

MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
MAY 15, 2023
7:00 P.M.

This Commission Meeting was conducted utilizing Communications Media Technology. Some Staff members were present in the Commission Chambers while others were present via the Zoom application.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Shirley Groover Bryant, Mayor
Sheldon Jones, Vice- Mayor, Commissioner-at-Large 1
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2
Sunshine Mathews, Commissioner, Ward 2 (Present via ZOOM)
Harold Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1
Brian Williams, Commissioner, Ward 3

STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney
Jim Freeman, City Clerk
Edward Johnson, Interim CRA Director
Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Director
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police
Cassi Bailey, Assistant City Clerk
Penny Johnston, Executive Assistant

STAFF PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:

Todd Williams, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

1. Mayor Bryant called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, and Pastor Jason Lane from Skyway Community Church in Palmetto, gave the prayer for tonight's meeting.

All persons intending to address the City Commission were duly sworn.

2. CITY COMMISSION AGENDA APPROVAL

MOTION: Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Jones seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the May 15, 2023 City Commission Agenda with the removal of item 4b.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Bowdie Williams, Boy Scout Leader, thanked the Commission for having them.

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Sharon Hillstrom, Bradenton Area Economic Development Corporations, spoke for the development of our downtown core.

Jonathan Davis, spoke of his concern with the noise at the Sewer Plant. He also noted that the land on 14th Avenue was given to the City for the future expansion of the graveyard.

Chris Tittel, Communication Director for the Department of Health Manatee, informed every one of the Community Health Assessment at the Palmetto Library on May 16th at 6:00 pm. The handout was made part of the minutes.

Mayor Bryant mentioned a public comment sent in prior to the meeting from Mickey Harrison, who was against development in the City.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Minutes: 04/17/2023 & 05/01/2023

b. ~~Special Function Permit 2024 Bradenton Area River Regatta~~ (**REMOVED**)

MOTION:

Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Williams seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as presented by staff.

Mayor Bryant recessed the City Commission Meeting to open the May 15, 2023 Special CRA Board Meeting at 7:12 pm.

Mayor Bryant reconvened the meeting at 8:14 pm.

5. 834 RIVERSIDE DRIVE (E.JOHNSON)

MOTION:

Commissioner Jones moved, Commissioner Williams seconded, and the motion carried 4-1 to approve the Riverside Review Committee's top ranked developer, Apogee Real Estate Partners, and authorize the Mayor/CRA Presiding Officer to negotiate the sale and development of property. (Commissioner Smith voted nay)

6. PALMETTO SPORTS COMPLEX-14TH AVE WEST & 9TH ST WEST (E.JOHNSON)

This item was discussed at the 4:30 Workshop meeting and again at the 7:00 pm Special CRA Board meeting.

MOTION:

Commissioner Jones moved, Commissioner Williams seconded, to approve the City of Palmetto to proceed with the engineering and construction plans and to issue an ITB or RFP to build the Palmetto Sports Complex at 14th Ave West and 9th Street West to include basketball, tennis/pickleball, walking trail, parking, lighting, security cameras and restrooms.

Commissioner Smith questioned Mr. Barnebey on any restrictions for the property. Mr. Barnebey answered that he has seen the deed, and there are no restrictions on the site.

Commissioner Jones wants to discuss further options to the design, including a playground, if possible. Mr. Barnebey suggested that prior to going out to ITB and RFP, the final sketch be brought back to the Commission for approval with costs.

Commissioner Cornwell wanted to add a disclaimer of "and other facilities" or "recreational use", instead of specifying a "playground" to allow for more options and further discussion on what will best fit on the site. She also noted that she assumed this project will have to be done in phases.

Commissioner Smith opined that they should use land in Ward 1 that the CRA owns, so the CRA can help with funding.

Commissioner Williams suggested putting it out to bid, and when they bring back the proposals, they will review it further.

REVISED MOTION:

Commissioner Jones moved, Commissioner Williams seconded, and the motion carried 4-1 to approve the City of Palmetto to proceed with the engineering and construction plans and to issue an ITB or RFP to build the Palmetto Sports Complex at 14th Ave West and 9th Street West to include basketball, tennis/pickleball, walking trail, parking, lighting, security cameras and restrooms , with final design to come before Commission prior to issuing any ITB or RFP. (Commissioner Smith voted nay)

7. APRIL 2023 CHECK REGISTER (Informational Only)

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STANDING AGENDA ITEMS:

8. Traffic Update

Mr. Rayan reported that the project on Haben Blvd. will begin this week. Part of Haben Blvd. will be closed to construct the roundabout. It is estimated to take 4 weeks to complete this work. The anticipated time frame is May 16th- June 16th.

