

# City of Port St. Lucie

## Strategic Planning Session

### Meeting Minutes

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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**Wednesday, March 9, 2022**

**8:00 AM**

**Community Center**

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**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, 2022 at 8:40 a.m., at City of Port St. Lucie Community Center, 2195 SE Airoso Blvd., Port St. Lucie, FL 34984.

**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**

Mayor Martin 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** Hold the 2022 Strategic Planning Workshop

[2022-237](#)

(Clerk's Note: The City Clerk did a roll call at this time.)

Mayor Martin stated that at the Winter Retreat 2022, the Council was provided with a toolbox that they were to decorate and discuss at this Strategic Planning meeting.

Councilwoman Morgan discussed that her toolbox was decorated with Business Tax Office information and Small Business Assistance Program information, and that her theme was decorated to help everyone spring into action and bloom/grow.

Councilman Pickett discussed that his toolbox was decorated with topics that were important to him which included a nice neighborhood, freshly paved streets with sidewalks, clean water, bringing a music venue to the City, and a picture of a fishing dock.

Vice Mayor Caraballo discussed that her toolbox was decorated with items that were symbolic to her which were focusing on the Keep Port St. Lucie Beautiful Initiative and recognizing the important things that are done aside from recycling and trash collection, and she used the theme of Spring to represent new beginnings.

Mayor Martin discussed that her toolbox was decorated with ties to Strategic Planning which included being the safest City, great quality infrastructure, economic development, the Port District, and herding cats for the Humane Society.

Councilman Bonna discussed that his toolbox was decorated to represent Girl Power for International Women's Month, and that it was decorated with pandas to represent the Panda software for the Building Department. He stated that it was quality education on the City and Strategic Plan, and helped prepare for a diverse economy by training and preparing a young person for the work force.

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) Kate Parmelee, Strategic Initiatives Director, presented the workshop agenda, and Dr. Kim Delaney, Regional Planning Council, initiated a warmup exercise for the Councilmembers and City Staff. Dr. Delaney then presented on the 2021 headlines exercise in which headlines were created using the vision of what Councilmembers and City Staff wanted to see in 10 years, such as "Adventure Park Phase 3 Completed", "Southern Grove Built Out", and "Water Taxi Now at the Port".

Dr. Delaney presented on the branding for the City and displayed various city logos and slogans across Florida and the United States. She stated that Port St. Lucie's vision statement was broad and that

she would like everyone to consider the theme of 'modernization/future ready' and keep it in mind while planning. She asked the Councilmembers for their thoughts on the vision statement, to which Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that it was to provide an exceptional life experience to all people and to create a unique experience here, as well as 'Welcoming All People' or about how the neighbors represent the diversity. Councilman Pickett stated that the vision statement read like a pamphlet and doesn't grab you like other cities and suggested expanding on it. Councilwoman Morgan stated that less was more and to make it a bold statement(s). Councilman Bonna stated that he agreed with expanding on it, and Mayor Martin stated that they should think about how to tie diversity into one clear statement and celebrate it.

A break was called at 10:08, and the meeting resumed at 10:28.

Ms. Parmelee stated that they would focus on the current Strategic Plan and make amendments, and she provided an overview of the Citizen's Summit. (Clerk's Note: A video was shown at this time.) Ms. Parmelee stated that in addition to the Citizen's Summit, they also conducted a National Community Survey, and she provided the Council with the numbers and percentages from the results of the 2009 survey in comparison to the 2022 survey. She stated that progress was made and that what they had heard in the survey was that citizens value Port St. Lucie's natural environment and support further focus in this area. She also stated that there were downward trends with the City's utilities infrastructure which indicated room for improvement, Mobility continued to be a challenge and priority, employment opportunities were on the rise, and affordability was a concern. She added that affordability was not just a concern for this city, but nationwide. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that they needed to have the data and numbers at the ready for growth and affordability, as well as quality of natural environment, to be able to promote it.

