

# City of Port St. Lucie

## City Council Workshop

### 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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**Monday, April 15, 2024**

**9:00 AM**

**Council Chambers, City Hall**

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**\*Addition of Item 5D\***

1. Meeting Called to Order

A Regular Meeting of the CITY COUNCIL of the City of Port St. Lucie was called to order by Mayor Martin on April 15, 2024, at 9:01 a.m., at Port St. Lucie City Hall, 121 SW Port St. Lucie Boulevard, Port St. Lucie, Florida.

2. Roll Call

Council Members Present:

Mayor Shannon Martin

Vice Mayor Jolien Caraballo (via Zoom)

Councilman Dave Pickett

Councilman Anthony Bonna

Council Members Not Present:

Councilwoman Stephanie Morgan

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Martin led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Public to be Heard

There was no public to be heard at this time.

5. New Business

**5.a** Tentatively Approve the Proposed Capital Improvement  
Program for Fiscal Years 2025 - 2029.

**[2024-346](#)**

City Manager Merejo noted that projects may need to be moved around based upon the Council's input, as well as what comes out of the Strategic Plan.

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) OMB Director Caroline Sturgis presented to the Council and provided an overview of the proposed CIP. She included examples of Capital Improvement Projects and outlined the process. Ms. Sturgis then discussed the Five-Year CIP Budget by fund, and the Ten-Year CIP Budget by fund, including revisions. She discussed the General CIP Fund, funding sources, and the projects by departments.

Mayor Martin addressed the Police Department Evidence Facility updates and requested further information. Ms. Sturgis advised that the Procurement Department was diligently gathering the information and working with the Police Department for further numbers/information. Assistant Chief Niemczyk informed of the updates needed to correct issues with the building. Vice Mayor Caraballo requested a full report on the history of the Evidence Building for transparency purposes and to be able to cure the current deficiencies, as well as future issues. Councilman Pickett inquired if the building was adequate for what the City needed, to which Assistant Chief Niemczyk responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Sturgis continued discussing the departmental projects. Parks & Recreation Deputy Director Mike Kendrick elaborated on the security and infrastructure for the canal and noted that they were still working on reducing the cost. Mayor Martin informed that she had concerns about the amount to be spent on the Botanical Gardens Strategic Plan, and City Manager Merejo noted that the Botanical Gardens could be upgraded so they wanted to strategically look at how to do this. Mayor Martin stated that this would not be a priority compared to other projects, and Vice Mayor Caraballo expressed agreement and suggested reaching out to other volunteer groups for assistance with events. City Manager Merejo stated that they would have to either get more volunteers or have staff there to support it and have the center open 7 days a week, and Councilman Bonna expressed that it was important to try to do things internally.

Ms. Sturgis continued discussions on the departmental projects for Parks & Recreation including McCarty Ranch and the Saints Golf Course. Mayor Martin advised that there was no Return on Investment listed on the report for the Saints extra training, and City Manager Merejo stated that they were seeing an increase in revenue every month, and they would update the numbers and provide that information to Council. Vice Mayor Caraballo discussed enhancements and addressing the resident's issues relating to

the golf ball locations, and Mayor Martin stated that the enhancements were to provide extra training to golfers. Keith Bradshaw, Saints Golf Course Administrator, spoke on enhancements to the driving range and the increase in revenue. Vice Mayor Caraballo suggested having workshop meetings when the projects are being added so that they could be pre-approved prior to the meetings. City Manager Merejo stated that this was only a draft and would be amended based on the Council's comments.

Ms. Sturgis continued the presentation by discussing the Parks Impact Fee CIP Fund and the Road & Bridge CIP Fund. Mayor Martin brought attention to the Mobility Fees and advised that they were collateral to pay back debt from bonds/infrastructure fees. She also noted that it was important to leverage bank/bond financing. Ms. Sturgis continued with further discussion on the Road & Bridge CIP Fund and explained that the revisions in the presentation were due to the inclusion of Public Works information. She then discussed the Half-Cent Sales Tax CIP Fund and Stormwater Capital Projects. City Manager Merejo stated that they would need to look for different sources to be able to expand the Stormwater System.

