

City of Port St. Lucie

Special City Council

Meeting Minutes - Draft

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, November 21, 2022

9:30 AM

Council Chambers, City Hall

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 Martin on November 21, 2022, at 9:30 a.m., at Port St. Lucie City Hall, 121 SW Port St. Lucie Boulevard, Port St. Lucie, Florida & Zoom.

2. Roll Call

Council Members

Present:

Mayor Shannon Martin
Vice Mayor Jolien Caraballo
Councilman Dave Pickett
Councilwoman Stephanie Morgan
Councilman Anthony Bonna

3. Pledge of Allegiance

The Deputy City Clerk gave the Invocation, and Mayor Martin led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Public to be Heard

Shelia Selinger spoke regarding the dog barking policy.

5. Special Presentations

- 5.a** Presentation by Florida Power & Light (FPL) regarding their Storm Secure Underground Program (SSUP)

[2022-869](tel:2022-869)

Marshall Critchfield, FPL, introduced Amy Bonilla, Customer Outreach Leader. (Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint was shown at this time.) Ms.

Bonilla explained that they were trying to build a strong & resilient energy grid and the underground program was one of the initiatives. She stated that they used selection criteria to determine the areas of focus and it was a decades long process. She showed before & after pictures of underground program projects. She explained that since some of the pad mounted transformers were being placed in front of the property, they would knock on doors to request easements. She explained Year 1 (2023) of the project which included the conceptual design, customer outreach to receive certain easements and the final design after that permitting would begin in Year 2 (2024). She stated that they would have many discussions with staff to ensure both parties understood the requirements. She described how the residents could identify an FPL customer outreach specialist.

Ron Edgecomb, Lead Project Manager, explained what directional boring was and explained how it minimized disruption to properties. He stated that advanced, proper communication would be key to the project. He described previous underground projects completed in Port St. Lucie in 2021. He stated that they identified two feeders of the Turnpike which would be the focus of the 2024 underground projects. Mayor Martin voiced that FPL should also include mailers to reach all residents along with door to door visits. She inquired if there would be dedicated FPL staff for customer complaints, to which Ms. Bonilla replied that they would send letters, make phone calls and door knock & added that there was a direct line to staff assigned to the project in the area with claims compliant service. Vice Mayor Caraballo explained how the process worked in her area. Ms. Bonilla expressed that the underground program was a voluntary program and FPL had to obtain easements to enter the properties & would not force anyone to volunteer. She explained that not everyone would have a transformer as one transformer would feed multiple homes. Councilwoman Morgan voiced that there should be a beautification program with regard to the boxes. Councilman Pickett inquired about safety aspect with regard to boring, to which Mr. Edgecomb replied that there was a minimum depth of 36 inches. Ms. Bonilla recommended that residents call sunshine 811 before boring to mitigate any issues. It was the consensus of the City Council that FPL and staff work together to communicate and educate the public.

- 5.b** Discuss Funding of City of Port St. Lucie Beautification Projects, History of Keep Port St. Lucie Beautiful (KPSLB) Program, KPSLB Program Achievements, and KPSLB Organizational Structure Needs which includes the KPSLB

[2022-991](#)

Committee.

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint was shown at this time.) Michael Enot, Public Works Assistant Director/City Engineer, provided the beautification projects that have been completed this year along with the Strategic Plan Project Milestones and explained the organizational chart. Beth Zsoka, Executive Project Manager, Community Outreach, described the programs and events. Mr. Enot explained the current KPSLB Committee and their issues. He requested direction for allocation/funding for future beautification projects, funding for two full time staff members, funding for Christmas lights as well as direction on changing the KPSLB to an advisory group. Mayor Martin stated that a discussion would be needed to address holiday lights since the price was increasing as was the demand for lights. She stated that there were more lights installed last year at the Botanical Gardens but there was not enough access for the residents to see the lights. Mayor Martin and Councilwoman Morgan questioned how Sunshine Law would not be broken with staff members being on a Committee. The City Attorney explained how the process would work as it was similar to the CDD's. Mayor Martin and Councilwoman Morgan mentioned that there may be redundancy with the NICE and KSPLB programs. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that she used to be on the KPSLB Committee and voiced that meetings held during the day could be an issue. She stated that she wanted to see more public involvement on the Committee versus staff and felt that minutes should be taken for transparency purposes. She said that the City Council could set a better strategic focus on KPSLB projects. Mayor Martin voiced that the lunch & learns may not be beneficial and wanted to end projects/programs that weren't being well attended.

