

City of Port St. Lucie

Special 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 20, 2023

9:30 AM

Council Chambers, City Hall

1. Meeting Called to Order

A Special Meeting of the CITY COUNCIL of the City of Port St. Lucie was called to order by Mayor Martin on March 20, 2023, at 9:32 a.m., at Port St. Lucie City Hall, 121 SW Port St. Lucie Boulevard, Port St. Lucie, Florida.

2. Roll Call

Council Members Present:

Mayor Shannon Martin

Vice Mayor Jolien Caraballo

Councilwoman Stephanie Morgan

Councilman Dave Pickett

Councilman Anthony Bonna

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Martin led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Public to be Heard

There was nothing to be heard under this item.

5. Special Presentations

- 5.a** FY 2023-2024 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
Project Discussion

[2023-285](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.)
Alessandra Tasca, Neighborhood Services Assistant Director,
presented to the Council and stated that this would be early/tentative

discussion for next Fiscal Year. She advised that they were bringing the projects forward as they had been proposed and they had vetted them for eligibility, and she also noted that they had totaled more than what they had funding for. She then provided information on the CDBG projects and procedures.

Councilman Pickett informed that Veteran's Memorial Park was running out of room and inquired on if it would be possible to add money to be able to clear the additional land, to which Ms. Tasca replied that Veteran's Memorial Park fell within the CDBG Low and Moderate Income Census Charts for the City so there was a wider range of project feasibility, and if they developed it, it could get approved. Councilman Pickett requested that this be added to the proposal, and Sherman Conrad, Parks & Recreation Director, advised that they had not yet done cost estimates because the land was wet and needed to be filled, and that an expansion was needed but was not in the 10-year Master Plan at this time. Mayor Martin stated that she did not think they would be able to include this with the current timeline and funds available, and City Manager Merejo suggested adding it to the 5-year Capital Plan as unfunded.

Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired if the grant funding for the Commercial Development Program would be targeted for particular areas of challenge for commercial, to which Ms. Tasca advised that while it would be open to everyone in the City, it would be targeted to low and moderate income businesses. Ms. Tasca and Vice Mayor Caraballo then discussed the grant funding, programs, and assisting partners in the community. Councilman Bonna informed that it was too early for him to state where he was leaning with certain projects, and Ms. Tasca added that while they could make the list for the budget, they also would make a list for alternative projects. Councilwoman Morgan stated that any way they could help in other ways too, she was all for, and Mayor Martin stated that when it came to CDBG she would always look at needs versus wants.

Upon brief discussion, it was the consensus of the Council to put infrastructure priorities first.

Mayor Martin stated that if they were to receive discretionary funding that came in only one time, she would like to continue their program with the Boys & Girls Club, and also inquired on what the Homeowner Rehab looked like in regard to funding and a waitlist, to which Ms.

Tasca replied that they designate a quarter to a fifth of the CDBG funding to the Homeowner Rehab Program, and that it did not have to be on a yearly basis as they could put a hold on it one year and then pick it up the next year with the CDBG funds.

Ms. Tasca then clarified information regarding Section 108 – Guaranteed Loans of the CDBG Program, noting that they could receive up to \$5 million for larger infrastructure projects as a loan, with rest of the program on hold for 5 years, and then pay it back with the money that would have been received over the 5-year period. She concluded by advising that they would come up with a more precise budget, alternate projects, and a large draft Annual Action Plan with statistical information, and then bring it back for a 30-day public comment period and present it to Council in the summer.

6. New Business

- 6.a** Discuss the Goals, Vision, and Funding of the 2023 Holiday Lights Program.

[2023-171](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) Jennifer Perkey, Public Works Manager, presented to Council and stated that it was being requested to have a 3-year contract and budget increase for the Holiday Lights Program. She discussed the initial costs of the Holiday Program over the last 2 years, showcased a map of the locations of the holiday decorations in the City, recommended more days open and longer hours at the Botanical Gardens, adding The Saint's Golf Course and The Port as new locations, and discussed renting versus purchasing.

Ms. Perkey concluded the presentation and asked for the budget to increase up to \$115,000, enhance decorations at the Botanical Gardens, and add decorations to The Saint's (with an optional future location approval for The Port). She also recommended that Parks & Recreation and the MidFlorida Event Center contribute to the program, partnering with the Botanical Gardens for donations, and utilizing existing locations with new locations added per Council's direction.

Vice Mayor Caraballo recommended creating a sponsorship for the lights in order to expand funding opportunities, to which the Council agreed, and Mayor Martin requested consistency with light presentation throughout the City and advised that she was in favor of a phased approach. Ms. Perkey informed that they had spoken with Tradition, of whom were in favor of assisting to create consistency throughout the

City.

Vice Mayor Caraballo recommended adding sponsorship signs in high traffic areas to bring attention to it, looking more at permanent displays, and focusing on the Port for the new location. Mayor Martin suggested looking into the addition of lights at Southbend before adding to the Botanical Gardens.

Michael Enot, Public Works Assistant Director/City Engineer, Ms. Perkey, and the Council held a discussion on sponsorship and contractor accountability. Councilwoman Morgan mentioned that per the map, North Port St. Lucie had no decorations and almost no North/South roads in the City included decorations, and Mr. Enot stated that he could talk with the City Manager's Office to discuss where to put new decorations. City Manager Merejo suggested increasing the budget, leaving the Botanical Gardens as status quo, adding lighting to Southbend, and having staff recommend North/South roads.

