

City of Port St. Lucie

City Council

Meeting Minutes

121 SW Port St. Lucie
Blvd.
Port St. Lucie, Florida
34984

Shannon M. Martin, Mayor

Jolien Caraballo, Vice Mayor, District IV
Stephanie Morgan, Councilwoman, District I
Dave Pickett, Councilman, District II
Anthony Bonna, Councilman, District III

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Monday, March 13, 2023

6:30 PM

Council Chambers, City Hall

Addition of Item 7i

1. Meeting Called to Order

A Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Port St. Lucie was called to order by Vice Mayor Caraballo on March 13, 2023, at 6:31 PM, at Port St. Lucie City Hall, 121 SW Port St. Lucie Boulevard, Port St. Lucie, FL.

2. Roll Call

Council Members Present:

Vice Mayor Jolien Caraballo
Councilwoman Stephanie Morgan
Councilman Dave Pickett
Councilman Anthony Bonna

Council Member Not Present:

Mayor Shannon M. Martin

3. Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance

The Acting City Clerk delivered the Invocation, and Vice Mayor Caraballo led the assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Proclamations and Special Presentations

4.a Proclamation: Government Finance Professionals Week

[2023-262](#)

Vice Mayor Caraballo read the proclamation for Government Finance Professional Week. On behalf of the Finance Department, Caroline Sturgis, Director, Office of Management and Budget, accepted the

proclamation and thanked the Council for their recognition and support of Government Finance Professional Week.

4.b Proclamation: Procurement Month [2023-264](#)

Vice Mayor Caraballo read the proclamation for Procurement Month. On behalf of the Procurement Team, Caroline Sturgis, Director, Office of Management and Budget, accepted the proclamation and thanked the Council for acknowledging and supporting Procurement Month.

4.c Special Presentation: Certificate of Achievement to Marc Ball [2023-265](#)

Vice Mayor Caraballo read the Certificate of Achievement awarded to Marc Ball for his 50 years of service and dedication to the City of Port St. Lucie.

Joel Dramis, Building Code Administrator, highlighted and commented on Marc Ball's long and historic career with the City.

Marc Ball shared his story of being hired by the City and spoke to his many years with Port St. Lucie. He thanked Council and the City for a rewarding career.

Vice Mayor Caraballo indicated she would have the Historical Society contact Marc Ball to interview him.

4.d Discuss the 2023 State Legislative Update [2023-281](#)

Frank Moerhle, Deputy City Attorney, updated the Council on the 2023 State Legislative session, appropriation projects, sponsorships, and pending bills.

Councilwoman Morgan inquired about House Bill 13.31, the involvement of Public Works, and there being no Senate sponsor. Deputy City Attorney Moerhle stated Senator Erin Grall declined to sponsor this bill this session and Senator Gayle Harrell normally only sponsors projects in her district. He indicated that in consulting with their State Lobbyist Chris Carmody, they are going to push the bill on the House side, as Deputy City Attorney Moerhle and Councilman Bonna are going to Tallahassee tomorrow.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated the City was trying to amend Senate Bill 102 on the House side to exempt pre-platted municipalities, like Port St. Lucie, because of the impact it will have on their commercial / industrial areas. Deputy City Attorney Moerhle explained staff's proposed amendment to subsection (f) and indicated their goal is to amend the

House version and then send it back to the Senate.

Vice Mayor Caraballo called on those who wished to speak:

1. Dr. Cathy Powers, 11749 SW Apple Blossom Trail, spoke regarding Senate Bill 102, which is now in the House. She stated she is not in favor of losing hometown/local control, as the people here know what is best.

Vice Mayor Caraballo requested that Deputy City Attorney Moerhle relay Dr. Powers' comments to the State Legislators.

5. Public to be Heard

Vice Mayor Caraballo called on those who signed up to speak:

1. Steve Carroll, 5421 NW Bolin Street, spoke to police officer pay, payment of health benefits once retired, and retention. He also questioned the use of swale liners.

2. Kathy Dwonch-Schoen, 9338 Carlton Road, read her letter to Councilman Pickett regarding the Oak Ridge Land Use Map Amendment, which touched on the uncontrolled growth, underserved medical community, and traffic. She asked that Council consider the health and welfare of the residents when considering high density projects.

3. Dodi Spence spoke regarding the Floresta Project. She stated the signs remain incorrect, as they should indicate the road/bridge is closed at Thornhill. Ms. Spence also commented on the construction mess behind her house and asked why it was being stored there.