Frank Moehrle, Deputy City Attorney, suggested three options for the Committee, the first being a 501c(3) which was similar to Keep America Beautiful and Keep Florida Beautiful; out of 40 Keep America Beautiful affiliates only two were government affiliate with a committee. He stated that most affiliates were staff driven with no committee including counties in the area. He added that a benefit to being a 501c(3) was the funding. The second option was to create a staff driven organization with no committee which would not cause any Sunshine violations and the third option would be to have an advisory committee who would advise the City Council on beautification projects, events and core missions. He advised that the Committee should be providing recommendations to the City Council as well as having committee members provide staff direction opposed to the current situation which

was staff providing direction to the committee members. Councilman Bonna supported the 501c(3) option which would provide funding opportunities to the communities. Mayor Martin voiced that a 501c(3) option may distract from the City's strategic plan initiatives & added that the current committee was staff driven and should stay that way until more information could be given on the 501c(3) option. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that having the City fund a 501c(3) may be an issue, therefore she was in favor of the third option. Councilman Pickett inquired as to what the best option would be, to which the City Attorney voiced that a staff driven committee may be the easiest path for the time being and the concerns raised for the 501c(3) were legitimate and would need more research. He said that staff would continue to do their job and keep the projects moving forward, to which Deputy City Attorney Moehrle agreed.

Councilman Bonna stated that he would support a staff driven process after hearing Legal's opinion and wanted the best option to keep KPSLB moving forward. It was the consensus of the City Council to structure the KPSLB Committee as a staff driven committee and to review 501c(3) options for the future. Vice Mayor Caraballo voiced that she wanted the community involved in the committee, to which Mayor Martin replied that the community was involved and gave the Adopt-a-Street groups & tree giveaways as an example. Heath Stocton, Public Works Director, inquired if it could be a staff driven committee which allowed for public involvement/suggestions, to which the City Attorney responded in the affirmative as long as the public did not make decisions. Mayor Martin added that staff has been completing the work, therefore a staff driven committee was not changing the process. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that if it was staff driven, the residents would not have a vote, to which Mayor Martin replied that there wasn't enough community involvement with the committee which could hinder completing strategic plan goals. The City Manager stated that residents needed to be involved in the process but at the moment it was difficult with a formal committee. He suggested that there be a focus group that meets regularly to also include residents, to which the City Council agreed. Mr. Stocton inquired if other departments could be involved, to which Mayor Martin responded in the affirmative.

The City Manager explained the current Christmas Light process and Mr. Enot added that they were looking for City Council direction and would come back in February. The City Manager stated that the City leased the lights which was a bit more costly but did not have to use

Public Works staff to install the lights or deal with changing out lightbulbs which could be a tedious manner given the size of the city and amount of lights. Mayor Martin stated that a refresher was needed on the smaller projects. Mr. Stocton replied that they would supply examples of smaller projects. Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired about the recycling money, to which Bolivar Gomez, Project Manager, replied that the recycling rebate funded the NICE program along with KPSLB enhancement projects. Vice Mayor Caraballo requested that the City Manager bring back suggestions on the extra funds to be used for KPSLB, to which the City Manager replied that the solid waste money was 100% funding a litter crew and a supervisor. Mr. Stocton added that the previous provider had a crew and since they left the funds now paid for a crew. The City Council requested an update on the NICE program to be able to maximize benefit/funding. Mayor Martin inquired if there were areas that were requesting lights, to which Jennifer Perkey replied that they wanted to expand the Botanical Garden lights but couldn't this year due to cost as well as adding garland from Sandia to Crosstown Bridge. Mr. Enot stated that the contract had to be awarded by April. The City Council requested that Christmas Lights be added to the January Special City Council meeting agenda. Ms. Perkey and Mr. Enot explained that if a business wanted additional lights, they could donate money to the City to help pay for the lights. Mayor Martin voiced her concern over some areas having lights but not giving residents access to view them. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that additional staff may be needed to assist with the Christmas Light program and hoped that the Port area will be the central of Christmas Lights in future years. She stated that maybe reviewing the lease with the Botanical Gardens could solve the access issue. Mayor Martin suggested that the City Council discuss creating a Special Events Team to create new and exciting events/programs.

