

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ZONE COMMITTEE (EDZC) MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 17, 2019 10:00 A.M.
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

PRESENT: Chairman Joseph Cataldo; Vice Chairman Garry Rooney (arrived at 10:18); Members: Terry Torres (arrived 10:22 a.m.), Alternate Member #1 Bob DelVecchio **Also Present:** Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director and Heather McCarty, Records Retention Specialist

Excused Absences: Mike Williams, Jessica Hawkins, and Linda Moore

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:18 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 20, 2019

Mr. DelVecchio made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Rooney seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Councilmember Laura Moss said that she has read the minutes from their last several meetings. The reason for her visit today is that since January 2018, she has been working on rain gardens and native plants with Mrs. Robin Pelensky. She wanted to make City Hall a model for rain gardens because she thinks that is a really important thing to do for the entire City and she wants City Hall to be a showcase. She said that she has been learning about rain gardens and how they can help to alleviate stormwater problems in a natural, native way. She said there has been many other things going on, but she is ready to get it done and that will be her message tomorrow at the City Council meeting. She has sponsored Mrs. Pelensky to present a plan for City Hall at the meeting. She noted that they have about \$70,000 in their funds and the estimate for the rain garden along 14th Avenue is about \$20,000. She brought up that their Committee has discussed going south with that. She has requested a copy of their master plan. She thought since they have the money, that they should do it. She said it seems their big concerns are stormwater, additional lighting for security and beautification. She said they also mentioned additional police on bicycles, but she was not sure where that falls in their priorities.

Mr. DelVecchio said he wanted to address that. He does think it is important, but they did not finish what they were trying to recommend. He said it is more of a recommendation, but one of their members did buy a bike for police patrol downtown.

Councilwoman Moss said she needs to know now because they will be going into budget workshops soon and tomorrow is their last City Council meeting before those, which is why she invited Mrs. Pelensky to make her presentation then. She said she got the sense from reading their minutes that they might want to sync themselves more with what City Council is doing. She said everyone should check their agendas on www.covb.org and look at all the information there. She would like to know today what they really want.

Mr. Rooney said they have come up with ideas and made a motion and it never went to City Council. Also, they are told it needs to go out to bid, but not to get too much information from any one person because that could disqualify them.

Mr. Cataldo said they are finally at a stage where they have some money. He said the purpose of this group and his focus has been the economic viability of downtown. He said it was desolate years ago and today it is doing better, but not yet thriving. In order for downtown to succeed, it has to be appealing and it needs to be safe. Lighting and a police presence give a feeling of safety. He explained the more the businesses thrive, the more the values of the real estate goes up and the neighborhoods around it become desirable. He said everything he reads about urban design is about walkability and street scale, which they are lacking. He thinks the main street between 20th and 21st is beautiful. He said Pocahontas Park is nice, but a little dark and the homeless are an issue. He feels parking is an issue between 20th and 19th.

Councilwoman Moss said they are going to be getting numbers and data regarding the parking from the Planning Director, Mr. Jeffries. She said personally she has never had a problem with parking and she frequents there regularly at all different times of the day, including at night. She does agree that they need more light in the area and she thinks FPL might be a big help on that. She has been speaking with them about another issue and she will bring the lighting issue up with them and see if they can help them out. She has seen the solar trees, but she would recommend that they keep it a little away from the Heritage Center. She said it appears to her that they have the funding but she is not sure if their funds have to be used for capital improvements or if they can use them for enhanced enforcement by the police. As the budget approaches, City Council has already been asked about their priorities by the City Manager. She said in regards to the traffic calming, they should do the things they can do right now, which is the lighting and the stormwater. She talked about traffic calming and the enhanced enforcement on Indian River Drive East and how the police over the past year or so have been able to bring the average speed down from 39 mph to 29 mph.

