

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING

December 7, 2020

4:30 pm

This Commission Meeting was conducted utilizing Communications Media Technology. Some Elected Officials and Staff members were present in the Commission Chambers while others were present via the Zoom application to respect the social distancing guidelines.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Shirley Groover Bryant, Mayor
Tambra Varnadore, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, Ward 2
Sheldon Jones, Commissioner-at-Large 1
Harold Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1
Brian Williams, Commissioner, Ward 3

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:

Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2

STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney
Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Deputy Director
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police
Kera Hill, Planning Analyst
Jeff Burton, CRA Director
Penny Johnston, Executive Assistant
Vanessa Cochran, Assistant City Clerk

STAFF PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:

Jim Freeman, City Clerk
Phil Southwick, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

Mayor Bryant called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

Ordinance 2020-11 Park Hours (S. Tyler, M. Barnebey)

Scott Tyler, Chief of Police, discussed the park hour changes pertaining to Ordinance 2020-11. He expressed that the park walking trails will be opened 24 hours. However, the restrooms, pavilion, picnic tables etc. will be open during normal park hours to avoid illegal and unethical activities.

Commissioner Cornwell questioned the proposal to close restrooms 30 minutes after sunset at Riverside Park East, which is located near the Green Bridge. She point out that people walk and fish on the bridge, and it gets dark earlier. She emphasized that this would be a hardship for people, and asked the time frame of the unethical activities.

Discussion proceeded regarding Section 20-14, City Park Operating Hours. Chief Tyler expressed that the restrooms are vandalized frequently, and people lock themselves in the restrooms to bathe, sleep, cook, and leave a mess for the City employees to clean that takes hours. He added that the activities are done overnight, and he doesn't have a specific time.

Commissioner Smith stated that the Park hours were previously discussed and asked why they were being discussed again. He agreed with Commissioner Cornwell that it isn't reasonable to close the restrooms at 6:00 p.m.

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Chief Tyler replied that the Commission had some concerns about the restrooms where unethical activities were conducted. Commissioner Jones agreed with Commissioner Smith and Cornwell that the restrooms should not be closed so early. Chief Tyler replied that the Board can amend the hours and requested suggestions.

Commissioner Varnadore asked Chief Tyler by what method are the restrooms locked. Chief Tyler referenced Sutton Park and said that Police Officers lock them at night, and City staff unlock them in the morning. He expressed that he wants to install time mag locks that have a safety device inside the door that locks automatically, and if someone is inside, they will be able to get out. Commissioner Varnadore communicated that she is in favor of locking the restrooms at 9:00 p.m.

Commissioner Williams asked if all security measures have been explored. He suggested that maybe after hours, locks could be used that allows the Police staff to buzz someone in, or cameras outside that shows the person being buzzed in. He asked if there were any other security objectives to use, so City employees would not be subjected to such horrific clean-ups. Chief Tyler asserted that he doesn't want to obligate the Police Dispatchers opening and closing restrooms because they are engaged in other responsibilities. He suggested having restrictive hours later in the evening or continue as we are now.

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney, suggested that if the Commission wants to look at a later time to close the restrooms, Sutton Park is open until 10:00 p.m. and suggested to coordinate the same hours.

Moe Rayan, Public Works Director, described the activities that occurred in the restrooms. Also, he expressed that there is no second shift, so employees leave at 3:30 p.m., and the restrooms are unattended until next morning at 7:00 a.m. when the employees return. Mr. Rayan added that due to Covid-19, the employees started attending to restrooms on Saturdays and Sundays because the pedestrians are utilizing the bridge more, and in the past, these restrooms were locked on the weekends. As a result, overtime has accumulated.

Commissioner Smith asked for clarification on the vandalism of the restrooms. Mr. Rayan replied that the equipment is damaged, and toilet paper is stolen. Commissioner Smith opined that cameras are essential and disagreed with closing the restrooms earlier.

After further discussion, it was determined that the item be placed on the next Workshop scheduled December 21, 2020, and staff provide data on the unethical activities in the parks' restrooms.

Purchase Contract 440 10th Avenue West (J. Burton, M. Barnebey)

Jeff Burton, CRA Director, gave a presentation on the purchase contract for property at 440 10th West, and the presentation is a part of the minutes. He stated that purchasing the property will aid in constructing new buildings for the private sector and creates low impact parking. He implied that due to the area's congestion, the low impact parking will help cars entering and exiting the area better, and the pedestrian will benefit as well. He pointed out that Palmetto's Comprehensive Plan declares that it is a pedestrian street, and cars should be limited, but parking has to expand elsewhere to make this happen. Mr. Burton mentioned that the State has the Revolving Loan Fund that is 20 years at zero percent, and the City would not find a better deal. He emphasized that the 440 10th Avenue West property is the central structure linking the CRA and private sector. He requested the Board's approval to purchase the \$107,000 property, and communicated that the amount is much less than previously requested.

Mayor Bryant asked the Commissioners if there were any questions.

Commissioner Jones stated that he liked the project and will discuss the property's usage later. Mr. Burton replied that the CRA doesn't determine the usage because the City has the authority.

Commissioner Williams questioned the total number of parking spaces being proposed because he is concerned about having too many. Mr. Burton replied that the architect has the information, and he could bring it back to the Board at the next meeting. Commissioner Williams stated that he likes the project, and it should continue.

Commissioner Smith stated that he likes the project and agreed with Commissioner Williams on the parking. And, he communicated that we need the people for the businesses. Mr. Burton reminded the Board that Randy Iboni will be back to address the Board on a marketing plan.

Commissioner Cornwell pointed out that people will come to Palmetto and Detweiler's Market has proven it because people will come if there is a demand.

904 4th Street West and 909 5th Street West Properties Leases Discussion (J. Burton)

Mr. Burton, CRA Director, gave an update on the leases for at 904 4th Street West and 909 5th Street West properties. He stated that the City's Purchasing Department is preparing an Ad to run for 30 days for these properties.

Mayor Bryant asked if anyone have any questions.

Commissioner Williams asked for an update on the termite issue. Mark Barnebey, City Attorney, responded that in the proposal for 909 5th Street West, it lists that the tenant will contribute in the cost of tenting for termites.

Commissioner Varnadore asked about the time line on getting a signed lease. Attorney Barnebey replied by January 15, 2021 with a 30 days requirement and completed by mid-February 2021. Mayor Bryant informed the Board that there is a new business operating in the building, and asked if the building could be spot treated, or do it have to be tented. Mr. Burton, CRA Director, replied that all the buildings have to be tented. And, if the building is not leased, it can be demolished.

Mayor Bryant informed the Board that Penny Johnston, Executive Assistant, can assist in setting up the Board members for the Florida League of Cities Education and Ethics Training, and this training is mandatory.

Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 5:43 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: JANUARY 4, 2021

JAMES R. FREEMAN

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CITY CLERK