City of Port St. Lucie

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

City Council Workshop

Meeting Minutes

Shannon M. Martin, Mayor

Jolien Caraballo, Vice Mayor, District IV
Stephanie Morgan, Councilwoman, District I
Dave Pickett, Councilman, District II
Anthony Bonna, Sr., Councilman, District III

Please visit www.cityofpsl.com/tv for new public comment options.

Monday, August 18, 2025	9:00 AM	Council Chambers, City Hall

1. Meeting Called to Order

A Workshop of the City Council of the City of Port St. Lucie was called to order by Mayor Martin at 9:01 AM on August 18, 2025, at Port St. Lucie City Hall, 121 SW Port St. Lucie Boulevard, Port St. Lucie, Florida.

2. Roll Call

Council Members Present:
Shannon M. Martin, Mayor
Jolien Caraballo, Vice Mayor
Dave Pickett, Councilman
Anthony Bonna, Councilman

Council Members Not Present:
Stephanie Morgan, Councilwoman

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Martin led the assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Public to be Heard

Mayor Martin opened Public to be Heard. There being no comments, she closed Public to be Heard.

5. Special Presentations

5.a Hear Presentation on the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Programs **2025-757**

Chris Peterson with FortiFi Financial provided a PowerPoint presentation on Residential PACE 101. He introduced Matthew Choy with Renew Financial, Eddie Metzger with Ygrene Energy Fund, and Rachel Hobbs with HomeRun Financing.

Councilman Bonna apprised the Council as to why he brought this item forward: 1) Passing of SB 770 in the Florida legislature adding consumer protections; 2) St. Lucie County initiated a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program; 3) Litigation on the old rogue PACE government has ended; and 4) Constituent outreach asking for PACE programs.

Mr. Peterson reassured everyone that PACE programs are no longer a rogue industry. He explained that PACE is a way to pay for certain property improvements, such as roofs, impact windows, HVAC systems, etc. Mr. Peterson discussed the aspects of PACE financing and PACE as an assessment. He reviewed the process to apply for PACE and the types of qualifying improvements. In addition, Mr. Peterson discussed the benefits to residential property owners and their qualifications. He also spoke to PACE consumer protections, the Florida state auditor general requirement, and home rule power. Mr. Peterson concluded his presentation by discussing contractor quality assurance and the benefits to local governments.

Vice Mayor Caraballo questioned how they ensure the contractors are doing quality work and the pricing is fair. Mr. Peterson explained the homeowner signs the certificate of completion approving the work that has been done and allowing the contractor to get paid. If something happens after the fact, the PACE companies will work with the contractor to fix any issues or hire someone else. Mr. Peterson stated there are pricing caps, but at the end of the day pricing is between the contractor and property owner. Ms. Hobbs discussed the consumer protections provided in SB 770 regarding pricing as well as the extra precautions provided to senior citizens. She stated the PACE companies share the list of contractors and inform each other of any bad actors.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that the residents who need to utilize PACE may have some liens due to code issues. As such, a discussion will need to take place on how to deal with those situations and what type of forgiveness and/or payment plan will be offered to get them in compliance. Mr. Metzger indicated that other financing options include borrowing money from someone, using a credit card, or accepting higher interest rates. He noted that PACE is just another option, but one of the few that regulate and audit reputable contractors.

Vice Mayor Caraballo explained that by approving the ordinance, the City is endorsing the program. She stated they have to protect the consumer as much as possible, because it will come back on the City.

Councilman Pickett asked if a list of contractors was provided. Mr. Peterson stated a list was not provided; however, a list of registered contractors is on the website. He explained it is the property owner's choice and they typically have their own contractor, but the PACE companies can provide recommendations.

Councilman Pickett stated he would like periodic updates on how many people are using the program, which services are being utilized, as well as the complaints received. Mr. Peterson explained the process and further discussed the program, complaints, and PACE's prior bad reputation.

Councilman Bonna clarified that the PACE companies keep a list of contractors who have been terminated or determined to be bad actors. He also noted that this was not a tax, as the PACE program is entirely voluntary.

Councilman Bonna inquired about the amount of interest in the PACE program, to which Mr. Peterson indicated his company has received over 400 inquiries from the residents of Port St. Lucie.

