

# City of Port St. Lucie

## Special City Council

### Meeting Minutes - Final

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

Shannon Martin, Vice Mayor, District III

Stephanie Morgan, Councilwoman, District I

Dave Pickett, Councilman, District II

Jolien Caraballo, Councilwoman, District IV

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**Monday, May 17, 2021**

**9:30 AM**

**Council Chambers, City Hall**

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**1. Meeting Called to Order**

A Special Virtual Meeting of the CITY COUNCIL of the City of Port St. Lucie was called to order by Mayor Oravec on May 17, 2021, at 9:34 AM, at Port St. Lucie City Hall, 121 SW Port St. Lucie Boulevard, Port St. Lucie, Florida.

**2. Roll Call**

Council Members Present:

Mayor Gregory J. Oravec

Vice Mayor Shannon Martin

Councilwoman Stephanie Morgan

Councilman Dave Pickett (virtual)

Councilwoman Jolien Caraballo

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Oravec led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. Public to be Heard**

Richard Lawton, 1129 SE Oriental Avenue, Port St. Lucie, FL, stated that he has spoken a number of times against the proliferation of signs in the City and its parks, and today he is speaking about the content of these signs. He said about twenty new signs just appeared in the Botanical Gardens park indicating that no bicycles, skateboards, or dogs are allowed in the park. He stated he has asked a number of staff about the new restrictions but received answers he found to be unreasonable. He asked the City Council why these policies were put into place.

Councilwoman Caraballo stated that she heard from a realtor that there are two conflicting signs at the Botanical Gardens for sunrise and sunset. She said that Mr.

Lawton is a resident in her district and she would be glad to meet with him regarding his concerns.

The City Manager indicated Mr. Lawton appeared at the last Regular Council Meeting. He stated that staff is reviewing the signs recently placed in the Botanical Gardens to ensure they are consistent with insurance purposes and park ordinances. He said staff will provide a memo to Council as well as setup a meeting with Mr. Lawton.

Mayor Oravec requested that staff meet with Mr. Richard Lawton regarding his concerns before the next Public To Be Heard. He stated he would like staff to explain why a sign is placed, as there should be no conflicting signs. He said there is a disconnect if kids cannot ride their bikes in the parks.

Brad Keen, Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation, explained that staff met with Mr. Lawton a week before the 5/10/2021 Council Meeting and discussed his concerns regarding the signs, provided him with the City's sign code, and a copy of Chapter 96, which explains that bicycles cannot be ridden through parks due to safety concerns. Mr. Keen stated that he joined staff last Friday to canvas the Westmoreland track, Botanical Gardens, and the Wilderness Park area, where they removed and flagged several signs. He said that some signs are required either to protect the City or inform the public.

Councilwoman Caraballo stated that she has received multiple complaints regarding bicycles on the bridge and she was told by the City Manager and staff that, even though there's a dedicated bicycle path on the bridge, the bicycles cannot be restricted from the sidewalk. She said if it applies on the bridge, it is difficult not to apply it throughout the City.

Mayor Oravec stated the signs need to have criteria for placement, serve a purpose, and be enforced. He requested that the City Manager apply some managerial discretion and come back to Council with a resolution.

## 5. Proclamations

### 5.a Proclamation for Haitian Flag Day

[2021-425](#)

Mayor Oravec read aloud the Proclamation declaring May 18th as Haitian Flag Day in the City of Port St. Lucie. Carmel Vericain, Secretary of Treasure Coast Cultural Festival, Inc., thanked the Council for granting this Proclamation. She introduced Carol King, the Founder of Treasure Coast Cultural Festival, Inc., and Carleen Wright, Head of Volunteers, and Nazaire King, Treasurer. She explained that May 18th marks a very important day in the Haitian history, as it is the day their

forefathers fought for the freedom of its people. She indicated tomorrow will be the 218th year since the flag was adopted and to celebrate a festival will take place tomorrow from 2:00 PM to 10:00 PM at the MidFlorida Credit Union Event Center.

**6. Second Reading of Ordinances, Public Hearing**

- 6.a** Ordinance 21-30, Public Hearing, An Ordinance Approving the Fifth Edition of The Citywide Design Standards (P18-024) And Repealing Citywide Design Standards Dated April 13, 2009, Ordinance 09-38.

[2021-302](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was heard after Item 7.g.)

Councilwoman Caraballo moved to approve tabling this item to the May 24, 2021, Regular City Council Meeting. Vice Mayor Martin seconded the motion. The City Clerk restated the motion as follows: to table Ordinance 21-30 to the May 24, 2021 Regular City Council Meeting. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

**7. New Business**

- 7.a** Hear Updates from Partners Supporting the City's Goal of Quality Education for All Residents

[2021-383](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was heard after item 5.a and was for discussion only, as no vote occurred.)

The City Manager stated that during their most recent Strategic Planning Session, Council discussed a desire to hear from their partners in education, prior to the Council setting their goals for the next year.

