

City of Port St. Lucie

Strategic Planning Session

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

Meeting Minutes - Final

Shannon M. Martin, Mayor

Jolien Caraballo, Vice Mayor, District IV
Stephanie Morgan, Councilwoman, District I
Dave Pickett, Councilman, District II
Anthony Bonna, Sr., Councilman, District III

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Thursday, May 8, 2025 **8:00 AM** **The Promenade on the River 2240 SE
Veteran's Memorial Pkwy, Port St.
Lucie, FL 34952**

1. Meeting Called to Order

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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 May 8, 2024, at 9:04 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 (left early at approximately 3:42 PM)

Councilwoman Stephanie Morgan

Councilman Dave Pickett

Councilman Anthony Bonna

Other's Present:

Alexis Baum, Transformed Learning Collective, Facilitator

Tim Fife. Transformed Learning Collective. Facilitator

Various Directors and staff members of the different City departments.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited during Day 1 of the Strategic Planning Session.

4. Public to be Heard

Diane Goldberg discussed Living Shorelines and requested that the City Council

change the Ordinance requiring new homes to plant 6 trees instead of 4 trees. She asked that the City Council review Ordinance 154.05, which states that landscapes should be kept free from exotic vegetation.

5. New Business

5.a Hold the 2025 Strategic Plan Workshop

[2025-454](#)

Alexis Baum and Tim Fife, Transformed Learning Collective, facilitated Day 2 of the City Council's Strategic Planning.

Kate Parmelee, Deputy City Manager, discussed the importance of Strategic Planning.

Ms. Baum switched up the participants at each table.

A breakout session started at 9:30 AM. The breakout session finished at 9:40 AM.

Ms. Baum discussed the reason behind the breakout session.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee asked for clarification regarding the completion versus the budgeting of certain projects. She asked the City Council how they would like to finalize each project.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that Strategic Planning was based upon the Budget and Capital Improvement Projects. She stated that if it were completed by the adoption of the budget and in the budget year, then it should be removed.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee confirmed that it had been the methodology used.

Vice Mayor Caraballo advised that the index cards should include when the project will be completed so that the Council knows if it should stay in the plan or not.

Councilman Bonna shared that he felt that until the project is complete, it should stay in the plan. He stated that they would say it is a priority project.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee asked if that was the consensus for the remaining Council Members.

Mayor Martin agreed with Councilman Bonna.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee advised that they needed additional

directions from the City Council regarding the following themes: 1. Helping Seniors, 2. Workforce Housing, 3. Neighborhood Engagement.

Councilwoman Morgan stated that during their breakout session, they felt as though helping seniors should be something that the City redirects.

Mayor Martin advised that, based on the economist's presentation at the Winter Workshop, the City's growth in the senior population would increase. She stated the City helps with youth engagement, such as kids' camp and the Youth Council. Mayor Martin expressed the need to partner with someone to address that need. She stated that the Council on Aging provided some insight into what they were about. Mayor Martin stated she would like to address the need to assist Seniors, as not all Seniors live in 55+ Communities and are offered amenities.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee advised the need to clarify what the goal of the City is.

She asked if the City Council would like to further discuss Neighborhood Engagement.

Mayor Martin asked what that entailed, to which Deputy City Manager Parmelee advised these events would be like Love Your Block, City University, and any community meeting.

Mayor Martin stated Love Your Block was incomplete and was recently awarded the mini-grant, and now it would be up to the Community Members to follow through with the funds received to make the projects happen. She stated she needed to see the success stories for the project before expanding it.

Councilman Bonna indicated he did not think the City Council needed to discuss anything further on Community Engagement at Strategic Planning, but in the future.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she would like to know when the Community Engagement discussion will occur, as many of the Community Engagement sessions seemed to be "lying flat" with many residents. She asked if there was an individual or individuals that are assigned to Community Engagement, she stated she would like to know if they are working 9-5 or if they were scheduled to work into the evenings and weekends. Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired if there was the potential to pivot the City's Strategy to make the best plan.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee stated it sounded like Vice Mayor

Caraballo was requesting a Staff Presentation to have the next Community Engagement update and answer all the questions as it relates to Community Engagement. Deputy City Manager Parmelee advised that it would be challenging to provide that information today in real-time. She stated it could be added to a Staff Workshop.

Mayor Martin questioned if the comments made by the City Council were in direct correlation with what was discovered through the Community Survey. She stated that if that was the case, then the City Council should discuss that at today's workshop. Mayor Martin asked if the City Council was discussing the need to add more Community Engagement based on the survey results. She expressed the need to discuss the future of the Survey. Mayor Martin stated she was not comfortable basing the City's future only off the 250 residents surveyed in the scientific survey.

The Council Members agreed to reevaluate the City Survey.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee stated that the survey results should be one data point, along with the results from the Citizen Summit and other data gathered by the City annually.