Council Bonna asked Mr. Peterson to speak on what other cities and counties in Florida have implemented. Mr. Peterson stated they have addressed specific concerns, such as the solar door knockers, reporting criteria, etc. He indicated they can work with the City to address any specific concerns.

Mayor Martin inquired if the vetting process of the contractors included researching their financial position, to which Mr. Peterson stated he would have to look at that and reiterated the mitigation aspects. Ms. Hobbs explained how contractors are terminated, status is communicated, and residents are surveyed. She stated it was in their best interest to stop any bad conduct.

City Attorney Richard Berrios advised the Council that this was only a presentation and that the Council was not obligated to do anything at this time.

Mayor Martin stated she did not want the City to endorse anyone or any program, because residents need to make their own decisions. She explained that PACE is a statute, people have options, it is buyer beware, and residents need to do their due diligence. She stated she would support adding extra restrictions to protect the residents, if allowed per the statute. Mr. Peterson indicated a disclosure stating that Port St. Lucie does not endorse the program could be added, as the City can acknowledge the presence of PACE without specifically endorsing it. He stated he could provide examples and language supporting same.

Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested that Staff work with the PACE representatives to ask questions and get more information prior to drafting a City ordinance, to which the City Manager indicated that Staff would provide Council with some recommendations in 45 days.

Councilman Bonna stated he brought this item forward to take a fresh look at PACE. He inquired if City residents would be eligible for the County program. Mr. Peterson suggested that the City have its own ordinances. Councilman Bonna recommended that the City take control, as he would like this to transpire in order to protect the consumers.

6. New Business

6.a Hear Options for BMX Facility Operational Structure **2025-742**

Brad Keen, Director Parks & Recreation, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the BMX Facility Operation Model - Overview & Options. He discussed the status of the project, background and timeline, facility highlights, programming potential, and the project's guiding goals.

Vice Mayor Caraballo indicated she did not want the word "free or modest" in the description, to which Mayor Martin agreed. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated they need to understand the cost, upkeep, and ROI, to ensure the cost of maintaining the track is assessed to what is collected. Mr. Keen discussed having a nominal entry fee to access the facility and a free educational/training area for the little kids.

Councilman Bonna added that nothing the City offers is free, as someone is always paying for it. He stated it may be more accurate to say "no charge" or "complimentary access" for this project and other City events. He reminded everyone that, at the end of the day, the City is paying to provide these services.

Councilman Pickett inquired as to what other facilities charge for access, to which Mr. Keen explained that other BMX courses do not offer public access. It was further explained that regardless whether it is City run or a 501(c)(3), the user would pay $80.00 per year to be a USA BMX member and then an additional fee to practice, race, or attend a clinic. Mr. Keen stated the split is 70/30% or 80/20% with a non-profit, where the City would get 20% to 30% of the revenue generated by the non-profit and would be responsible for the maintenance, lights, etc., much like the recognized users. Mayor Martin stated they were not interested in non-profits or recognized users for this facility.

Mr. Keen continued his presentation and reviewed Operational Model Option 1: Hybrid Model and Option 2: City-Run Model. He indicated City Staff recommends Option 2, and spoke to the revenue opportunities and structure alternatives. Mr. Keen concluded his presentation by outlining the next steps and responding to questions.

Councilman Bonna asked how many Staff would be fully dedicated to the facility. Mr. Keen indicated there would be a total of 12 employees with some being primarily dedicated to the BMX track for general maintenance. He noted there would be no ground maintenance, such as mowers, required. Mr. Keen stated the track operator will be on-site and dedicated exclusively to the operation. He indicated 2 or 3 people will operate the concession stand and pro shop, and 3 to 5 employees would be there full-time. He stated the employees would be spread out during operating hours and that it could be a 7-day/week operation.

Mayor Martin inquired as to when the park will be completed, to which Mr. Keen stated Phase 1 of Tradition Regional Park will be opened in January/February 2026. Mayor Martin expressed her concern, as this was a very short period of time to have everything in place, such as rentals.