Kate Parmelee stated she was pleased to have their education partners available this morning to provide an update on a historic year in education, the tremendous strides that have been made, and the efforts that are underway throughout the City and County. She introduced Superintendent Wayne Gent to talk about St. Lucie Public Schools and stated that representatives from the Somerset Group and the Renaissance Charter School and Charter Schools, USA, will speak as well. She said they will also hear from the Children's Services Council and the Early Learning Coalition, so that Council gets a holistic view of what is happening in education in the community today.

ST. LUCIE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Wayne Gent, Superintendent of St. Lucie Public Schools, provided a Powerpoint presentation. He reviewed graduation rates for 2020 vs. 2019, district comparisons, the Treasure Coast high schools, subgroup rankings, and closing the gap. He discussed increasing career and college readiness, Career and Technical Education (CTE) for the middle and high schools, and the Skills Gap Study for 2017 and 2019. He also spoke to the new and expanded CTE programs and pre-apprenticeships available at the high schools.

Superintendent Gent introduced John Prince, Deputy Superintendent; Helen Wild, Chief Academic Officer; Lydia Martin, Chief Information Officer; Marty Sanders, Intergovernmental Relations; and Aliesha Seitz, Career Technical Education.

Dr. Helen Wild, Chief Academic Officer, noted that the St. Lucie Public Schools just surpassed their industry certifications from last year, as they are now at 2,414. She discussed potential ways to expand their partnership with the City of Port St. Lucie and how the City can: support the new Civic Literacy Practicum for 12th grade students and internships, have staff or Council speak to the students, and share their social media outlets.

Dr. Wild also spoke to mental health and social emotional wellness, as the St. Lucie Public Schools have social workers, mental health counselors, and guidance counselors on staff as well as teachers training teachers on social emotional learning. She stated the City can help these efforts by putting some information in the their lobby regarding financial incentives and grants to support this work, promoting the importance of attendance, and working collaboratively to provide more school nurses.

Superintendent Gent reviewed the growth that is happening in the community and the intergovernmental initiatives. He stated that they were anticipating the need for a high school in the Tradition area within the next couple of years. He said the City can continue their support with a long term sidewalk plan and provide joint community and school planning to assure school sites in new communities.

Councilwoman Morgan stated that she learned a lot at the Treasure Coast Business Summit. She said the Future Business Leaders of America were there and she likes the new Pharmacy Tech program.

She inquired as to when the City will get their students back. In response, Superintendent Gent stated that they hope to kick that off again soon, as it boosts the students' self-esteem, passion, and confidence.

Vice Mayor Martin commented on the strides made despite COVID, including the increase in graduation rates. She stated she was impressed with the Treasure Coast Business Summit, the new programs, and the kids. She said that they needed to get this information out to the community by partnering with the City's Communication Department. She stated that she would be happy to come out and talk to the students or whatever she can do to be supportive.

Councilwoman Caraballo inquired about how students attend the programs offered at other schools, to which Superintendent Gent stated that transportation is provided. He explained that they are looking to expand the programs and continue to monitor them.

Councilwoman Caraballo stated that they need to provide the public with more information on these partnerships, so they understand that resources are available locally. She also asked the City Manager, since they are now post-COVID, to have the City's Police Department work with the School Board on its Truancy Program.

Mayor Oravec inquired how to explain graduation rates versus performance, to which Superintendent Gent stated that the requirements are rigorous, as the students have to pass testing and criteria to receive a diploma. He said they have to receive 24 credits, pass the FSA, and achieve a 2.0 GPA.

Mayor Oravec asked the City Manager to have the Communications Department partner with the School District to advertise the programs available and include the story as to why, how, etc., to sign up for the programs.

Mayor Oravec inquired if it was possible for the City to get a seat on the Advisory Committee, so they could work together on the Career Tech and feel like part of the team. Superintendent Gent stated that the City can participate, as there are Advisory Committees for all the Career Tech programs at the school centers, and it can be coordinated through Aliasha Seitz.

Mayor Oravec discussed the value of internships and how to leverage and maximize them in the City. Councilwoman Caraballo stated she agreed and supported the internships.

## SOMERSET ACADEMIES

A representative of the Somerset Academies provided a presentation and reviewed the state of truancy over the last year. She explained how they went from brick and mortar to remote instruction and showed a brief video on the technology being utilized in the classrooms. She thanked the City for the hot spots it allocated for the campuses. She indicated that attendance has decreased slightly and one of their office members now works full-time on attendance. She stated that the mental health of many students, along with their grades and enthusiasm, has really declined and their Guidance Department seems understaffed. She concluded her presentation by discussing the top issues Somerset hopes to surmount during the next school year: hiring, budget, and expansion.

Mayor Oravec suggested that Somerset get with Carmen Capezutto in the City's Neighborhood Services Department regarding the Homeowners Assistance Program for the teachers and others.

Councilwoman Caraballo questioned the amount of funds needed for the high school resource officers and asked if Somerset College Prep covers 100% of the expenses for an officer. The representative responded in the negative, stating that 100% of their allocation goes to the City, so there is a shortfall.

