

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING

February 22, 2021

4:30 pm

This Commission Meeting was conducted utilizing Communications Media Technology. 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

Brian Williams, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, Ward 3 (Entered the meeting at 4:36 p.m.)

Sheldon Jones, Commissioner-at-Large 1

Harold Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1

Tambra Varnadore, Commissioner, Ward 2

Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2

STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney

Mohammed Rayan, Director of Public Works

Scott Tyler, Chief of Police

Jim Freeman, City Clerk

Jeff Burton, CRA Director

Penny Johnston, Executive Administrative 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.

1. DISPOSITION OF CITY PROPERTY FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING (K. Owens)

Mrs. Owens discussed the prepared inventory list of properties that the City owns that were appropriate for use as affordable housing, and the list is a part of the minutes. Mrs. Owens stated that the list is updated when needed or at least every 3 years. Any properties that will accommodate housing will be removed from the list and added to a resolution and adopted by the Commission. She also stated that there are 66 properties that the City owns on the list. Mrs. Owens requested the Board's approval to authorize staff to advertise for a public hearing to be scheduled for April 5, 2021.

Commissioner Cornwell inquired about property 1409 10th Street West/1401 10th Street West that is listed on the Inventory List on page 6 as May Be Buildable. Mrs. Owens answered that it was listed in error and should have been removed because it is cemetery restricted.

Commissioner Varnadore asked if the list was basically a house cleaning item, and Mrs. Owens responded yes.

Commissioner Williams asked who considers the properties for use as affordable housing, and if the old Police Building could be considered for affordable housing, and why parcels are listed without addresses. Mrs. Owens replied that staff determines the use, however, she wanted to provide the Commission an opportunity too. Next, she acknowledged that the old Police Department could be considered for affordable housing, and she will ask Attorney Barnebey for assistance on the missing addresses.

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2. CONNOR PARK (J. Burton)

Robert Gause, Gause & Associates, discussed several issues that the Board cited during the CRA Board Meeting held February 1, 2021 regarding the Connor Park Project. Also, Mr. Gause provided drawings of the project for the Board to write suggestions on, and the drawings are a part of the minutes.

CONNOR PARK DISCUSSION

- Rubberized running trail – already in the project scope.
- Elevation changes on the walkway – existing evaluation meets American Disability Act (ADA) regulations.
- Playground – if playground is created, bathroom facilities have to be considered, and drainages cannot be blocked, so doubtful that bathroom facilities can be created.
- Kayak Launch – ditch is too narrow, and no places to park to load or unload.
- A loop Trail – moving the trail east closer to the railroad tracks increases the wetland impact. Also, the permit would have to be amended, which can take 4 to 6 months to process. And, it could affect the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) funding. Furthermore, if the Board decides to do so, the cost will be around \$10,000, and then SWFWMD will have to be notified.
- Exotic Nuisance Vegetation – cannot do a SWFWMD funding project to remove exotic nuisance vegetation.

Commissioner Jones asked if the paved walkway would improve the flooding on Riverside. Mr. Gause communicated that the system was designed to slow down and treat the stormwater that currently runs down the ditch, and it will not have any impact on the residents' drainages because it will bypass them.

Commissioner Varnadore expressed that she doesn't think the brick pathway is suitable for Florida's various weather conditions. And, she requested more information on the timing issue deadline. Mr. Gause expressed that the brick pathway was an option concerning the Commission's decision to keep the park activities on the other side of the ditch. He reported that the project is subsidized through a Comparable Funding Grant, and the project is currently behind schedule. If the project gets postponed, we could lose the funding. Also, the stormwater project is funded through SWFWMD.

Commissioner Williams disagreed that the east side next to the tracks is wetland and encouraged the Board to do a site visit. And, he doesn't think any residents wants a playground and definitely no restrooms. Mr. Gause responded that a playground and restrooms were not on the Plan. And, the wetland was established by the State of Florida Water Management District. To make changes, the permit must be formally modified because it would impact the wetlands, and this process will affect the timeline and the funding.

Mr. Burton, CRA Director, declared that the priority is to mediate the dirt and put the stormwater in. Mayor Bryant commented that 20 emails were received in support of the Connor Park Project, and the Board was copied on the emails. Mr. Burton recommend that the Board move forward with the Plan in place.

Commissioner Cornwell requested to have the project return to the Workshop Meeting on March 1, 2021, and the Board agreed.

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Attorney Barnebey asked what was involved to obtain the \$700,000 SWFWMD money. Mr. Gause replied that the remediation consisted of the Civil Plans, the construction, and the stormwater facility. And, the pavilion, the rubberized trails, and the boardwalk were not a part of the remediation. Next, Mr. Gause communicated that he will send emails to the Commissioners individually requesting their comments on the Connor Park Project, and will copy Mayor Bryant and Attorney Barnebey. The comments needs to be received no later than Wednesday, February 24, 2021, so they can be addressed at the City Commission Meeting on March 1st.

Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: APRIL 5, 2021

JAMES R. FREEMAN

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CITY CLERK