

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ZONE COMMITTEE (EDZC) MINUTES  
MONDAY, JUNE 20, 2022 9:30 A.M.  
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

**PRESENT:** Joseph Cataldo, Chairman; Terry Torres, Vice Chairman; Members: Bob DelVecchio, William Watkins **Also Present:** Jenny Flanigan, Assistant City Attorney; Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director; Matt Mitts, Public Works Director; Danessa Chambers, Assistant City Engineer; David Currey, Police Chief and Heather McCarty, Records Retention Specialist

**Unexcused Absence:** Sheila Schweitzer

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A) May 16, 2022**

**Mr. DelVecchio made a motion to approve the May 16, 2022 minutes. Mr. Watkins seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

**A) Five Year Capital Program - Jason Jeffries, Planning Director**

Mr. Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development, referred to the proposed Capital Improvement Program (on file in the City Clerk's office) for the upcoming budget year. They are currently doing the design for the lighting project and it is not complete, so their recommendation is to keep the construction budget that starts in fiscal year 22/23 the same at \$200,000. Once the design is done, they will have better cost estimates. If it is done by August, they can come back to this Committee and update it before the adoption of the budget by in September. What they are looking for today is a recommendation to City Council.

Mr. Jeffries said an additional project has come up just recently. He said the lights on 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the Model Block, are at the end of their useful life and need replacement. He said Public Works is suggesting a \$40,000 project to replace them. It has been recommended that it would be a good project for this Committee and the funding is available for them to do that project next year. He can revise this budget to add that in their capital improvement program if they are in favor it.

Mr. Cataldo asked what the fixtures would be replaced with.

Mrs. Danessa Chambers, Assistant City Engineer, said the lighting Consultant Kimley-Horn is going to bring back their initial design to the next meeting. Then once they have selected a pole style, the goal would be to match that pole style as best as possible to keep consistency. She added that all of the poles they are going to be recommending will be concrete black bases with ornamental fixtures.

Mr. Cataldo said he was concerned about aesthetics on the Model Block and wanted to see one of them installed. Mrs. Chambers said the consultant will be bring back the style of pole they are recommending to

their next meeting to ensure that is the way they want to go. They will matching the aesthetics the best they can to what they select at their next meeting.

Mr. Torres asked if she could send a picture of the pole with the fixture to the City Clerk to send to them.

Mrs. Chambers said that she would. She said they are limited to the inventory and types of poles and fixtures that FP&L offers. She said the Model Block poles are City owned and they would be replacing those with new poles that look like as similar or the same as the ones they will be selecting from the FP&L poles to keep the consistency. She explained that the Model Block poles will be kept as City owned and maintained by the City because of the outlets that are on them that are used for various events, such as Downtown Friday, and if they converted to FP&L that would no longer be an option.

Mr. Jeffries said they are looking for their recommendation today on the budget they received in their backup and if they want to fund the \$40,000 replacement of the lights in the Model Block, they can include that in their motion to amend the budget to add it.

**Mr. Torres made a motion to approve their budget with an amendment to add \$40,000 for the replacement of the lights on the Model Block on 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr. Watkins seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

The Chairman asked for any public comments.

Ms. Sue Gromis, Executive Director of Main Street Vero Beach, thanked the Committee, the Planning Director and the Engineering Department, for replacing the poles this next fiscal year because they were very concerned about them. Also, she is very glad they will still belong to the City so they will still have access to them for Downtown Friday. She questioned if pedestrian lighting referred to a particular height or design.

Mr. Jeffries answered that pedestrian lighting is focused on improving the lighting for the pedestrians on the sidewalks and not so much the street.

**The motion passed unanimously 4-0.**

**B) Safety Issues Downtown - David Currey, Police Chief**

Chief Currey said he was at today's meeting to answer any questions.

Mr. Cataldo said they asked him here to discuss the homeless issues and some of the activities related to it that are a deterrent to business in the downtown district. Their question is if there is anything this Committee can do to help, such as lighting, security cameras, or anything they could do to help policing and to address security concerns.

Chief Currey commented that as far as crime goes in the downtown area, there are very little issues being experienced. He commented that the homeless throughout the City has been an on-going issue for many years. He said lighting the streets at night and anything that illuminates the Park is always helpful. He added that the homeless commit very few of the crimes and that it is more quality of life nuisance concerns that are on-going. He pointed out it is a public park and they are allowed to be in that public park as we are. He said that as long as they are conducting themselves appropriately, they are allowed to be there and

they can't violate their civil rights. He said they have taken out the gazebo at the Community Center and are looking at taking out some of the benches.