Ms. Sturgis concluded the presentation with discussion on the Utility Systems CIP Fund, and City Manager Merejo discussed the last utility expansion that was done 15 years ago and the current capacity, noting that the capacity for water and wastewater needed to be increased. Councilman Pickett suggested putting something tentative in the Five-Year Plan for the Veteran's Park expansion.

There being no further discussion, Councilman Pickett moved to tentatively approve the CIP for Fiscal Year 24/25. Councilman Bonna seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

There being no further discussion, Councilman Bonna moved to tentatively approve the CIP for Fiscal Years 25-29. Councilman Pickett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

A break was called at 10:02 a.m., and the meeting resumed at 10:16 a.m.

**5.b** Update to the Hurricane Damaged Boardwalk at Tom Hooper Park

[2024-351](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) Parks & Recreation Assistant Director Bradley Keen presented on the damage to the Boardwalk, exhibited the existing conditions, and discussed the timeline of events and design options. He stated that alternate repair option 1 was to repair/rehab the existing boardwalk back to the original

design at elevation 2, and alternate repair option 2 was to raise the boardwalk to elevation 6 to match the new boardwalk connection to the south, which was the staff recommendation.

City Manager Merejo noted that it was difficult to obtain permits from the Army Corps so they would need the Mayor and Vice Mayor's assistance to create letters and schedule meetings. Mr. Keen announced that the project qualified for a nationwide permit, which would accelerate the approval process.

There being no further discussion, Councilman Pickett moved to approve the Alternate Repair Option #2. Councilman Bonna seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

- 5.c** Hear an Update on the Down Payment Assistance Program, also known as City of Port St. Lucie (PSL) Community Land Trust of Palm Beach County and the Treasure Coast (CLTPBCTC) Homebuyer Assistance Program, Funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

[2024-363](#)

Neighborhood Services Director Carmen Capezzuto provided an introduction of the program to the Council. (Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) Neighborhood Services Deputy Director Alessandra Tasca discussed the project timeline to date, the projected timeline if approved at this meeting, and Community Land Trust (CLT) Program information. Mayor Martin asked for clarification on the issues and why the program did not work, to which Ms. Tasca discussed that they had hoped interest rates would go down, but they were slower to come down which impacts the buying power, so the Housing Consultant would have to go into the MLS System and find properties that were available within CLT parameters. She also noted that they had worked condominiums and townhomes into the program for this reason, but then they would have to calculate the condominium fees associated with those properties.

Julie Brenner, CLT Housing Consultant, presented to the Council on the Port St. Lucie affordability gap, affordable pricing for 3-bedroom homes, eligibility criteria, and properties available based on criteria. Mr. Capezzuto informed that of the 4 available homes, there would be 8 applicants vying for those homes. He discussed the two requests for Council with the first request being to approve of increasing the maximum allowed subsidy in increments to achieve affordability, from \$50k to \$100k (based on 35% housing affordability analysis). The second request was to authorize staff to model a second program with approximately \$970k of the City's remaining Neighborhood Stabilization Funds to add more units to the City's

Community Land Trust program including any additional grant funding that might become available and return to the Council with an expanded program concept.

Regarding request 2, Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired if the CLT would be taking homes that were market rate today and hold them for the program by utilizing the subsidy that was provided, and would they be growing the number of CLT homes in the City, to which Mr. Capezzuto replied that residents that qualified for the program would find available properties and the down payment assistance would lock that into the CLT for the next 99 years with a renewable lease after that. Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired if this locked the property value so that they could maintain the lower price for the next buyer, to which Mr. Capezzuto responded in the affirmative. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that they needed to strategically plan where they would be putting the homes so that they could spread the CLT throughout the city, and that she was not opposed to the program, but she thought they should have a good plan moving forward. Mayor Martin stated that she didn't think there was an issue because there were homes already in existence, not homes being built, so people get to choose what they want to buy once they qualify, and they could not restrict where people could buy their homes.

