

City of Port St. Lucie

City Council / City Staff Retreat

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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Wednesday, February 23, 2022

8:30 AM

**Community Center, 2195 SE Airoso
Blvd**

1. Meeting Called to Order

A City Council/City Staff Retreat of the CITY COUNCIL of the City of Port St. Lucie was called to order by Mayor Martin on February 23, 2022 at 8:35 a.m., at City of Port St. Lucie Community Center, 2195 SE Airoso Blvd., Port St. Lucie, FL 34984.

2. Roll Call

Councilmembers Present:

Mayor Martin

Vice Mayor Caraballo

Councilwoman Morgan

Councilman Pickett

Councilman Bonna

3. Pledge of Allegiance

There was nothing heard under this item.

4. Public to be Heard

There was nothing heard under this item.

5. Retreat Business

5.a Port St. Lucie's Economic Outlook

[2022-192](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.)

William H. Fruth, Economic Development Consultant, gave a presentation on the City's Economy, discussing how to import money to the area and improve the local economy. He stated that the City would

need to create more primary industry jobs and pay a higher wage than the average area wage. Mr. Fruth provided data for St. Lucie County and announced that the City's population growth had been increasing for 20 years, the wage increase growth had been slow, and the small business growth had been fast. He stated that annual wages ranked 377th amongst 384 Metropolitan areas, and Vice Mayor Caraballo asked if that accounted for retirees since the data was stated for the total population, to which Mr. Fruth replied that it was based on earnings – money earned by people earning it.

Mr. Fruth provided data for job growth, stating that St. Lucie County had far exceeded the 10 strongest Metropolitan areas in the nation. He discussed data for job commuting and permits, and the effect of COVID-19 on the economy. He provided data for the housing and building economy and manufacturing employment, stating that manufacturing would continue to grow. He also stated that the key was to improve and approve industrial real estate, and that the land that the City had would be absorbed quicker than they thought.

Mayor Martin stated that in the next year or two the higher wage jobs would come to fruition, and she looked forward to seeing how things had changed in those years once the data became available. She stated that they needed to be more strategic with the acreage they have remaining.

5.b Citywide Transportation Infrastructure Update

[2022-114](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) Joseph DeFronzo, Public Works Director, gave a presentation to the Council, stating that they would discuss current project priorities as well as short-term and long-term needs. Mr. DeFronzo presented on the Floresta Drive project, the top tier projects, and projects that were currently underway. Mayor Martin stated that it was important to look at several areas in the City that had 4-way stops that were not moving, to which Mr. DeFronzo stated that they had projects where that would be the preferred alternative, but they had to make sure that the funding was there and when they could schedule the design and construction.

Heath Stocton, Public Works Director, stated that they had been working with OMB Budget Director Caroline Sturgis and her department to re-evaluate the revenue projections through the half-cent sales tax, which were above what they originally had, including the Floresta Project, and he believed that they may be able to fund Phases 2 and 3 within the course of 10 years. Mayor Martin stated that they needed to

keep advocating for Constructing Funding and pushing the issue, to which Mr. DeFronzo stated that they were pursuing a grant. City Manager Blackburn stated that they had already received some grants and that they were also looking at other sources in addition to the half-cent sales tax.

Mr. DeFronzo continued his presentation and provided an overview on additional future road projects, which also included turn-lanes, roundabouts, adaptive signaling, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks. Vice Mayor Caraballo asked where Floresta Phase 2 was added, to which Mr. DeFronzo replied that it was scheduled to start construction this summer and be completed by next Fiscal Year. Vice Mayor Caraballo asked for an update on the Elkcam Bridge, to which Mr. Stocton replied that they hired a consultant to determine the most cost-effective way to maintain pedestrian traffic, and after looking at different options, they found that the cost savings to add an additional pedestrian bridge and widen the existing bridge would only be a cost savings of \$800,000, so they planned to donate the existing bridge to Parks & Recreation and widen the new bridge. Vice Mayor Caraballo asked for an update on California Blvd, to which Mr. Stocton replied and stated that it was pre-mature to start the conversations with the community without having exhibits, and once received they would have public meetings. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that she thought it should be addressed ahead of schedule and asked where staff was at regarding St. Lucie West Blvd, Mr. DeFronzo and Mr. Stocton stated that it was identified on the long-range transportation plan as a need and a widening project.