4. Thomas Luce, 986 SW Connecticut Terrace, spoke to the high property tax in Port St. Lucie and it being so expensive to live here. He also inquired about allowing chickens in the city limits.

Councilman Bonna explained the make up of the property tax bill and the millage rate, the swale liner removal program, and how the City tries to limit growth with a pre-platted community.

Vice Mayor Caraballo explained the rework part of the swale program; expressed her concerns with the growth on the County's side of Glades, infrastructure, and mobility/impact fees; suggested having a conversation with local hospitals regarding care; and discussed the reasons for not allowing chickens in the City.

There was Council consensus to invite local medical partners/hospitals to the Summer Workshop for a discussion on the state of the medical care in the community and to address growing concerns. (Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin was not present at this meeting.)

City Manager Merejo stated staff would look into the situation behind Ms.Spence's home as well as the signs.

6. Additions or Deletions to Agenda and Approval of Agenda

There being no discussion, Councilman Pickett moved to approve the Agenda. Councilwoman Morgan seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. (Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin was not present at this meeting.)

7. Approval of Consent Agenda

Councilman Bonna moved to approve the Consent Agenda with the removal of Item 7.c and Item 7.e for separate discussion. Councilman Pickett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. (Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin was not present at this meeting.)

- 7.a** Approval of February 13, 2023 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes [2023-251](#)

This Consent item was approved upon Council's approval of the Consent Agenda.

- 7.b** Approve Sponsorship Request from the St. Lucie Cultural Alliance for the Art, Mind & Soul Fest in Tradition. [2023-256](#)

This Consent item was approved upon Council's approval of the Consent Agenda.

- 7.c** Approve Sponsorship Request for The Sacrifices of War Monument [2023-238](#)

Vice Mayor Caraballo indicated she requested this item be removed from the Consent Agenda. She stated she supported the Sacrifices of War monument and suggested holding a workshop discussion on its future location while reviewing the renderings. Councilman Pickett indicated the monument does not have to be placed at the Stars & Stripes Park. He explained the memorial will bring awareness to mental health issues and be dedicated to those who have died or have been wounded due to war.

There was Council consensus to having a future workshop discussion in regards to placing The Sacrifices of War Monument at the new Stars & Stripes Park vs. Veterans Memorial Park.

There being no further discussion, Councilwoman Morgan moved to approve Item 7.c. Councilman Bonna seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. (Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin was not present at this meeting.)

7.d Reserve Park Trace Major Site Plan (P22-254) [2023-266](#)

This Consent item was approved upon Council's approval of the Consent Agenda.

7.e Approve Amendment #1 to Contract #20210041 for CEI [2023-124](#)

Services for the Floresta Drive Improvement Project Phase 2.

Vice Mayor Caraballo indicated this item was pulled from the Consent Agenda, because a resident requested to speak on the item.

1. Dodi Spence stated she came before this Council on September 26, 2022, to discuss the permit box that was erected for the relocation of gopher tortoises. She indicated, on the agenda tonight, an additional \$36,000 was being requested to pay the contractor. She asked why the citizens were responsible for this.

Councilwoman Morgan noted the total was an additional \$45,942.24 and inquired why the contractor was not paying this amount. Heath Stocton, Public Works Director, explained it was an oversight at the front-end of the project, as the contractor assumed the consultant had obtained the permits. He stated it was never included in the contractor's contract and thus it was added to the CEI contract. He indicated a checklist has now been implemented to prevent this from happening in the future. Mr. Stocton explained the gopher tortoise survey process and discussed the relocation of the turtles. Council agreed the contractor working on the Floresta project should pay the amount owed.

Councilwoman Morgan moved to deny Item 7.e with the comments made and bring it back to Council. Councilman Pickett seconded the motion.

Under discussion, Mr. Stocton explained there were three items within the amendment. He stated the other items are for an asbestos survey and a budget reallocation. City Attorney Stokes stated Council could approve those two items.

Councilwoman Morgan amended her motion and moved to approve the

removal of \$35,041.24, which will be taken back to the contractor for payment, and to approve the new amount of \$10,901.00. Councilman Pickett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. (Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin was not present at this meeting.)

- 7.f** Award Contract #20220116 for the Gatlin Boulevard Adaptive Signal Control Project - LAP Funded. [2023-160](#)

This Consent item was approved upon Council's approval of the Consent Agenda.

