

City of Port St. Lucie

City Council / City Staff Retreat

Meeting Minutes

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

Gregory J. Oravec, Mayor

Stephanie Morgan, Councilwoman, District I
Dave Pickett, Councilman, District II
Shannon Martin, Vice Mayor, District III
Jolien Caraballo, Councilwoman, District IV

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

8:30 AM

**MidFlorida Event Center, 9221 SE
Event Center Pl., Port St. Lucie, FL
34952**

1. Meeting Called to Order

A Special Virtual Meeting of the CITY COUNCIL of the City of Port St. Lucie was called to order by Mayor Oravec on February 24, 2021, at 8:37 AM, at the MidFlorida Event Center, 9221 SE Event Center Place, Port St. Lucie, Florida.

2. Roll Call

Council Members Present:

Mayor Gregory J. Oravec
Vice Mayor Shannon Martin
Councilwoman Stephanie Morgan
Councilman Dave Pickett
Councilwoman Jolien Caraballo

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Oravec led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Public to be Heard

No one signed up to speak under this item.

5. Retreat Business Items

- 5.a** Provide Tentative Direction on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22
City Budget

[2021-161](#)

The City Manager stated that COVID has made the Retreat a bit more challenging, but they are taking precautions by social distancing and following the appropriate guidelines. He said the retreats are a time for the Council and staff to share information on their objectives, their future financial perspective, and the results of their efforts as leaders.

He provided an overview of the day's presentations: Revenues for the FY22 Budget, Succession Planning for the Organization, Future of the Treasure Coast Region, Business Plans for the Departments, and Septic-to-Sewer Conversion.

The City Manager discussed how the City of Port St. Lucie is growing rapidly and triggering changes. He said that approximately 10,000 people are coming into the community, with about half building new homes in their Developments of Regional Impact and PUDs, and the other half building in the 80,000 or so platted lots. He stated the pandemic hit some folks really hard and others are doing better than ever. He indicated that the City is doing extremely well relative to what might be expected in a pandemic recession.

Jeff Snyder introduced two new employees in the Financial Management Department: YingLin Yu, Interim Budget Manager, and Jackie Burns, Budget Analyst II.

Mr. Snyder provided a PowerPoint presentation and a first look at the budget. He discussed the desired outcomes and budget process as well as provided an overview of the economics and budget trends.

Councilwoman Caraballo inquired, with the cancellation of the Park Impact Fees, if staff had any ideas to ensure the City has the funds to cover the projects coming forward. In response, the City Manager stated that staff will be renegotiating that fee. He said that staff provided notice to cancel the Park Impact Fees per Council's direction, with the intent to renegotiate and have more of the Park Impact Fee spent on projects in the City.

Regarding Significant Needs - Unfunded, Mayor Oravec stated that staff needs to look through the lens as a resident, as future road projects and transportation are more of a concern to residents than golf course drainage. He said that when balancing the hierarchy of needs and competing priorities, it is important to think of their citizens and not necessarily the internal needs of staff.

Mayor Oravec requested a timeline and status of the Public Works building, and asked where it fit in the budget. Heath Stocton and the City Manager responded and stated that more information will be presented in April 2021 along with the CIP.

Councilwoman Morgan expressed that a new Public Works building is very important and suggested that the complex be located at the site being proposed for Adventure Park. The other Council members indicated they were open to having that discussion but explained the Adventure Park location has been set.

(Clerk's Note: A break was called at 9:22 AM and the meeting resumed at 9:36 AM.)

5.b A Market & Investment Update Regarding the City's Investment Portfolio [2021-163](#)

Faye Henry provided a PowerPoint presentation. She reviewed the investments for the City of Port St. Lucie as well as their strategic plan for investments. She discussed the fixed income total portfolio for market values, total portfolio for market values and earnings, anticipated portfolio risks, portfolio management, and portfolio and market monitoring. She concluded her presentation with future predictions and bond yield forecasts for the City.

Councilwoman Caraballo inquired about the City investing in cryptocurrency and Bitcoin and stated she would like to learn more. Ms. Henry stated she would provide some information to Council. The City Manager noted that their policies for investments do not allow the City to invest in cryptocurrency.

5.c Annual Review of the City's Debt Portfolio [2021-162](#)

Faye Henry provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Debt Portfolio for the City of Port St. Lucie. She provided an update on the overall market and reviewed the strategic plan for debt, the debt policy, and the major reasons for debt issuance. She discussed the City's population growth, bond ratings, and FY 2019-2021 bond refunds. She also reviewed the City's outstanding, governmental, enterprise, and special assessment debt; economic development bonds and gains; and future plans for debt.