Councilman Pickett stated his concern for Anthony Sansone Sr. Blvd, advising that they needed to look into it now, and that there needed to be a turning lane on Becker Rd due to illegal turns being made, and Councilwoman Morgan stated that they should be making the spine-road 3 or 4 lanes, not 2. CRA Director Wes McCurry stated that the left-turn lane on Sansone Blvd was included with an Access Management Agreement with DOT where that intersection was not to have a left-turn lane, and that to get one they would have to look at opening the agreement. Mayor Martin stated that something had to be done to correct the illegal actions, to which Mr. Stocton replied that the Agreement had already had an amendment and that they needed to be careful with their phrasing because they may force them to close it. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that she thought it would be helpful to create an Infrastructure Communications piece for the public, and Mayor Martin stated that they needed a Public Works group page,

specifically to Public Works Infrastructure projects, to which Communications Director Sarah Prohaska agreed.

Mr. Stocton stated that their recommendation was to expedite the roundabout by one year, to which Mayor Martin stated that the Council supported that recommendation along with all other recommendations that were discussed for the Tier 1, 2, and 3 lists.

5.c Traffic Calming Plan Interim Update

[2022-162](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.)
Frank Knott, Public Works Manager, gave a presentation to the Council on moving Dalton Circle to a Type 3 with the approval of Council, and Mayor Martin stated that it should have a right-turn lane, that it was not satisfactory to the residents nor to the Council, and that she informed the residents that they could not skip ahead on projects. She stated that changes would cost more money, but she would much rather have the information to make a complete and informed decision, and then scale-back and make changes.

Vice Mayor Caraballo asked if they should invest in certain traffic calming projects knowing that a sidewalk could alleviate some of the issues, and should they find a way to move the sidewalk projects up, to which Mr. Knott stated that they had the sidewalks projects scheduled out and the issue would be that they could not move one forward without moving another back. Vice Mayor Caraballo asked if staff could better address additional future traffic calming applications, and Mayor Martin stated that for future areas that were looking at traffic calming, they should maybe be looking at marrying the sidewalk plan since they did not want to bump other priorities.

Councilwoman Morgan stated that on Carter, although it was made a right turn only, people are still making a left and they needed a peanut or striping to make it more prevalent that it was a right turn only, to which Mr. Stocton stated that they would look into it and make a recommendation. Councilwoman Morgan stated that they needed to look into a light and emergency signal on Milner, and asked if there was a way to partner with the County to do a sidewalk connecting Midway on Milner to Selvitz, to which Mr. Knott stated that they had conceptually planned to have a sidewalk go from Selvitz to the Fire Station and anticipating that when improvements finished on Milner they could link them.

Vice Mayor Caraballo moved to change the classification of Dalton Ave

to a Type 3. Councilman Pickett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

Councilwoman Morgan moved for Fallon Dr traffic calming to go to construction. Vice Mayor Caraballo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

Vice Mayor Caraballo moved to add \$500,000 to the budget to get the traffic calming projects addressed in the next Budget Year.

Councilwoman Morgan seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

5.d The Port District Master Plan - New Projects Phasing

[2022-180](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) Jennifer Davis, Community Redevelopment Administrator, and Kelly Boatwright, Senior Project Manager for Parks & Recreation, gave a presentation to the Council, and Ms. Davis stated that the 3 top projects were Lyngate Park, the Iconic Observation Tower, and improvements to Veteran's Memorial Park. She stated that one of the first projects that City Staff was recommending was the Branding Phase and discussed the details of the top projects which included parking and boardwalk connection. She also stated that the price included if they took the boardwalks and trails and did them as one project. Ms. Davis then discussed various projects outside of the top tiered projects, and stated that they had spoken with a consultant, of whom had identified several private partnership opportunities.