## CHARTER SCHOOL, USA

Dr. Eddie Ruiz introduced Christiana Coburn, Principal at Renaissance Charter School of St. Lucie and Amanda Wilson, Principal at Renaissance Charter at Tradition. He stated that a new high school will be coming to Tradition in the next school year and that Teresa Brown, the Principal, will be providing some information. He stated that Dr. Patrick Galatowitsch is their lead for their schools in the St. Lucie area. Dr. Ruiz said that he, as the State Director for Florida, oversees all 64 schools in the state of Florida.

Dr. Ruiz provided a Powerpoint presentation and an overview of

Charter Schools, USA. He reviewed their mission, vision, and core values, and stated that they have 90 schools in six states. He discussed their graduation rates as well as how their core/DNA of putting students first, high expectations, and being better and different, equals student success. He showed Council a list of job skills for education innovation in the future from 2020 compared to 2030. Dr. Ruiz concluded his presentation by reviewing the Charter Schools, USA, continuous improvement model.

Dr. Galatowitsch discussed the state of truancy and school attendance. He stated they struggled last March when COVID hit and as they moved to learning from home. He said they created a structure and an environment where the kids could be successful, which included three different learning models. He stated that making personal phone calls to the families worked well and 70-85% of the students were back in school. He explained how they managed the learning environment during COVID and utilized the Charter School, USA, network for the mobile classroom. He stated that across math, reading, and science, the students performance in the mobile classroom environment exceeded the national average achievements across the country. He noted that their minority students were more successful than any other students across the state in math and reading in grade levels one through five. He said, even though they were better, it is distressing to look at the numbers.

Mayor Oravec stated that he likes the slide of the continuous improvement wheel, as it is a good teaching opportunity of relative performance and absolute performance, which Council has talked about in their strategic planning sessions and retreats. He said, relatively speaking, they are doing better and that is good, but as far as absolute performance goes, people who care about their kids and their education do not want to see that 39% of the kids are below grade level or two grades below. In response, Dr. Galatowitsch stated that it is important for the City and Charter Schools, USA, to collaborate and develop partnerships to help expand the opportunities and services that they provide to their children.

Ms. Teresa Brown, Principal of the new Tradition Preparatory High School, stated that it will open August 10, 2021. She spoke about support, internships, kids discovering their passions, CTE's, and a monthly speaker series where the Council is welcome. She reviewed the three objectives for Charter Schools, USA: Defeat the COVID Gap;

Mobile Learning Environment; and Mental Health. She described the areas of concern and the need for mental health counselors and social workers at the school level as well as the need for before and aftercare for the children and their families at the community level.

Dr. Ruiz stated that social and emotional is a big piece in all of these presentations. He discussed the results of a recent survey completed by parents, staff, teachers, and students, and there was a decline from fall to spring. He said the comments were around depression and anxiety, so this will be a huge task as they move forward. He stated they will support their teachers and the City would be a great partner in providing that support.

Councilwoman Caraballo commented on the great presentation. She stated that she thinks about the innovative ways they can reach out to the community to provide resources, utilize their parks programs, and create team building and fun activities. She said the lack of connection is only increasing with COVID. She suggested bringing the Parks & Recreation Department and the Civic Center into the schools and provide a model of the activity and where it is located. She said the kids can bring that information back to the parents and then maybe have some joint events with the parents. She recommended having a fun activity for teenagers and, at the same time, the parents could get a mental health service of some kind, whether it is yoga or another type of activity. Councilwoman Caraballo stated she is interested and passionate, and would love to work with Parks & Recreation on this partnership.

Mayor Oravec stated he appreciated the presentation, because it was reflective of strategic thinking and planning, data driven and offered real questions and ideas. He mentioned to the City Manager that it may be time to refresh and talk about internships and the idea of mentorships or a mentorship pool, and make it available to all of their partner schools. He noted that he would like a copy of this presentation and continuous improvement wheel.

#### CHILDREN'S SERVICES COUNCIL OF ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Sean Boyle, Chief Executive Officer of the Children's Services Council, introduced Commissioner Linda Bartz, who is the Chair of the Board. He indicated that Superintendent Gent, Assistant Chief Richard Del Toro, and Commander Carmine Izzo were also on the Board, among



others.

Mr. Boyle provided a PowerPoint presentation. He stated that the Children's Services Council's two biggest priorities are keeping the kids off the streets and in school. He reviewed their funding priorities and outlined their numerous contributions, programs, services, and partners, which include summer learning programs, safe sleep to prevent infant mortality, reading materials and mentors, and after school programs. He explained that they are primarily a prevention based organization and support families in crisis. He said they have served 44,000 children over the past year, which is 4,000 more than the prior year. He stated they have helped purchase PPE and tele-health related equipment, provide meals for Operation Dinner Table, promote small businesses, provide scholarships, etc. He talked about the need to improve family dynamics as well as assist those above and below the federal poverty level. He also discussed how the Children's Services Council has been able to impact school attendance and grades.

Mr. Boyle suggested ways for the City to partner with and support their organization. He said they could assist with the expansion of mental health services and social emotional learning (SEL) by utilizing the City's Communication Department to help with the stigma of mental health and promoting services for families. He stated the City could also assist by expanding facility use for summer and after school programs through their Parks & Recreation Department.

