

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

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

Friday, April 19, 2024

8:30 AM

**Promenade On The River, 2240 SE
Veterans Memorial Pkwy, Port St
Lucie, FL 34952**

1. Meeting Called to Order

The Strategic Planning Session (Day 2) of the City Council of the City of Port St. Lucie was called to order by Mayor Martin on April 19, 2024, at 8:46 AM, at the Promenade on the River, 2240 SE Veterans Memorial Parkway, Port St. Lucie, Florida.

2. Roll Call

Council members present:

Mayor Shannon Martin

Vice Mayor Jolien Caraballo

Councilwoman Stephanie Morgan (attended intermittently via Zoom throughout the day)

Councilman Dave Pickett

Councilman Anthony Bonna

Others present:

Alexis Baum, Facilitator

Various directors and staff members of the different City departments.

3. 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. New Business

5.a Hold the 2024 Strategic Planning Workshop Day 2[2024-385](#)

Alexis Baum, workshop facilitator, welcomed everyone to day two of the Strategic Planning Session.

ENERGY, ENTHUSIASM, FOCUS:

Alexis indicated their first task is to draw themselves on a sticky note and have each person place their note on the white board according to their current amount of energy, enthusiasm, and focus. Alexis asked each table to discuss how they feel and to place their notes on the matrix. She reviewed the white boards and matrixes of each table, and questioned each table regarding their levels of energy and focus.

Alexis stated the next task was to re-prioritize their sticky notes from the lowest to the highest, based on their energy, enthusiasm, and focus. She explained the goal was to understand relative ranking, as there are no ties and the notes should be placed evenly across the board. Alexis indicated she would check-in with the tables later in the day as to their level of energy and focus.

Alexis reviewed the activities planned for the day and how they relate to the current Strategic Plan. She stated the group will prioritize the ideas they generate, using an impact/difficulty matrix to think about the ideas in relation to each other. She indicated in the afternoon they will start to bring their favorite ideas to life and critique them as a group. Alexis explained the goal is to lift any ideas that come to the surface, make them better, and see how they connect to other projects. She stated the prioritization of ideas will ultimately become a portfolio of ideas.

ROSES, THORNS, BUDS:

Alex reviewed some of the comments from yesterday's session on roses, thorns, and buds. She stated it seemed the group enjoyed the activities and camaraderie, cared about the City, were thinking about the City, and were in alignment. She indicated some in group felt it was good to get out of the office and it was a nice environment, but it was difficult to disconnect from work. Alexis stated that others felt they had open and honest human discussions, which they thought was refreshing, and had a diversity of discussions, but they also found it difficult to be honest and sharing more of themselves.

Alexis stated some of the thorns included having trouble following instructions, prioritizing the issues, and getting started with new things, as

well as lacking the knowledge of some of the issues affecting the City. She advised to not let the thorns stop them from moving forward with their ideas, but to note the thorns. She explained that Kate and her team will be tasked with keeping the content of this work alive. Alexis indicated some of challenges also included listening and thinking forward with their peers, reflecting on others ideas as well as their own, and not jumping to solutions too quickly. She stated others thought it was hard to think about big ideas when they know the funding is not there. Alexis asked the group to relinquish some of these constraints, as they can always bring a wild idea in line with something more practical.

Alexis stated the buds included their ideas and possibilities, such as sitting next to and collaborating with new people, being more open, speaking up more, listening and being open minded, coming up with better ideas and solving problems. She indicated the group would get to do most of these things today. Some other buds included trusting the process, more emergence, more comfort with ambiguity and emerging ideas, etc.

MISSION, VISION, BRANDING, LOGO:

Alexis reviewed the structure of the A, B, C, and D spaces. She stated the City has already co-created their mission, vision, branding, logo, etc., and staff discussed some of the experiences and challenges they faced along the way. Sarah Prohaska stated the challenges were making the statements concise and memorable. Alexis explained that process was known as convergence.

