

**CITY OF PALMETTO
SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION MEETING
April 15, 2015
5:30 PM**

Elected Officials Present:

Shirley Groover Bryant, Mayor
Brian Williams, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, Ward 3
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2
Jonathan Davis, Commissioner-at-Large 1
Harold Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1
Tambra Varnadore, Commissioner, Ward 2

Staff Present:

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney
Jim Freeman, City Clerk
Allen Tusing, Public Works Director
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police
Amber Foley, Assistant City Clerk

Mayor Bryant called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., followed by a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

All persons intending to address City Commission were duly sworn.

1. CITY COMMISSION AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion: Commissioner Davis moved, Commissioner Williams seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the April 15, 2015 Agenda.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. HERNANDO DESOTO SOCIETY DISCUSSION

Mayor Bryant explained that the reason for the meeting tonight was to allow the Commissioners and Staff the opportunity to meet and ask questions of the Hernando DeSoto Society regarding the Riverwalk Regatta 2016 event.

Ray Niecestro, DeSoto Executive, outlined a plan to move the free "Little Anglers" fishing tournament from the Bradenton Riverwalk where it was held last year, to the fishing pier on the Palmetto side. It will begin at 8:30 a.m. and finish up before 11:00 a.m. when the Formula 2 boats leave the Palmetto Riverside Boat Ramp.

Rick Parcels, DeSoto President, stated he would like to have a community workshop with the City's residents, restaurants and businesses to receive feedback and discuss what could be done better to help the community as a whole.

Mayor Bryant informed DeSoto that there may be construction along Riverside Drive starting in October/November for the City's multi-modal project which may interfere with the Regatta. Jeff Rogers stated he spoke with Mr. Burton and has asked for a copy of the multi-modal project plans as they become available.

Commissioner Cornwell said she will not be in support of this event if no races are planned for the Palmetto side of the River.

Mr. Parcels informed Commission that he has been speaking with Mike Fetchko, event promoter, and has asked that the land events, such as X-Pogo and the BMX show, be split between the City of Bradenton

and Palmetto. Mr. Parcels also explained that one thing DeSoto is proposing for next year's event is to offer a beer zone on this side of the bridge, something that the City of Bradenton will not do. DeSoto opined that this will draw more people to Palmetto. The lack of beer was among the top complaints about the first event. Their plans for the beer zone would be in an enclosed area only.

Commissioner Smith questioned if DeSoto had a time frame as to when they will know what events will for sure be occurring in Palmetto for the event. Mr. Smith was disappointed with the promises that were made to the City last year and then at the last minute were withdrawn. DeSoto explained that if the promoter makes promises and does not fulfill them, they will pull out of the event altogether.

Mayor would like to see sponsorships and/or Tourist Development funds used to help support the events for the City of Palmetto. Money will be needed to fund the event for Palmetto, it will not be budgeted. She stated that she is also reaching out to find sponsors and funds for next years' event.

Commissioner Varnadore questioned if DeSoto has thought about providing some transportation on the Green Bridge to get spectators from one city to the other. Mr. Parcels stated that he is going to be having discussions with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to find out if some type of trolley system can be used this year on the Bridge. Commissioner Davis agreed with Commissioner Varnadore in the need for transportation, especially for the elderly. He also asked DeSoto to consider some type of corral area for bicycles as many residents rode their bikes to the event; however, were not allowed to ride them on the Bridge.

Mr. Rogers said he would like to see more utilization of the City's fishing pier for the next Regatta. There is more parking and space in the City of Palmetto and it needs to be utilized in the best way.

In regards to the race course for next year, it was indicated that Mr. Fetchko is planning on lengthening the course for more viewing. Commissioner Williams would like to have a discussion with the Coast Guard regarding the map and track for the races in the water.

Commissioners commended and thanked DeSoto for stepping up and helping the City with the 2016 event. Mayor Bryant does want the City to be very sure of what will occur on this side of the River before making such a large commitment to the event.

Commissioner Varnadore asked Attorney Barnebey to find out if the City of Palmetto does not agree to participate in the event, can the Green Bridge still be closed and what are the pros and cons of that. Attorney Barnebey stated he will find out more information but does know that the statute says that all appropriate local governments have to sign the agreement to get approval; ultimately though, it is a state highway and FDOT is in control of their roads. Commissioner Varnadore would like the questioned posed to FDOT as well.

Mayor Bryant asked that the 2016 Riverwalk Regatta discussion be placed on the agenda as a standing item.

Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 6:11 p.m.

Minutes approved: May 4, 2015

James R. Freeman

James R. Freeman, City Clerk