



City of North Port

6207 W. Price Blvd
North Port, FL 34291

Meeting Minutes - Final Town Hall Meeting

Thursday, March 15, 2018

6:00 PM

MORGAN FAMILY COMMUNITY CENTER
LOCATED AT 6207 WEST PRICE BOULEVARD
NORTH PORT, FLORIDA 34291

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE 06-26-2018 MEETING.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The Town Hall meeting was called to order at 6:20 p.m. in the Morgan Community Center by Mayor Carusone.

Present: Mayor Carusone; Vice-Mayor Yates; Commissioners, Hanks, Luke and McDowell, City Manager Lear; Assistant City Attorney Golen; City Clerk Adkins; Deputy City Clerk Peto and Assistant Police Chief Pelfrey.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Luke.

1. PRESENTATION REGARDING CITY SERVICES:

[18-127](#)

Town Hall Discussion

Mayor Carusone stated City Manager Lear will open the meeting with a presentation and that a question and answer session will follow the presentation.

City Manager Lear provided a presentation of the City of North Port.

2. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH COMMISSIONERS:

The rules of decorum for the meeting were explained.

Question: Can a Resolution for installation of the street light to Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Lennar, or Pulte be expedited to install the light?

Commission response: (1) Work has been done for a year with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to help get the light installed; (2) The lights are controlled by FDOT and the Developers; (3) Completion of the lights are scheduled for this summer for the first one and this fall for the second one.

Question: Have you sent a Resolution to anyone supporting the idea of getting that finished quickly?

Commission response: (1) A Resolution is not necessary; (2) Two Commissioners sit on the MPO have been lobbying heavily; (3) Several emails have been sent to people within Pulte and West Villages trying to expedite this.

Question: Are considering or contemplating writing a new Charter for the City? If the answer is yes, is it true you want to include the end of term limits for the City

Commissioners?

Commission response: (1) The Charter is being reviewed but the majority of it is linguistics; (2) The Charter was created in the 50's and it's been piecemealed since; (3) There has been extensive work with the Commission, Charter Review Advisory Board and Citizens to review the Charter; (4) It is uncertain at this point if the voting will be for part of the Charter or the Charter as a whole; (5) The date for the upcoming Special Meeting regarding the Charter was explained; (6) Term limits that were just passed in 2016 and haven't been discussed at this point and its unclear if this is an appropriate time; (7) The Charter belongs to the people and is your constitution and this process of this really starts with the Charter Review Board; (8) The Charter Review Board was looking at cleaning up language and the reorganization was added by the Commission; (9) the language regarding term limits is more clear to avoid going to a Judge to interpret the Charter; (10) it was explained that all public input is welcomed and encouraged; (11) there will be two ordinance readings before the language is approved to go on the ballot.

Question: Regarding the traffic as Gran Paradiso/IslandWalk and the traffic light, could we get an officer up there to slow down the traffic or maybe put a sign up with one of those clocking units to get the traffic to slow down? Also, while we're waiting for this traffic light, or the three traffic lights that are coming, is it possible to get an officer present up there that could be doing something with the traffic and the cross-over traffic, particularly at Gran Paradiso and IslandWalk?

Commission Response: (1) a speed monitoring sign was suggested; (2) Police Chief Vespia advised North Port Police are out there as much as possible; (3) stationing an officer at the intersection is not feasible; (4) traffic control device, doesn't eliminate traffic crashes; (5) a traffic unit was approved in last budget cycle to handle traffic complaints; (6) traffic enforcement is b being done and helps keep the community safe and keep the quality of life high; (7) alternative measures need to be utilized until the light is installed; (8) painting directional lines was suggested but a determination would need to be made as to who owns the roadways to be painted; (9) speed signs are temporary and they do have a short-term discouragement to traffic; (10) another suggestion was to leave parked police cars at the intersection as a deterrent; (11)

Question: Relating to the Warm Mineral Springs Master Plan, it is discussed in two major parts: the 20 acres that comprise the 1½ acre sink hole, the buildings and parking lot and the second major part is 60 acres of woods. At a recent Commission meeting it was stated that intent of the Commission is to use the State's 3P Regulations. First, has the City Attorney ascertained that the City is eligible to use P3 project? The second part is, if you are going that way, can you please explain the process that P3 entails?