Alexis indicated the next activity is to write down three things they like or connect with personally about the Port St. Lucie brand, vision, or mission. Kate Parmelee reminded the group that the City's brand is the "Heart of the Treasure Coast," vision is "To be a leader in finding innovative solutions that put residents first and support opportunities for all people to thrive," and the mission is "To provide exceptional services that enhance our community's safety, beauty, and quality of life through innovation, engagement, and fiscal responsibility." Alex had the tables post their notes to their white boards and then discuss their "likes" and "connections" related to the City's brand, vision, or mission. She then tasked the group to write headlines in full sentences on a sheet of paper and include people in the sentence, but not include the words used in the brand, vision, or mission.

Alexis had each table post their headlines/sentences to the wall. She reviewed and spoke to some of the sentences created by the tables. She stated the goal was to make some meaning for themselves of the City's

brand, vision, and mission. The group discussed the challenges with this activity as well as some of their "likes," and most expressed their like/connection with the sandhill crane.

Alexis explained their next series of group activities and discussed how their stories came back to the visual of the logo. She checked-in with the group to see how they were feeling and asked the tables to shift the notes on their white board based on how they were currently feeling.

IDEA GENERATION:

Alexis stated they were now in the C space - strategic moves. She explained the D space - strategic planning, next steps, who is accountable, how it is going to be implemented - is not going to happen today. She indicated that will happen with Kate, her team, and this group. Alexis stated the C-space is about naming those big initiatives or projects in their existing Strategic Plan, or adding or removing projects from the plan.

Alexis asked everyone to come up with six or more ideas and write them on the yellow sticky notes, and include an icon or a visual. She stated they can think about what is currently in the front of their minds when looking at the City's goals and initiatives. She then asked the tables to put all of their ideas into categories and post them on the wall.

The group had a discussion regarding existing and new ideas while they were posting their ideas to the wall. Alexis asked the group to put a red mark on the new ideas or ideas that are not currently in the Strategic Plan. The following comments and ideas were shared with the group:

City Manager Merejo stated it was a good opportunity to put his ideas on paper.

Carmen Capezzuto stated it was the first time he heard annexation was a possibility in Port St. Lucie.

Caroline Sturgis discussed expanding tourism opportunities to generate additional revenues, the projects that need to be advanced, the associated cost without an additional tax or funding responsibility on the resident, hotel tax, etc.

Linda McCarthy talked about projects stifled by the County.

Colt Schwerdt suggested working with a private partner to bring in a theme park, water park, amphitheater, to draw tourism and consider McCarty

Ranch.

Elijah Wooten envisioned a River City along the St. Lucie River, utilizing the waterways as a key branding feature, having an old town feel - early 1900's to speak to the history of the county.

Vice Mayor Caraballo shared that her inspiration for coming to this planning session was the Wow playground. She encouraged everyone to go see the playground and stated they put no limits on their creativity, funding, etc., when designing it. Vice Mayor Caraballo challenged the group to come up with big ideas, as the City Manager will worry about the funding.

BOLD MOVES:

Mayor Martin stated she shared similar thoughts related to Pioneer Park, as they walked it the other day and got extremely emotional. She remembered how they were being bold when creating the park and playground. Mayor Martin stated they traveled all over for inspiration and it has been her best experience in her thirteen years on Council. She explained the group should not be afraid, as everything can be possible when they ideate and collaborate.

City Manager Merejo stated the was first time he could dream without having to think about money. He indicated the City has always been bold and provided some examples: Water and sewer was completed in 12 years vs. 22+ years, McCarty Ranch purchase, Crosstown, Airoso, Bayshore, Gatlin, etc. Mayor Martin added that Southern Grove was done in a short amount of time.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated redevelopment was harder than new development and that the eastern redevelopment will be a challenge as well as Village Green Drive, US-1 corridor, and City Center. She also discussed the need to avoid blight and slum on the east side.

Alexis asked the group to share their bold moves:

Natalie Cabrera stated the City has always been bold, because they instituted an employee health clinic before any other city.

Joel Dramis noted the City added a drive through facility in 2016 for their Building Department, which was the first one in the nation.