Mayor Bryant noted that she got a request from residents at Riviera Dunes to meet with them regarding the traffic in the area.

Commissioner Cornwell questioned how the road closure will affect Manatee School for the Arts, MSA. She noted that they only have 9 days left of school. She asked why they can't push back the start of the construction until the school year ends. Mr. Rayan clarified where the area is that will be closed. Chief Tyler also stated that the school has been told and given advanced notice of the construction timeline.

Commissioner Williams agreed with Commissioner Cornwell and noted that they would avoid a good amount of traffic if they waited 9 days for school to end. Discussions continued between Chief Tyler, Commissioner Williams, and Mr. Rayan. The construction is already set to begin tomorrow, May 16th at 6:00 am. It is too late to make changes to the schedule.

Commissioner Jones questioned the noise at the sewer plant, which was brought up during Public Comment. Mr. Rayan responded that they are aware and are working on the problem. They are in the process of doing a plan evaluation and looking at renting a blower unit. Obtaining cost to install new piping, is also in the works.

COMMENTS:

9. DEPARTMENT HEADS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Williams asked Mr. Freeman if they can look into removing the partitions in the chambers. He noted that it makes it hard to see, at times. Some of the other Commissioners commented that they liked them being there.

Commissioner Cornwell congratulated the Finance Department for their award, Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 17th consecutive year.

Commissioner Cornwell also apologized to Mr. Johnson and his staff if they felt diminished by previous comments at the prior meeting.

Commissioner Mathews congratulated Jenny Silverio for being the Employee of the 2nd Quarter.

Mr. Barnebey also congratulated the Finance Department. He reported that pursuant to the Commissions' direction, he sent out two letters to property owners regarding the drainage issues and requesting easements, as previously discussed.

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Commissioner Williams stated that he believed another Commissioner should apologize to the CRA staff for previous comments that were made.

Mr. Freeman noted that there will be a Special City Commission Meeting on June 1st regarding Epoch and the Riviera Dunes Apartments. This will be held at the Bradenton Area Convention Center at 5:30 pm. (This meeting was cancelled at a later date)

10. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Bryant stated that they did not receive state funding. She noted that unless they have a lobbyist, they will continue to not receive state funding. Mayor Bryant reported that she plans to pursue researching and locating someone to lobby for the City of Palmetto. She will report back once she has more information. She also noted that she met with Commissioner Van Ostenbridge. She encouraged everyone to speak out to Manatee County in support of the search and development of additional boat ramps and boat parking. She asked for the Commissions agreement to write a letter of support to prioritize this development.

MOTION: **Commissioner Jones moved, Commissioner Cornwell seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 for the Mayor to take action and send a letter to County Commissioners supporting more boat parking.**

11. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Jones asked Mayor Bryant for an update on Lincoln Park. Mayor Bryant responded that she would bring back information at the next meeting. Mayor Bryant also mentioned the old land fill, near Buffalo Creek Middle School, and the need for a further discussion. The County is wanting to use that land to create more soccer fields.

Commissioner Williams addressed Commissioner Smith and stated the purpose for creating a review committee for Riverside was to research and review each proposal. The committee scored each Developer. He believed to deny their recommendation would have been wrong.

Commissioner Williams read a proclamation for Police Officers Memorial Day. It was declared that May 15th, 2023 would be Police Officers Memorial Day in the City of Palmetto. May 18th will be the annual law enforcement memorial in Manatee County. Chief Tyler will be a guest speaker.

Commissioner Cornwell noted that schools are about to close for the summer. The last day for students is Friday, May 26th. She opined that this would be a great time for the Police Officers to get out and interact with the youth. Commissioner Cornwell also mentioned that it is unfortunate when the public comes forward without all the information. The Riverside project has been ongoing for 10 years. She believed the review committee chose a "medium", trying to satisfy all that was desired and did a good job evaluating the properties. Commissioner Cornwell expressed that it was unfortunate that people think they made this decision lightly. She appreciated the Commission for moving forward.

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Commissioner Jones wished everyone a happy Memorial Day weekend coming up. He also noted that they made a big decision tonight, but there's still more work to be done.

Mayor Bryant discussed the history of the decision making with the Riverside property. She reiterated that she would write a letter to the County for additional boat parking.

Commissioner Smith spoke on the lack of presentations given to the Commission on Riverside. He believed they should've gone with the hotel developer. He also stated he didn't say a name when talking about the CRA at a past meeting.

Commissioner Mathews echoed that she appreciated the review committees time and evaluation. She also appreciated the publics input. Her hope is that the passionate group of boaters will redirect their passion to the County to develop more boat parking.

Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 9:02 pm.

MINUTES APPROVED: JUNE 5, 2023

JAMES R. FREEMAN

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CITY CLERK