Councilman Pickett stated that any survey result is a sample size of 247 residents, and 72% were residents 55 or older. He stated that there was a demographic not being captured by the survey, like those 20-30 years old. Councilman Pickett stated that the 20-30-year-olds seemed to get left out of the City's plans. He added that he did not think the City was meeting that demographic's needs. Councilman Pickett advised the need to include the 20-40-year-old demographic with Community Engagement.

Councilman Bonna stated that while 248 survey answers were not a lot, it was still a data point, and the margin of error was plus or minus 6 points which was consistent with other surveys that are used nationally.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that the survey was very important and noted that the information provided was usually an indicator of whether it was above or at the current benchmark level. She inquired if the Nation was answering these questions about 10 points lower than they did the previous years, and that would indicate if it was a sentiment of frustration and aggravation.

Councilwoman Morgan advised that she agreed with Mayor Martin. She explained that utilizing 248 survey responses to shape the City with a population of over 250,000 did not make sense.

Mayor Martin stated that the survey results were important, but it was not everything to base their decisions on.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee explained that the survey results were weighted based on the US Census data, and it is tied to the census demographics, but noted that most of the survey participation comes from a more diverse pool of 55 or older and added the City was not attaining the diverse pool from the younger generations.

Vice Mayor Caraballo expressed the need to look at qualifiers to review data points. She stated she would like the City Council's consensus to know what data points will be considered in the data discussion.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee indicated that the City has utilized the National Research Center, POLCO, for a long time, but added it was not the only survey the City could use. She explained there were other avenues for surveys, such as the ETC Institute. Deputy City Manager Parmelee advised that this was a matter of policy decision. She added that Staff could bring a future item for discussion on providers and how the City administers its surveys.

Councilman Pickett stated the need to reevaluate the various avenues of how the survey is conducted. He explained many younger residents may not find it worth their time to complete the survey by mail.

Councilman Bonna inquired if they could make the survey as short as the City Council would like, to which Deputy City Manager Parmelee responded in the affirmative. He stated that the City Council already knows of approximately 12-36 issues within the City. Councilman Bonna noted that the need to come up with 24-36 or 50 questions would be half the size of what the City currently has. He explained that there is value in benchmarking but expressed the need to cut at least half. Mayor Martin agreed with Councilman Bonna's comments. It was the consensus of the City Council to shorten the survey questions.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she would be supportive of adding more surveyors to the survey. She stated the previous concern was a cost increase but would be supportive of the increase in costs to add more surveyors if that is the consensus of the City Council.

Councilman Pickett stated it was not about supporting the survey but expressed the need to see more responses from the survey than the 247 responses they have. He added that of a population of 250,000, a need to do better to extrapolate information is needed.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she did not disagree with Councilman Pickett.

Vice Mayor Caraballo shared that in a previous conversation, when costs came into question after the Council further researched to increase the results, the Council opted against it. Councilman Pickett stated he did not care about the costs associated and cared more for accurate data. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she would be supportive if the Council wished to move forward.

Councilwoman Morgan expressed frustration over the number of questions within the survey.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee advised that she would be happy to accommodate the change if that was the desire of the City Council.

Mayor Martin asked that the item be brought back with a reduction in the number of questions that contain the more important issues, and bring back the costs associated with increasing the sample size of the survey. She suggested the need to marry all three data points, this survey with the five-digit survey, and the Citizen Summit Feedback.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee shared that it was 248 survey results and the 2,513 survey results from the online version of the survey, in addition to the 1,000 from the Citizen Summit feedback and 9,531 Summit in-person responses. It was the consensus of the City Council to bring this item with the requested information for them to review.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee inquired if the City Council wished to discuss Performing Arts, it was the consensus of the City Council to not discuss Performing Arts.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that Mayor Martin was correct in that the survey data results were 72% for those 55 and older and the Census showed that the City had a population of 34% of 55 and older. Deputy City Manager Parmelee stated NCS weighs the demographics. Vice Mayor Caraballo pointed out that it was still 10 points higher and 10 points off. She expressed frustration and the need to speak to NCS.

Mayor Martin stated that when she does her generational demographic presentation, she presents information from ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc.) GIS software.

Vice Mayor Caraballo added that she was frustrated because the results play such a big factor in how the City Council decides on the City's

Strategic Plan. She advised on the need to go with a different provider, as this has been an issue in the past.

Mayor Martin agreed with Vice Mayor Caraballo and advised the need to further evaluate the survey, shorten the survey, and review other potential providers.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee and Ms. Baum introduced the discussion of Goal 6 and asked the tables to review the packet before them.

A breakout session commenced at 10:16 AM. The breakout session finished at 10:41 AM.

Ms. Baum asked the Council Members to discuss the various conversations from the breakout session.

Councilman Pickett suggested changing the name of Port St. Lucie's Southwest Park. He recommended something more specific to the geographical area of its location. Councilman Pickett stated that the City needed to get out of the concert business and suggested that the City participate in festivals rather than concerts. He explained that there was more public engagement at festivals and that there was not enough participation in the sale of concert tickets.

Councilman Bonna advised that they did not wish to remove anything from the current plan and shared that he agreed with Councilman Pickett's comments regarding the need to remove the City from the concert business if it is not self-sustainable. He suggested partnering with someone in the future.