Carmen Capezzuto stated the City replaced their garbage service in six

months.

Chief Del Toro announced the City is instituting the first Port St. Lucie only Police Academy class starting May 28th, safest city for 13 straight years, and will be breaking ground on the new police training facility in July 2024.

Councilman Pickett discussed how he has been the recipient of what past Council's have done and this planning session was exciting to him because he can take part of something to add to his legacy.

Colt Schwerdt stated Public Works' bold moves included Crosstown, the first superstreet intersection, and the first Public Works agency in the state of Florida to be accredited and top ten in the nation.

Councilman Bonna noted that this team did all of these projects while radically paying down the City's debt and having the third lowest millage rate of the top twenty largest cities.

Mariana Feldpausch stated the City changed the Solid Waste contract and every guideline in six months.

Brad Keen talked about it was bold for the Parks & Recreation Department to work collaboratively with other City departments, including the Police Department. Mayor Martin added that the City has two amazing parks opening within two months of each other and groundbreakings for two new parks.

Vice Mayor Caraballo thought it was bold that the City Council does their work and keeps the politics out, which is hard in today's society and with being the 6th largest City in the state of Florida.

Kristina Ciuperger stated the City staff focuses on what they have to do because they are growing so fast and are in the top 100 cities in the United States.

Roger Jacob expressed that in his 44 years working in a public government agency, he has never worked with a more collaborative group of people.

Kate Parmelee discussed how only the people in the room could understand what they have done as a City, as it is such a unique experience. She stated this was a team of people who do the impossible.

Alexis stated that after lunch they will practice being bold, being creative,

being their best selves, seeing what they are capable of, doing the impossible, as they are going to amplify their ideas even further. She explained that when everyone returns from lunch, they will write on a green sticky note what motivates them to be bold, think big, and dream of what is possible.

(Clerk's Note: Lunch break was called at 12:00 PM and the meeting resumed at 1:05 PM.)

THINKING BIG:

After lunch, Alexis asked everyone to place their green stickys/badges on their shirts as a name tag and share their thoughts on how they were going to think big and bold. Next, Alexis had the group work on the creative matrix for creative collisioning, as ideas happen at the intersection of two things. The group posted their ideas and drawings on the matrix with the "How might we . . ." at the top and on the side are the "enablers." When that task was completed, the tables added up their scores to determine how many ideas and drawings were created. Alex explained she gave points for quantity not quality, because they were in the divergence phase and trying to get all of the ideas on the table. She noted the group generated 240 ideas in ten minutes.

Alexis stated the next task was for the tables to talk through the ideas they placed on the matrix so that each person understands each idea. Alexis explained how to organize the ideas/sticky's into phases to determine return on investment, decide which projects to start first, or discuss in the future. She had the tables pick out two ideas from their matrix to present to the group later in the day.

Alexis explained the goal of the planning session is to get the group focused to generate ideas and bring them to life, in a way that is compelling but not yet decisive. She stated Kate will take everything they have done here and, in conjunction with their current plan, bring it back to the group and the Council.

Alexis had the tables bring their two ideas to life by creating posters; however, she encouraged them to make posters for all of their ideas when they have more time to determine the impact. Kate Parmelee added that the rewrite of the plan will reflect the words and language used today. She stated changing the City's approach requires more time and inquired if another day was needed for planning.

Mayor Martin stated this what they needed to change their processes and

that they need another day, so they can determine what should go into the plan, what they should implement over the next several years, and have further conversations and make decisions from a Council perspective based on what they want to work on.

Vice Mayor Caraballo spoke to the Wow playground and how the idea came from strategic planning. She stated one of her team's ideas was a Performing Arts Center, but maybe it does not go directly into the strategic plan, as they could do the tours, field trips, and get feedback first, and then develop the phasing system as to how it would be implemented and work. Kate Parmelee added that partnerships was a category they could start to look at, which is another level of ideation. Alexis explained the C to D spaces will be discussed another day or during another series of sessions.

Mayor Martin stated the City has seven strategic plan goals and Goal #2 is Vibrant Neighborhoods. She indicated they have spoken in the past about what that means and they do not know. She questioned whether they still want this goal or if they need to redefine it.

