

City of Port St. Lucie

Strategic Planning Session

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
Anthony Bonna, Councilman, District III

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Thursday, March 9, 2023

8:00 AM

**Sandpiper Bay Resort 4500 SE Pine
Valley Street, Atlantic South Room**

1. Meeting Called to Order

A Special Meeting of the CITY COUNCIL/CITY STAFF of the City of Port St. Lucie was called to order by Mayor Martin on March 9, 2023, at 8:52 a.m., at Sandpiper Bay Resort, 4500 SE Pine Valley Street, Atlantic South Room, Port St. Lucie, FL 34952.

2. Roll Call

Councilmembers Present:
Mayor Shannon M. Martin
Vice Mayor Jolien Caraballo
Councilwoman Stephanie Morgan
Councilman David Pickett
Councilman Anthony Bonna

3. Pledge of Allegiance

(Clerk's Note: The Pledge was not commenced at this time.)

4. Public to be Heard

Resident Diane Goldberg advised the Council to attend a Zoom meeting hosted by the University of Florida for Green Infrastructure funding, and suggested making minor updates to the City's building requirements regarding landscaping/plants.

5. New Business

5.a Hold the 2023 Strategic Planning & Visioning Workshop

[2023-270](#)

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

Delaney, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, and Rick Gonzalez, REG Architects, began the Strategic Planning Workshop with Session 4 – Implementing the Vision by discussing potential City Hall updates. Mr. Gonzalez presented on lobby updates which included changes to the outside pavilion and the Council Chambers, extending the entrance to the building, opening up the lobby for creation of a café, and additions of an idea lab and community garden. Discussion continued on the Chambers with a proposal of flexible space and opening the back wall for expansion space, and Mayor Martin expressed concern about sound and distraction, and also stated that they needed to maximize the space they had while remaining functional for the future. Dr. Delaney advised that there were challenges with the building's footprint and it may eventually need some type of expansion. Mr. Gonzalez continued by discussing additions to the lobby such as the addition of an interactive wall and café space to provide interaction opportunities.

Dr. Delaney then presented on campus concepts by discussing existing conditions and needs which included items such as office space shortage, parking shortage, connectivity challenges, campus aesthetics, and lobby aesthetics. She informed that the Community Center could have additional utilization and discussed the challenges of crossing the street to get there, and she also provided various concept plans for the parking lot/plaza layout.

Council provided their feedback with Councilman Pickett mentioning preparing for the current issues as well as future, and Mayor Martin discussing accelerating the parking issue and having connectivity between buildings. Councilman Bonna suggested not focusing on aesthetics until office space is addressed and Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested adding public opinion. The Council, Dr. Delaney, and City Manager Merejo held discussion on the level of public engagement and communication, using these concepts to continue further discussion on plans, addressing current immediate needs, and funding.

A break was called at 10:34 a.m. and the meeting resumed at 11:04 a.m.

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.)
Bradley Keen, Parks & Recreation Assistant Director, began Session 5 – Round-table Discussion by presenting on a proposed pickleball expansion. He provided information on creating additional pickleball

courts to Whispering Pines Park by converting existing tennis courts, as well as project funding. Councilman Pickett inquired about additional information regarding the funding and what it would be utilized for, to which Mr. Keen advised of the reconstruction phases. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that she appreciated having tournaments, but expressed concern of having these facilities that the majority of the public may not be able to use. Councilman Bonna inquired if the remaining tennis courts would be consistent with current utilization, to which Mr. Keen responded in the affirmative. Councilwoman Morgan stated that as long as the lights did not impact residents, she was in favor, and Mayor Martin stated that as long as funding remained consistent, she was in favor as well.

Vice Mayor Caraballo moved to approve the proposal for pickleball courts in Whispering Pines Park. Councilman Pickett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

Planning & Zoning Director Mary Savage-Dunham and Public Works Director Heath Stocton began discussion on Mobility Fees. Ms. Savage-Dunham informed that the 2025 Mobility Plan would be presented at the April Special Council meeting and deeper discussion with Council was needed for prioritizing projects, and Mr. Stocton advised that it was a Mobility discussion, but it would also be a Budget discussion as well. Vice Mayor Caraballo recommended discussion on traffic calming, to which Mr. Stocton stated that they could bring that topic to the Summer Retreat for discussion, and that they would have a list of all projects regardless of funding and in line with TPO. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that she wished to also discuss design funding. City Manager Merejo suggested prioritizing intersections that would have a huge impact and expressed interest in the funding. The Council had a discussion on the various roads that they would like to see improved, and Mr. Stocton provided 2022 data for vehicles per day traveling on certain roads. Assistant City Manager Graham advised the Council that there were active conversations taking place with the School District regarding Torino Parkway.

