

Palmetto City Commission
September 12, 2006 4:00 p.m.

Elected Officials Present:

Larry Bustle, Mayor
Mary Lancaster, Vice Mayor
Eric Ball, Commissioner
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner (entered at 4:08 pm)
Tambra Varnadore, Commissioner
Brian Williams, Commissioner

Staff and Others Present:

James R. Freeman, City Clerk
Chris Lukowiak, Public Works Director
Frank Woodard, Deputy Public Works Director
Chief Garry Lowe
Tanya Lukowiak, CRA Executive Director
Karen Simpson-Deputy Clerk-Finance
Diane Ponder, Deputy Clerk-Administration

Mayor Bustle called the meeting to order at 4:06 pm. A moment of silence for military overseas personnel was observed, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. APPROVAL OF WORKSHOP AGENDA

Mayor Bustle requested that item #3 FRDAP Grant Application be moved to #4.

MOTION: Ms. Varnadore moved, Mrs. Lancaster seconded and motion carried 5-0 to approve the September 12, 2006 4:00 pm agenda, as amended.

2. OLYMPIA THEATER UPDATE

Attorney Mickey Palmer updated Commission on the Olympia Theater eminent domain litigation. Judge Peter Dubinsky will hear the order of taking hearing on December 5, 2006, an extension from the original September 26, 2006 court date. The defendant, Charter Service & Supply, as Trustee, with Mr. and Mrs. Jarvis as sole beneficiaries of the Trust, has obtained Bill Moore as additional counsel. Mr. Moore desires to depose 14 separate people; Mayor Bustle, Tanya Lukowiak, Karen Hartman, Scott Maloney, Stanley Roberts, Alan Moore, C. J. Czaia, Allen Langford, Rose Marie Tory, Alan Zirkelback, Bill Strollo, Chris Lukowiak, Barbara Levin and Michele Hall. Mr. Palmer stated he and Mr. Moore are confident the December 5, 2006 date will be met.

Mr. Palmer discussed the process of preparing for the hearing, stating he has ordered an update to the appraisal of the property that is approximately four months old. He discussed what will take place during the December 5, 2006 hearing, explaining the judge may or may not make a final decision the day of the hearing.

3. POLICE OFFICERS' PENSION PLAN PROPOSED BENEFIT CHANGES

Attorney Scott Christiansen, counsel for the Police Officers' Pension Plan and the General Employees' Pension Plan Board of Trustees, explained the Board had taken Commission's comments into consideration and is recommending the following benefit changes that will be paid for entirely by State Chapter funds, as represented in the most recent actuarial study:

Normal Retirement Dated:	55 and 10 years of service or 23 years of service
Disability:	62% vs. 42%
Ad hoc COLA for retirees:	2% per year, to a maximum 10% increase (effective October 1, 2005; anyone retired less than one year is not eligible)

Commission agreed to place the proposed ordinance on the September 18, 2006 agenda for first reading and advertising approval.

4. GENERAL EMPLOYEES' PENSION PLAN PROPOSED BENEFIT CHANGES

Attorney Christiansen stated that as Commission requested as a result of the budget process, the proposed ordinance had been amended to require Commission's ability to discontinue the annual 2% COLA adjustment. He also stated language had been added that no retiree or other person shall have any vested right to the continuation of the COLA.

Mr. Ball opposed the annual 2% COLA, and suggested a survey of surrounding municipalities should be done regarding pensions, after which the ordinance should be placed back on a workshop agenda. Ms. Cornwell also opposed the annual COLA. Mayor Bustle discussed the straw vote that was taken during the budget process concerning the proviso that language be added requiring Commission annual review of the COLA, and the fact the Board of Trustees complied by instructing Attorney Christiansen to amend the proposed ordinance. Ms. Varnadore stated her acceptance of the language that was added at her request. Mrs. Lancaster and Mr. Williams favored the benefit for the employees. Discussion of the topic resulted in an amendment to the proposed ordinance that will allow Commission to discontinue the COLA "at any time".

A majority of the Commission agreed to place the proposed ordinance on the September 18, 2006 agenda for first reading and advertising approval.

Mayor Bustle informed Commission the Bighthouse franchise staff has been working on will be brought forward at a subsequent meeting. He asked that Commission contact Attorney Hall with any questions.

Mayor Bustle stated he will be submitting the following legislative priorities at this week's Manasota League of Cities:

1. EZ designation criteria
2. Red light running camera system
3. Local control

Also suggested as priorities was the issue regarding the difference between flood waters and wind driven waters that create insurance claims and support for mandatory participation in attainable housing vs. voluntary participation in attainable housing programs.

5. FRDAP GRANT APPLICATION


Mrs. Lukowiak's requested permission to apply for a FRDAP grant for the Estuary Park to establish an entrance on 7th Street and additional amenities at the northern end of the park. Commission approved the grant application.

Mrs. Lancaster informed Commission she is receiving complaints about Lincoln Park and its lack of picnic tables large enough to accommodate families. Mrs. Lukowiak advised the City owns the park but it is leased to the county. Mr. Lukowiak stated he will send correspondence to the appropriate county department regarding the size of the tables. Mrs. Lukowiak stated she feels the City could manage the parks for the citizens of Palmetto.

Mayor Bustle informed Commission the City this morning received a verbal commitment from the School Board that they will not seek the property next to Blackstone Park. Mayor Bustle stated Commission may need to consider attending a County Commission meeting, in mass, to inquire when Palmetto would receive the Blackstone Park improvements that have been promised.

Meeting adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Minutes approved: October 2, 2006


James R. Freeman, City Clerk