There being no further discussion, Vice Mayor Caraballo moved to approve the Holiday Lights budget with the additional \$115,000 increase with sponsorship information to come back with the item and a plan of new light locations. Councilman Pickett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

- 6.b** Discuss and Provide Direction on the California Boulevard
Conceptual Plan - Crosstown Parkway to St. Lucie West
Boulevard.

[2023-031](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) Eliot Brown, Culpepper & Terpening, provided the City with a summary of the Public Information meeting, reviewed access management along California Blvd, and showcased design alternatives for the widening of California Blvd.

He stated that during the Public Information meeting, the main concerns were having a signalized intersection instead of a roundabout, increased traffic noise with the request of a sound berm, and requesting a median opening where the All Villages Presbyterian Church intersected with California Blvd. He advised that the Crosstown intersection would remain signalized as it currently was, and the only difference would be having 2 through lanes instead of 1, with a total of 2 left lanes, 2 through lanes, and 1 right designated turn lane. He noted that there would be a directional median for the Grand Reserve Blvd

intersection, the Heatherwood Blvd intersection would remain signalized, the Sanctuary Dr intersection would become an unsignalized full access median, the Fairway Isle intersection would be an unsignalized full access median, and the Chamber Court and St. Lucie West Intersections would combine with a directional median/left turn in/no left out added to Chamber, and SLW remaining as signalized.

Mr. Brown then discussed the 2 design alternatives, stating that the main difference was that there was a berm on one and not the other. He recommended the approval of alternative #1 which had a larger median for refuge and a roadway within the center of the right-of-way which provided room for future turn lanes & roadway widening. He stated that alternative #2 was not desired because it did not create a berm high enough to reduce sound from traffic, it did not provide room for future widening or turn lanes on the west side, and it had a smaller median for refuge.

Councilman Pickett recommended doing a sound study to have information to provide to residents that suggested a berm was not needed, and Mayor Martin expressed her reluctance to pay for a sound study just for the sake of having one when they already had justifications. Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested providing residents with the educational point that the additional lanes may increase traffic, but that would allow for traffic flow which would minimize sound impact.

There being no further discussion, Councilwoman Morgan moved to approve alternative #1 with a larger median for refuge and a roadway within the center of right-of-way which provided room for future turn lanes & roadway widening. Councilman Pickett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

A break was called at 10:47 a.m., and the meeting resumed at 10:55 a.m.

6.c Discussion on Election Qualifying Fees

[2023-133](#)

City Attorney Stokes noted that the City Clerk's Office and Legal Department provided research for this topic. Councilman Bonna advised on his reasoning for bringing this forward, stating that if you seek to serve in Public Office, you should show that you were serious about serving the community and either invest your own money, raise a small amount of money, or meet with residents and get signatures. He advised that it was not the goal to make it more difficult to run for office,

but rather to have more quality elections and a greater discussion on local issues. He provided statistics for fees in varying cities, and also informed that having inadequate funds did not disqualify anyone from running for office because they could submit an undue burden form.

Councilman Pickett advised that even if someone did petitions, they would still pay a fee, and expressed that he did not understand where the fees were coming from. Councilman Bonna stated that his recommendation was to charge 3% for the Administrative Fee. Councilwoman Morgan stated that she was in favor of 3% as it was going to the Clerk's Office. Vice Mayor Caraballo recommended a 1% Administrative Fee and 1 % Assessment Fee, provided her personal history with running for office, and expressed that she was not in favor of this item. Mayor Martin provided her personal history with running for office and stated that she was in favor of this item.

There being no further discussion, Councilman Bonna moved to amend the current Ordinance to include a 3% Administrative Fee for the City and 1% Assessment Fee for the State. Councilwoman Morgan seconded the motion, which passed by roll call vote with Mayor Martin, Councilman Bonna, and Councilwoman Morgan in favor and Vice Mayor Caraballo and Councilman Pickett opposed.

6.d Accept the Half-Cent Sales Tax FY 22/23 1st Quarter Projects Update

[2023-187](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) Public Works Director Heath Stocton provided an update and stated that the Sales Tax Action Team (STAT) now meet every month to review projects and discuss progress, and they meet every 2 weeks aside from STAT meetings to discuss project-specific issues. He then provided updates for various projects including the completion of Floresta Drive Phase 1, the construction of Floresta Drive Phases 2 & 3, and sidewalks for Rosser Blvd and Import Dr. Mayor Martin recommended checking on the Rosser sidewalk because there was grass growing out of it.

Mr. Stocton continued by presenting on projects including repaving Bayshore Heights, traffic signal coordination, US1 improvements, and SLC Prima Vista Blvd improvements. Vice Mayor Caraballo informed that the SLC Prima Vista updates were due to a follow-up by County Commissioner Bartz. Mr. Stocton then presented the implementation schedule, budget & expenditures, and revenue summary.

Councilwoman Morgan requested an update for Milner Dr, and Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired about projection, to which Mr. Stocton advised that the last projection showed a completion of all projects with the exception of the California project. He added that they were actively pursuing grants for projects. The Council, Mr. Stocton, and Chief Bolduc then held a brief discussion on the blocked intersections of St. Lucie West, and Councilman Bonna discussed traffic concerns for Paar Dr, to which Mr. Stocton informed that Planning & Zoning was leading a study to look at various roads, and there could be changes to the Comprehensive Plan. Vice Mayor Caraballo expressed agreeance at looking into speed limit changes for Paar, and Mayor Martin stated that she wanted it further looked into before agreeing.

7. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:34 a.m.

Bryan Pankhurst, Acting City Clerk

Jasmin De Freese, Deputy City Clerk