Ms. Parmelee asked Council if they would like to discuss ways to incentivize the conversion of septic-to-sewer, to which Vice Mayor Caraballo informed that she had held discussions with DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) on grants and best practices for conversion. Utilities Director Kevin Matyjaszek provided an update on the number of septic systems remaining within city limits, funding,

and provided information on various ways other counties have funded, along with their procedures. He stated that they were seeking direction from Council to be able to further prepare for the Summer Workshop where this would be discussed. Vice Mayor Caraballo informed that DEP provided suggestions such as amending the Ordinance for a final end date for septic-to-sewer conversion, charge a fee for continuing to have septic, but that money would be used for their conversion later on, and she also suggested having Legal look into the option of having residents convert at sale (while purchasing their home). Councilman Pickett voiced his approval of moving forward, and Councilwoman Morgan voiced approval of an Ordinance with a deadline, but having it done in phases. Mr. Matyjaszek recommended doing brief, targeted surveys to residents to inquire if their concerns were the monthly cost or the up-front cost, and have those findings presented at the Summer Workshop. Councilman Bonna voiced his approval for providing a fee to residents to be used later for conversion, and that he was cautious on the 'at sale' idea, but would like to hear the Legal Department's feedback.

City Manager Merejo advised that currently, it would take 30 years to have all septic tanks removed, and asked Council what the goal would be for the timeframe if changed, to which Mayor Martin replied 20 years and that future Councils could extend it, and Vice Mayor Caraballo replied that 2040 was fair. Councilman Pickett recommended changing from 20 years to 30 years to better incentivize residents since the cost would be lower, to which Mr. Matyjaszek, Mayor Martin, and City Manager Merejo discussed that they were on a 10-year loan and the issue would be that the longer it was extended, the more customers would be added, which would become more difficult for Utilities to carry those loans.

A lunch break was called at 12:10 p.m. and the meeting resumed at 1:12 p.m.

Bolivar Gomez, Neighborhood Service Project Manager, presented on the NICE Program and provided information on the common elements such as connected space, learning space, play space, and arts & cultural space. He concluded the presentation by discussing budget considerations on the little free library, benches and receptacles, site work, selfie station, and decorative elements. Vice Mayor Caraballo recommended having a QR Code rather than a message board and discussed volunteering to have people work with the City for game

piece maintenance, to which Mr. Gomez advised that they would have some of these sites/projects overseen. Councilman Pickett recommended having a chess/checkerboard painted and have residents bring their own pieces to avoid having the supplied game pieces taken. Mayor Martin voiced approval for the project and recommended having landscaping and removing the idea of metal benches due to lack of shade. She also stated preference for having these areas within neighborhoods rather than park sites. Vice Mayor Caraballo discussed the issue of security and having at least one camera. Ms. Parmelee stated that they could work with Neighborhood Services to look at the list of sites to ensure that they would be getting the most use out of public lands and look at locations with under-parked sites. Councilwoman Morgan recommended having both a message board and a QR code to make sure the City accommodated all ages, as well as partnering with schools and various organizations to build items for the parks, to which Mr. Gomez expressed approval. Councilman Bonna suggested that the Eagle Scouts would be good to assist with this project.

Ms. Parmelee introduced the next topic of City Council meetings and City Manager Merejo suggested that they hold Special Council meetings with all Council Members rather than one-on-one meetings to discuss topics. Councilwoman Morgan suggested that one meeting start at 9:00 a.m. and one meeting start at 6:00 p.m., and only call Special Meetings as needed. Mayor Martin suggested not cancelling Special Meetings until they know that a daytime and nighttime meeting would be enough, and requested having Legal and City Manager Merejo discuss this on their end and provide feedback at the April Special Meeting. Councilman Bonna advised that he was not in favor of daytime meetings, but was in favor of moving all meetings to 5:30 p.m. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that she would like Citizen's Summit data follow-up for more information on switching the times and gather scientific data, and advised she was not in favor of daytime meetings. Mayor Martin asked City Manager Merejo and Ms. Parmelee to do a further survey and Council held further discussion on holding daytime meetings. City Attorney Stokes advised that this report as well as additional information would be brought before Council at the April Special Meeting as a comprehensive presentation.