Mayor Oravec questioned whether the higher interest bonds could be swapped with lower interest bonds for the special assessments. Ms. Henry stated she would check with the City's Financial Advisor.

(Clerk's Note: A break was called at 10:12 AM and the meeting resumed at 11:04 AM.)

5.d Succession Planning in the City of PSL [2021-160](#)

Kristina Ciuperger provided a PowerPoint presentation on Succession Planning in the City of Port St. Lucie. She defined and discussed the key goals and elements of succession planning. She reviewed the different phases: 1) What Have We Done; 2) Meet with Departments; and 3) Evaluate Risk Continuously. She also discussed what to consider, developing the leadership pipeline, PSL Knowledge City and training data, and developing career paths.

Vice Mayor Martin asked for the percentage of responses and how many employees responded to the survey. Mayor Oravec requested the average number of responses compared to the national benchmark. Kristina Ciuperger stated that staff would get that information for Council.

Vice Mayor Martin and Mayor Oravec expressed their concerns with some departments having a deficit or misalignment in talent. Mayor Oravec requested that a workshop be held with Council to further discuss succession planning. The City Manager explained that the new training catalog is a manifestation of how the City provides training, educational learning opportunities, and the knowledge it takes for employees to make the organization better and what it takes to become a good supervisor, division director, assistant department director, or department director.

Councilwoman Caraballo discussed how it was just as important to be number two, as without number two there would be no number one. She recommended having a third party, such as ICMA, take an unbiased look at the City's positions and provide recommendations. Kristina Ciuperger stated that staff will check with ICMA on potential assessments and best practices.

Councilman Picket suggested that cross-training be ongoing in each department for those who are potentially retiring as well as for those who may get sick, leave the organization, etc. Mayor Oravec requested that exit interviews and institutional knowledge be consolidated and captured when employees leave the City, to which Kristina Ciuperger responded in the affirmative.

5.e Swale Innovation Team Update

[2021-154](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was approved under Item 5.g.)

Kate Parmelee introduced Brian Elms, who has helped develop the Innovation Academy for the City of Port St. Lucie. She explained how

they thought the work Mr. Elms has introduced might be good for evaluating the swale issues. She said 1PSL has been an amazing informational system in determining their number one complaint is drainage and blocked swales. She stated that Mr. Elms tackled this issue with the City's first innovation team.

Mr. Elms explained how the team was looking to provide the service before they received a call for that service. He said over 60 employees through different departments were trained on the same techniques. He stated that some worked on the 1PSL center, others worked on expediting the time it took to fix the swale or blockage or change their inspection process, and some employees developed the communication plan and provided training. Mr. Elms noted that all these changes were done during COVID and several major rain events, and resulted in a significant reduction in calls for service.

Ms. Parmelee introduced Sabrina, an intern with the City of Port St. Lucie, who discussed the team's innovations: updating the City's website, creating new swale communication material, improving 1PSL, creating checklists, and better labeling. She also reviewed the different checklists and the diagram showing how a swale site should be set up.

Sarah Prohaska presented the Swale Education Campaign that was created by the team and further discussed the team's innovations. She indicated that 220 service requests were received in June 2020 and 106 were received in November 2020, which was a 50% +/- reduction in calls.

Kate Parmelee presented the maps showing where the service calls are coming from. John Dutton explained how they are targeting the hotspot, a 34,000 foot section, for improvements based on the data, and how they are changing the way they do swale work. He noted that they are requesting about \$2 million to do this work to get the numbers down.

Council expressed their concerns for the continued flooding on Rosser Boulevard and Savona Boulevard. Vice Mayor Martin suggested looking at the 100 acre property for the City, as it has a lake for storage. Mayor Oravec indicated the owner acquired this property via tax certificate and may be willing to give the property to the City. He asked if the City has ever discussed this with the owner. The City Manager stated that they recently had a conversation, but the owner is

looking to develop and monetize the property. Mayor Oravec said there may be a way forward, through tax benefit or eminent domain, that the City can explore.

At this point, Mayor Oravec requested that Council receive the Storm Water Presentation after lunch, before they vote on the request for \$2 million. The City Manager indicated that Joe Capra would be able to present this afternoon.

Councilwoman Caraballo stated the public is more willing to clean their swales when the Governor declares a State of Emergency, which might be a good time to push TV commercials if they are reimbursable by FEMA. Ms. Parmelee indicated that this was a great idea, as they are aligning their beautification cleanup day.

(Clerk's Note: A break for lunch was called at 12:49 PM and the meeting resumed at 1:12 PM.)