Mayor Martin asked for clarification on the BMX sanctioned agreements. She questioned the partnership, tournament regulations and compliance, and who pays for the police department/officers, as it all factors into revenue generation. Mayor Martin stated she would like to start with an Enterprise Fund with the employees coming from the General Fund the first year and, as they ramp up, maybe a hybrid model could be utilized. She expressed the need to have the required equipment and protections as well as the people with the knowledge and experience in place on day one.

Mr. Keen explained the folks with BMX USA would come into the City's facility, organize the races, and provide the programming, officials, and starters. He stated it would be operated by BMX USA for the amount of time the sanctioned event takes place. Mr. Keen indicated the Legal Department currently has an agreement, and some things need to be negotiated, so he does not have some specific answers today. He stated Staff will be bringing this agreement back to Council for review and approval. Mr. Keen indicated they were anticipating providing bicycles for rentals, but it might be financially feasible to offer skates, which would require storage.

Mayor Martin stated they need an operations plan that will be successful on day one, to include the number of BMX events vs. public use. Mr. Keen noted that Staff has drafted the job description for the track operator, should the Council decide on Option 2.

Vice Mayor Caraballo agreed with the thoughts of an Enterprise Fund at three years. She stated Staff would need to present a business plan, annual update, and an Enterprise Fund at the third year. She indicated the track operator will be key as well as maintaining the track, making everything safe, and monitoring the money. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she would love to offer it to the residents for free, but the contracts and revenue from ticketing events, concessions, and sponsorships would need to happen. She suggested having the Legal Department look at other cities regarding their contracts/splits.

Councilman Bonna questioned the timeline of the facility, to which Mr. Keen stated Torino Park Phase 1 is currently being constructed and the anticipated opening is January/February 2026. He indicated the BMX contractor is projecting four months to build the track. He stated they highly anticipate it being done on time, as no impacts are known at this time. Councilman Bonna noted that he would like the City to be as conservative with their date estimates as they are with their numbers.

Councilman Bonna stated cost recovery was important to him, as he does not want the taxpayers to pay for the facility. Councilman Pickett added that if taxpayers pay for it, they should be able to use it. He stated that the tournaments should be paying for the track, the maintenance of the track, and for the police/security. He indicated he wants the City to run it via an Enterprise Fund and does not want to use a non-profit.

Mr. Keen explained the original numbers were provided by the track operator at Okeeheelee and City Staff lowered them by 20-25% to be conservative. Mayor Martin requested that Stephen Okiye bring a business plan with a multi-year proforma back to Council.

City Manager Merejo discussed and clarified the following: Two components - Tradition Field and BMX; Enterprise Fund for BMX only; City/BMX staffing for facility; BMX March/April 2026 expected completion more realistic; bring back financial analysis to Council; look at the numbers vs. employees; get with BMX team; might not be self-sustained in three years; and work on agreements with BMX.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated the focus needs to be on the track operator to develop an operational plan for the City. She discussed phasing in the use of the track, revving up the programming, and offering free access at the beginning with users bringing their own bikes. Councilman Pickett stated a soft opening is feasible, but they need to charge a fee from day one or there will be repercussions. He indicated the subject matter experts will advise the City on what to charge.

Mr. Keen expressed how fortunate they are to have a designer and contractor who are extremely knowledgeable in the BMX world. He stated they have unlimited access to Mike MacIntyre, designer with Action Sports, and they have established a very good relationship with USA BMX. Mr. Keen agreed it is critical to select the most knowledgeable and experienced person to be the track operator of this facility.

City Manager Merejo requested 60 days for Staff to come back to Council with the cost analysis, Enterprise Fund numbers, and what to open first. He stated it will take more than 60 days to find the right person for the track operator position. Mayor Martin asked that they be realistic and not make assumptions.

Kelly Boatwright discussed the current job description, process, and status. Mayor Martin stated they needed to start searching for a track operator ASAP.

There being no further discussion, Councilman Bonna moved to approve moving forward with a City run operation and hearing an update from the City Manager within 60 days that considers Council's feedback on business plans, finances, staffing, and other comments made today. Vice Mayor Caraballo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. (Clerk's Note: Councilwoman Morgan was not present at this meeting.)

7. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:28 AM.

____

Sally Walsh, City Clerk

____

Traci Mehl, Deputy City Clerk