Linda McCarthy, Civic Center Director, discussed Special Events for Goal 6 and stated that they were looking for direction/discussion as to what would happen to their outdoor events once the land was

developed. Mayor Martin suggested getting the City Center Master Plan topic done first, then have discussions on the outdoor events during the Summer Workshop. Ms. Parmelee stated that they could also put the Special Events discussion on the Summer Workshop agenda as well.

A break was called at 1:53 p.m. and the meeting resumed at 2:09 p.m.

The session continued with discussion on the Strategic Planning goals, starting with Goal 1: Safety. Mayor Martin stated that the Council had made request in October and February regarding this goal and they had not yet received it, and that she had the Executive Assistant pull Traffic Unit information for Florida's top 15 cities by population. (Clerk's Note: Mayor Martin provided the report to the Council Members, City Manager Merejo, and Chief Bolduc.) City Manager Merejo advised that they could provide the requested reports/information to the Council in 90 days at a Special Meeting. Chief Bolduc stated that they were still discussing what the goals should be for Officers per thousand in the City and looking to discuss it with City Manager Merejo. The Council and Chief Bolduc then held conversation on traffic observations, speeding, and enforcement.

Mayor Martin inquired about exit interviews for Officers that had left the agency and requested a report, to which Natalie Cabrera, HR Director, advised that they could provide that report. Vice Mayor Caraballo recommended utilizing the Action Agendas provided by the Clerk's Office to help create timelines for their calendars to keep track of requests and projects, and Ms. Parmelee advised that there could be new mechanisms that could assist as well. Councilwoman Morgan also recommended that the City partner with Safe Kids for Traffic, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Safety goals.

Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired if the Council wanted to take off the Police Training Facility from the plan, to which Chief Bolduc replied that they could take it off, but they had a problem with funding. Vice Mayor Caraballo recommended to change the name of the goal to 'Fund and Construct Police Training Facility', to which Ms. Parmelee responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Parmelee announced that for the Clean & Beautiful section of the goal, the US1 Beautification Project was now underway as the first phase, and the section closest to the Martin County line was not yet funded, and Mr. Stocton informed that the prices had a dramatic

increase from when they first started. Mayor Martin expressed that between landscaping projects and projects that were more critical, she was going to be in favor of funding projects that were more critical. Ms. Parmelee inquired if this should be taken off the plan, to which Mayor Martin and Vice Mayor Caraballo responded in the negative. Vice Mayor Caraballo recommended that Planning & Zoning research who on US1 was in compliance for their original landscaping plan, and honing more into what the entire corridor should look like. Ms. Parmelee suggested presenting the corridor in phases and including a commercial corridor review.

Ms. Parmelee advised that they were informed that they could not touch the St. James roadway due to the Mobility Fees and the County did not have any plans to make improvements. She then gave brief review of the final projects included in the beautification plan, and Councilwoman Morgan suggested taking St. James off of the plan. Mr. Stocton recommended leveraging the School Board to assist with speeding issues on St. James. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that she wished for staff to come back with ideas for a goal for litter, and Solid Waste Director Mariana Feldpausch provided a brief update on Solid Waste and Mr. Stocton provided a litter update.

(Clerk's Note: Mr. Stocton clarified during Goal 3 discussions that the US1 Beautification Project was fully funded through the Martin County line area.)

Ms. Parmelee continued by presenting on Goal 2: Vibrant Neighborhoods and recommended changing the Neighborhood Parks/Preserves Development Program to the new community gathering spaces that were previously discussed by Mr. Gomez. Vice Mayor Caraballo recommended increasing the NICE outreach through movie nights.

Ms. Parmelee presented on Goal 3: Smart & Connected City by discussing resident surveys, Smart & Sustainable Initiative, reviewing parking regulations for EV charging, and solar-powered park amenities. She also included topics of new technology for traffic and improving performance for innovation.