Councilwoman Morgan agreed with Councilman Pickett's and Councilman Bonna's comments regarding the concerts. She suggested expanding on the four main events rather than adding more. Councilwoman Morgan suggested partnering with the TPO to review the Greenway Trails. She shared that the table did not agree with the results from the POLCO data presented.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she would like to discuss the City having a performing arts center. She advised on the need to identify a location for a center to hold up to 1,000 people and suggested an opportunity during the expansion of the City Center. Vice Mayor Caraballo recommended that special events continue but be treated as a business. She suggested the need to re-evaluate how the City runs its concerts and festivals. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she would like to continue with the tight timeline to

complete the Port Restaurant.

Councilman Bonna suggested to possibly add an option on the survey/in-person response to include “that’s not a role of government.” He recommended that the City modify the goal from expansion of special events to making special events self-sufficient by a date certain.

Mayor Martin stated that this was why she preferred the term reimagining/reenvisioning special events and looked forward to the discussion on special events this summer.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee advised that this year’s strategic planning was more about refinement and maintenance. She suggested the need to evaluate if the timing was correct for certain projects.

Councilman Pickett requested the need to discuss and think of where the City’s future Special Events will be held as the development of City Center occurs. He stated the need to consider alternate event locations besides the MidFlorida Event Center.

Ms. Baum asked if there was something the Council wished to discuss further that was not currently on the list shown. She introduced Carlos Perez, PLA, Perez Planning & Design, LLC.

Mr. Perez presented the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. He discussed the need to obtain direction from the City Council relating to the prioritization of park projects. Mr. Perez presented the funding prioritization strategy in draft form.

Brad Keen, Parks & Recreation Director, discussed the growth of the City. He expressed the need to prioritize land acquisition for new future City parks.

Mayor Martin agreed with Director Keen as she believed the residents provided feedback that new parks were needed. She discussed various locations within the City that have potential for future park or open space conservation sites on Rosser Road and Savona Boulevard.

Councilman Bonna advised that he agreed to acquire more land for parks. He asked Mr. Perez to further the discussion and asked how much land should be acquired based on the City’s population, and what the metrics were.

Mr. Perez recommended that it be increased to 8 acres per 1,000 in

population, over 350 acres of land acquisition for parkland. He stated that currently, the City is in negotiations for 100 acres of potential land for acquisition for parks.

Director Keen asked Mr. Perez if he could provide a timeline for the land acquisition of 350 acres, to which he responded that it would be over the next 10 years.

Mayor Martin expressed the need to continue land acquisition of at least 300 acres, with the known information that the City's population will become 400,000 in the future.

City Manager Merejo indicated that the time to purchase park land was now.

Stephen Okiye, Finance Director, asked if the question posed was about park development, to which Mr. Perez advised that the survey was separate when inquiring about the acquisition of park land.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that residents request more green space because they do not want to see more buildout within the City. She advised that she was supportive of the City investing in land conservation. Vice Mayor Caraballo indicated that there was a need to fulfill the commitment to the new parks and agreed with the targets of land acquisition. She expressed the need to reimagine Lyngate Park. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she felt as though the residents desired higher-quality parks.

Mayor Martin recommended that the City Council balance the needs of the residents.

Vice Mayor Caraballo indicated she would like to be responsive to the community but shared that the point of discussion was on how the City can improve Parks and Recreation. She commented that open space with just trees was not the intent of what the City Council was intending to occur with the current conversation. Vice Mayor Caraballo advised that the City should be specific on what the land use will be versus the land conservation. She stated she feared that the City would acquire land for parks, and the residents perceive that as a green space that the City will never develop, only to later disagree with the residents to turn it into a park. Vice Mayor Caraballo used Winterlakes as an example and noted the residents did not want the park, and now there were present lighting issues.

Mayor Martin noted Vice Mayor Caraballo's concern but advised that the land was currently available and the need to purchase was now. She indicated that when she bought her property, she knew that the area had a designated park space that the City owned across the street. Mayor Martin shared that many of the previously vacant lots in her neighborhood were no longer vacant based on the park coming online.

Councilman Bonna stated that the land acquisition would be dependent on the passage of the sales tax. He agreed that acquiring the land necessary to meet the target for the City's park acquisition and improvements to existing facilities should be part of the City's strategic plan. Councilman Bonna suggested the need to discuss and set policies to meet the City's goals.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she agreed; however, she expressed the need to be detailed in seeking funding sources. She recommended that the two items, land conservation and park development, not be mixed to avoid confusing residents.

Mr. Perez presented Phase 2 of the prioritization projects.

Director Keen provided the City Council with an update regarding the number of visitors to City parks/recreation facilities. He indicated that 5,100,006 park/recreation facility visitors were the newly updated number provided by Placer A.I., Artificial Intelligence software.

