

MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
OCTOBER 21, 2024
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
Tamara Cornwell, Vice- Mayor, Commissioner-at-Large 2
Sunshine Joiner, Commissioner, Ward 2
Sheldon Jones, Commissioner-at-Large 1
Harold Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1
Brian Williams, Commissioner, Ward 3

STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Jim Freeman, City Clerk
Marisa Powers, City Attorney
Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Director
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police
Rowena Young-Gopie, CRA Director
Cassi Bailey, Assistant City Clerk
Jake Bibler, City Planner
Kera Hill, Development Services Supervisor
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 Deputy Simmons gave the prayer for tonight's meeting.

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

Mr. Huntsinger presented a Certificate of Appreciation from the Veterans Council to the Mayor for her 16 years as Mayor of Palmetto.

2. CITY COMMISSION AGENDA APPROVAL

MOTION:

Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Joiner seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the October 21, 2024 City Commission Agenda with the addition of item 6a. Waiver of Permitting Fees and item 6b. Sole Source Purchase of the Lemur 2 Drone.

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3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Bryant read a statement from Attorney Mark Barnebey regarding the prohibited use of the City seal for political purposes.

Commissioner Smith asked who couldn't use the City seal. Mayor Bryant clarified that it cannot be used in a political campaign. It is in violation of City Ordinances and State Law.

John Ebel spoke against Amendment 4, which will be on the upcoming ballot. The Mayor and Ms. Powers stated that they try to keep public comments to issues within the City of Palmetto.

Carrie Ebel wanted to also speak against Amendment 4. Ms. Powers reiterated that they try to keep public comments to issues within the City of Palmetto.

Tom Porter spoke about the recent storms, and he wanted to express his appreciation for everyone who came together to help in the aftermath. He also wanted to express his appreciation to Mr. Rayan and his department for their hard work.

Betty Sailes Rhodes spoke about Tropic Isles and the destruction they endured. She spoke about 13th and 14th Avenue and the apartments that are in bad shape.

Tracy Washington followed up about the mental health program Chief spoke about a few weeks ago. Chief responded and explained the mental health model. USF and Centerstone have applied for a grant to fund this program for 2 years. They are hoping to hear the results on the grant application soon. He will bring back more information when he has it.

Mayor Bryant reported on what she had done over the last couple of weeks. She stated that she had reached out to all of the mobile home parks within the City. She was on the EOC meetings night and day throughout the storms. She went around to local restaurants to share the updates on the gas shortage.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Minutes:09/09/2024 & 09/23/2024

b. Resolution 2024-30: Lease Reimbursement for 2025 Capital Items

c. Resolution 2024-32: FY 2024 Year End Budget Amendment-CRA

d. Palmetto Utility Infrastructure Improvements in Low/Moderate Income Area Grant

e. Special Function Permit- First Baptist Church: Fall Festival

f. Special Function Permit- Life Changers International World Ministries, Inc.

MOTION:

Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Jones seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as presented by staff for items 4a., 4d., and 4f.

Item 4b. was pulled for discussion by Commissioner Cornwell. She asked for clarification on the purchases and how they go about getting reimbursed. Mr. Freeman explained the process of lease reimbursement for capital purchases.

MOTION: Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Williams seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve item 4b.

Item 4c. was pulled for discussion by Commissioner Cornwell. She said when the Department Head was appointed, she asked if this position was funded. She was told it was. However, based on the amendment, it was not. She wanted to be careful when things like this happen. It is the Commissions job to keep an eye on City dollars.

Commissioner Jones also spoke on MLK Park and the \$300,000 they're reducing for the bathrooms. This was just to reallocate funds to the Women's Club renovation. It is not taking away a project, per Ms. Young-Gopie.

MOTION: Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Jones seconded, and the motion carried 4-1 to approve item 4c. (Commissioner Williams voted nay.)

Commissioner Corwell pulled item 4e. for discussion. She questioned the timing of the event for the Special Function Permit. It was clarified that the event times were detailed on the permit. This is the same event that was approved last year.

MOTION: Commissioner Joiner moved, Commissioner Williams seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 for item 4e.

5. RESCHEDULED-2ND PUBLIC HEARING ORDINANCE 2024:04: HOME BASED BUSINESSES & OCCUPATIONS (M.POWERS/J.BIBLER/K.HILL)

THIS PUBLIC HEARING WILL BE RESCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 18, 2024, DUE TO HURRICANE MILTON.

Mr. Freeman also noted that a conditional use permit (CU 2024-03) for Royal Palm will be continued to a future meeting date.

6. ALTIER PURCHASE AGREEMENT (J.FREEMAN/M.POWERS)

Mr. Freeman clarified that this is for the approval of the contract only. There will be other opportunities for the Commission to discuss the project through the re-zoning process, and GDP. This is a high level conceptual. As they stated at the workshop, they are open to further discussions.

Commissioner Cornwell questioned the purchase price, due diligence period and what input the commission would have going forward. The GDP process was discussed. The Commission would decide if they want to approve the GDP. Ms. Powers further explained the due diligence period. It was reiterated that the only thing they're approving is the contract.

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Commissioner Smith believed the staff changed what was originally presented to the Commission. He thought they should have another Workshop.

Commissioner Williams asked about section 6.3. Can they sell the property within the 2-year due diligence period? Ms. Powers stated that would have to be negotiated. There is nothing currently in the contract to prohibit that.

Brad Baker, Developer, spoke on the project. They want to continue to work with the Commissioners and staff. They want to be flexible. All the Commission is approving at this point is the ability to move forward. They have no intention of selling the project. He is not a property flipper.

Mayor Bryant felt strange putting that restraint on them. Mr. Baker noted that it would be unlike any building contract he has ever seen.