- 7.g** Approval to Participate in Fort Pierce Utilities Authority Contract #22-02 for Wet Lime Residual Hauling Services. [2023-229](#)

This Consent item was approved upon Council's approval of the Consent Agenda.

- 7.h** Award Contract #20230018 for the Direct Purchase of Materials for the Hegener Drive/ Paar Drive 24" Water Main Extension. [2023-211](#)

This Consent item was approved upon Council's approval of the Consent Agenda.

- 7.i** Appointment of New Member to Serve on the Budget Advisory Committee. [2023-293](#)

This Consent item was approved upon Council's approval of the Consent Agenda.

8. Second Reading of Ordinances, Public Hearings

- 8.a** Ordinance 23-18, Public Hearing, Petition to Contract the External Boundaries of Tradition Community Development District No. 8 [2023-107](#)

The Acting City Clerk read Ordinance 23-18 aloud by title only.

Vice Mayor Caraballo opened the Public Hearing. There being no comments, she closed the Public Hearing.

There being no discussion, Councilwoman Morgan moved to approve Ordinance 23-18. Councilman Bonna seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. (Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin was not present at this meeting.)

- 8.b** Ordinance 23-19, Public Hearing, Petition to Establish Tradition Community Development District No. 11 [2023-108](#)

The Acting City Clerk read Ordinance 23-19 aloud by title only.

Vice Mayor Caraballo opened the Public Hearing.

1. Dr. Cathy Powers, 11749 SW Apple Blossom Trail, spoke in favor of Establishing Tradition Community Development District 11 and having decision making power.

There being no further comments, Vice Mayor Caraballo closed the Public Hearing.

There being no further discussion, Councilman Bonna moved to approve Ordinance 23-19. Councilman Pickett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. (Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin was not present at this meeting.)

- 8.c** Ordinance 23-20, Public Hearing, An Ordinance Amending the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Port St. Lucie to Include a Small-scale Amendment to the Future Land Use Map to Change the Future Land Use Designation of Approximately 0.69-acres from ROI (Residential, Office, Institutional) to RL (Low Density Residential) for a Parcel Legally Described as Port St. Lucie Section 33, Block 2325, Lots 2,3 and 4, and Generally Located on the Southeast Corner of SW Abraham Avenue and SW Port St. Lucie Boulevard (P23-003).

[2023-216](#)

The Acting City Clerk read Ordinance 23-20 aloud by title only.

Vice Mayor Caraballo opened the Public Hearing.

Stephen Mayer, Planner, Planning and Zoning, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Donald F. Defenthaler Small-Scale Future Land Use Map Amendment. He reviewed the request, location of subject property, and background. He noted the proposal has a concurrent rezoning request, which will be discussed in the next agenda item. Planner Mayer also presented the future land use and justification. He stated the property has an existing Limited Mixed Use (LMD) zoning and a future land use of Residential, Office, Institutional (ROI), to which the applicant is requesting an amendment to Residential, Low Density (RL). He indicated the Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval on February 7, 2023.

There being no further discussion, Vice Mayor Caraballo closed the Public Hearing.

Councilman Pickett moved to approve Ordinance 23-20. Councilwoman Morgan seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. (Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin was not present at this meeting.)

- 8.d** Ordinance 23-21, Quasi-Judicial, Public Hearing, An Ordinance Rezoning a 0.69-acre Property Owned by Donald F. Defenthaler and a 0.29-acre Property Owned by the City of Port St. Lucie, Located on the Southeast Corner of SW Abraham Avenue and SW Port St. Lucie Boulevard, from Limited Mixed-Use District (LMD) to Single Family Residential (RS-2) for Property Legally Described as Port St. Lucie Section Thirty-three, Block 2325, Lots 1, 2, 3 and 4 (P22-366).

[2023-215](#)

At this time, City Attorney James Stokes reviewed the quasi-judicial procedures. The Acting City Clerk swore in those individuals who wished to speak on this item and read Ordinance 23-21 aloud by title only.

Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired if Council had any ex parte communications, to which the members indicated they had none.

Vice Mayor Caraballo opened the Public Hearing.

Stephen Mayer, Planner, Planning and Zoning, stated he had been sworn and the official file was submitted to the City Clerk five days prior to this hearing. He asked that the file be entered into the record.