Mr. Torres said their funds are earmarked for capital improvements and not for extra police so they could use her help with the police. The last time Chief Currey was here, they were talking about the bike patrols. He instituted them from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., but they do not need them then. They need them particularly on weekend nights and when they have events like Downtown Friday. He said there is a lack of presence of police during the dark hours and you do not feel safe at night. He said Pocahontas Park at night is very dark. Councilwoman Moss agreed. Mr. Torres said the presence of police would give people a sense of safety.

Councilwoman Moss said she has already said she would like more enhanced enforcement. They are welcome to attend the budget workshops in July. She will mention this because she understands they want more police and Chief Currey does not have anybody specifically assigned to the bicycle patrol and it is all overtime right now. She knows they want the hours later.

Mr. Torres talked about why they think that a greater police presence at night would help. Councilwoman Moss referred to a similar thing with lifeguards. She explained that the lifeguards came to them around budget time and told them their quitting time was 5:00 p.m. and people were coming to the beach after that. Now they have extended hours and stay until 7:00 p.m. She is in agreement with them and she will discuss this with Chief Currey. She thinks they have a friendly City Council in terms of the police and enhanced enforcement. She thinks everyone is aware they need more. As for the homeless issue, she is the City's representative on the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee. She explained that is linked to homelessness and one (1) of the big problems is that they are not getting money for the homeless from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. She said they get more and more homeless because money that is dedicated for affordable housing is not being spent on it.

Mr. Rooney said they all agree police presence is huge. Since day one, walkability has been an issue. One of the questions they asked Councilman Robert Brackett at a meeting was City Council's position on

Complete Streets so they don't go down the wrong path. Councilwoman Moss asked if that was narrowing the Twin Pairs. Mr. Rooney said that is part of it. Councilwoman Moss said she wouldn't spend a lot of time on that and thinks they should do what they can do. She said that as far as she knows, Council is not in favor of it. She added that it is not going to help them slow down traffic and they should get the data.

Mr. Cataldo disagreed and said data shows when lanes constrict, people slow down. Councilwoman Moss pointed out that it is also an evacuation route.

Mr. Rooney asked if City Council could just tell them to abandon talking about Complete Streets so they don't waste their breath anymore. Councilwoman Moss answered no, that they are an advisory board and should discuss whatever they want.

Mr. Cataldo referred to parking and the Kimley Horn study that was authorized and done by prior City Councils. Councilwoman Moss said they are doing a study right now for Ocean Drive. She advised them to put it on a back burner and do what they can with their \$70,000.

Mr. DelVecchio said in regards to parking, he has a business on 14th Avenue and he gets complaints every day and sometimes he has to try to help direct parking in his own parking lot. He said she is lucky enough to find a parking spot, but many people don't find parking spaces. Councilwoman Moss said that she parks a few blocks away and walks. She understands that some people cannot walk.

Councilwoman Moss said that \$70,000 is not a lot of money and they should do what they can with it. She said that amount would be nothing to parking. She is also the City's representative on the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). She told them she has had a project on there for Aviation Blvd and US1 since 2017 and now maybe it will be done in five (5) years. She said it is very long term, almost beyond belief to her. If they have \$70,000 and they can do good with it in their area, she thinks they should focus on that.

Mr. Torres said they do and that is where their lighting projects and their stormwater and landscaping projects come in. He explained with Complete Streets, the reason they don't want to drop it is they know it is a long term project and it is down at the bottom of their list as far as the timeline is concerned. They are looking for the City Council's blessing on it in saying that they support traffic calming and Complete Streets and when the time comes and they eventually have the funding from the FDOT that they support the narrowing.

Councilwoman Moss said she would try enhanced enforcement first. It helped on Indian River Drive East where people were speeding on only one (1) lane. She emphasized that is proof that they could have just one (1) lane and still have speeding. She added it is also proof that enhanced enforcement works.

Mr. Rooney said they can support enforcement but they cannot spend their money on it. Councilwoman Moss said she appreciates that and she will take that under advisement and bring it up during the budget workshops. She wants enhanced enforcement for speeding everywhere they can do it within the City. She added that as far she knows, the Council is pro-enhanced enforcement. As for their money, if it has to go to capital improvements, she felt they could fund the plan from Mrs. Pelensky and just do it.