Mayor Martin asked how the City would combine the new land recently acquired for possible acquisition, to which Mr. Perez responded that they continue to negotiate that property. She inquired if there would be a future list provided with the current property, to which City Manager Merejo stated the Council would be presented two different lists, one for the Parks & Recreation Department and another for the Utility Department. He stated that the City Council would be able to reach the City's goal within the next six months, but it would require the City Council's commitment now to take advantage. City Manager Merejo questioned the City Council if they would like Staff to move forward with the purchasing of the land now, to which the City Council responded in the affirmative. It was the consensus of the City Council to move forward with the current land acquisitions.

Mr. Perez concluded his overview.

Ms. Baum recapped the remainder of the discussion points for the afternoon portion of the Strategic Planning Session.

A lunch break was called at 11:40 AM, and the meeting resumed at 12:10 PM.

Mayor Martin discussed various organizations addressing the City's aging population. She discussed other organizations, besides the Council on Aging, that could assist.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that she believed there was a policy in place stating that the City does not utilize General Funds to fund non-profits.

Mayor Martin stated it was an older, unwritten policy.

Vice Mayor Caraballo explained that her concern was that she had recently met with ARC and another organization regarding similar proposals. She stated that she was afraid that the policy would get lost. Vice Mayor Caraballo expressed concern that, as the City grows, there will be a lot more of these types of discussions. She recommended making the policy into a Resolution or Ordinance so that it's memorialized. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she had concerns about the constant tug and pull for funding.

Mayor Martin stated that as the Mayor of the top 10 cities and more folks would look to the City for help and answers. She added that when ARC came to her, she viewed everything holistically and thought of how it could be tied to the City's Strategic Plan. Mayor Martin explained that there were people with disabilities who had no job training, who could potentially get job training. She stated that those people could contribute to the workforce and society. Mayor Martin stated she did not believe in the need for giving everyone funding, but she was supportive of assisting the disabled community. She explained she would love to have a conversation. Mayor Martin added the need to have a policy regarding funding non-profits. She noted that the City cannot rely on the County to do things because the County does not offer these services. Mayor Martin shared the need to do what other cities do and support their residents.

Councilman Bonna stated he did not see any inconsistency between a policy that says the City does not fund non-profits and partnering with organizations that fulfill goals in the City's Strategic Plan. He provided current examples of how the City currently partners with the Humane Society or the Boys and Girls Club. Councilman Bonna suggested partnering with an organization that the City can handle. He stated he was supportive of partnering with the ARC program.

Councilman Pickett shared that soon after he was elected, he pushed the

previous City Manager, Russ Blackburn, to fund non-profits, he was told, "we don't do that." He stated that he did not agree, but when approached by ARC, he asked them directly if they had spoken to City Manager Merejo. Councilman Pickett added that after ARC's presentation, he felt strongly about being involved with the organization. He stated he was happy to hear others from the City Council felt the same. Councilman Pickett added that \$160,000 was a lot of money, but in the grand scheme of things, it was not really a lot of money. He stated that the City could invest \$160,000 to assist people from the community. Councilman Pickett expressed the need to discuss how the City would fund similar non-profits in the future and what the Return on Investment would be from the non-profit. He stated that the County changed the way they fund non-profits and left it up to the United Way to decide. Councilman Pickett stated he looked forward to developing a policy on how the City would fund non-profits, if that is the way the City Council wishes to engage.

Councilwoman Morgan explained she met with ARC and stated she was also unsure why they were there since the City has an unwritten policy that they do not fund non-profits. She advised that by the City allowing this, the City would be opening a can of worms. Councilwoman Morgan explained there were close to 2,700 non-profits in the City of Port St. Lucie and inquired how the City Council would pick and choose. She stated she did not wish to do that and used the County as an example. Councilwoman Morgan shared that she did not think it was the government's job to fund non-profits. She stated she understands to partner with certain non-profits but noted the need to take a step back. Councilwoman Morgan stated she did not want to be the one to pick and choose which non-profit to fund over the other.

Vice Mayor Caraballo asked that in the event the discussion continues that the City have a clear understanding of the County's income stream over the City's income stream. She shared that the County receives money from the State, which is responsible for other services outside of basic governmental services. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that the County had a different level of responsibility constitutionally as well as a different pool of funding, which gives them the capability to fund some of the issues. She stated that the City is dealing with service-based only general funds. Vice Mayor Caraballo shared that she was not in favor of utilizing general funds to fund non-profit organizations.

Mayor Martin asked if the Boys and Girls Club pays for the Summer Camp held at MidFlorida, to which everyone responded in the affirmative. She stated she understood what the concerns were but noted that the City was moving into a different space. Mayor Martin suggested the need for further

discussions and suggested the need to partner with experts to handle certain services. She shared that she would have no problem justifying the use of funds to assist job training for the disabled City population.

Councilman Bonna stated the need to identify the needs of seniors with a growing population, or not. He advised that the Council should not fund non-profits and utilize taxpayer money for non-profits, but stated that what they should do is allow non-profits to come to the City Council and identify a need in the City and present their plan to address the need.

Carmen Capezutto, Neighborhood Service Director, shared that a written policy existed and that it was Resolution 84-R36. He provided a summary of the resolution.