5.f Trends and Preparing for PSL in 2030

[2021-174](#)

Kate Parmelee introduced Kim DeLaney, Ph.D., of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, who provided a PowerPoint presentation on Regional Trends and Preparing for PSL in 2030. Dr. DeLaney took a look backwards, provided some history on the City of Port St. Lucie, and spoke about why people love the City. She explained the challenges of building a city as well as smart governance and community engagement. She reviewed the Community Livability Report for 2020 for the City of Port St. Lucie and other performance measures.

Dr. DeLaney provided a look towards 2030 and discussed working from home and continued residential growth. She indicated that buyers will be seeking healthy lifestyles and walkable places, and that industrial demand is climbing while retail demand is falling. She stated that infrastructure investments will be for placemaking, mobility will be in different flavors, and there will be a heightened call for sustainability. She concluded her presentation with some recommendations for Southern Grove while looking towards 2030.

Mayor Oravec asked the Council and this team to plant the seeds of the future that will transform the City in ten or twenty years. Regarding mobility, Councilwoman Caraballo stated that the City needs to start developing ordinances for scooters and bikes, to keep the City beautiful.

Councilwoman Caraballo inquired about the status of the corridor studies. She suggested having a planning exercise with the Council on the corridors to visualize their options and move the pieces around. Mayor Oravec stated that all the corridors in the City have something in common and should be studied together by the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC).

(Clerk's Note: A break was called at 2:23 PM and the meeting resumed at 2:52 PM.)

5.g Approve the Stormwater Management Plan

[2021-142](#)

(Clerk's Note: Mayor Oravec requested that Item 5.a, Approve the Stormwater Management Plan, on the 02/26/21 Retreat Agenda be heard at this time.)

Joe Capra with Captec Engineering, Inc., provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Stormwater Management Plan for the City of Port St. Lucie and reviewed the successes and status of the Stormwater Program. He discussed the regulatory requirements and drainage areas as well as the current budget and staffing. He provided recommendations to enhance the program and services, including a CIP priority list. He concluded his presentation by discussing the funding needs and next steps.

Mayor Oravec inquired how much the stormwater fee increased to fund the Eastern Watershed Improvement Project (EWIP) and when the bonds will be paid off. The City Manager stated staff would have this information for Council tomorrow.

Councilwoman Morgan expressed her concerns with the City taking four years to provide a swale liner. She stated they needed to fix this now and not play catch-up, to which Council agreed.

Mayor Oravec asked for the recommended approach to dealing with the \$161 million in capital improvements, to which the City Manager stated that the strategic plan, budget, and grants are coming. He said the \$2 million is one piece of it. He stated that recommendations will be brought back to Council.

Mayor Oravec stated that he is looking for the stormwater fee over time, increase vs. leverage, and how the projects correlate with the HEAT map. Vice Mayor Martin stated the City cannot continue with the

Pay-As-You-Go program and needs to be realistic moving forward by leveraging, taking out bonds, and getting larger grants.

Vice Mayor Martin stated that the Council needs to hear the challenges and have a comprehensive conversation, to which Mayor Oravec indicated they needed the facts to have the discussion. Councilwoman Caraballo agreed they needed to have the conversation.

Vice Mayor Martin and Councilwoman Caraballo stated that going forward, based on the data, they need to educate and involve the people in the process. Councilwoman Caraballo explained that the projects need to tie into the community element and access piece as well as show high costs versus results, so the public sees where the money is going.

Mayor Oravec stated that he hoped the City was utilizing 1PSL to track and keep their promise of providing swale liners in four years. He suggested looking at the swale project through different lenses when making the recommendations to Council.

Referring to the specific request for the swale liner, Mayor Oravec asked if the funding was from reserves. In response, the City Manager stated that it was potentially one-time money and the idea would be to bring in some contractual crews to lay down some swale liner to catch up.

There being no further discussion, Vice Mayor Martin moved to approve the funding request in item 5.e and the Stormwater Management Plan. Councilwoman Caraballo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

The City Manager stated that staff will come back with the Rate Study and provide alternatives, such as leveraging, grants, etc., for the Stormwater Program. Council requested that the City Manager consider the requests of the engineers and staff as well the politics of the City Council and make a feasible, advisable, and professional recommendation for this project.

- 5.h** Accept the Strategic Plan First Quarter Progress Report and Review the City Manager's Biweekly Report

[2021-170](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was not heard on Day 1 (02/24/21) of the Winter Retreat.)

- 5.i Introduction and Presentation of Departmental Strategic Business Plans

[2021-140](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was not heard on Day 1 (02/24/21) of the Winter Retreat.)

6. Adjourn

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

Karen P. Phillips, City Clerk

Traci Mehl, Deputy City Clerk