Mr. Rooney explained when they like an idea, such as lighting, they pass a motion for City Council to approve and there has to be three (3) bids. He said they could ask to get bids on rain gardens.

Mr. Cataldo pointed out that Mrs. Pelensky wanted to do something in front of the Theater building or City Hall. He thinks that area of 14th is already attractive, but the next block to the south is unattractive and it

seems to him that they should do something there. He said they want to get the biggest impact and the most bang for their buck, which is why they are focused on lighting.

Councilwoman Moss asked if they could make a motion that that is how they want to spend their money.

Mr. DelVecchio asked if City Council has read their Mission Statement. Councilwoman Moss said she has not seen it but she has requested their Master Plan.

Mr. Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director, explained that the EDZC funds are for capital investments. He has been working with the Finance Department and they are going to be putting together a five (5) year capital plan. He said their revenue estimates just recently came in. He is expecting to get their five (5) year capital plan template, which this Committee has not seen before. He said in the last couple of years the fund has generated more than expected funds. Now that they have funds, this is new territory. He explained once they put together the five (5) year plan, he will present it to this Board in July. They will then make their formal recommendation and then it will be forwarded to City Council. He said their budget will become part of the overall City budget.

Mr. Jeffries said they would look at the Master Plan they did and come up with some realistic budget estimates, which he now has some estimates from FPL on the lighting program. He said they have talked about the Twin Pairs and traffic calming, but that is an out in years project. Councilwoman Moss noted that is a political decision and the other things are not, which is why she doesn't think they should spend too much time and effort on that.

Councilwoman Moss asked Mr. Jeffries if rain gardens on 14th Avenue were something they could do. Mr. Jeffries answered that he did not know because they need to make sure that any dollars they put in this proposed budget does meet the state requirements as to what they can spend the funds on. It has to be only capital projects and not operational or for maintenance. They are looking more into it, but before he presents anything to the Board, he will make sure these are feasible projects that can be funded.

Councilwoman Moss reiterated that the budget workshops are rapidly approaching. She wants to do the rain gardens now. She said a five (5) year plan can be comforting to some, but this sounds like they can just do this. They will need to talk about maintenance since they can't use their funds for that. She added that Mrs. Pelensky has a full plan put together for the area, which she had asked for.

Mr. Torres asked Councilwoman Moss to get that plan to the City Clerk so she may distribute that to the Board. Councilwoman Moss said she would. She said Mrs. Pelensky would be at the City Council meeting tomorrow. She pointed out that the runoff from 14th Avenue runs into the Lagoon. She thinks that is the most important business they have and hopes the rest of the City Council feels the same way.

Mr. Cataldo asked if they know the costs. Councilwoman Moss thought 14th Avenue was around \$20,000. She said that she could probably add a block and add that to their motion.

Mr. Torres asked Mrs. Elaine Jones if she has been in touch with Mrs. Pelensky and if she had made a presentation to Main Street.

Mrs. Elaine Jones, President of Main Street Vero Beach, said she has talked with Mrs. Pelensky about rain Gardens and the maintenance. The only way she sees this happening is maybe getting the Garden Club or volunteers to sponsor a rain garden. She has seen the plans and she saw a presentation at a Rotary Club meeting. She said it looks like a really nice plan, but she just worries about the maintenance as an issue. She felt that they should reach out to the Garden Club or anyone else who might want to sponsor a rain

garden. Councilwoman Moss said that she would speak with the Garden Club's new president. They will have to find out about a cost estimate on the maintenance.

(Mr. Rooney left the meeting at 11:04 a.m.)

Mr. Torres made a motion to appropriate \$20,000 to \$30,000 for a rain garden south of SR 60 on 14th Avenue, exact location to be determined in the future. Mr. Cataldo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously 3-0, with Mr. DelVecchio voting yes, Mr. Torres yes, and Mr. Cataldo yes.

