

City of Port St. Lucie

Citizen's Advisory Committee

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

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Michael Bernard, Chair
Lynette Lockwood, Vice Chair
Jack Jennings, Chair Pro-Tem
Raymond Pezzi, Member
Christy Romano, Member
Melony Zaravelis, Member
Ingrid Sarmiento, Member
James Abbott, Alternate Member
Danielle Eber, Alternate Member

CAC

Wednesday, March 27, 2024

1:30 PM

Room 366, City Hall

1. Call to Order

A Regular Meeting of the CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE of the City of Port St. Lucie was called to order by Michael Bernard on March 27, 2024, at 1:30 p.m., at Port St. Lucie City Hall, Room 366, 121 Port St. Lucie Boulevard, Port St. Lucie, Florida.

2. Roll Call

Members Present:

Michael Bernard

Jack Jennings

Lynette Lockwood

Christy Romano

Melony Zaravelis

James Abbott, Alternate (left at 2:05 p.m.)

Danielle Eber, Alternate (arrived at 1:40 p.m.)

Members Not Present:

Raymond Pezzi

Ingrid Sarmiento

3. Determination of Quorum

It was determined that there was a quorum.

4. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Jennings requested that his name be added to the February minutes as he was present for the landfill tour. Assistant City Manager Graham requested that the landfill name be corrected to say the St. Lucie County Landfill as it was not

the City's. Mr. Jennings moved to approve the amended minutes. Ms. Lockwood seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

4.a January 17, 2024, Meeting Minutes [2024-274](#)

This item was approved.

4.b February 16, 2024, Meeting Minutes [2024-275](#)

This item was approved.

5. Public to be Heard

There was nothing heard under this item.

6. New Business

6.a Appointment of Committee Chair and Vice-Chair [2024-278](#)

The Deputy City Clerk collected & tallied ballots. Michael Bernard was selected as the Chair, Lynette Lockwood was selected as the Vice Chair and Jack Jennings was selected as Chair Pro Tem.

6.b Saints Quarterly Report [2024-276](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint was shown at this time.) Keith Bradshaw, Golf Course Administrator, provided a quarterly update to the Committee. He explained that the golf cart depreciation was over several years as the lifetime as a golf cart was five years. He explained how the course was playing at capacity and advised that he did not want to increase the playing numbers as it could negatively impact the course greens. He briefly discussed how the Sandpiper/Club Med & the City courses were linked in the past and advised that the current Sandpiper course was not a good investment for the City at this time. He explained the Saints goals for FY 23/24.

6.c Business Tax Update - Equity Fee Study Review [2024-277](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint was shown at this time.) Yvonne White, Business Tax Manager, informed the Committee that Business Tax was not a license, it was a tax. She explained the benefits of the tax receipts, explained the revenue/expenses, statistics and analytics, the application process and the fee comparison.

Charlie Proulx, Finance Deputy Director, explained the challenges of meeting the demand of a growing city. He informed the Committee that the department had hired a third party to help identify the number of operating businesses in the City. Ms. Lockwood inquired what the course of action would be to adjust the tax, to which Ms. White replied that they would need a legislative change to increase the rate. Mr. Proulx added that there was a House Bill that was trying to cancel business taxes completely. Rich

Berrios, Interim City Attorney, stated that an equity study and a change in the Florida State Statute may be beneficial. Chair Bernard recommended that the City Manager's Office and the Finance Department work together to adjust the fees. Mr. Proulx added that compliance was an issue as the department only had one Compliance Officer to enforce the tax & he stated that during Covid the City decided not to raise the tax to help struggling businesses. Caroline Sturgis, Office of Management and Budget Director, added that the City Council voted to reduce the mileage rate and taxes as a way to aid in leveling the rise of assessments which may have also been a factor in not raising the business tax.

Ms. White explained that business tax was based upon the nature of the business, the service or the product that someone was providing. Mr. Jennings inquired if staff had the ability to assess costs retroactively, to which Ms. White replied that they had the ability to go back five years but usually only assessed two years of back revenue since they did not want to punish businesses within the City. Ms. Lockwood inquired if they could merge a program with Sunbiz to track businesses within the City, to which Ms. White replied that the third party was providing that service and City staff would impose a \$25 fee on the tax to recoup the third party cost; if the business still did not comply staff would involve Code Compliance. Staff and the Committee discussed the need for more full-time employees. Ms. Eber stated that communication was key in trying to collect the tax and recommended that texting would be the ideal form of communication. Ms. Lockwood inquired if the Business Tax Office partnered with other departments and outside agencies in promoting business tax, to which Ms. White responded in the affirmative.

6.d In-House Solid Waste Collection Study Proposal

[2024-299](#)

Chair Bernard recommended that the Committee review the report and prepare questions for the consultant. Jasmin Padova, Executive Assistant, informed the Committee that the consultant would be attending the September Citizens' Advisory Committee meeting. Mariana Feldpausch, Solid Waste Director, informed the Committee that their kick off meeting with the consultant would be next week. Ms. Lockwood inquired if staff or the Committee should contact the Florida League of Cities or other agencies to see if other cities had undergone this process within the last three to five years, to which Ms. Feldpausch replied that the collections & services were very unique to each city and it was very difficult to compare but added that Coral Gables did go through this process with the same consultant. Mr. Jennings requested that page 44 of the handout be enlarged.

7. Unfinished Business

(Clerk's Note: This item was added at the meeting.)

Mr. Jennings stated that the previous Committee had addressed the septic to sewer issues within the City. He proposed that Zachary Judd speak to the Committee regarding water quality and handed out documents to the Committee. Ms. Padova informed the Committee that the Utility Systems Department would be providing a septic to sewer update at the next meeting. Assistant City Manager Graham advised that the Committee needed approval from the City Council to review water quality and/or septic to sewer issues.

8. Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

Michael Bernard, Chair

Shanna Donleavy, Deputy City Clerk