

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING

January 4, 2021

4:30 pm

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 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
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2
Harold Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1
Brian Williams, Commissioner, Ward 3

STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Jim Freeman, City Clerk
Mark Barnebey, City Attorney
Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Director
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police
Jeff Burton, CRA Director
Penny Johnston, Executive Assistant
Vanessa Cochran, Assistant City Clerk

STAFF PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:

Todd Williams, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

Mayor Bryant called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

RECOGNITION

Mayor Bryant announced that Octavious Cole was chosen as Employee of the Year for 2020. The finalists were Sam Smith, Employee of the First Quarter, Gracie Johnson, Employee of the Second Quarter, Tanisha Jefferson, Employee of the Third Quarter, and Octavious Cole, Employee of the Fourth Quarter.

1. SEAHORSE PROMOTION (J. Burton)

Mr. Burton, CRA Director, gave a presentation on the seahorse promotion and displayed a video. He informed the Board that the video will be posted on the internet by way of a Quick Response Code (QR Code) that allows the public to scan and watch the 8 minute video. He also added that the City will show the video at the Manatee County Fair that starts January 14, 2021.

Mayor Bryant stated that there were 9 slots open for volunteers to oversee the City's booth at the Manatee County Fair and invited Commissioners and staff members to sign-up with Penny Johnston, Executive Administrative Assistant, to volunteer.

2. RIVERSIDE PARCEL SALE PRESENTATION (J. Burton)

Mr. Randy Iboni, Realtor, gave a presentation on the Riverside Parcel, and the Development of Palmetto's downtown. The presentation is a part of the minutes. He stated that Palmetto does not have a comprehensive vision plan, and it prevents the development of reinventing the City.

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Mr. Iboni emphasized that Palmetto's existing demographics has hindered the City's potential as certain retailers like dollar stores, gas stations, 7-11, and developers looking at Section 8 Housing in the downtown area. Palmetto's demographics were highlighted:

- Population is 14,000 with 5,500 households with a family size of 3.
- Housing vacancies are 20 percent versus 11.3 percent for the United States.
- Florida's population increases during the winter months due to the Snowbirds and decreases after they leave. So, retailers consider the year around residents and not the vacationers.

Next, Mr. Iboni defined the Tapestry Segmentation and communicated that it classifies lifestyles and demographics by merging them to determine who lives in the community. He gave the below narratives concerning Palmetto.

- Senior Escapes - 52% of the Palmetto's population, age is 52.6, household income is \$35,000 with size over 2. This group does not have the income to support the kind of retailers that Palmetto is looking for.
- Fresh Ambition - 12.6% of the Palmetto's population, a tad younger.
- Silver and Gold - 11.4% of the Palmetto's population, age is 61.8, and household income is \$63,000. This group is the target because they live in the community now, and they can afford to support the retailers Palmetto needs.

He summarized Palmetto and Gulfport similarities and differences. Both communities are small and located on the water. Gulfport has high rise buildings and has the density population to support their retailers. But, they do not have any Senior Escapes in their community, and Palmetto has 52.5% of that population in their community.

Mr. Iboni informed the board that the traffic issue is going to increase no matter what because structures are being built around Palmetto, so travelers will go around the City or pass through it. To change this, the City has to develop a vision to attract the appropriate groups and have developers build for them. The Riverside section has been developed, and it has changed the perception of Palmetto. He suggested that the Board take in consideration the previous two developers' offers and make a decision to sell the Riverside parcel owned by the CRA.

Discussion proceeded pertaining to the guidance on how to revitalize Palmetto. Topics included the zoning, and the Board receiving limited communication when structures are built. Commissioners Jones, Smith, and Williams declared that the community wants the downtown area developed. Mr. Barnebey, City Attorney, addressed the Downtown Core Comprehensive Plan and the zoning, and announced the properties that were available for sale. Mr. Iboni's recommendations to the Board were to hire an expert, and reach out to the Chamber of Commerce, and remain on a reliable course that does not slow down the business process.

Mr. Burton, CRA Director, communicated that the CRA Plan is due for an update and suggested to have Professor Trent Green, University of South Florida Architectural Community Design, meet with the Board at the next Workshop Meeting, February 1, 2021, to discuss the vision plan. Then, Mr. Burton asked the Board if they would like to meet with the 2 previous developers again, and they responded yes. Next, Mr. Burton addressed the issue of the Commission not knowing about proposed development. He stated that there needs to be a business process initiated that includes the Commission. And, he wants to invite the Florida Main Street Program Director that helps creates business groups to determine what a Main Street could look like to a Workshop Meeting via Zoom sometime in March 2021.

Mayor Bryant reminded the board that when more than one is speaking, it makes it difficult to maintain accurate minutes, and it can be a violation of the Sunshine Law.

Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: FEBRUARY 22, 2021

JAMES R. FREEMAN

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CITY CLERK