Ms. Parmelee presented the community facets that were getting higher/lower quality ratings. She stated that the National Research Center categorized the top priorities that citizens would like to see a focus on in the next year, with the number one priority being Mobility, followed by Traffic/Roads, Affordability, Community Development/Infrastructure Growth and Utilities, Economic Activity, Garbage Pickup/Recycling, Natural Environment, and a few others. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that the numbers did not have an overwhelming response to just one topic, which showed just how many

priorities they had.

Ms. Parmelee then presented the existing goals and projects, starting with Goal 1: Safe, Clean, and Beautiful. (Clerk's Note: a video was shown at this time.) Chief Bolduc stated that the Police Department had begun training and implementation on body-worn cameras, and Mayor Martin stated that highlighting and sharing Vision Zero would help educate citizens and inform them that the City was addressing issues. Ms. Parmelee stated that on the survey, most responses were in favor of traffic calming over traffic enforcement, and that part of Vision Zero was framework and looking at how all factors contribute to traffic safety. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that one of the goals that she would like to see in the future was crafting a strategy for community relations, and Chief Bolduc informed about Marsy's Law and that the partners in the media had been understanding and helpful with getting the messages out. Chief Bolduc also stated that the Police Department had decided to be more transparent with residents, that they do a tremendous amount of communicating, but could always do more, and that they were working with Communications for Mental Health awareness.

Councilman Bonna noted that all of the safety sub-groups had improved except traffic enforcement and asked if it was traffic enforcement that was bringing down the overall feeling of safety or was it another sub-category or maybe the national narrative, to which Ms. Parmelee replied that many times residents state that they felt safe in their neighborhood/commercial areas, but not safe overall, so they would have to find the gap. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that perhaps the question should inquire as to overall safety in the City rather than just overall safety as that may be too broad.

Ms. Parmelee then presented on Beautifying the Landscaping of Roadways, Public Parks, and Gateways, stating that the long-term priority of the US1 Beautification would start this year, and that for the Port St. Lucie Blvd Beautification Plan, it would be recommended for the Council to consider a parcel on Floresta/PSL Blvd for the project. Mayor Martin asked which side this would be referring to because she would consider both sides to be one project rather than separate, and as work was currently being done on one side, there should be similar work done to the other side. She suggested making it one project, stating that other areas of PSL Blvd needed beautification. John Dunton, Deputy Director of Public Works, stated that they did plan on doing more landscaping, and after looking at it again they realized it

was a big piece of property and they needed to have a deeper look because there may be more opportunity there. City Manager Blackburn stated that the reason that this project wasn't included in the overall project was because they later on decided to acquire the property and extend the turn lane, and when they had acquired the property there was no plan at the time. Ms. Parmelee stated that there would be one-on-one meetings with the Council about new options and the corridor study.

Ms. Parmelee briefly discussed the St. James Beautification and stated that the Keep Port St. Lucie Beautiful Committee had finalized their recommendations and would be presenting them to the Council. She added that there was also a beautification project set for the Crosstown Parkway berms. Ms. Parmelee then provided statistics to the Council and stated that cleanliness had gone down, in which trash collection may have contributed. She stated that one of the areas that Council should focus on should be Gateways, as it was mentioned at the Winter Retreat, to which Mayor Martin stated that it should be included as an initiative going forward.

Ms. Parmelee presented on Goal 2: Vibrant Neighborhoods and stated that 86% of residents rated their neighborhoods as a place to live positively. (Clerk's Note: A video was shown at this time.) Ms. Parmelee briefly discussed Peacock Trails and also stated that civic and community pride had gone down and was now below the national average. The Council and Ms. Parmelee discussed this potentially being due to COVID-19. Ms. Parmelee then stated that residents were asked for the top 3 service changes that would be most helpful with waste, with the results being a scheduled bulk pick-up day, having the City provide a container for household waste, and weekly automated garbage collection service. She stated that waste collection was a dominant topic for feedback, and that another favorite topic among the community was diversity. Councilwoman Morgan asked if the City University would be starting back up, and she also stated that the proactive code compliance was very important. Mayor Martin stated that when they went virtual with City University, they received a lot more residents in attendance, and Mr. Capezzuto, Neighborhood Services Director, stated that they were looking to have a hybrid of in person and virtual attendance for the next session. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that the NICE Program should be revamped and should not be held inside the Civic Center, and Mayor Martin suggested holding the meetings at a local park. Vice Mayor Caraballo also suggested new

communication strategies.