Councilman Bonna expressed that he thought this was a good program, and he would be open to a \$75,000 option, but he would not be in support of \$100,000. Mayor Martin asked for clarification on if each one of the applications are reviewed on an individual basis, to which Ms. Tasca responded in the affirmative, stating that it was customized to the income, size of the household, price and interest rate that they get pre-approved for, so it would be a range that could be up to \$75,000 or higher.

Councilman Pickett inquired as to how many units \$75,000 could get to which Ms. Brenner replied that they could get 12 units. Councilman Pickett expressed that he was not comfortable putting someone in a townhome with an HOA, to which Ms. Tasca advised that the homebuyers must go through a Homebuyer Education Course, and they also work closely with them to assist them with their needs. Mayor Martin expressed that she was in favor of going up to \$100,000 but wished to get an update at the Summer Council Workshop. Mayor Martin inquired if the second request was being made to mirror what was being done now, to which Ms. Tasca responded in the affirmative, noting that they wanted to bring the feedback back to the Council to make any adjustments needed.

Regarding the \$75,000 limit, Councilman Bonna inquired if there were any restrictions that could be put in place so that if there was inventory

available within that threshold, it was given preference and they would only go above that price range if there was no inventory, to which Mr. Capezzuto replied that this was something they could do. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that when the second request was brought back, she would like to have it presented to Council as to how they hone the program in further for the needs of the City. (Clerk's Note: The second request will be brought forward at the Summer Council Workshop.)

There being no further discussion, Vice Mayor Caraballo moved to approve up to \$100,000. Councilman Pickett seconded the motion, which passed by voice vote with Mayor Martin, Vice Mayor Caraballo, and Councilman Pickett in favor, and Councilman Bonna opposed.

**5.d** Discuss Proposed Changes to the Chapter 35 of the Code of Port St. Lucie (Procurement Ordinance).

[2024-354](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) OMB Director Caroline Sturgis presented to the Council and stated that they recommended adding a section for purchases subject to the Consultants Competitive Negotiation Act, F.S. 287.055, and to amend Section 35.07 – Formal Bidding Procedure to clarify solicitation award language. She stated that for the amendment to Section 35.07(c), the section was enhanced to provide the City Council with flexibility with additional options to keep a project momentum prior to rejecting a bid/all bids. She also discussed the note that was added to the subsection. Ms. Sturgis stated that for Section 35.08(a), they clarified that the City Manager/designee would recommend a purchase to Council for an award prior to, and the applicability language was cleaned up. She also discussed the addition of subsection 9, which stated that professional services shall be solicited and awarded based on the procedures set forth in the Consultants Competitive Negotiation Act, Section 35.21 of the same Chapter, the City's policies and procedures, and any other applicable laws. She also discussed the addition of Section 35.21 – Professional services as defined in the Consultants Competitive Negotiation Act: Award Professional Agreements by City Council, as well as its subsections.

Councilman Bonna asked for clarification on if the option would also be to reject all bids, to which City Attorney Berrios responded in the affirmative. Councilman Bonna inquired if there was anything he was allowed to do today that he would not be allowed to do in the future if the changes were made, to which City Attorney Berrios responded in the negative. Councilman Bonna inquired as to why the language was different regarding the statement "amend and approve the recommended proposal", and would they have the ability to reject the proposal, to which City Attorney Berrios replied that the change was to reflect what was presented

to the Council for the agenda summaries they received and confirmed that they would also have the right to reject. Mayor Martin recommended the addition of a line that states that they could reject all bids.

It was the consensus of the City Council to add a line with the language to "reject all bids".

6. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:11 a.m.

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Sally Walsh, City Clerk

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Jasmin De Freese, Deputy City Clerk