Vice Mayor Caraballo advised that she was glad it was written. Mayor Martin shared the need to further discuss the resolution.

Councilwoman Morgan inquired what the history that prompted the City Council to come up with the resolution and requested to know the history behind the policy placement. She stated the need to learn from the City's past. Councilwoman Morgan expressed concern that there was a lot more information out there from ARC that was not being shared with the City. She shared that she would follow the resolution.

Mayor Martin asked the City Council to solve the problem at that moment. She asked if three members of the City Council supported moving forward with changing the policy with regard to how the City partners with non-profits. Mayor Martin advised that she was in support. Councilman Bonna and Councilman Pickett stated they were. Councilwoman Morgan and Vice Mayor Caraballo responded in opposition. Mayor Martin stated there were three members in agreement to discuss changing the policy and asked the City Manager Merejo to further the conversation.

Councilman Bonna stated that once the item came back before the City Council, it needed to contain different criteria. He added that the non-profit needed to align with the City's Strategic Plan and include benchmarks.

Mayor Martin advised that ARC needed to be notified that the City does have a written policy from 1984 and that the policy would need to be changed before the City can provide funding.

City Attorney Richard Berrios advised that a resolution would need to pass to abolish the previously approved policy or amend the policy.

Ms. Baum stated they would discuss Goal 2.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee inquired if the City Council was done with the previous conversation. Mayor Martin stated the need to revise the policy and the need to acquire more data for future conversations.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee confirmed that the City Council discussed Goal 2: Supporting the needs of Seniors, Strategic Growth, the Comprehensive Plan Update to be completed by December 2025, and High-Performance Public Spaces. She asked if there were any recommendations for changes to the plan.

Councilman Pickett stated that they recommend changing the name of High-Performing Public Spaces to something else. He said it should be something that the normal layperson could understand. Deputy City Manager Parmelee stated that Naturally PSL Green Spaces and Places was the brand.

Mayor Martin suggested changing it to "Naturally PSL" and explaining that it's the City's Green Spaces and Places rather than having a long name.

Councilwoman Morgan agreed that a better name/definition for HPPS was needed. She stated that the Comp Plan update was required, and she inquired why it needed to be listed. Deputy City Manager Parmelee stated the reason it was added was that growth had come up in a lot of comments, and the Council wanted to know what they were going to do in response to the growth. Mary Savage-Dunham, Planning and Zoning Director, advised that the City was making a 20-year plan, which includes a throughfare plan and partnering with the 2045 mobility plan. Councilwoman Morgan stated that they wished to get rid of Goal 2 and move the remaining items to Goal 5.

Mayor Martin stated that Strategic Growth in Goal 2 was important because growth is the City's biggest topic. She added that everyone always asks what the City Council is doing about growth. Mayor Martin advised that she always says that the Comp Plan is the document used for planning the future. She advocated for the need for it to remain on Goal 2.

Councilman Bonna stated they wished to rearrange some of the details. He commented that the subgoals needed to be smart goals, as that's how it is done in our personal lives. Councilman Bonna shared that the City should be setting attainable goals and should be challenging. He stated he will be looking for attainable goals when the Strategic Plan comes back in July.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee asked for clarification regarding Goal 2.

Mayor Martin expressed concern over adding timeline dates to Projects. She stated that by adding timelines, it may be perceived as a failure from the City if the completion of the project is not completed by the timeline due date. Mayor Martin advised that many times projects were held up by other organizations and not by the City itself. She asked for a reminder of the Naturally PSL conservation core and what the environmental stewardship award was.

Councilman Bonna agreed with Mayor Martin's concern. He stated his point was to set goals. Councilman Bonna stated that the goal should not be offset by any one project or tactic. He added the need to evaluate each goal every year to make sure it's on track.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee responded that more information would be added to the strategic plan, clarifying measurable outcomes to the City Council's goals. She stated staff will be updating the reporting system so that the City Council has a better tool to keep track of projects.

Councilman Bonna used the previous Council's goal to lower the City's millage rate by a certain year. Mayor Martin agreed. Councilman Bonna stated it was those types of goals he would be looking for.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee provided more information about the Naturally PSL Conservation Core and the Stewardship Award.

Mayor Martin followed up by asking how many volunteers there were for the program and if there was any programming. Deputy City Manager Parmelee advised it was a program in its initial stages of launching. She stated there would be a conservation clean-up in the future. Mayor Martin asked who was reviewing the Environmental Stewardship Applications and how it was awarded. Deputy City Manager Parmelee advised that there was a Committee and would later provide a presentation to the City Council. Mayor Martin stated she would like to know more information as to what that looks like, the criteria, how the City was giving out these awards, and how they were being evaluated, because that would become a reflection of the City Council.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee asked for a motion to finalize Goal 2. Mayor Martin stated that the City Council did not need a motion to confirm the Goals under Goal 2. Deputy City Manager Parmelee stated there was consensus as to Goal 2.

A breakout session commenced at 1:25 PM. The breakout session finished at 1:38 PM.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee inquired if the City Council wished to add, modify, or change Goal 3: Community Engagement.