Commission Response: (1) the Commission did say they wanted to do a relationship with a P3 company; (2) a P3 company would be able to allow for a revamp of the current; or recondition the historical buildings that exist today and to help with some of the other things that we need to do on that property; (3) the Commission still in the phases of trying to figure out what we want on that property; (4) a feasibility study is going to be completed and then maybe come up with some of those ideas of what to do with some of that undeveloped property; (5) there are a lot of governments that use a P3; (6) there is a procurement process to utilize P3s; (7) the project would need to qualify under the P3 regulations; (8) a suggestion was made to bring this issue back at a Commission Regular Meeting.

Question: IslandWalk has been limited to a single point of ingress and egress. West Villages has closed off the backroad for construction. That's an oversight on the part of

the City to allow our back entrance to have been closed. Why are we limited to one point of ingress and egress when there is a potential for the main entrance to be closed?

Commission Response: (1) the West Villages Improvement District closed the back gate and it is not a City road nor do we control the gate or the use of that road.

Question: Previously the City limited the number of permits you were willing to issue for Gran Paradiso until they opened their back gate.

Commission Response: (1) that was a different style of road and the way that road was funded; (2) the City had a little more control over that because there is Federal Law that they had to have those gates open; (3) U.S. 41 is a State highway; not a City road, and we do not have control of putting signs on roads that are not ours; (4) the City is doing everything we can to encourage those lights to be installed; (5) the biggest opportunity there is with the developer and West Villages; (6) a recommendation was made to go to their Board meetings and ask them over and over again; (7) the issue has more to do with permitting, in this particular case, with the lights; (8) the Commission can reach out to some of our connections in West Villages and try to find out what are the plans about the gate being closed; (9) the original plans were there was supposed to be a complete loop that would lead you out to River Road; (10) concerns were expressed about only having two ways in and out; (11) the public was encouraged to email and remind the Commission and will do our very best to check in to that and see what West Villages can do to fix that problem.

Question: We need cooperation of all the stakeholders and the City Commission is a stake holder in the safety of public. Kimley Horn was supposed to provide the second round of submission for the design. It is time to do something because we are running into more delays. The best estimate which I received from FDOT, is in the fall for installation. I will go on to a different subject. Regarding the presentation today, it caught my attention that 1/3 of the funding comes from property taxes. One of the slides was the average taxable value, which is about \$167,000. That's 3.4 mil if we take let's say, 200,000 or 300,000. It's \$1,000 which comes from such assessed property; which many of the properties in West Villages area at that level. Looking on my tax bill, under the non-ad valorem assessment I see some of the road fund. We are in this together and to support all the City infrastructure. But we would like to engage with you to see how we can use some of the tax money to our neighborhoods.

Commission Response: (1) the Road Bond Project was City-wide, and it had to do with the City roads; (2) meetings and workshops are open to the public; (3) Florida is the most open public State in the U.S. and we have very strict guidelines that we must apply or comply with.

Question: Trying to understand the structure of the Commission in North Port. I try to figure out which Commissioner or seat of the Commission represents the communities that exist in IslandWalk. From what I could understand, the City of 60-some-thousand residents, is broken up into districts and when I go online the maps are so small and I've tried to figure out where my community falls in and which Commissioner, if any, represents or comes from the West Villages district community. I was hoping you could explain that to me.

Commission Response: (1) North Port is a City Manager-Commission form of government; (2) Commissioners are elected based on where they live; (3) everybody in the City of North Port votes for each one of us and once elected, we represent all of you, regardless of what district we live in.

Question: May I ask which of you Commissioners reside in the West Villages?

Commission Response: (1) District 5 is your district and Vice-Mayor is from that District; (2) in 2014 the people decided to change the Seats, which were at-large, into the Districts; (3) in 2016, they switched Seats 1, 2, and 3 into Districts and Seats 4 and 5 will change in 2018; (4) to create a District, there has to be a certain amount of voters; (5) when the lines are drawn in those areas, it's going to incorporate more than West Villages because it doesn't have enough voters to create a District; (6) West Villages is lumped in with some of the more northerly areas of the City, and all of it together becomes District 5; (7) the Commission has to live in those boundaries of that District in order to run when that Seat is up; (8) the reason for that is that we don't have two neighbors on a Seat at the same time, only vying for their area; (9) the City's website should have a better representation to help citizens understand the City Commission page; (10) there is conversation going on right now about going to single member district, where that commissioner in that district is only voted on by the people that live in that district; and represents only the people that live in that district; (11) concerns were expressed because the County will lump us with Englewood and South Venice.