Mayor Oravec thanked Mr. Boyle for his presentation and organization.

Vice Mayor Martin stated that she would like the City to formalize a process through NICE to promote awareness and partner with Mr. Boyle to do what he discussed.

Councilwoman Caraballo agreed they needed to involve the NICE program and suggested doing the State of Education for each neighborhood, which will give the opportunity for some partners to come in and answer questions.

Councilwoman Morgan stated that it is Mental Health Awareness month and that mental health has a stigma attached to it. She said they all need to stay off Facebook and reach out and talk to someone.

Mayor Oravec stated that he is supportive of NICE, but that is just scratching the surface. He encouraged the City Manager to have a symposium with Mr. Boyle and his team to map out what they can do together. He said NICE and City University should have a partner day, where they talk about the Children's Services Council, 211, and some of the other organizations to help their citizens learn what the City and other services provide that are critically important to quality of life and what to do in a family crisis.

Mayor Oravec stated that he would like some ideas, as they have the Minsky gym, Mid-Florida Credit Union Event Center, Community Center, and Parks facilities. He said they are working on partnerships with the schools and that the Boys and Girls Clubs are in many schools. He stated there is a need and a demand, so they have to do some strategic problem solving.

Mayor Oravec stated he is a vote for anything that supports mental health counseling and the social workers. He said the social workers in the schools are overworked and cannot provide the quality of care the families and the kids need. He stated that this is a City issue, because when there is inadequate mental health and social workers in a community, the Police Department ends up providing these services. He said he is supportive of getting to that systematically and having it driven by data.

#### EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Deb LaBella, Director of Programs, presented a PowerPoint presentation. She stated that five years ago they addressed mental health as a need for their two and three year olds. She said they have implemented many programs in their childcare centers, contract with 140 providers, and serve about 2,800 school readiness children a month. She stated they have some evidenced based programs that help children learn at a very young age and help their teachers identify and regulate feelings.

Ms. LaBella stated the issues right now are funding, finding qualified teachers, and families struggling with finances and children's behavior. She encouraged the City to include the Early Learning Coalition in their further discussions on mental health.

Ms. Labella stated the City can help by communicating their services

and having the Early Learning Coalition communicate the City's services, as their families are reaching out for low cost services, especially for their birth to five population. She said the City can help recognize that childcare is an essential industry that helps a Community grow economically. She stated that the City could also give consideration and priority to childcare owners who are looking for permits.

Councilwoman Caraballo stated that the number one issue is communicating and marketing the information to the public. She said she wished there was a button on the City's webpage to search for resources by just putting in the need. She asked if they could create a centralized resource, so people can quickly find what they are looking for.

Councilwoman Morgan stated that communication and mental illness were listed under every presentation. She said that their Welcome Guide does not list any local resource. She suggested having a local resource page with a link to the City's webpage.

- 7.b** Hear the Presentation on the Proposed Youth Council Program [2021-325](#)

This New Business item was Tabled, under Item 7.g, by the City Council to the next Special City Council Meeting.

- 7.c** Review and Accept the City Manager's Strategic Plan Update [2021-216](#)

This New Business item was Tabled, under Item 7.g, by the City Council to the next Special City Council Meeting.

- 7.d** Recommended Prioritization of the American Rescue Plan Allocation to the City of Port St. Lucie and Federal Legislative Update [2021-215](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was heard after Item 7.e and was for discussion only, as no vote occurred.)

Kate Parmelee introduced Andrew Sath with Sustainable Strategies DC, who is available via Zoom for any questions. She provided an overview of the American Rescue Plan and the recent launch of the Coronavirus state and local fiscal recovery funds from the U.S. Treasury Department. She stated the City of Port St. Lucie will be receiving an allocation of \$24,739,425 and discussed its eligible and ineligible uses. She reviewed the City's recommendations on how to use this funding to support the public health expenditures of \$485,000

and address the negative economic impacts.

Vice Mayor Martin inquired if the leftover funds for housing, mortgage or small business assistance have been utilized, before committing more funds. She stated she would rather use the funds on something tangible, like putting people in homes, and not on consulting services.

The City Manager stated that rental housing assistance has not gone as fast as expected. He said an initial amount of \$6 million for rental housing was distributed countywide and the money the City received is not available for mortgage assistance, which is in demand. He noted that more money will be coming for rental assistance. Vice Mayor Martin questioned how much was used.

Kate Parmelee explained the amount for mortgage assistance was projected based on the current need. She stated the County has some funds, as does the City in its CDBG allocation. She said this is a placeholder and should be evaluated. She stated the County will finalize their spending allocation in June and that they administer many of the social service programs in Port St. Lucie as well. She said they could look at the homeless intake program further, as the county comes forward with their recommendations. Vice Mayor Martin stated she would like to see the data in a memo to Council.

Mayor Oravec stated that they need useful data to know if they are doing a good job. He said he agreed with the Vice Mayor in that they focus the funds on larger projects, such as water and sewer, and that they put it into the economy to help people.