Vice Mayor Caraballo asked for information on the remote camping pads, to which Ms. Davis stated that they were located along the west of the river and were primitive as they would not have any water or power. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that if this was not done right, she would not be in support of this, that she thought something primitive did not fit with the high entertainment area, and that she wanted it off the list. Councilwoman Morgan stated that she wanted it to be more natural and was also not in support. Mayor Martin agreed as well, and Councilman Pickett stated that they would have to address purchasing a boat or pontoon for their Parks & Recreation staff to go over and clean up the site. Ms. Davis stated that they had added it last due to prioritizing and that they could amend the plan and put it as not recommended. Mayor Martin asked if the Council was okay with the other recommendations set forth, to which the Council agreed.

5.e Hear Presentation on Alternate River Nights Locations.

[2022-186](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) Kelly Tiger, Special Events Administrator for Parks & Recreation, presented options to the Council for new River Nights locations. She presented the detailed options of Club Med, Veteran's Park at Rivergate, and Village Green. Mayor Martin asked what the temporary time frame would be, to which Ms. Davis replied that they were looking at it for both the fall and spring.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that she would attend the meeting with Club Med and that she wanted to figure out a reasonable cost for those that attend since it was a free event, but Club Med had fees. Mayor Martin stated that she wanted to make sure it was known that this was temporary.

It was the consensus of the City Council to select Club Med as the first option, and Village Green as the second option.

5.f Hear a Presentation Regarding Event/Venue Parking Solutions

[2022-175](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) Assistant City Manager David Graham presented to the Council and stated that they were seeking direction from Council to mitigate solutions for parking issues. He stated that there was a continuing demand for low-cost entertainment and there was a population increase, and Police Chief Bolduc stated that the Police Department creates After-Action Reports that show opportunities for improvement.

Utilities Director Kevin Matyjaszek stated that they had gotten with the Parks & Recreations team to find possible solutions, and one of the areas that stuck out was the area south of the feature Section 7-A, which was a 234-acre Water Storage Impoundment that was scheduled for construction in FY24/25. He stated that should Council support this project, it could accommodate the request for future parking and would not interfere with the future of McCarty Ranch and the impoundment that was proposed there. Mayor Martin asked if this would be paved parking, to which Mr. Matyjaszek responded in the negative and explained that it would be rock-based coquina because of the future water-use intent. Mayor Martin asked what the timeframe would be if they approved it, to which Mr. Matyjaszek replied that it would be roughly 6 to 9 months. Vice Mayor Caraballo asked if they could make it more natural-looking like the Botanical Gardens, to which Mr. Matyjaszek replied that this was just conceptual to look at options, but

that they could look into incorporating it, and Mr. Stocton stated that they could look into a pervious surface.

Councilwoman Morgan asked about handicap parking, to which Parks & Recreation Director Sherman Conrad replied that what they had done in the past was used temporary areas and front areas, and he believed that they would still use those recommendations. He also stated that as for the coquina, they needed to use a flat surface so that the event area would not flood and there would be no holes since the lighting would not be great.

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) Ms. Davis presented the conceptual plan for the overall Port District site. Councilwoman Morgan stated that she had previously mentioned that she did not think the parking was safe for the waterfront restaurant and asked if the parking was still open or was it just conceptual, to which Ms. Davis replied that it was still open. Mr. Stocton discussed the option of angled parking on various streets and stated that the biggest issues were ADA accommodation and pedestrian access. Ms. Davis discussed the idea of a Water Taxi, stating that there were limitations with the City's Sovereign Submerged Land Lease with the State of Florida that prohibited commercial activity off of the docks, and that they promoted recreational activity, but the commercial activity would not be feasible. Mayor Martin stated that it seemed like a long-term issue, and that she was looking for how they were planning to address the issues that they had now and address them in the shorter term. Linda McCarthy, Civic Center Director, discussed online ticketing and reservations, stating that they had tested the Civic Center's E-Tix system with parking at no cost. Mayor Martin asked if they would be limiting people, to which Ms. McCarthy replied that they would limit people based on the number of spots provided until spots were vacant, and that people would feel comfortable knowing that they had a reserved parking spot, and then as people left, others would be let in on a first come first serve basis. Mayor Martin asked if people were currently being turned away from River Nights, to which Mr. Conrad replied that they had been full and overflowed, but the Police had assisted in parking, and that his only concern with this option was if you were only going to the playground or restaurant. Ms. McCarthy advised that this was a short-term option until the Port construction was finished.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that her concern was if spots were