Councilwoman Morgan suggested changing the wording of expanding community and neighborhood engagement.

Mayor Martin asked for the definition of engagement, if it meant engagement of projects, or keeping the residents informed, or if it was an event to be considered engagement.

Sarah Prohaska, Communications Director, stated she agreed to changing the survey to make it clear to the public what the City means by engagement. She noted that internally, the City uses the Bloomberg model of engagement.

Councilman Pickett stated that a “sustainable and resilient city” and “improved performance and design for innovation” should go under Goal 5. He shared that they felt that “Smart City and AI” should go under Goal 7.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee clarified that the plan would be reorganized and discussed individually with Council members to obtain any additional feedback on the structure prior to adoption.

Councilman Bonna advised that this was a difficult response since he knows the City does so much but also recognizes public perception. He stated that it would be critical to think of specific initiatives that the Council can take to increase and attack that perception. Councilman Bonna suggested that a possible goal be that the Council meet with every HOA in the City.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee shared that they met with every HOA during the last sales tax initiative. She suggested the possibility of doing the same for this year.

Director Prohaska commented that the City has put together an internal engagement calendar and, with the help of IT, generated a dashboard. She stated that it's a centralized location where they are collecting the data as to who is out there engaging with the community and how many are in attendance.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee shared that there were 81,000 households

in the City, and that there were 100,000 subscribers to the City newsletter.

Mayor Martin inquired about the Ambassador Program, to which Director Prohaska stated that the program came about because of post-graduates from City University who wished to engage in City Events. She stated these folks would become City information conduits into HOAs, churches, and neighborhoods.

Director Prohaska added that it was the reason the Ambassador Program was important because the resident is out there disbursing the information. She stated it would take time to grow as it's in the early stages.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee recommended the following modification to have residents co-create and tell the City's story as an explanation for neighborhood and community engagement.

Mayor Martin discussed the need to provide more volunteer opportunities within the City.

Councilman Bonna commented that another way to engage the community was by working with Big Brother, Big Sister, and added the need to work with non-profits and engage youth and the community.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee clarified that under Goal 3, they would work on the wording of "expanding community and neighborhood engagement program." She stated that they would focus on co-creating and letting residents tell the City's story. Deputy City Manager Parmelee asked for further clarification on the Youth Council and Teen Program. She stated that there were three dots to remove from the Strategic Plan.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee inquired if the Council wished to collapse Youth Council and Education Partnerships together, to which Councilman Pickett stated that when speaking of Education Partnerships, that usually meant university or schools.

Mayor Martin suggested the use of "Youth Partnerships" instead.

Councilwoman Morgan stated that providing a sustainable and resilient city with improved performance and design through innovation. Councilman Pickett noted that he previously suggested rewording that verbiage.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee suggested moving it to Goal 7 rather than Goal 5. The City Council agreed to move the above from Goal 3 to Goal 7.

Councilwoman Morgan asked if Smart City and AI would be moved to Goal 5, to which Deputy City Manager Parmelee suggested moving it to Goal 7.

The City Council agreed to move the above from Goal 3 to Goal 7.

The Deputy City Manager Parmelee stated that the above changes would prompt an updated Goal name for Goal 3. She suggested the use of "Connected City".

A recess commenced at 2:01 PM. The meeting resumed at 2:16 PM.

Ms. Baum introduced the "Workforce Housing Initiatives" and all other initiatives that were a part of Goal 4.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee prompted the Council to discuss workforce housing. She stated that a presentation would be coming to the City Council.

A breakout session commenced at 2:17 PM. The breakout session finished at 2:30 PM.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee asked the City Council if there was something they wished to clarify relating to Workforce Housing Initiatives.

Councilman Bonna stated they conversed about affordable housing versus workforce housing. He stated that they needed to engage the Economic Development Council. Councilman Bonna suggested the use of public-private partnerships to address the workforce housing.

Mayor Martin shared that it was important and noted that the EDC had a housing summit. She indicated it was not very good and noted that the City Council got bashed for not knowing anything. Mayor Martin stated there was still work to be done and noted the need to build a toolbox.

Director Capezzuto stated that on May 19th, a presentation would be provided to the City Council depending on the outcome of today's meeting. He noted the need to attract developers for workforce housing.

Mayor Martin added that the City has a fund where developers have been voluntarily paying into, but the City had no policy on how to properly distribute the funds. She stated that the City has been sitting on the fund for a few years now. Mayor Martin indicated the need for the Council to decide on how to create that toolbox.

Director Capezzuto shared that there was 1.8 million dollars in the fund.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee inquired if the Council wished to change

the wording of Workforce Housing.

Director Capezzuto added that during the one-on-ones with the Council, they shared that they would like to be flexible.

Mayor Martin commented that the term “affordable” had a negative stigma and preferred to call it something else.

Vice Mayor Caraballo noted she preferred the term “attainable”.

Councilman Bonna stated he preferred to limit it to “workforce” or “essential worker” housing. He shared that it was not a popular item among residents as it increased higher density. Councilman Bonna advised that affordable housing was a goal that was not necessarily attainable.