Question: The tax base in West Villages probably represents a significant revenue stream to the City. What I'd like to see is to see that presentation broken down both in revenue and expenses specific to the West Villages, so we can understand the dollars going in and the services coming back and whether they're part of the general real estate tax that we pay or whether they are part of the ad valorem additional taxes that we pay. So, that will give everybody a clear understanding of our investment, revenue-wise, into North Port, and return the value of services and others that are coming back into the community. Is that possible?

Commission Response: (1) it was explained that would take a long time; (2) Staff would have to go back to the initiation of West Villages and look at what went into developing West Villages initially.

Question: Could you not do it on the present budget?

Commission Response: (1) historical research on the cost of those things would need to be completed.

Question: How does that apply to current budget? If you have a budget item and it shows revenue of X amount of dollars coming in. You know where the revenue's coming from on a percentage basis. The same thing on your expenses, Police Department by example, how much of the Police Department budget of X dollars is specifically expended in the West Villages area?

Commission Response: (1) a portion of that we could do with Property Tax revenue; (2) Yes, we can break that down and it would take some time for Staff to get that information of where each dollar comes from; (3) That revenue source of property tax makes up about 1/3 of what the City brings in in revenues; (4) Some of the other revenue sources we do not have that information because nobody tracks it, such as municipal shared revenues and sales tax; (5) There are certain items that are provided at-large such as the City Commission budget, the City Manager's budget and all the administrative services, and the costs expended for West Villages are not broken out; (6) All the tax payers in the City, whether you're in West Villages, in Heron Creek or over on the west side of the

community by Atwater, own all of the assets of the City and are provided the services of the City; (7) As the property taxes of the City spread out, it's very difficult to segregate and say how much is spent on different parts of the City.

Question: I guess I want to get a level of comfort as a tax payer and certainly in Gran Paradiso, where a lot of the infrastructure is being paid for by the homeowners. So, with a significant expenditure if you look at the general taxes; forget the ad valorem stuff right? I just want to make sure that everybody has a more comfortable understanding of revenue going out from the community vs. services coming back in to the community.

Commission Response: (1) Maybe you can meet with Mr. Lear afterward and exchange information.

Question: What I don't understand is, who has responsibility and governing authority for West Villages when it comes to the decisions that were made to close off the back access to IslandWalk? It's not clear to me that it's a Pulte discussion. And yet, it doesn't appear to me that you think that it's a situation that you can influence; but it's left our residents with very dangerous process of getting in and out of the community at the front gate. So, could you please help us understand who we can influence and who has accountability for the decisions that are being made by West Villages?

Commission Response: (1) It was suggested this would be from the West Villages Board of Directors.

Question: Marty is the one we need to go to?

Commission Response: (1) Mr. Black, or if it's not him, he would at least have the correct person to go to.

Question: My second question is, what exactly is West Villages relative to North Port?

Commission Response: (1) West Villages is a District, it's almost like a city within a city but not a city; (2) The property was in unincorporated Sarasota County, and Sarasota County did not want to see any development at this end; (3) The people who owned the property in the West Villages area wanted a community development so they asked to be annexed into the City of North Port; (4) the City of North Port fought to have all of the West Villages annexed; (5) the North Port City Commission insisted that West Villages be one of the greatest developments in southwest Florida; (6) The best way to finance West Villages was to become a District, and by becoming a District they could create a tax and that tax would pay back for some of these higher-value aesthetics that is there today.

Question: My question deals with the entire City of North Port. My office is in West Villages and I live in the City of North Port. My question is about telecommunications, we have to address the dead cell issue, whether its T-Mobile, AT&T, Sprint, it doesn't matter. I literally have to go outside because my phone doesn't pick-up inside. My question is, do we have anything in place to address that? Is the City aware of it? Do they plan to address it?