Mr. Torres said his heart goes out to the homeless, but aren't there certain things that violate the laws, such as drinking, urinating in public, sleeping on benches, and if they witness that, can they ask for the person to be removed.

Chief Currey stated if you see something, say something. He said they are in and around the Park and have designated foot patrols. He said they can potentially trespass individuals for committing crimes of inappropriate conduct in public areas, such as urinating, but they would need to be called and witness that and can look at a potential trespass. He pointed out that drinking in public for anyone is a nuisance crime that is a misdemeanor.

Mr. Torres asked about the status of the bicycle patrols. Chief Currey answered they are out every Friday and Saturday night on 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue and also throughout the City, including beachside. He said the hours downtown are around 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. to accommodate the dinner crowd.

Mr. Cataldo asked if there was any news on the cameras they discussed previously. Chief Currey answered that was with RING and unfortunately that partnership never evolved and went away. He said that some businesses have them already.

Mr. Cataldo asked if they could look at installing cameras now with the new poles. Chief Currey said they could look into that and the possibility of setting them up strategically in and around the Park and having Dispatch and Officers be able to tap into them.

Mr. Torres pointed out it is a deterrent when someone sees a camera and that would be inexpensive. Also they could have a few camera surveillance signs posted.

Chief Currey agreed that does deter. He questioned if that is something that could be in their budget. Mr. Cataldo thought if it somehow could be tied in to the lighting project, maybe, but he wasn't sure about maintenance, wi-fi, etc...

Chief Currey said he would speak with staff and the I.T. Department.

Mr. Watkins said maybe today they could start with increased focus on certain areas like parks and looking for these issues, rather than just driving by. He noted that the drinking is prevalent. He agreed crime might not happen that often, but when it does happen, it's major and he thinks there have been four (4) major instances in four (4) years.

Chief Currey said for 20 years they have been foot patrolling and talking about these very same things with regards to the homeless.

Mr. Watkins stated the Vero Beach Police Department has done a very good job and their Officers are great, but he believes there could be an increase in more citations and arrests being made and that would deter more.

Chief Currey brought up the newly passed Panhandling Ordinance.

Ms. Flanigan talked about the Panhandling Ordinance that was passed in October 2021 and what it entails and prohibits. She added there were public meetings prior for people to talk about their safety concerns. She applauded Chief Currey for really enforcing this and the City Council for listening to the concerns.

Chief Currey brought up some of the changes and restrictions it puts in place. He explained they went out and advised those at the intersections and at the Park and handed out copies of the Ordinance. He noted at the initial passing, there were a couple that decided not to move and they were arrested, but pretty much everyone else has complied. He feels it has helped overall.

Mr. Torres asked that their Committee receive a copy of the Ordinance.

Ms. Flanigan said she would get that to them. She added that it bans aggressive panhandling throughout the City.

Mr. Watkins asked Chief Currey if has any general recommendations and ideas that he believes might work.

Chief Currey brought up a couple of things that have helped over the years. After the incident at McDonalds, they have trespass warnings at just about every business along the US1 corridor. They do a lot of trespass arrests along that corridor. He talked about their new Community Prevention Patrol Unit (CPU) that could come by if they haven't. They can put a little sign in their window that says they are partners with the Vero Beach Police Department for issues such as safety, clean, trespass, etc... and they do that every Friday and Saturday night in areas all over.

Ms. Flanigan asked if private businesses can request that from the Vero Beach Police Department. Chief Currey said yes. He added that any private business can have a trespass affidavit on hand, and most of the businesses throughout the City have them.

Chief Currey said he would look into cameras they could tap into and see if that is something they can do. He added that if they have any questions, feel free to call his office.

Mrs. Linda Moore said she remembers being on this Committee when the RING cameras were discussed. She said they had talked about this Committee, since it would be a capital improvement, financing those cameras in conjunction with putting in the lights. She asked if cameras were ever put into their five-year capital plan.

Mr. Jeffries wasn't sure that was an eligible expense.

Ms. Flanigan said their office and the Finance Department can do some research into that.

Mr. Jeffries thought there was a legal opinion prior to Mr. Turner. He explained the project has to meet the definition of a capital project in State Statutes and it has to be in their Plan. He thinks they had been talking about running conduit while doing the lights, so cameras could possibly go there in the future.

Mrs. Moore asked if they could make a motion to determine whether this Committee is legally allowed to use the funds to finance cameras and if it is, they can make an amendment to their budget to get the cameras.