reserved and the ticket holder did not show up, in which they would be holding a parking space for nothing, and asked if they should put a value on it so that people think twice and don't obtain a ticket and not show, to which Mayor Martin replied that it would be another conversation because then it stopped being a free event. Ms. McCarthy recommended shortening the timeframe on the ticket since the ticket would stop scanning after the time ran out, and Councilman Bonna stated that it was possible to overbook it based on the percentage of no-shows, but the bigger question for him was if he had a ticket that had the language 'pass does not guarantee parking spot' as that could be a challenge, but that the issue could be slightly addressed with overbooking. Councilman Pickett asked if this was going to be an issue since they had decided to temporarily move River Nights to Club Med, to which Mr. Graham stated that there were events at the Botanical Gardens that could be impacted by it. Councilwoman Morgan stated that she did not like this idea and preferred first come, first serve.

Ms. McCarthy discussed Lyft and Uber Stations for Ride-Share Zones and stated that both companies would work with the City for events, and Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that this was something that should always be done for all events, and she preferred having an area for ride-sharing. Mayor Martin stated that the option was good, but she questioned how many people would use that service and wanted to see numbers on utilization once it was tried, and Ms. McCarthy stated that it had been used in the past at the Event Center. Councilman Bonna stated that it seemed like a relatively inexpensive solution and asked if there was much of a cost to it, to which Ms. McCarthy responded in the negative.

Mr. Graham stated that the item that had the most discussion was the Trolley idea, and that in order to shuttle people to an event, they needed a place to shuttle them from and that they had looked at a number of options. He presented the options to the Council and discussed various options of who would provide the shuttle services. Mr. Graham also discussed permanent parking solutions which included parking garages and Trolley modifications, to which Mayor Martin stated that she would like to have a more in-depth discussion on evaluating the possibility of the City purchasing the vehicles on their own and staffing them. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that she would like to see a feasibility study in regard to the cost and how many fleets they would be required to have, and maybe looking at having the drivers sub-contracted. Councilwoman Morgan asked if that would be an

opportunity for a public/private partnership to take over the shuttle service, to which City Manager Blackburn replied that there were a lot of vendors that would provide service on a case-by-case basis and that they would need to look at the cost. Councilman Pickett stated that the conversation needed to be whether they wanted finesse or to move people, and that if they wanted to move people then the bus would be the way to go because the Trolley did not hold that many people, to which Mr. Graham informed that the size of the Trolley was something that needed to be considered for this item. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that they needed to think about the construction of the City Center because after construction there may be more uses for the Trolley.

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) Peter Buchwald, Executive Director for the St. Lucie County Transportation Planning Organization, presented to the Council on the Special Events and Congestion Management Parking Plan and stated that they would propose to develop a plan for the entire TPO area, which included all jurisdictions. He stated that the framework would be to evaluate and quantify the congestion and parking issues at events and identify the needs at those locations. He discussed that there could be projects and plans for items such as infrastructure and funding sources. Vice Mayor Caraballo asked if the funding sources meant that there were programs within the TPO and State to have this funded outside of the City's own General Funds or if it meant every entity's General Fund, to which Mr. Buchwald replied that he was speaking on the State and Federal funding sources and discussed the various sources. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that it was good to look at, but her concern was ensuring that the City had dedicated service available for its event when it needed to utilize the service, to which Mr. Buchwald replied that he thought it was something that they could work through, but cautioned that it did take time. Mayor Martin stated that they had issues now and they needed to find a solution for themselves because she could see the issues that the City and County could have in relation to who needed the service and when, and while they could engage in the conversations, she wanted to focus on their own issues more than the TPO issues. Mr. Buchwald stated that there were some projects they could now do more quickly, and some of the technical solutions could be implemented faster. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that she would like the opportunity for the City to continue to test and have a study done to see what worked.