Ms. Parmelee presented Goal 3: Quality Education for All Residents and noted that Adult Education was not focused on for this priority and that it may be something the Council would wish to include. (Clerk's Note: A video was shown at this time.) Ms. Parmelee stated that the overall opportunities for education of the arts was lower than the national average, childcare affordability grew significantly after a long decline, adult education opportunities remained lower than the national average, and affordable high-speed internet connection declined. Bill Jones, Chief Information Officer, confirmed that the Wi-Fi enabled in the parks would be the City's own Wi-Fi fibers and not through the carrier Blue Stream's fiber. Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested amending Goal 3 to be based for more technology for the future and innovation of the City. Ms. Parmelee asked if it would be adding a Smart City Category, to which Vice Mayor Caraballo responded in the affirmative. Mayor Martin stated that this category needed to be revamped, and Ms. Parmelee stated that another comment from the Citizen's Summit was that secondary education trade school continued to be important, as well as apprenticeships and internships. Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested that the solar pieces go with the technology pieces, stating that she had gotten many compliments on the solar power pieces at Jessica Clinton Park, and that she would like to work with FPL to further relationships in getting more pieces since the ones in the park were only a pilot program.

A break was called at 12:00 p.m., and the meeting resumed at 1:17 p.m.

Ms. Parmelee continued the presentation with Goal 4: Diverse Economy & Employment Opportunities, discussing topics including employment opportunities, business developments, and implementing business plans. For amendments, Mayor Martin stated that they could take out the MidFlorida Event Center from the Master Plan and also that they were already working with the Chamber.

Ms. Parmelee presented Goal 5: High Quality Infrastructure & Facilities. (Clerk's Note: A video was shown at this time.) Ms. Parmelee discussed topics such as accelerating construction for Port St. Lucie Blvd South, expediting traffic signal synchronization, and designing and constructing the Public Works Administrative Complex. She stated that some of the topics were below the national benchmarks, and Mayor

Martin stated that she had a theory on the drinking water, which was that people coming from other locations base the judgment of the water off of the places they moved from. Kevin Matyjaszek, Utilities Director, provided details on upcoming water projects, stating that Utilities staff was continuously looking at ways to improve the City's water. Ms. Parmelee stated that the infrastructure for sidewalks was the next frontier after the Tenure Plan, and that for the Citizen's Summit, quality of water came as the first priority, and multi-use paths and sidewalks was the top priority for infrastructure. Mayor Martin stated that they had to tie the Mobility Plan with the Multi-Mobile Plan because they had to operate together, and the Mobility Plan needed to be added to the Strategic Plan. City Manager Blackburn stated that they were in the process of identifying the projects that they would implement using the funds that were generated by the Mobility Fee, and the projects would be identified in September. Teresa Lamar-Sarno, Deputy City Manager, stated that Jonathan Paul, Principal of Urban Concepts, would be making a presentation on March 21, 2022.

Ms. Parmelee presented Goal 6: Culture, Nature, and Fun Activities, which she stated was also lower than the national benchmark. (Clerk's Note: A video was shown at this time.) Mayor Martin stated that the video had a lot of great information and asked how they were getting the information out to the public, to which Sarah Prohaska, Communications Director, replied that the videos presented during this meeting were played during the Virtual Citizen's Summit, they were going to be placed on the Strategic Planning webpage, and that they could also send them along with the video newsletter each month. Mayor Martin stated that they should be put on the City's Facebook page. City Manager Blackburn stated that 60 days prior, Mayor Martin had authorized the City to begin negotiations on economic vetting that might obtain a vendor to build a restaurant at the Port, and that they had gotten 2 more high quality proposals since that authorization, giving the City 3 proposals in total that were better than any they have ever had before.

