

# City of Port St. Lucie

## Special City Council

### Meeting Minutes

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

Gregory J. Oravec, Mayor

Stephanie Morgan, Councilwoman, District I  
John Carvelli, Councilman, District II  
Shannon Martin, Vice Mayor, District III  
Jolien Caraballo, Councilwoman, District IV

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**Monday, November 9, 2020**

**5:00 PM**

**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 November 09, 2020 at 5:02 p.m., 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 Jolien Caraballo  
Councilman John Carvelli (virtual)  
Councilwoman Stephanie Morgan

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Oravec led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. Public to be Heard**

There was nothing heard under this item.

**5. New Business**

**5.a** City Center Update

[2020-893](tel:2020-893)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint & a video were shown at this time.) The

City Manager stated that City Center was a Strategic Plan objective and informed the City Council that staff had negotiated a Letter of Intent with the Receiver for 22 parcels. He broke down the layout of City Center and stated that the City owned the Event Center and eight acres out of the 20+ acres. The City Manager gave a brief history and timeline of the City Center dating back to 2001. He informed the City Council that the City had tried to sell the property since 2015 to no avail, due to the \$46.2 million worth of aggregate taxes, special assessments and fees that needed to be paid by the buyer plus the purchase price; an approximate valuation of negative \$25 million. He said that the carry going forward and the back fees were too high for the private sector. He informed the City Council that Mr. Goldberg had tentatively agreed to a Letter of Intent to sell the property to the City for \$400,000 which covered broker and other fees. He stated that the City would continue to pay approximately \$1.7 million to cover the special assessments and would continue to pay to maintain the property. He informed the City Council that the community's and the City Council's vision for City Center would be fulfilled if the City acquired the property, since the City would be placed in the role of master developer and would be able to redevelop the 28 acres to ensure the success of the Event Center. He requested that the City Council authorize himself and the City Attorney to develop a Purchase and Sale Agreement for the 22 parcels. The City Attorney stated that issues, including bankruptcy & litigation, would be dealt with along the way.

Councilman Carvelli inquired as to what the City's exposure would be in regard to the tax certificates if they became the de-facto owner of the property, to which the City Attorney replied that it was a complex issue, but the property would be in better hands with the City versus real estate speculators. Councilman Carvelli clarified that private sector buyers would need to pay the assessments even if the property was taken on tax certificate or tax sale, to which the City Attorney responded in the affirmative. Councilman Carvelli voiced that the City should not be the owner for all of the properties and hoped that a percentage could be listed in the ordinance which would require private development. Mayor Oravec requested that staff use the public planning process of the community driven plan, like they did for Southern Grove. Vice Mayor Martin agreed and felt that the area would be successful if it was acquired by the City. Councilwoman Morgan felt that it was time to move forward and she was looking forward to the final chapter. Councilwoman Caraballo stated that the lack of development on the eastern side was the focus of communication from

residents and she was looking forward to the next phase. Mayor Oravec discussed the community driven plan from the early 2000's and explained how the recession affected the City and the dreams for City Center. He compared it to Southern Grove and hoped that the City would follow in those same footsteps. He stated that City Center needed a citizen driven vision or Master Plan so that it could become a destination.

Councilwoman Caraballo moved to approve the City Manager and the City Attorney enter into a purchase and sale agreement with the SEC receiver for the purchase of 22 parcels at City Center. Councilwoman Morgan seconded the motion. Under discussion, it was the consensus of the City Council to have the City remove the receiver to ensure a clean break. Vice Mayor Martin hoped that all business options were "entertained" concurrently, so that there were no missed opportunities during the master planning. Councilman Carvelli inquired if private investment was thought of in the past, to which Mayor Oravec responded in the affirmative. Councilman Carvelli inquired about the Bealls Building, to which Mayor Oravec replied that the receiver, according to the current Letter of Intent, would keep the revenue. Mayor Oravec stated that City Center needed to become a destination that was more than apartments and an assisted living facility, to which Councilwoman Caraballo replied that City Center needed to be methodical and hoped that the City Council and staff would take time to focus on the dream of what it could be. The City Clerk restated the motion as follows: to approve the City Manager and the City Attorney enter into a purchase and sale agreement with the SEC receiver for the purchase of 22 parcels at City Center. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. Mayor Oravec reiterated that the City Manager needed to remove the receiver to ensure a clean break. He asked the City Manager when the agreement would return to the City Council, to which the City Manager replied 90 days.

## 6. Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

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Karen A. Phillips, City Clerk

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Shanna Donleavy, Deputy City Clerk