

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ZONE COMMITTEE (EDZC) MINUTES
MONDAY, MAY 20, 2019 10:00 A.M.
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

PRESENT: Chairman Joseph Cataldo; Members: Mike Williams, Terry Torres, Alternate Member #1 Bob DelVecchio, and Alternate Member #2 Linda Moore **Also Present:** Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director and Heather McCarty, Records Retention Specialist

Excused Absence: Garry Rooney and Jessica Hawkins

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 15, 2019

Mr. Torres made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

4. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Williams commented that Downtown has become much different than it was 10 years ago and asked if they are doing anything to promote tourism.

Mr. Cataldo said they need to do capital improvements, but capital improvements would drive tourism. If they make downtown more alluring, it will bring in more people. Mr. Williams said he was wondering if they could recommend to the Chamber of Commerce that they spend money to promote summer tourism.

Mrs. Moore referred to rain gardens and Mrs. Robin Pelensky's presentation at their last meeting. She said that Mrs. Pelensky came to Kilted Mermaid to talk to them about doing one. She said she has reached out to City Councilmembers and they already have enough support from them to move the rain gardens forward. She said she added them to their Master Plan. She also spoke with Mr. David Gay, Public Works Chief Surveyor, and he brought up the maintenance of the rain gardens and said that they need to have a plan in place if they are going to install the rain gardens. She has spoken to Councilmember Robbie Brackett about how they solved a similar issue with the Fountain. She explained his pool guy donates the cost of the upkeep of the Fountain to the City. She was thinking about having people adopt the rain gardens, but they would still have to weed and water them. She suggested that perhaps a landscaping company could take care of all the rain gardens and people could adopt them. They could figure out the cost to maintain one (1) for a year and do it that way. She has spoken to several non-profit groups and a lot of people were willing to adopt a rain garden.

Mr. Cataldo asked if the rain gardens would be in the right-of-way and if so, could it be something Public Works could maintain.

Mrs. Moore answered it could, but there is a question of the budget. She said if they balk at the cost of maintaining it on an ongoing basis, she has public-private partnership solutions that they could work out.

Mrs. Elaine Jones, President of Main Street Vero Beach, said she knows about the rain gardens and thinks it is a great idea.

Mr. Cataldo asked where they would go. Mrs. Moore said there could be several around City Hall and along 14th Avenue, but they could also add areas. She feels that they should go south. She added that there is no shortage of drainage problems.

Mr. Cataldo said they need to finish their Master Plan first, which they are going to discuss today. Then they can send it to City Council and once approved, they could then make specific recommendations, like a lighting program. Mrs. Moore commented that they are on hold on lighting until they see what FPL is going to do.

Mr. Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director, said that he received a copy of their proposed Master Plan and he has met with Public Works and with FPL. His plan is to take their Master Plan and turn it into a five (5) year capital plan, which they could recommend to City Council. He has spoken with the Finance Department and hopefully going forward, they will have this as part of the budget process. From a revenue standpoint, June 1st is when the revenue estimates come out. He said one of their top priorities is the lighting and he has met with FPL and they are going to give them some figures regarding their program. His understanding is that there are some existing lights on 14th Avenue between 21st Street and 19th place. He asked if their intent is to extend those south to about 18th. Mrs. Moore answered yes.

Mrs. Moore said when she spoke with Councilmember Brackett, he was talking about first trimming the trees around the lights which might help. Mr. Jeffries said in terms of the existing lights, they are looking at upgrades that FP&L could do, such as new light fixtures or LED lights. He said another question is whether they should go down some of the side streets as well.

Mr. Cataldo said one of the issues is with walking from the parking lots that exist. Mr. DelVecchio added also in the alleyways.

Mrs. Moore referred to the light that the City put in going from Taco Dive down to the Freshman Learning Center. She said the Galleries still feel it is not adequate and could be better and she agrees. Mr. Torres agreed there is lighting there, but it is not adequate. Mr. Cataldo pointed out that lighting is their number one priority and is for both aesthetic and safety purposes.

Mr. Williams said if they switched to LED, it would make all the difference in the world. Mr. Jeffries said that switching to LED is part of the FP&L program. He will be getting some budget estimates from them and getting the revenue estimates in June. He said by their July meeting, they will have a draft capital plan.

Mr. Cataldo pointed out that one of the things on their plan is how they could increase the parking downtown with a minimal amount of capital, such as restriping.

Mr. Jeffries referred to the downtown redevelopment plan that was done in 1992 which showed a surplus of parking. Since then, there have been many changes. One thing they are doing right now in his department is re-creating that parking database to see if there is still a surplus or a deficit. He will be sharing that with the Planning and Zoning Board and will share it with them as well.