Ms. Parmelee continued the presentation with the additional data and numbers for the National Average and Citizen input, with most of the comments being to showcase additional art and culture activities, more parks and trails, and environmental preservation. She stated that park feedback was provided including adding a pool, summer concerts/events, and nature programs. Councilwoman Morgan asked if the numbers had gone down for preservation of natural areas due to the new construction of homes, to which Ms. Parmelee responded in

the affirmative and stated that one of the initiatives was branding the public spaces which included the lots that the City had bought for preservation more than 20 years ago. Mayor Martin asked if they had received results from the survey about if the Citizen's wanted to have the City spend funds on land in the next 5 years, to which Ms. Parmelee responded in the affirmative, stating that 46% deemed it as highly important. Sherman Conrad, Parks & Recreation Director, asked if there were any lots left in Woodland Trails, to which Mayor Martin replied that there were only 4 lots left, and that the lots had been immediately purchased following the construction of the park.

Ms. Parmelee presented Goal 7: High Performing City Government. (Clerk's Note: The video was unavailable at this time.) She stated that Customer Service remained steady throughout the survey and discussed 1PSL, and that they were trying to tap into the intelligence of the calls for 1PSL in order to get ahead of the problems such as with the swale project. She also stated that the trash collection issue had dominated the calls. Ms. Parmelee stated that the majority of the Citizen's Summit feedback was positive, they made comments on the Millage Rate, and that the majority of residents had not yet used 1PSL and for those that had used it, they thought it was helpful. Mayor Martin stated that the Millage Rate continued to be a problem because they were tied with the County. Ms. Parmelee stated they continued to focus on improvement and finding more efficient procedures, and that the top area where residents would like to have more funds invested was land acquisition for parks and open spaces, followed by trails, cultural/special events, sidewalks to schools/neighborhoods, neighborhood beautification, traffic calming, storm water funding, and traffic enforcement.

Ms. Parmelee stated that the residents were asked how the City could celebrate their diversity, to which they replied music festivals such as ZAM Fest, art festivals, cultural events, and culinary events. Mayor Martin stated that ZAM Fest was more of a music and art festival rather than a multicultural festival, and that she wanted to be able to compare their April festival to what a true multicultural festival looks like so that the City could become a more culturally aware city. She stated that next year she would like a full multicultural festival and they could look at what other cities have done to embrace that. Councilman Pickett agreed with Mayor Martin and Linda McCarthy, Civic Center Director, stated that they had some serious discussions about what the mission was and how it needed to be tweaked in the future in terms of



inclusiveness and diversity. Elijah Wooten, Economic Development Administrator, informed that the City was looking to establish a 501(c) (3) for arts and culture because funding is not usually provided to governments. Councilwoman Morgan stated that instead of having multiple individual festivals, they should put them together for one International Festival, and Ms. McCarthy stated that it may take a Public/Private partnership and that she was working with a private promoter that was an expert on doing festivals. Mayor Martin stated that her only concern was celebrating the cultures of the locals rather than bringing people in from other places as she wanted to support local businesses, so it would need to be local-focused. Ms. Parmelee recommended to focus on making the residents co-creators, getting them engaged, and utilizing their talents, as well as to put a focus on branding. Ms. Prohaska stated that they were more than willing to take on a City-wide rebranding, with the best way to tackle it being to refine the vision and mission. She also stated that once that was facilitated, she would recommend having a Branding Advisory Committee and focus groups. Ms. Parmelee stated that part of the brand is the City's facilities, so the Council may want to prioritize the City Hall lobby renovations.

Dr. Delaney stated that the next part of the meeting would include a breakout session in which the Council and City Staff would discuss the big topics in multiple groups. (Clerk's Note: A breakout session ensued at this time.) The groups presented their discussions and Dr. Delaney then had the Council put dots next to the items that they felt needed more discussion for Day 2 of the Strategic Planning session. Ms. Parmelee also asked the Council to think about what they wanted this Port St. Lucie City Council team to accomplish and what was their vision, and they would discuss it for Day 2. Dr. Delaney introduced the topics selected as innovation and technologies, waterways/preserves/natural areas/green spaces, diversity, recreation and culture, natural warmth and friendliness, and gateways.

#### 6. Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

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Sally Walsh, City Clerk

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Jasmin De Freese, Deputy City Clerk