The Council agreed to call it “workforce housing.”

Councilwoman Morgan suggested the term “attainable workforce housing.”

Nan Krushinski, Special Events Director, stated she preferred the term workforce as it was more encompassing.

Councilman Bonna stated that the issue with utilizing the term “attainable” was that it meant something different for everyone. He noted that the role of the government was to make sure there was an available housing stock to support the local economy.

Vice Mayor Caraballo shared that she was not supportive of this goal because every housing tactic has failed previously. She stated that she felt the role of government was to get out of the way and allow housing to happen.

Jen Davis, CRA Director, suggested calling it “Housing Initiatives” rather than “Workforce” due to senior housing also being important to capture.

Mayor Martin stated that, being that the City was the 6th largest city, the top ten all had housing initiatives. She stated having the toolbox to facilitate development, and how the City can work to make it happen to benefit the community.

Vice Mayor Caraballo commented that having housing initiatives did not necessarily mean that they were successful. She stated that no one has solved the issue and expressed concern over doing the same thing over.

Vice Mayor Caraballo shared that the role of government was to deregulate and allow high-density residential housing in the City. She stated she did not want to subsidize, as that was not the City's goal.

Councilman Bonna advised that the Council was discussing an initiative under Goal 4, Diverse Economy and Employment Opportunities. He stated an initiative that was relevant to the Diverse Economy and Employment Opportunities was Workforce Housing. He stated that, separately, another goal that addresses seniors and the initiative under that would be something measurable that the City could do to address senior housing. Councilman Bonna stated that affordable/attainable housing had nothing to do with Diverse Economy and Employment Opportunities. He stated he wanted to make sure that the Council was not mistaken by the initiative for the goal.

Mayor Martin agreed with Councilman Bonna. She shared that the City did not need to have a housing authority like Orlando or Tampa, but if they don't start to try to build something that fits the community, then they will further perpetuate the issue. She asked if it was correct to sit on funds that developers have paid into and not figure out how to utilize those funds.

Ella Gilbert, Risk Management Director, posed the question to the room: for those who have adult children, can they live in Port St. Lucie based on the jobs they have in this City?

Mayor Martin answered "no" and shared that her children would be graduating from college and would not be able to afford living in the City on their own. She stated they would be living with her for a long time and noted that it has been a complaint of many residents. Mayor Martin stated the need for the City Council to address the issue and stated that if they did not address the need, they would go back to being a bedroom community. She expressed the need to evolve as a City.

Councilman Pickett agreed and stated he had not chimed in since everyone was saying what he was thinking.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee stated they would keep the initiative as Workforce Housing and define a toolbox.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated she agreed with the majority of the City Council.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee stated it was the consensus to keep the Workforce Housing as an initiative and work towards a future definition of a

toolbox.

Councilman Pickett suggested the need to identify the new Southern Grove 2.0 for the City.

Councilwoman Morgan suggested combining all three Southern Groves. She stated they also discussed implementing the Walton and One Master Plan along the Eastside Economic Development. Director Davis stated she was fine with combining.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee shared that Mayor Martin recommended an Eastside Economic Development Strategy and having Walton and One as the first priority.

Councilwoman Morgan expressed confusion over the Destination PSL Tourism Plan, stating that the St. Lucie Tourism Development Council already existed and it seemed redundant.

Councilman Pickett stated that was added during last year's Strategic Plan, it was added that all the tourism dollars earned in PSL were going to Midway Road.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee added that the possibility to get some of the funding for the City to doing ecotourism in Port St. Lucie.

Councilwoman Morgan expressed confusion and requested the rewording of "Support Small Business Support." She stated she did not understand why it was listed if the City pays \$75,000 to the Chamber of Commerce a year to do Small Business seminars.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee asked if the City Council wished to remove the above priority, to which Mayor Martin responded in the affirmative.

It was the consensus of the City Council to remove the above priority.

Councilman Bonna pointed out that the Chamber was a non-profit and another example of the City partnering.

Councilwoman Morgan stated that the Chamber of Commerce was a 501(c)(6), which was a noncharitable non-profit.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee stated she would be removing Support Small Business Development and would combine the Southern Grove items.

Mayor Martin stated there was no more acreage for economic development at Southern Grove and noted that the only property left was for commercial spaces.

A recess commenced at 3:08 PM. The meeting resumed at 3:21 PM.

(Clerk's Note: Vice Mayor Caraballo left the Strategic Planning Session at this time.)

Mayor Martin discussed the various City-funded non-profits, such as the Botanical Garden and PAL.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee referenced the Strategic Plan priority of partnering with FDOT to accelerate Port St. Lucie Boulevard.

Colt Schwert, Public Works Director, stated that during the next portion of PSL Boulevard from Darwin to Alcantarra, they were establishing an incentive policy.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee asked if they wished to remove anything from Goal 5.