Councilwoman Moss said she would like them to do the rain garden first, then the lighting with possible help from FPL, then enhanced enforcement to see if they can slow down the traffic. She added that City Council is generally in favor of enhanced enforcement.

Mr. Cataldo said they agree on lighting, plantings, aesthetics. What's encouraging is the funds are greater than anticipated and the reason is what the businesses are doing down there. He explained how it could keep growing and feed upon itself and their funds can grow more for them to do more improvements.

Councilwoman Moss agreed the whole area has been improving over the years. She emphasized they need to do what they can do now.

Mr. Cataldo referred to the Kimley Horn study that was done on the parking and traffic downtown, which was authorized by previous City Council and came up with a plan for downtown. He pointed out that it found there was no issue with evacuation. He explained if FDOT did the restriping during a resurfacing project, there would be no cost to the City. He said that was 15 years ago and they missed the boat last time. They have been told that these projects are so far out in the future and they need to get on board now. Mr. Cataldo said that FDOT is looking for support. He explained they have a specific program called Complete Streets that is separate from resurfacing and they are an ideal candidate, but they need political support. He said it would be tremendous for downtown if that area could be beautified at no cost to the City and create economic value and desirability. He commented that the facts are facts and it is not an evacuation issue.

Councilwoman Moss said that they did try to change that in the Comprehensive Plan and increase the number of hours to evacuate and she was against that. She added that they don't have that many evacuation routes.

Mr. Cataldo said the Kimley Horn study went out 20 years and traffic is fine on the evacuation. He said the problem with evacuation is not getting through downtown; it is when you get out by I-95.

Councilwoman Moss said there are people that say that the City is not growing but she is not convinced of that. The County is growing by leaps and bounds and they all want to go to the City. She would look at the Kimley Horn study, but right now, the last time they discussed it, the majority of the City Council was not for it so she would not spend a lot of time on it. She feels that is a political issue, but lighting and rain gardens are not. She understands it would be nice for people and businesses in that immediate area but possibly not others everywhere else and they have to balance the needs of people who don't live there as well.

Mr. Torres questioned if a member of this Committee should go to City Council to explain the Complete Streets program. Councilwoman Moss asked if it is a new concept or the same as traffic calming.

Mr. DelVecchio said it is a new program. Mr. Torres doesn't think it has ever come before the City Council as a new concept. He agreed traffic calming has come before the Council and they have talked about evacuation routes and it taking 20 seconds longer to get through downtown if they close off two lanes, which was part of the study. But they have never presented to City Council in clarity about Complete Streets and it might be beneficial.

Councilwoman Moss suggested they wait until they see how it goes in July with enhanced enforcement. They should see if they can first reduce speed through the enhanced enforcement. She said they are always going to have speeders, but maybe they can bring the average down.

Mr. Torres said it is part of this Committee's platform. At some point, he thinks they should raise it before the Council.

Mr. DelVecchio commented that their contact with FDOT has told them that if they are not on board before it is time, then they won't be and it will be too late.

Councilwoman Moss said that she is the City's representative on the MPO and she will find out more.

4. NEW BUSINESS

5. OLD BUSINESS

A) Update on Master Plan

This item was discussed earlier.

B) FPL Lighting – Mr. Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director

Mr. Torres asked Mr. Jeffries about his discussions with FPL and if there was anything new.

Mr. Jeffries answered not really at this time. He does have cost estimates from them. He is going to be coming back to them with a five (5) year plan in July. He will make sure they put the rain garden project in as part of the capital plan. He explained that they will make their recommendations, it will go to City Council and then it will become part of the budget. He added that their Master Plan would go to City Council at the same time. He said they have made their motion on the rain gardens and he will get it into their budget.

Councilwoman Moss wanted to make sure it does get in the budget and it happens.

Mr. Cataldo said they approved spending \$20,000 to \$30,000 on them. Mr. Jeffries said at the next Committee's meeting on July 15th, they will discuss the five (5) year capital plan that he is working on.

Today's meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

/hm