5.g Introduction to Departmental Plan Summaries/High Impact Plans

[2022-199](#)

Kate Parmelee, Strategic Initiatives Director, stated that all departments had submitted a departmental plan and had looked at the Council's Strategic Plan to determine the top ways that they could integrate it for their department. Mayor Martin asked if any of the Councilmembers had specific departments that they would like to hear from, to which Vice Mayor Caraballo replied that she would like an update on the MidFlorida Event Center and Emergency Management. (Clerk's Note: City Manager Blackburn and Deputy City Manager Kristina Ciuperger were to provide the updates for Emergency Management as the Director was unable to attend.) Councilwoman Morgan replied that she would like an update on the Saints Golf Course, and City Manager Blackburn stated that the departments that were already lined up would present at this meeting, and the others could present on Day 2 or 3. Mayor Martin stated that she would like to see the priority positions for the departments listed because she questioned whether some of the positions were actually a priority and that some FTEs were added that were not approved.

(Clerk's Note: A PDF was presented to the Council at this time.) Mr. Conrad presented the Parks & Recreation Impact Plan to the Council which included topics such as Pioneer Park, Tradition and Torino Regional Parks, Adventure Park, playgrounds, and various additional City parks. He also discussed the impacts of COVID-19 and numbers such as park reservations, standards, and survey numbers. Mayor Martin stated that they needed to see a projection of the parks coming online because they needed to know what those needs were going to be since the facilities needed to be staffed and maintained, and City Manager Blackburn stated that he was going to be working with Mr. Conrad. He also stated that they traditionally used a Design-Build methodology for the parks, and that the Council would soon receive a proposal from Mattamy Homes proposing that they build Tradition Regional Park on the City's behalf.

Mayor Martin stated that for the Adventure Park, they would not be operating the part of the park that was revenue-generating, so their focus was on the parts that were not revenue-generated. She stated that she did not want to keep waiting for a business plan that was not going to be used, and that Council needed to talk about if they wanted to move forward. Councilwoman Morgan stated that this was something in which they may need to rethink the location of because of the current solid waste situation, and that it seemed like Torino Regional Park kept getting pushed down. Mr. Conrad stated that Torino had not been

pushed down other than for the exception of the Wilderness Park which they completed first, that Tradition Park was being pushed because Mattamy Homes was on board, and that there was money for Torino and they would be going for an RFP.

City Manager Blackburn stated that they had not had yet had discussions with the Legal department as to what the options were to go for projects, to which Mayor Martin stated that they needed to do that because if it was unable to come to fruition, they needed to start discussions on other things. She asked if they had projected using some of the Federal Funds for water and sewer, to which City Manager Blackburn responded in the affirmative, and stated that recently the Federal Government allowed all local governments to take a loss of revenue up to \$10 million out of the ARPA Funds, and what they would propose would be to credit that to the General Fund and use the General Fund to pay for water and sewer so that they did not have to follow all of the Federal bidding processes. He also recommended to have a special meeting, to which Mayor Martin agreed. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that it was important to provide different recreational activities and that the Cameo site was ideal. She also stated that Cameo would not be an ideal site for the potential solid waste transfer station, so if the Adventure Park did not work out, they had other needs that they could utilize for that location. The Council and City Manager Blackburn had a brief discussion on transfer stations and asked Carmen Capezzuto, Director of Neighborhood Services, and the Solid Waste team to create an information packet on transfer stations.

(Clerk's Note: A PDF was presented to the Council at this time.) Mr. Stocton presented the Public Works Impact Plan to the Council which included discussions on full-time staff and reaching 5 of the 7 goals given by Council. He informed that Public Works was up for their 5th accreditation and that they were 1st in Florida and 7th in the nation.