Councilman Bonna shared that his group felt that the acceleration of funding infrastructure projects was a best practice and not a goal. He suggested removing that from the Goal and noted that the Wi-Fi being almost complete was also a point of discussion.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee shared that the fiber was almost complete, but the Wi-Fi component had not been expanded to every public facility.

She asked if he wished to remove Wi-fi from the plan, to which Councilman Bonna stated it could stay in the plan.

Councilman Bonna stated that there was a suggestion to remove "future" for the Facilities Master Plan and change the "expansion of the transportation network" to "expansion of roadway network." It was the consensus of the City Council to make those changes. (Clerk's Note: Vice Mayor Caraballo was not present during this portion of the meeting.)

Director Savage-Dunham stated that transportation was much more inclusive, and the roadway was only for roads.

Caroline Sturgis, Director of OMB, shared that some residents do not

understand transportation or mobility. She suggested using resident-friendly wording.

Councilman Pickett discussed the need to enact something to convert septic to sewer once they sell the property.

Councilwoman Morgan stated that it cannot be legally done. She shared that the City could order a mandatory connection.

Kevin Matyjaszek, Utility Systems Director, confirmed that the City Council can order mandatory connection. He explained they were very close to reaching 11,000 septic to sewer conversions. Director Matyjaszek spoke regarding the possibility of awarding grant dollars for possible future conversions. He shared that they were currently reviewing all of the businesses that were currently on septic to possibly get them converted.

Councilwoman Morgan asked if the City could deny a permit for a homeowner who is on septic and would like to add a bathroom, to which Director Matyjaszek stated they were looking into the legality of it.

City Manager Merejo stated that the challenging portion was that the City does not control what is in the County. He added that there was no mechanism to assess residents who live in the County. City Manager Merejo stated that it was up to the County Commission to force everyone to convert.

Councilwoman Morgan stated the need to discuss that with the County Commission. She shared that many residents from Hidden River would convert if the service were available.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee shared the need to confirm with the City Attorney's Office to identify legal avenues to get more septic-to-sewer conversions. She asked if there were other changes needed for Goal 5. Deputy City Manager Parmelee shared that satisfaction went up 10% on Traffic Light Signalization.

Director Schwerdt provided various improvements shown as part of the survey results.

City Manager Merejo asked if the City could add a flashing yellow turning light on the Kings Isle intersection, to which Director Schwerdt said he would investigate the possibility of adding a light.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee added the need to prioritize traffic

signalization for this year.

Mayor Martin stated that adding signalization at Marshall Parkway and Community and Discovery had already built signalization into their design.

Councilwoman Morgan noted the importance of preemption of light signalization to increase the response time.

Director Schwerdt stated that state mandates were coming to modify traffic signals to add pedestrian crossings.

It was the consensus of the City Council to move forward as discussed for Goal 5. (Clerk's Note: Vice Mayor Caraballo was not present during this portion of the meeting.)

Deputy City Manager Parmelee inquired if there were any changes to Goal 7 or status quo.

It was the consensus of the City Council for Goal 7 to remain status quo. (Clerk's Note: Vice Mayor Caraballo was not present during this portion of the meeting.)

Councilman Bonna discussed stating what the goal was for the millage rate.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee discussed Goal 1. She inquired if they could declare District 6 as complete, to which Chief Niemczyk responded in the affirmative. Deputy City Manager Parmelee inquired if there was a need to remove or change anything from Goal 1.

Chief Niemczyk stated that the Police Department had plans to increase marine patrol during the season.

Councilman Bonna inquired how far the City was towards the goal of recruitment of 1.6 per thousand. Chief Niemczyk stated he was confident that in 2026, they would be fully staffed.

Mayor Martin inquired if that included any retirements, to which Chief Niemczyk stated there were no planned separations in 2026.

Deputy City Manager, Parmelee, inquired if there were other changes to Goal 1.

Billy Weinshank, Director of the Emergency Operations Division,

commented on the possibility of adding a specific Emergency Management Project.

Mayor Martin stated that Goal 1 includes all aspects of public safety, not just policing. She explained that unless there is a specific project relating to Emergency Operations outside of inclusivity and the real-time operation center it should not be added specifically to the plan.

Assistant City Manager Teresa Lamar-Sarno suggested the need to collapse the last four projects: gateway, landscaping, and beautification of the street.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee stated that a tree shade plan was mentioned as a top priority for residents. She suggested the use of the "Attractive and Clean Streets" as a title.

Councilman Bonna agreed with the title of "Attractive and Clean Streets".

Councilman Pickett stated it was important to keep in mind what kind of street tree is planted. Deputy City Manager Parmelee stated it was important to plant the right tree in the right place. There were no other suggestions for Goal 1.

Deputy City Manager Parmelee requested a motion, to which Mayor Martin stated there was no need as there would be a plan to be presented to the City Council. There was consensus amongst the City Council to move forward with the City's Strategic Plan as discussed. (Clerk's Note: Vice Mayor Caraballo was not present during this portion of the meeting.)

6. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:36 PM.

Calleigh Nazario, Acting City Clerk

Daisy Ruiz, Deputy City Clerk