Mr. Torres brought up public safety. He said he went Downtown for the art stroll last Friday and there was a tremendous crowd, but the Police presence was nil. They walked all along 14th Avenue from Post and Vine

and down to Pocahontas. He said there were no police cars or police on foot or on bikes. He stated that they do not need the police bicycles from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. They need them at night. He commented that he went in to the Park at night and even with the lights, it was very dark. He said he is disappointed in the police presence and particularly on the weekends when they need them. He said they know what's happened in Pocahontas Park and at the Grove and there is still a total lack of police presence in that area and they need it particularly on weekends and at night. He said he is very frustrated about it.

Mrs. Moore said in regards to security, Chief Currey had spoken about cameras in the park. Mr. Jeffries said they are going to look at lights and cameras at the same time with FP&L.

Mr. Torres asked Mrs. Elaine Jones for her comments on the police presence since she is right there on Main Street. Mrs. Jones replied that she does not see them during the day. Mr. DelVecchio added that he does not see them either.

Mrs. Moore said that she does see them from time to time and she did see an Officer ride by on a bike on Saturday around 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Williams said that Chief Currey came by his store and told him the bikes were starting again and showed him their new bike. He said he has seen them a couple of times.

Mr. Torres said they need to decide what hours and what days they need the bikes and they need to let Chief Currey know.

Mr. DelVecchio agreed that they should be later hours. He said that during the day, it is almost not necessary.

Mrs. Moore did not agree and said there are some concerns during the day. She referred to Southern Social and the couches they have out front. She said they started to have a huge problem with the homeless during the day just hanging out before they opened. She said they do not care if homeless people are sitting there as long as they are tidy.

Mr. Williams referred to his business and the bus stop right on the corner. He said they sit on the east side of the businesses there near their doorways and make some of the customers uncomfortable. Mrs. Moore said she does not care if they sit there or charge their phones, but sometimes they defecate on patios and sidewalks.

Mr. Williams agreed they do have a daytime problem. He said that Chief Currey said that the bicycle officers are not budgeted positions, but rather are all on overtime.

The Committee agreed it would be good to get them budgeted.

Mr. Cataldo did not feel they need the bicycles during the day because there are still police patrols. He thinks they need the bikes 7:00 p.m. and later when people are out strolling. Mr. Williams commented that most of the walking traffic during the day are the homeless. He said he has a camera outside his store and he watched a man get out of his car, walk to the end of his building and urinate on his mural. He added that also happens around his dumpster.

Mr. Torres said he has seen that in other areas as well, even though there are plenty of bathrooms in gas stations and in parks. Mr. Williams said that the bicycles need to be in the budget so they can be utilized more often.

Mr. Cataldo said that public urination is a problem and there should be an Ordinance against it. Mrs. Moore said it would be better to prevent it from happening than try to enforce it. Mr. Torres referred to the homeless having sex in the middle of the day at the Park recently. He said if they let it go, it will encourage people to violate the law and not care what other people think.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A) Update on Master Plan

Mr. Torres said that he would like to modify A-3) Public Safety to include some language about budgeting the police bikes at night after the hours of 7:00 p.m. and particularly on weekends.

Mrs. Moore agreed, but said that is not a capital improvement and would not be appropriate in their Master Plan.

Mr. Cataldo said that it is in there, but it is up to Chief Currey to staff it. Mr. Torres said they could recommend to the Chief that he budget the bicycles. The Committee agreed that they should make it a priority. Mrs. Moore said that she would add the language in the Plan.

Mr. Torres felt they could send the Master Plan to the City Council right now. He said they meet monthly and can tweak it as they see fit, but there is no need to delay it. He feels the sooner they get it to City Council, the better. He said he is just frustrated with the lack of police presence and particularly at night or when there are events there.

Mr. Cataldo thinks their Plan is comprehensive and gives them the openings to do most things.

Mr. Torres commented that it is an excellent report and that less is better.

Mr. Torres made a motion that they present their Master Plan to the City Council as it is and continue to look at it every month and modify it as necessary. Mrs. Moore seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mrs. Moore asked if they should get Mrs. Pelensky on the agenda to do a presentation to City Council about the rain gardens. She said that Mayor Zudans or Councilmember Brackett would sponsor her. She said they would like to proceed with that. She would also like to request that Mrs. Pelensky alter the plan that she did and extend them down through their area.

The Committee agreed that lighting should be the top priority and then the rain gardens.

Mr. Jeffries said the next step is to do the five (5) year plan because they would have the revenue estimates and know what is feasible going down in priority order. He added that he could get with Mrs. Pelensky.

Mrs. Moore said that she (Mrs. Pelensky) has already done some plans and has some cost analysis on them.

Mr. Jeffries said that he would start with the lighting and then move down. He said that hopefully by June or at the latest July, they would have that from him.

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

/hm