Councilwoman Caraballo stated that she agreed. She said this would be a good time to hone in on the Business Accelerator Program and capitalize on the entrepreneurs in light of the newer market or industry since COVID. She stated that she likes the Small Business Grant program and the Women's Business Center program. She said that she supports the SBDC, but would like to hear how they utilize their funds and what they have done so far. She stated that the Commercial Development Program is important and the US-1 corridor absolutely needs improved. She said all the projects they have are great and she wants to see more projects. She stated the more projects they have, the better they are at serving the needs of the Community, as they are based upon their Strategic Plan.

Kate Parmelee stated that Andy Seth was on the line. She explained that there is some framework in this Bill with the US Treasury that may require some level of relatedness to COVID-19, which is why some of the infrastructure projects were chosen. She stated that one strategy could be with the replacement of lost public sector revenue, as it could free up some discretionary power of the City and allocate it toward projects that may not fit that caveat. She said they may be able to swap the culvert replacement program, but that is kind of in the weeds. She asked if Mr. Seth could confirm that for her.

In response, Mr. Seth stated that the overall framework of the Bill asks that they look at the impacts COVID has had on their community as well as what projects they will be doing and how they will help the City. He said it is important to consider this as they are making these choices. He stated the path was clearer on water and sewer infrastructure, because the language of the Bill suggests if they are improving the health and safety of their community with water, sewer, or stormwater projects, then it makes that link. However, on the business programs and individual assistance, the City needs to be sure they are benefiting the folks who were impacted and that the result is something better.

Mayor Oravec stated that Mr. Seth was making the case for the City to put more of the funds into water and sewer projects. He said that they will want to do something for businesses, to the extent that it fits the parameters. He stated that he thought businesses would be easy to get around for targeted industries or the new economy that has accelerated has a result of COVID.

Carmen Capezutto, Neighborhood Services Director, stated that the City is good with rental assistance right now. He said they received \$6 million from the Treasury for emergency rental assistance and a possible second round coming. He stated that money is going a little slow, but they are monitoring it. He said they put a placeholder in for mortgage assistance, because the City has high homeownership. He stated the CDBG coronavirus money set aside for mortgages has not been touched, because the City has been getting assistance from the County. He noted that mortgage assistance will be their future need.

Regarding homelessness services, Mr. Capezutto explained that there is an intake center/housing hub in Fort Pierce to service Port St. Lucie. He stated that it is not consulting services, but an intake center for the

City to refer people to if the Police Department comes across someone who is homeless, or if they call 211, they can be referred to a place in Port St. Lucie for temporary placement.

Vice Mayor Martin asked if it could be worded differently, because that is not how she read it. Ms. Parmelee stated that they could work on the wording, fine-tune it, and consolidate it. She said she appreciated Council's comments and feedback on the funds having a major impact. She stated that the County will be coming out with their recommendations in June. She said about \$20 million is for infrastructure projects. Vice Mayor Martin stated that she would like to know what the County is going to do, so they do not duplicate efforts. She asked if they would be discussing this at the Retreat.

In response, the City Manager stated that he is working on his budget recommendations, which Council will get prior to the retreat. He explained that fiber and hot spots are eligible through the American Rescue Act and that staff is proposing they meet this strategic objective through this Act and their General Fund. He asked that Council let him know if they disagree with this strategy. He noted that for the water and sewer extensions for Torino Park and Tradition Regional Park, staff sees these as an addition to all the projects being proposed through the CIP and not substitutions.

Vice Mayor Martin stated that when they have another public discussion and find out what is happening with the County, she hopes the presentation clearly states the funding sources and how they will be utilized. She said it can get confusing and they need to be able to explain it to the residents. The City Manager stated that staff will provide an update at the Retreat.

Councilwoman Caraballo asked for the anticipated date by which all funds needed to be utilized before the government wants them back. Ms. Parmelee stated that date is December 20, 2024. She also discussed the infrastructure projects, the funding from various federal agencies, and the grants they are seeking to free up additional funding for other projects.

Councilwoman Caraballo stated that she was fine with the infrastructure projects. She said that if they ever have another pandemic, and they needed a WiFi hotspot, what better way than to go to a park and work in an open area. She stated that they can link some

of that into COVID relief, but flexibility is key and these projects are just placeholders. Ms. Parmelee stated that was correct. She said staff is working to respond to the guidelines and will have to do some additional due diligence. She stated she was hearing six to eight parks per year with both fiber and WiFi. She said staff can consolidate them into large categories, because the City's WiFi expansion program is in their Strategic Plan. She stated the water and sewer components are in the 10-Year Master Plan, Parks & Recreation Master Plan, Stormwater Master Plan, and Southern Grove Infrastructure. She said that staff can structure this the next time it comes to Council to show the big projects that are moving forward through these individual line items.

Mayor Oravec stated he agreed that was the way to go. He said he would rather see that lost revenue put to some great projects. He stated the Village Green septic-to-sewer is in there, but he would like to see just septic-to-sewer and \$1 million set aside for low to moderate income people in the City.