Planner Mayer provided a PowerPoint presentation on the companion rezoning application for Donald F. Defenthaler, which is a joint application with the City. He reviewed the request, location of subject property, and background. He also presented the future land use and justification. He stated the Planning and Zoning Board recommended approving the rezoning request, from Limited Mixed Use District (LMD) to Single Family Residential (RS-2), on February 7, 2023.

There being no further discussion, Vice Mayor Caraballo closed the Public Hearing.

Councilman Pickett moved to approve Ordinance 23-21.

Councilwoman Morgan seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. (Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin was not present at this meeting.)

9. Other Public Hearings

There was nothing scheduled for this item.

10. First Reading of Ordinances

- 10.a** Ordinance 23-24, Authorizing the Issuance of Not to Exceed \$49,000,000 in Aggregate Principal Amount of the City 's General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Series 2023 in Order to Achieve Debt Service Savings.

[2023-257](#)

The Acting City Clerk read Ordinance 23-24 aloud by title only.

Stephen Okiye, Finance Director, stated the debt savings to the City was approximately \$3.2 million. He discussed the status of the bonds and indicated there would be an annual savings of \$320,000.00 every year up to 2035.

There being no further discussion, Councilwoman Morgan moved to approve Ordinance 23-24. Councilman Bonna seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. (Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin was not present at this meeting.)

11. Resolutions

- 11.a** Resolution 23-R24, Authorizing the Acquisition of Real Property Described as Lot 18, Block 2294, Port St. Lucie Section Thirty-Three, as Recorded in Plat Book 15, Pages 1, 1A through 1V, of the Public Records of St. Lucie County, Florida, for the Port St. Lucie Boulevard South Improvements.

[2023-252](#)

The Acting City Clerk read Resolution 23-R24 aloud by title only.

Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired if the City owned the property across the street from the parcel, to which City Manager Merejo indicated the City did not own the three lots. He noted that it did not inhibit their ability to expand the road heading south of Port St. Lucie Boulevard.

There being no further discussion, Councilman Bonna moved to approve Resolution 23-R24. Councilman Pickett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. (Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin

was not present at this meeting.)

- 11.b** Resolution 23-R25, Authorizing the Acquisition of Real Property Described as Lot 26, Block 2293, Port St. Lucie Section Thirty-Three, as Recorded in Plat Book 15, Pages 1, 1A through 1V, of the Public Records of St. Lucie County, Florida, for the Port St. Lucie Boulevard South Improvements.

[2023-253](#)

The Acting City Clerk read Resolution 23-R25 aloud by title only.

There being no discussion, Councilman Pickett moved to approve Resolution 23-R25. Councilwoman Morgan seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. (Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin was not present at this meeting.)

- 11.c** Resolution 23-R26, Authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Right-of-Way Consent Agreement between Florida Power and Light Company, a Florida Corporation, and the City of Port St. Lucie, necessary for maintaining the extension of Tom Mackie Boulevard.

[2023-254](#)

The Acting City Clerk read Resolution 23-R26 aloud by title only.

There being no discussion, Councilwoman Morgan moved to approve Resolution 23-R26. Councilman Pickett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. (Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin was not present at this meeting.)

12. Unfinished Business

There was nothing scheduled for this item.

13. New Business

There was nothing scheduled for this item.

14. City Manager's Report

City Manager Merejo stated FEMA awarded the City \$467,447.00 for a new generator at the Prineville Water Treatment Plant. He also noted there are 91,146 new water connections and 73,292 new sewer connections, which is a tremendous accomplishment for the City's waterways.

15. Councilmembers Report on Committee Assignments

Councilwoman Morgan stated she was honored to judge the Young Floridians and indicated a couple of the students would like to intern for the City.

Councilman Pickett reported that he attended the Treasure Coast Council of Local Governments.

Councilman Bonna stated he enjoyed judging the Young Floridians, announced he and his wife were expecting a baby boy, and thanked the Boy Scouts in the audience for attending.

Vice Mayor Caraballo reported she went to Washington, D.C., where she attended Cities 101, addressed members of Congress and their staffs, and met with Senator Rick Scott and others. She stated she also attended the Florida Black Caucus on behalf of the Florida League of Cities and the Strategic Planning Session for the City of Port St. Lucie.

16. Public to be Heard - (if necessary as determined by City Council at conclusion of public to be heard)

17. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Bryan Pankhurst, Acting City Clerk

Traci Mehl, Deputy City Clerk