

# City of Port St. Lucie

## Special City Council

### Meeting Minutes - Draft

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  
Vancant, Councilman, District III

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**Monday, October 18, 2021**

**9:30 AM**

**Council Chambers, City Hall**

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**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 October 18, 2021, at 9:30 AM, 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

Council Members Not Present:

Councilman Dave Pickett

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Martin led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. Public to be Heard**

No one from the public signed up to speak under this item.

**5. New Business**

**5.a** Update on Wilderness Trail Design

[2021-715](#)

Kelly Boatwright, Parks and Recreation Project Manager, provided a short overview of the Wilderness Trail Project.

Joe Capra, Captec Engineering, presented a PowerPoint Presentation to the City Council with the Wilderness Trail Design. He reported he worked with Dr. David Barth and Mike Flaugh provided Landscape Architectural work. Mr. Capra explained the public was interested in walking, jogging, bicycling, and wildlife watching at the trail. He added the amenities requested were shaded areas within the trail. Mr. Capra presented the Council with an estimate for concrete path. He noted there are plans to add a bathroom and trash receptacles. Mr. Capra explained the trail routes would be about half-mile loops throughout the trail and stated there were intentions to clear some of the exotic vegetation and improve the wetlands. He presented the recommended approved plan and advised that bio-swales would be created to enhance storm water on the trail while encouraging education. Mr. Capra stated there are plans for an elevated boardwalk within the trail and that the trail would be two miles long. He reported the project would be completed in phases and total costs would be \$2.2 million dollars.

Councilwoman Morgan inquired about handicap, street, and designated parking areas for those visiting the trail, to which Mr. Capra discussed the new parking proposed at the Saints Golf Course and possibly adding handicap parking near the future restrooms at the park. He advised there would be parking at the Botanical Gardens and mentioned they had not designated a parking lot for the trail. Councilwoman Morgan expressed concern over the walk from the Saints or Pioneer Park parking areas to the trail. Mayor Martin agreed with Councilwoman Morgan's concern over relying on the Saints or Pioneer Park parking areas for the trail and expressed concern for the trail not having its own designated parking area, to which Mr. Capra suggested speaking to residents who live nearby to attain their input to possibly place a designated parking area at the park.

Vice Mayor Caraballo reported additional public parking was a major item of opposition by neighboring residents during a previously held neighborhood meeting because of its close proximity to the community. She stated based on the opposition she encountered at the meeting, many individuals would be upset if the Council added an additional parking area. Vice Mayor Caraballo asked if the wetlands on the trail retained water, to which Mr. Capra answered there are two wetland areas and both retain some water. He also reported on the removal of the exotic vegetation throughout the city-owned areas and warned it

would look barren after the removal; however, the area would be re-planted with native vegetation. Mr. Capra stated he would like to keep the buffer between the residential neighborhood. Vice Mayor Caraballo questioned at which phase would the exotic vegetation be extracted and if the exotic vegetation will be removed upon adding the infrastructure, to which Mr. Capra responded that grant funds would be used to pay for a portion of the project and anticipates the amount of the grant to be close to half a million dollars and mentioned he is waiting on the funds to move forward with the construction. Mr. Capra reported that the Parks and Recreation Department would like to remove the exotic vegetation soon and hopes by 2022 they would start adding a substantial amount of the trail and removing a large amount of exotic vegetation. Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired if the restroom would be a neighborhood element or more intensified element as most neighborhood parks do not have restrooms. Mayor Martin noted the Woodland Trails neighborhood park has a small restroom and expressed concern of having a two-mile trail with no available restroom. She stated if the neighboring residents do not want a restroom due to safety issues, she would like to know the reasons behind their decision, as she has not heard of any safety issues in other neighborhood park restrooms. Mayor Martin stated she has personally observed City employees locking neighborhood park restrooms and would hope the same would happen at this location, to which Ms. Boatwright added if restrooms were confirmed they would be locked by staff and confirmed there would be no sports lighting at the trail. Mayor Martin stated there would be a need to include a restroom facility for the trail and added she would like to see additional water fountains.