The City Manager suggested thinking about the flexibility. He said if they replace the revenue, they could earmark it for that project. He stated some things might be stretching the limit of the American Recovery Act, but it is very clear that they can replace loss of revenue.

Councilwoman Caraballo stated that it is not just the loss of revenue, as the cost of goods keep going up on their sales tax projects, such as Floresta, etc.

Ms. Parmelee thanked Congressman Mast for putting in an appropriations request for the City of Port St. Lucie for a surface transportation appropriations request of \$4.6 million to support Port St. Lucie Boulevard South. Council thanked Congressman Mast as well.

**7.e** Discuss the Results of the Crosstown Noise Monitoring Evaluation

[2021-283](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was heard after Item 7.a and was for discussion only, as no vote occurred.)

Heath Stocton introduced Andy Smith with KCI who was joining them from Baltimore, Maryland. He stated that Mr. Smith is the Regional Practice Leader for KCI in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) area, which covers noise impacts.

Mr. Smith provided a PowerPoint presentation on the phase one and phase two monitoring studies that were performed at Crosstown Parkway. He stated that phase one was basically focused on looking at the performance of the earth berms that are currently in place and phase two was a subsequent study looking at 24 hour noise monitoring. He defined noise as unwanted noise where folks could not carry on a conversation in their backyard. He explained that noise or sound is measured in decibels, the general noise fundamentals, traffic noise, sound barriers, and the FDOT traffic noise criteria.

Mr. Smith discussed the noise monitoring study, short-term monitoring, monitoring results, residents concerns, 24-hour monitoring, residential speech interface, and noise disturbance events. He also reviewed the monitoring results for NR13, NR14, NR15, NR16, NR19, SR34, SR35 and SR36.

Councilwoman Morgan questioned the noise of the motorcycles going to the beach on the weekends, as indicated in the report. In response, Mr. Smith explained that the residents indicated they could hear motorcycles going to and coming from the beach. Councilwoman Morgan asked if there was a law regarding noise, to which Mayor Oravec stated there is a law and it will probably be a part of the recommendations.

Councilwoman Caraballo asked about NR13 and NR14, and if the noise was higher because of the drop off and traffic is turning right from Floresta onto Crosstown, as there is an acceleration there. Mr. Smith stated that was their assumption. He said they can evaluate them to see if they can hear the revving engines.

Councilwoman Caraballo also asked, regarding NR19 and NR36, if the US-1 traffic was a factor, to which Mr. Smith stated that US-1 did not affect the noise level.

Councilman Pickett inquired about the distance between the roadway and the receptors. In response, Mr. Smith explained that the receptors were placed in peoples backyards with no established distances.

Councilman Pickett asked if the information in their packets was the average of all the noise data collected during that 30 minute period. Mr. Smith stated that was correct. He explained that a noise



measurement is taken, and then it is ultimately averaged together to come up with the overall sound energy equivalent for that one hour period or for an hour period.

Councilman Pickett asked what an acceptable decibel level would be for a roadway or parkway with an average speed of 45 mph, such as Crosstown. Mr. Smith stated that in this case anything under 66 decibels was acceptable. Mayor Oravec noted that after the recommendations, Council will have to work through this.

Mayor Oravec inquired about the average daily trips for Crosstown and asked if the 2000 plus trips were peak hour. Mr. Smith stated that was during their noise monitoring period, so it would have been either during an AM or PM peak hour. Mayor Oravec indicated that some of their locations are right under 66/67. He said people are still learning to drive Crosstown and the City is becoming more crowded. He stated that this presentation sets forth that when traffic doubles, the noise will increase three DBA's. Ms. Smith stated that was the general fundamental. Mayor Oravec stated if they are close, but expect traffic to double, the volume will double; and where they were close, they are now over; and where they were not close, they are close.

Heath Stocton stated he thought the worst case scenario was level of service C, which is free flow traffic conditions with people going whatever speed they want to go. He said once they increase that or double that, their level of service will decrease because people will no longer be able to go that fast. He stated that even though they are increasing their volume, they are decreasing their speed. Mr. Smith stated that was a great point. He said 2,698 was at NR14 and 2,720 is what was studied, so it was really close. He stated they would not double the traffic to get to that point. Mayor Oravec said if it doubles, they will go down in speed, which will be a decrease. Mr. Smith noted that the peak hour might shift to a different hour.

Mr. Smith stated, with the one exception at SR34 of 67.1, they did not exceed the 66 decibel criteria level throughout the weekend. However, the residents have expressed noise level events that interfere with outside speech and sleep. He stated that the noise levels are principally generated from vehicles sporting loud exhaust systems, motorcycles, and heavy trucks.

Mr. Smith explained that peak noise levels would not be addressed by

sound barriers. He suggested having a visible police presence along Crosstown Parkway and explained that it is illegal to replace the manufacturer's muffler system with something that emits more noise. He indicated that the Police Department will be working with the Communications Department to initiate a City-wide campaign focused on educating residents on illegal exhaust systems. He stated the City will be signing Crosstown Parkway as a residential noise control area and/or strict enforcement area. He said the City is committed to monitoring and maintaining the enhanced landscape that was done as part of the enhancements program to block and minimize views of the Parkway.