A break was called at 11:10 a.m., and the meeting resumed at 11:27 a.m.

5.c Evaluation of the Swale Liner Program

[2022-986](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint was shown at this time.) Amy E. Eason, PE, explained the swale liner & swale rework programs. She provided a brief background on the swales liners, an overview of the program and gave the basics on swale construction. She stated that the liner program was started in 1987 because the thought was that the liner could move water by maintaining a consistent grade. She explained the three swale liner services practiced by the City, new swale liner installation (the city purchases the liner & pegs and City staff cuts the

pipe), swale liner repair (costs \$16.13 per foot) and swale liner maintenance. She informed the City Council that the purchase of the liners have increased which was added onto the cost of paying City staff to cut the pipe. She informed the City Council that the City had incurred a \$742,622 increase in swale liner maintenance and the cost of the liners made up approximately 10% of the Stormwater Budget, \$33.2 Million.

Ms. Eason stated that no other municipality in the state of Florida use a swale liner program nor was it required from a drainage standpoint. She believed that the City would not see erosion to warrant using the liners. She said the cons of the liners were that more pollutants were entering the system, the cost was 10% of the budget and it decreased the flow capacity & the one pro was that it preserved the grade of the swale. She stated that the City would incur a minimal cost to remove the liner during the swale rework program but would need to educate the public regarding the change. She recommended that the City phase out the liner program and described the steps needed to do so. She voiced an alternative which consisted of only removing the maintenance program from the swale program. She gave a timeline of moving forward if City Council moved to phase out the liner program. Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired about vacant lots, to which Ms. Eason replied that the empty lots still paid a fee and they should be connected into the system. Ms. Eason explained the difference in fees for vacant and built-out lots. Mr. Stocton voiced that Ms. Eason was reviewing the fee structure. Vice Mayor Caraballo requested a strong education program for the residents which included door-to-door visits, to which Mayor Martin added that the education had to be consistent. The City Council agreed that they should phase out the swale liner program, therefore Councilman Pickett moved to discontinue the swale liner program and to move forward with the swale rework program. Councilwoman Morgan seconded the motion which passed unanimously by voice vote.

6. New Business

6.a City Center Master Plan and Economic Analysis Update

[2022-989](#)

Jennifer Davis, Community Redevelopment Administrator, introduced the City Center Master Plan team and showed the parcels which had been acquired by the City. She explained that staff received more than a thousand responses from the public with regard to what they wanted the space to become. The public wanted more festivals, markets, concerts and places to eat. She invited the public to attend the first

Public Workshop on December 7, 2022 at 6:00 p.m., at the MidFlorida Event Center.

Tom Hazinski, HVS, recommended that the Parks & Recreation component be separated from the MidFlorida Event Center main building so it can be turned into an event/convention center. He then explained how HVS came to that conclusion.

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint was shown at this time.) Anthony Davis, HVS, stated that they had interviewed users such as event planners and explained the key findings; a weakness found during that process was that the building was shared with the Parks & Recreation Department. He said that the replacing the Parks & Recreation side with a new exhibit hall would change the type of the events held at the center. He explained the current programs as well as the proposed ideas such as expanded exhibit hall and moving the stage. He explained the historical demand for the event center and how the proposed changes will increase the amount of meetings and events. He showed comparables which showed the City's center a bit lower for attendance due to not having a hotel. He explained the economic impact of the center by using the gross direct spending number. He said that there were three sources of quantified impact, net direct (buying food in a Port St. Lucie restaurant), indirect spending (the supplier of a restaurant sees an increase in revenue due to a Port St. Lucie restaurant asking for an increase in goods) and induced spending (the restaurant in the City hires new employees and the employee spends their salary within the City). He stated that the facility today generated about \$15.1 million in annual economic impact and with the proposed expansion it would increase to \$23.7 million. He stated that the jobs increased mentioned under induced spending would increase by 78 jobs not including jobs at the event center.

Mr. Hazinski stated that the center was the "living room" of the community and played an important part. He stated that the center could be important for the developmental infrastructure of the City as it improves. He informed the City Council that the center contributed a lot of value to the community and the value could be improved greatly by further investment.