Vice Mayor Caraballo asked if the County had agreed to the St. James Blvd project, to which Mayor Martin responded in the negative and Mr. Stocton replied that it may have been more of a hand-shake deal because there was nothing in writing and no interlocal agreements. Vice Mayor Caraballo asked Councilwoman Morgan how long ago it was brought up, to which Councilwoman Morgan replied that it was around 4 to 5 years ago at a Strategic Planning session. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that she would like Mayor Martin or Councilwoman Morgan to write a letter to the County about the issue because it was

an easy project, and she would like to see additional action and follow up on this discussion by the Council. Vice Mayor Caraballo and Councilman Bonna voiced support of having the County make the improvements and having staff inform them via letter or attending a Commission meeting to make sure the issue was taken care of. City Manager Blackburn informed Mayor Martin that staff would draft a letter and provide it to her for her signature.

Mr. Stocton continued the presentation with discussion on topics such as diverse economy, high quality infrastructure facilities, and grants. Vice Mayor Caraballo asked if we were using a good amount of ARPA funds to address some of the Public Works needs, to which Ms. Parmelee responded in the affirmative, stating that they tried to leverage some of the Storm Water allocations through the American Rescue Plan for a match for grants because a rule was clarified that they could do that. Mr. Stocton then presented the top 5 priority positions for Public Works for FY22 to the Council. Vice Mayor Caraballo asked for elaboration on the Financial Analyst position, to which Mr. Stockton stated that as they were growing, the invoices were overwhelming the current staff. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that she wanted to be responsive to this item to make sure that they have the resources that were needed. Mayor Martin asked if the Traffic Signal Technician position was tied to all of the City's synchronization projects, to which Mr. Stocton replied that those technicians also do streetlights, pedestrian lights, and median lights, so as the infrastructure has grown, the need for maintenance has increased.

(Clerk's Note: A PDF was presented to the Council at this time.) Chief Bolduc presented the top 3 ways that they were putting the Strategic Plan into action. He stated that the crime rate had gone down by 9.13%, to which Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that they should speak about that to the public. Chief Bolduc also discussed mental health and adding additional positions for District 5, to which Mayor Martin stated that if they said the implementation would be completed by this year, that they needed to do that and make sure that they are fully implemented by that time. She asked if they were going to be able to implement this in the time frame announced given all of the vacancies in the Police Department, and if there were issues with recruitment, what were they doing from this standpoint to which Chief Bolduc stated that they had re-prioritized some of the civilian positions. He then discussed speed limit implementations and traffic enforcement and stated that DOT had contacted the Police Department and provided an

analysis that informed that there were areas that were dangerous to pedestrians. He also discussed the implementation of body cameras and the Police Training Facility.

Chief Bolduc stated that they were unable to receive a grant to hire a Body Camera Trainer, and Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that they needed to prioritize this immediately, even without a grant. Mayor Martin stated that they needed to fix the rank structure and mentioned that last year a Sex Crimes Detective was requested, but not approved, but she now sees an Internal Affairs position, and she asked if they were taking last year's requests and adding it onto these new priorities, or were they now only asking for the priorities that were listed and replacing them with the old requests, to which Chief Bolduc stated that when they identified that they needed a Sex Crimes Detective, they had seen a tremendous spike in reported sex crimes, but it tapered off by the time they got to put detectives on. He stated that this year they had re-prioritized and proposed a different format for solving that problem, and due to the uptick in violent crime they wanted to create a Major Crimes section in the Criminal Investigations Divisions. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that she would be interested in learning how they could communicate to parents and residents on prevention methods for sex crimes and having an educational campaign.

Chief Bolduc then discussed having an additional Animal Control Officer due to an increase in animal control issues, as well as an Administrative Assistant position and an Evidence Technician.

6. Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

Sally Walsh, City Clerk

Jasmin De Freese, Deputy City Clerk