Mr. Altier reiterated that they would like to meet with the Commissioners individually. The City still has the opportunity to turn their project down through the re-zone and GDP process. They are just wanting to move forward.

Our next meeting is November 18th. Mr. Smith thought they should workshop it.

MOTION: Commissioner Williams moved, Commissioner Joiner seconded, and the motion carried 3-2 to approve the sales contract with Bradford Baker as provided in the agenda. (Commissioners Smith and Jones voted nay.)

6a. WAIVING OF PERMIT FEES

Mr. Freeman noted that they have mirrored what the County has done. The waiver of permitting fees would be for repairs that occurred during the recent hurricanes. Commissioner Cornwell discussed the late fees for utilities. Mr. Freeman noted that they already decided to waive late fees and shut offs through November. She asked if residents could apply for pool re-fill credit. Mr. Freeman stated that they already have a process for that in place. There is a credit for the sewer portion.

Commissioner Williams stated that a couple of months is a very short time to waive permitting fees because it takes insurance awhile to move forward with repairs. Mr. Freeman stated that it will be brought back in January to extend, if needed. Mr. Rayan said it will be documented if the damage was from the hurricanes. The fees will be waived, but permits are still required.

MOTION: Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Williams seconded and the motion carried 5-0 for the recommendation of relief of permitting fees and relief for overdue billings to help residents with both hurricanes.

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6b. DRONE PURCHASE

Chief Tyler explained that this is a sole source matter. It is fully funded by a grant. A handout was given to the Commissioners and made part of the minutes. It was clarified that this is for one drone.

MOTION: Commissioner Cornwell moved, Commissioner Joiner seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the sole source purchase of the Lemur 2 Drone in the amount of \$24,999.

Mayor Bryant noted a state law which addresses when a mobile home is destroyed, there is an opportunity to put a motor home in its place. However, it is limited to 36 months. It will be brought forward to the Commission at a later date, once they determine the City's procedures for acquiring a permit.

Commissioner Williams also spoke on an item in the City regarding homes that were totally destroyed and the ability to put a motor home on their property if they have an excess of \$500,000 worth of damage. The Mayor stated that they would also look at that, and advise them of their findings.

7. SEPTEMBER 2024 CHECK REGISTER (INFORMATIONAL ONLY)

Mayor Bryant recessed the City Commission Meeting to Open the October 21, 2024 CRA Board Meeting at 8:17 pm.

Mayor reconvened the City Commission Meeting at 9:34 pm.

COMMENTS:

8. DEPARTMENT HEADS' COMMENTS

Mr. Rayan reported on the events of the past couple of weeks. He acknowledged the public works staff and the great work they did. He thanked his colleagues and the Mayor. He also extended thanks to the port workers. He went on to thank the Palmetto Marriott for providing them food during the storm.

They've had boots on the ground since beginning debris removal. They're in the process of establishing an interim site for construction and demolition, C&D, materials. This requires approval from the DEP. Overall, the City properties fared well compared to other local areas.

Commissioner Cornwell questioned the property the City owns near Buffalo Creek Park, which was the old landfill. She asked if it would be possible to store the C&D materials there. Mr. Rayan answered that it would be difficult for the haulers to go that far outside the City. Mr. Rayan continued to explain that it would still be subject to the same DEP requirements. There is an existing restriction on that property, and it is already being monitored by DEP.

Commissioner Cornwell asked when the wastewater treatment plant closed during the storm. Mr. Rayan answered Wednesday, and it re-opened sometime on Thursday. Commissioner Cornwell continued to question SSO and the cleanup process.

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Commissioner Williams spoke on the difficulty of haulers taking materials out to the old land fill. Mr. Rayan noted that they would like to get an interim site for processing.

Mayor Bryant appreciated the teamwork with her department heads during the storm.

Mr. Freeman reminded everyone that the next meeting would be on November 18th. He shared that he is proud to be a resident of the City of Palmetto, and he is proud of the City staff. Mr. Freeman went on to report that they had received 7 applications so far for the CDBG Housing Grant. They have extended the deadline until they reach the threshold of a minimum of 10 applicants. There is a slight extension to the Audubon property's due diligence period, as they're finishing up environmental testing.

Chief Tyler echoed what was already shared, the City staff is second to none. He increased messaging on Facebook to get information out to the residents. They hired someone to help with public relations. He is extremely proud of everyone. He highlighted the efforts they made before, during and after the hurricanes to protect the City.

9. MAYOR'S REPORT

No additional report.

10. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Joiner thanked all of the staff for their amazing work.

MOTION: Commissioner Cornwell moved to extend the time of the meeting until 10:15 pm, Commissioner Jones seconded, and the motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Cornwell thanked the Mayor and department heads for all of their work. It has been a pleasure to have Mayor Bryant as the Mayor for the last 16 years and as a Commissioner before that. She greatly appreciated all she had done for the City.

Commissioner Jones spoke about the fence and generator on Lantana Court. The resident has retained a lawyer. He is hoping we can resolve this issue. Mr. Rayan noted that they're looking at different fencing products. Commissioner Jones mentioned a letter he received in his box that was open. Ms. Penny Johnston responded that after the hurricane, staff were working quickly to get through all the mail that was received. Commissioner Jones said it was a job well done to everyone in the City.

Commissioner Williams thanked the entire City staff, the Building and Planning Departments and Kera Hill specifically for their work throughout the hurricanes. Commissioner Williams thanked the Mayor for all of her years of service. He thought the City had improved tremendously under her tenure.

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Mayor Bryant shared that her goal as Mayor was to leave the City better than when she found it. It has been a pleasure working with everyone.

Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 10:13 pm.

MINUTES APPROVED: NOVEMBER 18, 2024

JAMES R. FREEMAN

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CITY CLERK