Mayor Martin inquired on the phasing structure for the project, to which Mr. Capra stated the first nine items listed on the estimate would be included in the first phase at the price of one million dollars. Mayor Martin stated she would like to have a phasing structure based on what is allowable within the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) funds and have the information presented to the City Council to have a clear understanding of the scheduling. Vice Mayor Caraballo agreed with Mayor Martin and stated she would like for the information to include the items the City knows the community is embracing, such as sidewalks. Mayor Martin agreed with Vice Mayor Caraballo and added she would like to walk the entire area with staff. Mayor Martin inquired if concrete sidewalks was the best use of funds for the trail pathways and if other types of materials were explored. Mr. Capra confirmed research was done on asphalt, concrete, previous pavers, and

rubberized materials. He stated that concrete lasts longer and some areas would have different types of materials. Councilwoman Morgan also requested to walk the area with staff to obtain a better understanding of the trail.

Mayor Martin inquired if the City has a million budgeted in the CIP fund for 2022 and asked for a timeline that the City would be awarded the grant funding for the trail, to which Kate Parmelee, Strategic Initiatives Director stated that it was part of the ten-year sidewalk master plan. Mayor Martin inquired if the Council would be provided with the revenue sources all on one slide to visualize how everything will be leveraged for this project, to which Ms. Parmelee responded in the affirmative.

Richard Lawton, Sandpiper Bay, stated his home is in close proximity to the trail and he is representing about a dozen residents from his neighborhood. He noted the major uses of the property were based on his personal observations of dog walking, dog running, bicycling, and ball throwing. Mr. Lawton stated he had an issue with one of the loops, as it will encircle one of the areas and would interfere with the people running their dogs or ball throwing since they will have to encounter people on the sidewalk. He stated the sidewalk loop would interfere with the future plans and added that the wetland areas would not be visible from the sidewalk. Mr. Lawton noted the pedestrian bridge planned is about 100 feet across the water and would be expensive and added that none of the loops run through areas of interest at the park. He stated residents do not want lights at the park and feel bathrooms in neighborhood parks are unsafe.

Patrick Hanlon, Visconti Community, spoke in favor of the exterior perimeter sidewalk, but he expressed concern over the interior loops, as they may intrude the natural wildlife habitats and disrupt the wildlife, community, and foliage. He also agreed with Mr. Lawton and found the pedestrian boardwalk visually attractive but intrusive and stated he had concerns with the restrooms at the trail, as they may attract homeless people. Mr. Hanlon stated he is concerned with excessive parking at the trail and trail lighting.

Anthony DiChiara, 1241 SE Cambridge Drive, spoke on behalf of many neighbors who are opposed to bathrooms and lights at the park. He stated he would like the sidewalk to be concrete on Cambridge and suggested the interior paths have soft material. Mr. DiChiara asked for clarification on the City ordinance regarding dogs and/or pets in

city-owned parks and inquired if the park would be a wildlife refuge, reserve, or preserve. He suggested parking be placed away from the residential areas and the City install cameras if restrooms will be added to the park.

Russ Blackburn, City Manager stated the park currently is not designated as a dog park and noted the City is not aggressively enforcing the ordinance at the park. Brad Keen, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation Department, stated Chapter 96 of the City Code currently prohibits dogs inside City parks and reiterated the City Manager's statement regarding the City not aggressively enforcing the ordinance and explained his department does address issues when complaints are received. He added the Neighborhood Service Department installed doggie waste stations at the park and confirmed the department currently does not aggressively pursue people that are walking their dogs in the area since the park is not a developed park at this time. Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired if the Council will be revising the ordinance to address this issue, to which Mr. Keen responded in the affirmative and reported the ordinance is currently undergoing the final edits for review and will be coming before the Council for their review and adoption.

Mayor Martin stated the loops need to be addressed and that she understands the perception of the safety concern for the bathrooms; however, she believes there is no evidence to support the concern as other neighborhood parks have bathrooms and are locked. She asked that the information about safety concerns in neighborhood park bathrooms be shared with the residents and they be invited to submit their comments to the Council Office.

At this time, an unidentified member of the public made a comment regarding restricting coyotes in the park, to which Mayor Martin informed the member that the City does not control the coyotes. Mr. Keen stated Florida Wildlife Conservation has been notified as they have received sightings of coyotes.

The City Manager informed the Council that staff would review the loops and establish phasing with funding. Ms. Boatwright added that tours would be set up with both Mayor Martin and Councilwoman Morgan would offer tours to all Council Members. Councilwoman Morgan stated lights were not discussed as part of the proposal and added the trail would be an awesome addition for pet owners to utilize.