Ms. Parmelee presented on Goal 4: Diverse Economy & Employment Opportunities and discussed topics such as the City Center Implementation Strategy, Southern Grove Implementation Plan, fully

leveraging the partnership with Cleveland Clinic & FIU Center for Translational Sciences, Work Local Initiative/Partnership with EDC, supporting business development. City Manager Merejo requested eliminating the Cleveland Clinic partnership section from the plan and revisit it next year. Ms. Savage-Dunham briefly discussed the jobs corridor and Deputy City Manager Teresa Lamar-Sarno informed that they had recently been asked to do a Comprehensive Plan amendment that goes from Industrial to Residential and stated that there are certain trends such as that one that they have been seeing recently. Vice Mayor Caraballo then held discussion on Mixed-Use land and targeted Ordinance review. The Council and staff discussed city lands and utility service lines. Elijah Wooten, Economic Development Administrator, and the Council then discussed a Small Business Enterprise Program and Caroline Sturgis, OMB Director, discussed Demand Star and bidding proponents.

Ms. Parmelee then presented on Goal 5: High Quality Infrastructure & Facilities by discussing topics such as accelerating construction of Port St. Lucie Blvd South, expediting the implementation of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control (ATSC) on PSL Blvd from Gatlin to US1, citywide fiber network & Wi-Fi, Public Works Administrative Complex, and the Public Transit Enhancement Plan. Dr. Delaney also mentioned additional topics such as intersection improvements, traffic calming catalogue of best practices, and items for septic-to-sewer. The Council and staff held various discussions including topics such as prioritization, traffic calming, and funding.

Ms. Parmelee presented on Goal 6: Culture, Nature, & Fun Activities by discussing the implementation of The Port & Pioneer Park Master Plans, O.L. Peacock, Sr. Preserve improvements, Parkland acquisition and Environmental Lands/Green Space Preservation Program, implementing bikeways and trails priority corridors, and Winterlakes Park Phase 2, Tradition & Torino Regional Parks, McCarty Ranch camping enhancements, implementation of the Public Art Master Plan, and expansion of cultural offerings/events. She advised that many of these projects were still underway and cautioned additions to this goal. She also recommended removing Winterlakes from the plan. Mayor Martin discussed utilizing McCarty Ranch land for emergency services. Dr. Delaney added additional topics including a Teen Council and teen focused recreational activities. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that parking for event spaces needs to be addressed this year, and a brief discussion was held on trolley rides/ride services for events and shade

services/trees.

Ms. Parmelee introduced Goal 7: High Performing Government Organization. Ms. Cabrera stated that one of the objectives for this year was to begin career counseling for internal employees once they reach the 9-month mark off probation to find out where they would like to go within the City, where they saw themselves in 5 years, and get them the tools to get there through the Training and Development Program, as well as having an Employee Summit. Vice Mayor Caraballo introduced the possibility of adding childcare for an incentive for Police Department recruitment, as well as for other employees, to which Ms. Cabrera advised that they could look into partnerships with a discounted rate or other options that could be more viable/quicker to obtain. Jennifer Davis, Community Redevelopment Administrator, provided information on Palm Beach Garden's childcare center, and Ms. Ciuperger advised the Council that the City had employees leaving due to the issue of lack of childcare and/or not being able to get into a childcare facility. Councilman Bonna expressed concern for the City being in the childcare business, but stated that he would not be opposed to exploring partnerships, discount programs, or alternatives with non-profits. Mayor Martin stated that she wished to explore partnerships first before building their own center, and Vice Mayor Caraballo expressed interest in touring the Palm Beach Gardens facility. Vice Mayor Caraballo also recommended looking for improvements to 1PSL for how they interact with residents such as texts and other forms of communication.

Mayor Martin discussed issues with the Communications Department due to their location and need for more staff, and asked City Manager Merejo and Communications Director Sarah Prohaska to discuss where they would need to get to in order to have proactive communications. Ms. Prohaska suggested potentially having a communications liaison within each department to assist them and City Manager Merejo stated that it would be good to have one for Planning & Zoning. Dr. Delaney added topics including the City Hall Campus Plan and have the Citizen Advisory Board to assist, City mission and branding, and tax and millage education.

Ms. Parmelee concluded the presentation and Mayor Martin and City Manager Merejo provided closing remarks.

6. Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 4:26 p.m.

Bryan Pankhurst, Acting City Clerk

Jasmin De Freese, Deputy City Clerk