

MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION/CRA WORKSHOP MEETING
APRIL 10, 2023
4:30 P.M.

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
Sheldon Jones, Vice-Mayor, Commissioner-at-Large 1
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2
Sunshine Mathews, Commissioner, Ward 2
Harold Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1
Brian Williams, Commissioner, Ward 3

STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney
Jim Freeman, City Clerk
Edward Johnson, Interim CRA Director
Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Director
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police
Cassi Bailey, Assistant City Clerk
Penny Johnston, Executive Assistant

STAFF PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:

Todd Williams, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

Mayor Bryant opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

1. **CRA DIRECTOR'S REPORT (E. JOHNSON)**

Mr. Johnson went through a PowerPoint highlighting items he has done so far during his time in office, and status reports on current projects. The PowerPoint is included in the minutes. He introduced Bob Gause to provide an update on Connor Park.

Bob Gause, Gause & Associates, provided an update on Connor Park. He went through the PowerPoint, which is included in the minutes. The dedication of Connor Park will be on April 27th at 10:00 am.

Commissioner Smith questioned the property that was being proposed for the baseball bat company, Pure Sports Tech. He thinks it's a good idea, but they need to move quickly. Mayor Bryant stated that they will pursue it further with other possible incentives, but the property is not in the CRA. Commissioner Smith thought the entire Ward 1 was in the CRA. Mayor Bryant and Mr. Johnson said they would double check.

Commissioner Jones liked Mr. Johnson's presentation and appreciated him keeping them updated. He questioned Mr. Gause as to the location of the benches at Connor Park. Mr. Gause answered that most of them are located around the pavilion.

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Commissioner Williams opined that the park is beautiful. He asked where the bat houses are. Mr. Gause pointed out the tree in a photo from the presentation.

Commissioner Smith agreed that the park looks good. He questioned if the design was what they picked. Mr. Gause responded that it is. Commissioner Smith requested the minutes where they voted to eliminate the elevated walkway.

Mr. Johnson introduced Vicky and John Moore from Moore2Design, who gave an update on several projects from the included PowerPoint. The Woman's Club was first discussed. The sports courts at 14th Avenue were then discussed. It was noted that the CRA cannot fund the project on 14th Avenue. It is outside of the CRA. The MLK Park bathroom should be completed in May. The P3 parking project had their groundbreaking today and the construction starts tomorrow. The parking lot will be completed on July 3rd. They are waiting for the final approval from the Coast Guard to sign the permits for the Palmetto Bay Aquatic Habitat project. A possible land trade-exchange at US 41/Riverside Drive was mentioned. Estuary Park and the Carr Drain project was also highlighted.

Commissioner Williams opined that there would need to be a lot of discussion before moving forward with an Estuary Park project. Mayor Bryant noted that she sent out communications from FDOT regarding Estuary Park and the Desoto Bridge to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Jones questioned the 14th Ave courts. He asked how large the open play area is. Mr. Moore answered approximately 200 feet long. Commissioner Jones suggested looking into private partnerships to help fund this project. He asked for an update on the playground at MLK park to Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson will bring back an update at the next CRA meeting.

Mr. Freeman noted that the quit claim deed from the City to the CRA for the Women's Center property was on the 7:00 pm meeting tonight for approval. He also reminded Commission that they previously approved \$325,000 for covered basketball courts at Lamb Park. These funds could possibly be utilized in a different area if they wish. There are also \$100,000 allocated ARPA funds for park upgrades. Some of those dollars could be used for conceptals.

Commissioner Mathews would like to request pickle ball courts in conjunction with the tennis courts. Commissioner Jones stated that the original drawings at Lamb Park showed basketball and pickle ball courts. Mayor Bryant stated that these desires can be part of their discussions moving forward.

Commissioner Smith noted pickleball's increasing popularity.

If they want to discuss potential plans for courts on 14th Avenue, it can be put on a Workshop Agenda. They will look into adding it to the May 1st Workshop Agenda for discussion.

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Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 5:12 pm.

MINUTES APPROVED: MAY 1, 2023

JAMES R. FREEMAN

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CITY CLERK