



# City of North Port

4970 CITY HALL BLVD  
NORTH PORT, FL 34286

## Meeting Minutes City Commission Workshop

**CITY COMMISSIONERS**  
*Barbara Langdon, Mayor*  
*Alice White, Vice Mayor*  
*Pete Emrich, Commissioner*  
*Debbie McDowell, Commissioner*  
*Phil Stokes, Commissioner*

**APPOINTED OFFICIALS**  
*Jerome Fletcher, City Manager*  
*Amber L. Slayton, City Attorney*  
*Heather Faust, City Clerk*

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Monday, March 6, 2023

9:00 AM

Room 244

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### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Langdon called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

### ROLL CALL

**Present:** 5 - Mayor Barbara Langdon, Vice Mayor Alice White, Commissioner Pete Emrich, Commissioner Debbie McDowell and Commissioner Philip Stokes

### ALSO PRESENT:

City Manager Jerome Fletcher, City Attorney Amber Slayton, City Clerk Heather Faust, Assistant City Clerk Adrian Jianelli, Recording Secretary Matthew Powell, Neighborhood Development Services Director Alaina Ray, Police Commander Eric Sineath, and Deputy Fire Chief Nick Herlihy

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Phil Stokes.

### 1. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Jianelli read the following public eComments into the record:

David Iannotti: expressed support for fair and easy access for public comment process.  
Robin SanVicente: questions and comments regarding public comment process.

### 2. GENERAL BUSINESS:

[23-0457](#)

Discussion and Possible Direction Regarding Public Comment Process

Mayor Langdon announced the item.

Ms. Jianelli introduced the item.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding current process concerns, submitting cards prior to meeting versus during, policy requirements and limitations,

Consent Agenda public comment process, rules of decorum policy, limiting distractions, creating a new procedure, encouraging public involvement, possible changes to public comment card, meeting times related to public involvement, pausing during meeting to organize cards, Vice Mayor role, informing public of process regarding answering questions during public comment, City Manager role, importance of respect, personal attacks versus professional criticism, using judgment, and determining tone.

***There was consensus to direct the City Clerk to bring back a policy to include public comment process on Consent Agenda items.***

***There was consensus to direct the City Clerk to bring back suggestions for a process to handle public comment cards more efficiently, without it creating distractions.***

Ms. Faust spoke to updating public comment card and policy.

### [23-0346](#)

Discussion and Possible Direction Regarding Approved Uses of the Tree Fund.

Mayor Langdon announced the item.

Mr. Fletcher introduced the item.

Mr. Speake spoke to maintenance supporting irrigation systems, liability and safety hazards, irrigation system implementation, splitting cost with Road and Drainage District for access points, acquiring and preserving land, native canopy preservation, current Arborist and tree crew funding, and tree fund growth.

Commission questions and discussion took place regarding impact on general fund versus building fund, Arborist role in relation to building fund requirements, and 50 percent of fund changing from building fund to general fund.

Ms. Ray spoke to reviewing timeline of funding change.

Commission discussion continued regarding irrigation system cost efficiency, site specific costs, irrigation system possible locations, water truck usage, staff and equipment costs and requirements, Environmental Specialist versus Arborist role and funding, budgeting, reviewing tree removal fees, prior discussion regarding tree fund growth, revenue and fee structures, cost of clearing properties, tree fund usage regarding labor, costs for management and maintenance of trees, Hurricane Ian tree replacement plan, Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) role and prior discussions regarding ideas for usage of tree fund, green construction, developing a comprehensive tree planting program, joint meeting with EAB, Neighborhood Development Services (NDS) role, Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) rewrite, Sustainability Manager position and role, and impact fees usage.

Recess was taken from 10:36 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Mr. Fletcher read the EAB list of possible ideas regarding usage of tree funds.

There was no public comment.

***There was consensus to direct the City Manager to schedule a joint meeting with the EAB and Commission prior to budget.***

***There was consensus to direct staff to bring back a tree replanting and maintenance program including budget along with other requests made today, prior to budget.***

Commission discussion took place regarding canopy survey requirement and timeline, amount of trees to be replaced, tree canopy improvement program (TCIP), minimizing impact on general fund, tree fund budgeting, priority for replanting, tree species and locations, landscape plans, presenting full plan to Commission, and tree giveaway program.

Consensus was requested to direct the City Manager to create a tree giveaway program stipulating that citizens must pick up and plant the trees without City involvement.

Ms. Slayton spoke to public funds usage requirements.

Commission discussion took place regarding conducting joint meeting with EAB prior to further action, staff requirements, City involvement in community landscaping, landscaping plan, extending time limit for Homeowners Association (HOA) compliance, and bringing back cost estimates.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

William C English: expressed concern for ethics regarding clearing public land without proper surveys and expressed concern for possible conflict of interest.

Commission asked City Manager to contact Mr. English to discuss further and follow up with a memorandum.

Ms. Slayton spoke to the process for handling conflicts of interest.

**4. ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Langdon adjourned the meeting at 11:26 a.m.

City of North Port, Florida

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Barbara Langdon, Mayor

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

These minutes were approved on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.