John Harley, a resident who participated in the study (SR34), stated that the noise level varies as traffic has picked up but the gas situation has decreased the amount of loud cars. He also stated that exhaust fumes or something in the neighborhood is turning their outdoor furniture and pools black. He said he brought in a sample to be analyzed. He stated that his wife has asthma and they spend 80% of their time outside on their lanai. He said she comes to bed wheezing and needs her inhaler to breathe. He stated that new things are cropping up, as the number of ambulances and emergency vehicles on the road have increased, and suggested putting up a wall.

Robert Loupe, a resident who participated in the study (RN15), stated he feels if the road from Floresta was open to go straight across, they would only get the noise one time. He said his house is right between Floresta and the bottom of the bridge, where the turnaround is located. He stated the loudest noise is on acceleration. He said when the vehicles turn onto Floresta from Crosstown, they accelerate to the light, slow down and make the U-turn, and then accelerate to Floresta, slow down and turn right. He stated that he gets the noise three times from one vehicle. He also explained that the traffic stops at the light at the bottom of the bridge by the turnaround. He said if that light was not there, and it was a regular intersection, that traffic would be moving and they would not get half the noise. He stated his bedroom is on that side of the house and he has hearing aids, but the traffic noise wakes him up. He said he can hear the traffic when he is in his enclosed porch and it is hard to talk on the phone. He suggested turning the super street into a normal intersection.

Kevin Nelacenti, 1271 SE Wave Lane, stated that he would like to see that intersection go, because it makes more noise. He suggested

looking at Mr. Smith's data and comparing the intersection noise versus the noise away from the intersection. He stated that Crosstown turns into a raceway, as people are passing him going 55 and 60 mph. He suggested putting up some radar devices warning people that they are going too fast. He said he would like to know the curve on having more traffic volume but at a slower speed. He stated that he can feel the music/sub-woofers when lying in his bed.

Mayor Oravec inquired if Chief John Bolduc had setup a radar unit in the sidewalk at the crown of the bridge with a catch car on the other side. In response, Chief Bolduc stated his officers have caught a lot of people speeding on Crosstown. He said he did not know if they could enforce their way out of a situation. He explained that the roadway is engineered like a highway and people will feel safe to speed.

Chief Bolduc stated they have started cracking down on the modified mufflers. He explained that the officers have gone through the educational phase, but it is a change in enforcement and philosophy for the organization and community. He said it is a problem across the country. Chief Bolduc suggested a public campaign to deter people from modifying their vehicles and issuing citations for those that are modified.

Mayor Oravec stated that he wanted to hear from the Council, as he felt staff's recommendations could be enhanced.

Councilwoman Morgan suggested more enforcement on the bridge and increasing the landscaping at Floresta and the turnarounds. She agreed that more enforcement comes with education and visible police presence. She said most of the noise is from loud mufflers and music. (Clerk's Note: Councilwoman Morgan excused herself from the meeting at this time, 1:00 PM.)

Vice Mayor Martin stated that the wall is not efficient, they cannot have police presence 24/7, and the superstreet would be too costly to redo. She suggested doing something specifically for the homes being effected.

Councilwoman Caraballo stated that the superstreet is for safety, but inconvenient. She explained the noise she hears from Crosstown on her front porch and how traffic is like a raceway when she walks on the bridge. She suggested increasing the law enforcement, even in the

evening hours. Regarding the loud exhausts, she stated she would like strategic enforcement based on when the noise is more prevalent in the evening hours. She explained that shops can sell modified exhausts and vehicles can be purchased from dealerships with enhanced exhausts. She said she does not want a proliferation of signs and asked for the status of the lighted sign, as she thought was very effective when they discussed speeding. She stated she was good with the larger berms, but that she does not want a wall because it is not effective or aesthetically pleasing to the community. She explained that when discussing equity, she wants them to address this issue with a holistic approach, as other intersections in the City are experiencing traffic noise.

Councilman Pickett explained that he hears the traffic noise when he sits on his back porch. He said it will only get worse with more residents. He stated that Crosstown is a road that invites people to speed. He suggested enhanced enforcement and landscaping along the road to curtail the noise. He said he was against a wall there, because of the cost and the potential for unwanted spray painting. He suggested providing landscaping to the homes that are being affected.

Mayor Oravec explained that noise is relative. He pointed out that the master planned communities west of I-95 have buffered themselves from the road using walls. He stated that it is clear the Council does not want to reconstruct the superstreet, but that he continues to support the idea of a referendum to make the superstreet a traditional intersection. He said they should let the people vote on it, as all of the solutions are going to be expensive. He stated that the berm is maxed out in most places and would be very disruptive to the landscaping. He said that walls can be done correctly. He indicated that the developments on Becker Road have a berm, a wall, and landscaping. He stated that they cannot enforce their way out of the situation. He suggested having a beautiful wall and landscaping on top of the berm, if Council does not want to go the superstreet route.