Councilwoman Morgan explained she would like to see the removal of the exotics and warned it would likely look barren because of the number of exotics that will be removed and stated the planting of new vegetation will have to occur soon after. Kelly Boatwright stated the City anticipates starting the removal of exotic vegetation very soon and warned the neighborhood the area will look different in the upcoming months. Mayor Martin inquired when the City will incorporate new vegetation in the area and if there will be a long gap in-between the removal and planting of new vegetation. She stated it is important the planning and phasing in the new vegetation as soon as possible, so it does not look barren over a long period of time. Mr. Capra reiterated the Council would like the exotic vegetation removed and replanted soon after, which will be proposed to staff. Vice Mayor Caraballo asked that more mature plants go into the area that abuts the Visconti community to help in-between the phases.

Mr. DiChiara inquired if the park was a wildlife preserve or a City park as he did not receive clarification on that question earlier, to which Mayor Martin stated its a neighborhood park with passive amenities; however, she clarified all the City's neighborhood parks are public parks and all residents have access to them. Mr. Keen clarified Wilderness Park is an open public space and explained the City is improving the property by adding the trail and other minor amenities.

**5.b** Review and Accept Rapid Open Space Assessment Results  
and Recommended Next Steps for Environmental Lands and  
Land Acquisition

[2021-662](#)

Stephen Mayer, Planning and Zoning Project Manager, presented a PowerPoint Presentation to the City Council and provided a brief overview of the Parkland Acquisition & Environmental Land Preservation Program Utilizing Strategic Land Conservation and High-Performance Public Spaces (HPPS). He reported that with the help of the City's consultant, The Conservation Fund and the High-Performance Public Spaces Teams worked with interdepartmental teams to incorporate comprehensive input and created potential site inventory and prioritization criteria to identify pilot sites for Rapid Open Space Assessments throughout the City. Mr. Mayer reported they identified four sites in the City that fit the criteria: California Avenue Site, Tiffany Avenue Site, Westmoreland Boulevard Site and Del Rio Boulevard Site. He presented a map of the Parks and Recreation areas of Lowest Level of Service within a mile of the areas where residents would not be able to walk to a park. Mr. Mayer

presented the Council a visual of potential storm water and recreational sites on California Boulevard and Westmoreland Boulevard Site and Potential HPPS Pilot Project Sites on Tiffany Avenue and Del Rio Boulevard. He presented staff's recommendations to the Council for staff to have authorization to prioritize the city-owned property as potential HPPS Pilot Projects, identify properties for land acquisition for potential storm water and park sites as HPPS component of the Storm Water Master Plan and 10-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan, develop an open/green space initiative for smaller lots, develop HPPS branding to create identity, name recognition and public education of the HPPS goals and projects, and submit Florida Forever Project Applications for key acquisitions for water quality and conservation acquisitions.

Mayor Martin stated she would like to ask residents if they would like the City to spend city funds on property acquisition for conservation in the City. There being no further discussion, Vice Mayor Caraballo moved to approve item 5b). Councilwoman Morgan seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

**5.c** Parks and Recreation Staff Presentation on Greater Chicago  
Parks Site Visit

[2021-865](#)

Brad Keen, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation Department, presented the Council with a PowerPoint Presentation and provided an overview of the June trip to Chicago to various recreation complexes. He reported on the various amenities at the following facilities: Bolingbrook Recreation Aquatic Complex, Tinley Park, Maggie Daley Park, and Forge Adventure Park. Mr. Keen explained the City of Port St. Lucie will have a business and operation plan by the end of November. He added the City will hold public engagement meetings, meetings with stakeholders and one-on-ones with the Council Members to discuss the planning and design process.

Mayor Martin explained certain park elements would not be free to residents and would require payment in the form of a day-pass or yearly membership for maintenance and operations.

Vice Mayor Caraballo asked if the City plans on using the final business plan to serve as the City's talking points to try to obtain a private partner for the park as it is likely the City will need to make private-public partnerships for the park, to which Mr. Keen stated they would take the suggestions and use them as a reference point to further conversations

through the City Manager's Office to any private sector third-party that may be interested. Vice Mayor Caraballo asked City Manager Blackburn of the status of the City's sponsorship policy, to which the City Manager stated his office started the process but never brought it to Council. Vice Mayor Caraballo requested the City Manager to bring the City's sponsorship policy forward to the City Council to provide clarification. Brad Keen added that the Parks and Recreation Department is currently developing a water park feasibility study that will be presented to the City Council at the November Council workshop.