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint was shown at this time.) Kevin Plenzler stated that he concentrated the residential analysis to multi-family type development such as condominiums, townhomes, age restricted and

apartments. He felt that apartments worked the best as it was an underserved market and worked well with the site. He said that they could have a mix of residential and non-residential at the site which would fit the demand going forward. He informed the City Council that the data showed a demand for 900 one-two bedroom with a mix of three bedroom apartments through 2031. He explained that there could be retail development which made sense for the area and estimated the demand to be around 85,000-175,000 square feet with half of it being delivered in the first 10 years. He said that there would be 100,000 square feet of office space demand but the site wouldn't have office space as a primary source of development. He advised that hotels along US 1 were older and hotels that were being planned were along I-95 and the water. He said that the site currently with the size and profile did not have a demand for a hotel but moving forward with the proposed changes there could be a hotel in the future. He stated that if there were incentives it may bring forward a hotel faster. He informed the City Council that this study was based on the market, not incentives or public input.

Councilman Pickett inquired if a large hotel corporation could be contacted for an analysis, to which Linda McCarthy, MidFlorida Event Center Director, replied that under Phase 2 a hotel feasibility study would be conducted. Mr. Hazinski explained the process and steps HVS will take to conduct the study. He knowing what the destination will or wants to look like will be a key question for the study. He said that a hotel on the site today would not work and would need a lot of incentives.

Kim Delaney, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, stated that staff, PFM and HVS are integrated into the master planning. She explained that the financial aspect and developmental program were part of the due diligence process, which were still underway along with the hotel and the balance of activities on the site. She informed the City Council that there will be a workshop on December 7th and were receiving input from the residents through surveys; staff would be updating the City Council at the Winter Retreat in February. The City Manager voiced that the demand would be higher once all the elements were in place to create a vibrant destination.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that the City Council needed to decide on what they wanted the City Center to be and then base incentives on that. Councilman Bonna noted that this was a preliminary discussion

and the City Council had to be mindful of public desire and the price tag that came with that. Councilman Pickett stated that other areas, such as Abacoa, could be used as a blueprint. He said that the stage should be turned to the side not moved to the back & he agreed that the Parks & Recreation side needed to be moved. Councilwoman Morgan stated that she was unsure about moving the stage to the back because of the water fountain, she also felt that the Parks & Recreation side should be moved. She said that hotel companies were watching the area but the center had to be a destination first. The City Manager hoped that the Master Plan would identify the pods (what will be located next to what) which would open the proposal phase. Councilwoman Morgan voiced that a covered walkway from the garage was needed. Mayor Martin voiced that this would be the biggest policy decision the Council would make over the next four years. She stated that the City did not have a downtown area or downtown elements and had to be mindful that a true convention center may not be realistic especially within four years. She said that it would require substantial capital investment to build while the City was trying to improve on much needed Public Works, Police and City Hall facilities while lowering the millage rate. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that the Public input would be highly valuable. Councilwoman Morgan agreed with Mayor Martin, she stated that the City would never have a convention center and maybe staff could call it a conference center. She stated that no center in St. Lucie County could hold over 300 people, but this space had the possibility to.

- 6.b** Hear a Proposal from Councilman David Pickett regarding a proposed "Sacrifices of War" Monument

[2022-1002](#)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint was shown at this time.) Councilman Pickett stated that the monument would honor those who served in combat and passed away once they returned home from wounds, physical or mental, directly associated from being in a theater of operations. He explained that memorialization helps people come to terms with loss. He said that he worked with Kate Parmelee, Strategic Initiatives Director, and they were hoping to receive grants to fund the artwork. He described the artwork parameters and his ideas for the monument's dimensions. He proposed that it be displayed at the Stars & Stripes Park in Tradition but was open to new locations. Mayor Martin questioned how it would be paid for, to which Councilman Pickett replied that if they did not receive a grant, he would fundraise for the piece; his proposal was for \$80,000. Mayor Martin stated that in the past, the City paid for the base and the Veteran groups/501c(3) fundraised for the piece. The City Manager clarified that Councilman

Pickett was asking to use City resources to prepare grant applications & asking for locations. Councilman Bonna moved to go forward with Councilman Pickett's proposed "Sacrifices of War" Monument. Councilwoman Morgan seconded the motion. Under discussion, Vice Mayor Caraballo requested more information on locations since she preferred Veteran's Park. The City Attorney clarified that the Legal Department would aid in the ethic side of things but added that using a 501c(3) did not pose any concerns. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

6. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Traci Mehl, Deputy, City Clerk

Shanna Donleavy, Deputy City Clerk