compromises, other benefits of street toppers in 9-11 calls, the average number of street signs, creating community cohesiveness, lack of resident discussions regarding neighborhood signage, neighborhood identifiers, and starting with only five areas.

Ms. Galehouse clarified how additional information may help the discussion, neighborhood standards moving forward, and overall development of the City still in beginning stages.

Discussion continued pertaining to Highland Ridge history, receiving input from the community, and starting with five neighborhoods with strategic progression through the City.

Ms. Galehouse spoke to private neighborhood communities responsible for their own signage.

Ms. Bellia clarified the number of neighborhood signs, approval for Highland Ridge signage today, direction regarding types of signs for neighborhoods, providing signage suggestions for the other four locations, replacing the Highland Ridge sign with something similar to what is currently there, creating a monument sign standard, and signage consistency.

There was a consensus to replace the Highland Ridge sign with something similar to Country Club Ridge sign.

There was a consensus to direct staff to provide an estimate of cross-streets and intersections in the remaining four initial areas and the type of signage that would work best.

Mr. Lear spoke to dispatch who did not think neighborhood signage would interfere with emergency 9-11 communications.

Ms. Bellia stated she will work with the Police Department regarding input for Neighborhood Watch signs and forward information to the Commission.

Discussion ensued regarding a strategy update, and preventing blight in neighborhoods.

Ms. Galehouse spoke to consultant's recommendation to implement neighborhood redevelopment.

Discussion continued pertaining to police enforcement of code violations, and establishing a housing corporation in neighborhoods being a separate conversation.

Mr. Lear spoke to the concept of Nice Guys Program and the annual Serve Florida program.

Ms. Bellia addressed dumpster placement in areas vs. refuse drop-off locations controlled by Public Works, and targeting community areas needing cleanup efforts.

Ms. Galehouse explained the short-term rental identification study, and a future discussion regarding neighborhood mapping.

Ms. Cassell explained the Code Enforcement lien cap program for violations and lien release program for judicially imposed sales.

B. [20-2260](#)

Discussion Regarding COVID-19 Related Information Updates

Mr. Lear introduced the item and requested direction regarding the annual survey regarding City services.

There was a consensus to forego the Community Survey this year.

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

Ashlynn Schneider: reopening North Port, permitting wait time, water park opening.

Mr. Lear spoke to Capital Improvement Program (CIP) large ticket items from surtax, fully-funded CIP projects, reduced funding for some projects due to reduced revenues, Springhaven Drive land acquisition not moving forward and reallocating funds elsewhere, and a disc golf course update.

Ms. Pfundheller addressed requesting a formal RFP or RFQ to move the disc golf course project forward.

Discussion ensued regarding surtax funding adjustments.

Mr. Lear spoke to actual percentage revenue reduction for next year's budget and dark fiber costs.

Ms. Pfundheller addressed the Myakkahatchee Greenway RFB ready to go out to bid, delays may increase costs, and delay of other projects.

Mr. Lear confirmed the Police Department expansion being delayed, direction needed regarding the Greenway project, slowdown of surtax revenue, adapting project funding, and Tamiami Trail parking grant.

Ms. Bellia spoke to Tropicaire Boulevard improvement issues.

Discussion ensued regarding projects to postpone.

There was a consensus to direct City Manager to hold CIP projects P10MCG (Myakkahatchee Creek Greenway - Heron Creek) and P18SHA (Springhaven Drive Land Acquisition) until next fiscal year.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Reed read the following public comment into the record:
Judy Leach: opening City Hall.

6. COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS:

Vice Mayor Luke reported receiving a letter from Florida League of Cities (FLC), noted that City volunteer Janet Lewicke passed away, July 4, 2020 Fireworks parking at the high school, and a stage needed for high school graduation program in July.

Commissioner Hanks reported attending a peaceful protest in Port Charlotte and another one scheduled at Lashley Park in Punta Gorda tomorrow.

Commissioner Emrich expressed gratitude to staff regarding the neighborhood signage information.

Mayor McDowell requested an agenda item for Commission assignments at the FLC, opening City Hall, and City Chambers.

Mr. Lear spoke to reopening date of June 16, 2020 for City Hall, and City Chambers to open in a phased approach with full opening in July.

Ms. Slayton added information regarding Governor DeSantis' Executive Order allowing municipalities to hold virtual meetings.

Discussion ensued regarding opening Chambers on June 16, 2020.

Ms. Slayton and Mr. Lear spoke to concerns regarding accommodating public participation in Commission meetings.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL REPORTS:

There were no administrative or legal reports.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor McDowell adjourned the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

City of North Port, Florida

By: _____
Debbie McDowell, Mayor

Attest: _____
Heather Taylor, City Clerk

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