

Palmetto City Commission
April 3, 2006 4:00 p.m.

Elected Officials Present:

Larry Bustle, Mayor
Mary Lancaster, Vice Mayor
Eric Ball, Commissioner
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner
Tambra Varnadore, Commissioner
Brian Williams, Commissioner

Staff and Others Present:

James R. Freeman, City Clerk
Frank Woodard, Deputy Public Works Director
Chief Garry Lowe
Ric Hartman, Planning Supervisor/Zoning Administrator
Tanya Lukowiak, CRA Executive Director
Michele Hall, City Attorney
Diane Ponder, Deputy Clerk-Administration

Mayor Bustle called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm.

Chief Lowe administered the oath of office to new police officer Nickolas Ligman.

A moment of silence for overseas military personnel was observed, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. APPROVAL OF WORKSHOP AGENDA

MOTION: Mrs. Lancaster moved, Mr. Ball seconded and motion carried 5-0 to approve the April 3, 2006, 4:00 PM agenda.

2. LEGAL SERVICES (5:34)

Mayor Bustle proposed a six-month trial with the firm of Dye, Deitrich, et al as follows:

- \$280,000 per year fee for non-litigation, non-specialty legal services
- Michele Hall to work at the city for two days per week; Monday usually one of the days
- Edward Conrad to work at the city a minimum of two days per week
- City to provide office space; Firm to provide a computer
- Litigation and specialty legal services to be billed at \$175 per hour

Discussion ensued on the topic. Mayor Bustle advised Commission legal services would be secured by a letter contract with the firm, and that if at the end of the six months the city finds the arrangement is acceptable, the same legal service rate will apply to a new term established by Commission. The \$280,000 will be prorated over the balance of the fiscal year, i.e. approximately \$23,200 per month.

Ms. Hall confirmed the letter contract could be constructed to also contain items requested by Commission during discussion. A draft letter contract will be provided Commission prior to the 7:00 meeting containing the following additions to the proposal:

- Person specific for Michele Hall and Edward Conrad
- Itemized billing at the same level of detail currently provided
- Firm to provide a computer that can be networked to the firm's system,
- Firm to provide the administrative support for legal services

- Charges currently passed through to the city will continue to be passed through
- A termination clause in the event Michele Hall is unable to perform legal services

Attorney Hall will provide a draft letter contract containing requested items for Commission's review prior to the 7:00 agenda.

Mr. Ball, Mrs. Lancaster and Mr. Williams supported the trial basis, provided the letter contract contains all the items discussed. Ms. Cornwell stated her belief the city is negligent in not having bid the legal services. Discussion also surrounded moving this item, as well as other items on the 4:00 agenda, directly to the 7:00 agenda; some Commissioners are not proponents of the practice.

The item was moved forward to the 7:00 agenda for Commission action.

3. OLYMPIA THEATER UPDATE (48:35)

Mrs. Lukowiak stated that as a result of Commission's instruction to provide a plan for the Olympia Theater, Geoff Seger, Parks & Recreation Director, had compiled information on how other cities use municipal auditoriums. She briefed Commission on possible uses the Olympia Theater could provide, should the Commission move forward in the taking of the property via eminent domain to provide a viable space for community events.

4. SPATIAL NEEDS PHASE II (54:20)

As requested by Commission, Mayor Bustle presented two possible options for the Spatial Needs Phase II Study:

1. Evaluation of the "Gold Dome Bank" building, and
2. Scott properties, which are candidates for redevelopment because of their deteriorated state and the fact they are for sale, and because a space along 8th Avenue was recommended in the Waterfront Community Study. The properties would have to be demolished, thus they would be considered a bare lot option. The Police Department or soccer fields on 14th Avenue could also be considered a bare lot option.

Mr. Freeman stated he would confirm if the Building Department and CRA could sub-lease space in a newly constructed City Center, but he felt the City could allocate the cost of space to each department in a new location.

Mayor Bustle explained the study would consider space and parking requirements for a City Center that would house all the administrative functions of the city in one space. He also stated that regardless of a chosen property, the study would determine if the size was appropriate to house the facility. Mr. Lukowiak also discussed the fact the study would not be tied specifically to the Scott property, it would look at the size of any bare lot option.

Mr. Williams suggested forming a citizen's committee to aid staff in determining a location. Ms. Cornwell requested an option to place a City Center in a depressed economical area to reduce slum and blight be considered; Mrs. Lancaster concurred. Mr. Ball stated his opinion the study is perfect to determine what it will cost the city to not use the Gold Dome Bank building; what will the city gain by spending more for a new building.

1. Evaluate the Gold Dome Bank building
2. Evaluate the Scott properties to determine if the size is adequate to house a City Center
3. Evaluate a bare lot option any place in the city to achieve the maximum reduction of slum and blight and economic revitalization

The item was moved forward to the 7:00 agenda for Commission action.

5. CRA CONSULTANT (1:30:38)

Mrs. Lukowiak informed Commission of the need to hire a consultant to assume some of the responsibilities to conclude major projects underway in the city. She proposed hiring J. E. Free, Jr. as a consultant to assist in land assembly and the associated contracts, and to development funding mechanisms and joint participation agreements. She stated if Commission approved the hiring of Mr. Free as a consultant, the expense would equate to an hourly rate of \$37.50 per hour, not to exceed 150 hours or \$5,625. With Commission's approval the topic will be presented to the CRA Board for approval.

The item was moved forward to the 7:00 agenda for Commission action.

Mrs. Lukowiak updated Commission on the progress of the Palmetto Elementary land assembly project.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm.

Minutes approved: April 17, 2006


James R. Freeman
City Clerk