Mayor Oravec stated he would be supportive of the City buying the homes of those with 60 db or more and directly adjacent from Crosstown, and selling them with a disclaimer. He said they have the money to address this issue. He stated he was also for the City providing no-interest loans through Neighborhood Services and a banking consortium. He also suggested giving the homes in this corridor hurricane glass and weatherization. He stated that 24/7/365

enforcement on Crosstown could cost \$360,000.

Vice Mayor Martin stated that she would be supportive of sending a letter to residents about the City purchasing their home as well as how the City can facilitate or mitigate the cost of hurricane impact windows. She said she would like to see the plan for adding traffic officers to the budget. She explained that she hears the traffic on I-95 in her house all the time, so it is an issue across the City. She stated she was fine with the extra enforcement, purchasing/selling homes, providing hurricane windows or landscaping in backyards.

Councilwoman Caraballo stated that she does not like the superstreet. She said she does not mind sending it out to referendum, but questioned if it was something the City should do for safety reasons. She stated the study indicated a wall would not help the really loud noises. She said that she supports additional landscaping and hurricane/sound proofing the homes, but she has concerns about purchasing them.

Mayor Oravec stated they would need more research on any of these suggestions. He explained the safety issue with the superstreet would apply to every intersection in the City. Councilwoman Caraballo said that they should factor in safety and cost when making the decision. Mayor Oravec stated he feels it should go to referendum because it has been such a contentious issues, as it was unusual, was not rolled out properly, and would be very expensive to change. He said he believed the voters will reject it, and the issue would be resolved by asking the question. He explained that a disclosure could be provided when selling the homes.

Vice Mayor Martin stated that the flashing speed signs work and asked if they could be placed in that area. Mr. Stocton said they could install the signs, as they are relatively inexpensive, if this is something Council wants to consider. Vice Mayor Martin and Mayor Oravec stated they supported the use of speed signs.

Councilman Pickett stated he was in support of the referendum to remove the superstreet, to put an end to the petitions, emails and arguments. He said he thought purchasing the homes was a great idea, but he would want to hear more.

Mayor Oravec stated that two and one-half of them support the

referendum idea. He asked the City Manager for a report on the time and expense of converting the intersection that exists to a traditional intersection. He said the City Attorney can provide how the referendum question can be structured, so that it meets the rule/law. He stated the public should know or be educated on the time and expense that goes into this decision, if Council decides to move forward.

Mayor Oravec also asked for some objective criteria and ideas by which they could offer and provide for the acquisition and then the disposition of certain homes negatively impacted by noise in this corridor as well as for hurricane glass, weatherization, and soundproofing. Vice Mayor Martin suggested having a Letter of Interest to gauge the public's interest. Mayor Oravec explained that a sliding scale of options could be offered based on the severity of the noise, objective criteria, and location of property.

Councilwoman Caraballo stated that Floresta needs to be included in the referendum conversation. She inquired about using planes to catch speeders, to which Chief Bolduc stated that the lasers are much more effective and cost efficient. Mayor Oravec suggest putting a laser in the sidewalk after the crown of the bridge and pick up the speeder at the foot of the bridge.

Heath Stocton asked for clarification on future noise studies and reports, to which Mayor Oravec explained that they have to consider growth and other changes, but to go big and let the Council cut it back. He reiterated the need for information on the superstreet intersection conversion and referendum as well as landscaping.

The meeting went into recess at approximately 1:48 PM and reconvened at 1:56 PM.

Heath Stocton questioned where Council stood on the driver feedback signs, to which Mayor Oravec indicated Council was in support of them. Councilwoman Caraballo stated that she did not want a proliferation of signs and that she wants the noise/muffler message on the big screen. Mr. Stocton stated he would prepare a memo for Council and include a proposal for the feedback signs.

- 7.f** Accept the Half-Cent Sales Tax FY 20/21 Second Quarter  
Projects Update

[2021-365](#)

This New Business item was Tabled, under Item 7.g, by the City

Council to the next Special City Council Meeting.

- 7.g** Request for an Attorney-Client Session with the City Council to Discuss Pending Litigation in the Matters of Marquee Development V. City of Port St. Lucie, Case No.: 2018-CA-1892 and Marquee Development V. City of Port St. Lucie, Case No.: 2018-CA-1893.

[2021-409](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was heard after Item 7.d.)

The City Attorney stated that they mediated and received more information, so they need to talk to Council as a group. He said if Council approves this request, his office will setup of the meeting.

Vice Mayor Martin moved to approve the request for an Attorney-Client Session with the City Council to Discuss Pending Litigation in the Matters of Marquee Development V. City of Port St. Lucie, Case No.: 2018-CA-1892 and Marquee Development V. City of Port St. Lucie, Case No.: 2018-CA-1893. Councilwoman Caraballo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

Councilwoman Caraballo moved to approve tabling the remainder of the items to the next Special City Council Meeting. Vice Mayor Martin seconded the motion. Councilwoman Caraballo amended her motion to approve tabling items 7.b, 7.c, and 7.f to the next Special City Council Meeting. Vice Mayor Martin seconded the amended motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

**8. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:21 PM.

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Sally Walsh, City Clerk

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Traci Mehl, Deputy City Clerk