Mrs. Chambers said they can explore if it is an eligible expenditure and they can explore if they can be mounted to the FP&L lighting. She wanted to let them know as part of the lighting project, they are installing additional conduits for future needs.

Mrs. Gromis asked if there are existing loitering laws and what constitutes loitering, for example does sitting on a bench for 10 hours constitute loitering. Also, she wanted to know if there was any prohibition of outside agencies bringing food and drinks into the Park to serve to the homeless.

Chief Currey said loitering is a Florida State Statute and no, sitting on a bench won't get you arrested for loitering. He talked about what constitutes loitering and when it can be applied. As far as the distribution of food and drinks, they've dealt with some of them and will continue to. For example, the Salvation Army was bringing their vehicle to the Park to feed the homeless and they spoke with them and they went somewhere else to serve their food. He added if she sees that or hears of it, give him a call.

#### 4. **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **A) Lighting Project Update**

This item was previously discussed.

##### **B) Twin Pairs**

Mr. Matt Mitts, Public Works Director, commented the good news is they finally got some actual information from Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). He will forward what he is going over to the City Clerk's office to be distributed (on file in the City Clerk's office). He went over what was discussed at their meeting. FDOT is going to include the project later this year in a tentative work program. The design will take place fiscal year (FY) 24 and construction is scheduled for FY 27. He pointed out that there is time to go back and forth and for more discussion.

Mr. Mitts said as far as the study they asked FDOT to perform in support of the project, their speed study supported reducing the speed limit to 35 mph. Their safety study also supported putting block crosswalks at 12<sup>th</sup> Court, where American Icon and Jetsons are and the parking lot is. He explained they asked for a cross walk at the Courthouse, but that wasn't supported for technical factors. They are going to include 7' wide buffer bike lanes by narrowing the traffic lanes. He referred to the dedicated right turn lane near St. Helens and said FDOT was conceptually agreeable to putting additional signage there. Also, they are going to upgrade some pedestrian signal timing so there is more time for crossing. He talked about patterned crosswalks. He said FDOT doesn't support putting them in unless the City would pay to put them in and every year pay for an annual friction test, which he has objected to. He brought up the pattern pavement crossings the City did near the Airport. He said FDOT is suggesting to put down thermoplastic as an alternative, which is white line markings. He feels those can be slippery to walkers and bikers and they are going to keep objecting to that.

Mr. Mitts commented that they don't have a full time project manager assigned to the project yet, but there is an Engineer they can address comments to. Once the project is officially adopted, there will be a project manager assigned.

Mr. Cataldo asked if that is all part of Complete Streets. Mr. Mitts answered yes and no. He explained they've dealt with Mr. Larry Wallace who heads up the Complete Streets Program at FDOT and he assisted them with the buffered bike lanes, reducing the speed limit, and the mid-block crosswalks.

Mr. Torres asked if this plan involves any reduction in the number of lanes west of 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue. They had talked about reducing it by one (1) lane and adding on-street parking.

Mr. Mitts expressed some concerns about parallel parking on SR60. He said there are some side streets where they could add more parking, but they would need to find a way to fund that. For the lane reduction, he said FDOT would be agreeable, but it would require a lot of support from the City and the MPO and also funding. He pointed out they compromised on some of these issues, like speed limits and bike lanes. Reducing a lane is technically possible, but there has to be very strong local and public support for it.

Mr. Cataldo pointed out this Committee has always supported the reduction of the west bound to three (3) lanes, possibly by widening sidewalks and adding landscaping. He believes that would fall under their purview if that was a project they could adopt because it would be an investment in safety and aesthetics.

Mr. Torres agreed. He asked Mr. Mitts if he could pursue that and the costs associated with the removal of one (1) lane with bike lanes and wider sidewalk. He feels west of 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be a logical place and that it could easily be done there.

Mr. Cataldo talked about how some cities have certain blocks that support driverless transport, such as a trolley, and other ways technology could be changing in the future. He explained there really isn't anywhere to safely pull over and unload downtown.

Mr. Mitts pointed out that the EDZC has a clear mission. He said they might want to make this an action item on their agenda to propose something. They are operating under the policy decision they've been given and he thinks they've come up with some very substantial improvements. He added it is several years out so there is time to consider alternatives.

Mr. Torres stated he believes it is an action item. He said traffic calming on State Road 60 has been something this Committee has pursued from the very beginning and one of their main objectives.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m.

/hm