Commission Response: (1) If you can't receive service within your building, it's probably because the newer homes are Category 4 Hurricane Code reinforced, so you are not going to get cell service inside the house unless you are next to a window; (2) Not being able to get service on the outside is something the Commission is diligently working on. We just did an Ordinance to allow for small cell towers so that cell service can expand at

a reasonable cost; (3) One of the bigger issues our City is facing is the lack of reliable internet within the City, and the Commission is diligently working on how we can expand broadband and internet within our boundaries; (4) The State is working on legislation for new technologies like macro-towers, but it takes away some of the Home Rule aspects that we have, which is the ability for us to govern ourselves within the City; (5) We are working on an Ordinance that will allow some of this technology to spread throughout out City, in a way that can be reasonable for us to deal with; (6) This is something we are well aware of being an issue, not only in the West Villages area but in the City of North Port, and it is a very big concern for us; (7) it was suggested that citizens contact their providers and request they invest to provide better services.

Question: I'm going back to the traffic light. I would assume that a permit has to be issued to start construction or approval of the construction of the traffic light. Has that permit been applied for and if not, why? Who is supposed to be applying for it? How long will it take to get this permit from the City of North Port?

Commission Response: (1) That is handled by the Department of Transportation.

Question: If you don't have to approve it, has it been approved by the State? Are you aware of that?

Commission Response: (1) Yes, we are aware of that.

Question: So, it's been approved but we don't have a firm timeline?

Commission Response: (1) Because this is U.S. 41 it is the State's jurisdiction, the Secretary for this District Area stated a few weeks ago they had put in for the permit; (2) The permit had to go back because it needed some calculations and it is now in the process of getting the final paperwork done; (3) It is estimated the lights will be done this Fall or at the end of the year.

Public: How is the decision made as to what gets added in our area, specifically the West Villages, IslandWalk area? What can I do personally to help lobby for not having the population density so great that I feel I might as well have moved in to Lakewood Ranch because their population density is absurd.

Commission Response: (1) A Comprehensive Pattern Book for West Villages was done years ago before any houses were built; (2) a suggestion was made to review Florida Forever, a program that purchases properties for conservation; (3) it was noted there are occasions when State agencies will sell conservation properties; (4) The State of Florida provides a Constitutional Right to build what you want on your property as zoning allows; (5) The City cannot tell people that have undeveloped property that they're not allowed to build, it's against the law; (6) it was noted that Commissioner McDowell or Vice-Mayor Yates may be able to provide information regarding environmentally sensitive groups.

Public: I do have one further question. The large landowners, Pulte and other groups around. Certainly, I understand they have the right to develop their land as they see fit. Except, they do have to have their plans OK'd through some group; it must be State and local?

Commission Response: (1) Those plans were approved back in 2005.

Question: With the exact number of residences that could be built?

Commission Response: (1) Yes; (2) Florida is experiencing a huge influx of people, we just went from the fourth or fifth largest to the third largest populated state in the country; (3) It's important to know that North Port is only 22-25% built-out and many areas are still very pristine; (4) North Port is the only City in Florida that has an entire State park within its boundary - Myakka State Park.

Question: If you could give us a synopsis of where we stand, where North Port stands in working with the State and other communities for the widening of River Road as an evacuation route. Obviously, it's narrow and difficult and with a full-blown hurricane we could have issues there. I know you're working on it, if you could give a synopsis on that.

Commission Response: (1) River Road is a county road and there has been a partnership with Sarasota County to get State funding, and the City of North Port has been lobbying; (2) The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) program recently appropriated more funding towards this project; (3) There are on-going discussions with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and Sarasota County regarding a potential land swap which would allow for funding to complete River Road; (4) Charlotte County is also helping by making it their top priority as well; (5) A couple of Representatives in Tallahassee are trying to get a line item in the FDOT budget that would help with expanding that process; (6) it was noted that River Road in North Port is a hub in hurricane disasters; (7) two roads being considered for the land swap have bridges on them, and they're trying to work out is who is going to care for the bridges; (8) River Road is a \$200,000,000 project.

Public: Suggestions were made regarding the entrance and exit at IslandWalk.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Public comment was held 8:04 p.m. – 8:06 p.m.

Joan San Lwin: Warm Mineral Springs and Spring Haven Drive.

4. ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Carusone adjourned the North Port City Commission Town Hall Meeting at 8:10 p.m.

City of North Port, Florida

By: _____
Vanessa Carusone, Mayor

Attest: _____
Patsy C. Adkins, MMC, City Clerk

Minutes approved at the City Commission Regular Meeting this ____ day of _____, 2018.