Alexis stated at the bottom of each poster there is a question as to which strategic plan goal the idea supports, as it needs to fit in the plan, and if does not, they need ask themselves if they need another goal or does that mean it is an idea they are not going to work on right now. Alexis suggested if they plan for another day, they do it from a place of looking at the idea in this rough and ready way, where they have not locked down anything, but where they have explored the idea and brought it to life, so they can have the discussion about whether it fits in with Strategic Plan.

Mayor Martin stated they cannot have a big time gap when planning for the next session, as she is afraid they will lose this great work. Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested coming up with a concept of where the City would like to head and then see what ideations, recommendations, or phasing steps staff comes back with at an informal meeting. Mayor Martin thought they needed togetherness to move forward. She stated she would like to see what Vice Mayor Caraballo's suggestion looks like before agreeing to anything.

CRITIQUING IDEAS:

Alexis stated the latter part of the day will be spent on capability building, to give the group some tools to utilize going forward. She explained to the tables how to organize and what to list on their concept posters of ideas.

Alexis reviewed the posters created by each table and explained to the

group how to critique the ideas. She asked each table to present one of their ideas to be critiqued by the group. She explained the critique process and dialogue includes explaining or asking the following questions:

1. The challenge we are trying to solve for is . . .
2. One of the ideas we have is . . .
3. Is there anything unclear about what we shared?
4. What elements of the idea do you like?
5. What challenges might we face?
6. How might we build on this?
7. Thank you!

Following the steps above, Team Bonna presented their idea of changing 1PSL to MyPSL; Team Caraballo presented their idea for the Lack of Culture, Entertainment, and Social Gathering Space in the City; Team Martin presented their idea of a Future Facility Master Plan; Team Pickett presented their idea on how to Attract and Retain Employees; Team Morgan presented their idea of Hardening City Buildings for Safety. The group provided the teams with sticky notes and shared their thoughts as to the roses, thorns, and buds pertaining to the ideas presented.

Alexis noted the group spent approximately ten minutes coming up with the ideas, twenty minutes flushing out the ideas, and ten minutes receiving feedback on the ideas. She stated they now have a list of ideas they may want to keep, which also includes the challenges and how to grow the ideas.

CLOSING COMMENTS:

Vice Mayor Caraballo thought this was a very constructive process, as it makes every idea seem possible. She stated it may be challenging, but this process shows them how to approach it.

Councilman Pickett stated he thought this was a great process and much better than the dot process. He stated they can better understand the ideas, which helps others build off what they are trying to achieve.

Mayor Martin expressed that this has been an excellent two days, as they have worked together more than ever. She stated this will set a course for them on how to solve future problems. She indicated she was looking forward to the next steps, because the sky is the limit for each of them, both individually and as a team.

City Manager Jesus stated he wants to complete what they have started

and take it to the end, so everyone can create something they have dreamed of. He thought it was great to come together as an organization and go through this type of training.

Councilman Bonna discussed that it was beneficial to think through a lot of different ideas all at once, as conversations can be uncomfortable when people are passionate and then appear negative. He stated this process reinforces that ideas need to be vetted, thought through, and part of the larger plan and big picture. He explained the people proposing the ideas and the people asking the questions are both important. He stated they are all on the same team, even if they are asking questions and even if they disagree.

Kate Parmelee stated the group has worked very hard and is an amazing team. She explained that everyone owns the plan they are creating and they have much more to do. She acknowledged Alexis for her knowledge, instruction, and guidance. Kate stated she was excited to see where they go from here and will schedule the follow-up meeting. She thanked everyone for their hard work, passion, and ideas.

Mayor Martin thanked Alexis for opening their eyes to a whole new world. She stated in all the years of doing Strategic Planning and working with everyone, this is the best it has ever been and it is only going to get better.

6. Adjourn

There being no further business, the session recessed at 4:10 PM.

Sally Walsh, City Clerk

Traci Mehl, Deputy City Clerk