Councilwoman Morgan stated she would like to focus on the park needs of Torino and Southern Grove areas. She reported she met with Charlene Lyons from the YMCA of the Treasure Coast at the Torino Regional Park area with City staff. Councilwoman Morgan stated the YMCA is very interested in partnering with the City and after meeting with all the County Commissioners they believe it would be a great project partnership as a regional park. Mr. Keen informed the Council that YMCA would be included in the public engagement process as he understands partnerships, sponsorships, grants, and bonded dollars are not going to be enough, and hopes those opportunities are fully explored. Mayor Martin reported she also met with Ms. Lyons and would love for her to have a space in the City but, funding is the barrier. Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested a vision session with City Council to envision the outcome of potential projects. Mayor Martin stated she would like a breakdown with phases and funding to be included with big projects.

**5.d** Port St. Lucie Boulevard Gateway Sign

[2021-648](#)

Bridget Kean, Senior Planner, Planning & Zoning Department, presented a PowerPoint Presentation and discussed the City Gateway Sign Proposal at the intersection of Bayshore Boulevard and Port St. Lucie Boulevard. She explained the request to the Council was for the following: selection or direction on the sign concepts, approval of \$1,635 to the Developer for variance fee waiver, and direction for the City Attorney to negotiate a landscape and sign maintenance agreement and easement. Ms. Kean provided a visual of the subject property location, aerial map, easement map, and proposed concept plans. Mayor Martin stated she did not like the top concept plan shown as she preferred the bottom one with the arch angle without the top façade portion of the concept plan. Councilwoman Morgan inquired if the sign would be placed on the Northeast corner of Port St. Lucie Boulevard and Bayshore Boulevard, to which Ms. Kean confirmed and



asked if the Council preferred the bottom concept with the arched stone and the bottom City sign, to which all of the Council Members responded in the affirmative.

There being no further discussion, Vice Mayor Caraballo moved to approve item 5d) to approve the Port St. Lucie Boulevard Gateway Sign as discussed, approval of the Variance and approval of Landscape and Sign Maintenance Agreement. Councilwoman Morgan seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**5.e** NW Selvitz Road Speed Limit Change Recommendation

[2021-649](#)

Joseph DeFronzo, Engineer, Public Works Department, discussed the speed study and safety review information for the Council to consider increasing the minimum speed limit from Selvitz Road from Midway Road to Peachtree Boulevard to 35 miles per hour, Selvitz Road from Manville Drive to Bayshore Boulevard to 35 miles per hour, and for the posted speed of Selvitz Road from Peachtree Boulevard to Manville drive to remain the same at 35 miles per hour.

Councilwoman Morgan moved to approve item 5e) to approve the Northwest Selvitz Road Speed Limit Change. Vice Mayor Caraballo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

**5.f** Update on the Higher-Paying Jobs for PSL December 7  
Referendum

[2021-879](#)

Kate Parmelee, Strategic Incentives Director and Sarah Prohaska, Communications Director presented a PowerPoint Presentation to the City Council regarding the upcoming December 7th voters' referendum for higher-paying jobs for Port St. Lucie. Mayor Martin stated it was important to provide the public with the full economic investment associated to each project such as construction, jobs and giving back to the community. The City Manager confirmed the City would add the estimated value of the capital improvements; however, he added the downside to adding the value are that some projects are not given the incentive. Ms. Parmelee provided a report on the number of jobs created by the various projects in the City of Port St. Lucie that benefited from the incentive.

Vice Mayor Caraballo noted it was important to explain that the City is seeking the residents vote for the upcoming referendum because it is required by state law and is being renewed per the Florida Statute. Mayor Martin agreed with Vice Mayor Caraballo.

Councilwoman Morgan stated the flyer that was provided to the Area Council regarding the referendum was too wordy and contained incorrect information. She encouraged the City to attain input from the Area Council, Treasure Coast Builders Association, Chamber of Commerce, and the Economic Development Council. Vice Mayor Caraballo asked James Stokes, City Attorney if she was allowed to answer how she will be voting on the City's referendum when asked, to which Mr. Stokes answered that Council Members are entitled to their own opinion on the issue; however, the City as an entity, cannot advocate and can only educate the public.

**6. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:39 PM.

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Sally Walsh, City Clerk

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Daisy Ruiz, Deputy City Clerk