

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ZONE COMMITTEE (EDZC) MINUTES
MONDAY, AUGUST 19, 2019 10:00 A.M.
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

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

Excused Absence: Jessica Hawkins

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) July 15, 2019

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the July 15, 2019 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

4. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Rooney said he had a good conversation with Councilwoman Moss regarding their voting and getting things on agenda. He said she gave some clarification on issues they should be focusing on. He feels they should put aside the calming issue that is dead and not waste their energy on it.

Mrs. Moore said a long time ago, when American Icon Brewery opened up, they talked about the need for having a traffic light there, but there was a reason they couldn't but she couldn't recall what that was. She said a lot more people are parking there recently and having to dart across SR60, which is a safety issue. Mr. Jeffries said he would look into it. He explained that during the site plan review, they would have done a traffic concurrency review to see if it was justified to have a light there.

Mr. Rooney recalled that it was a FDOT issue and that it had to do with the distance and a crosswalk across three (3) lanes. He added that the crosswalk here at City Hall was grandfathered in.

Mr. Cataldo said they had also talked about the west bound side of SR60 that is four (4) lanes and if the inside lane could be striped as a drop off/loading zone for delivery trucks, Uber, busses, etc..., where people already stop. Mr. Jeffries said he would talk to Public Works.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A) Update on the Raingardens – Mrs. Linda Moore

Mrs. Moore reported that they cannot use their money for rain gardens. However, she is working on putting in a rain Garden privately at her restaurant.

B) Mr. Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director, to give an update on the Master Plan

Mr. Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director, referred to the proposed Five-Year Capital Improvement Program, which includes their Economic Development Plan (attached to original minutes). He said included with his memo is the Five (5) Year plan, along with the project descriptions, their Economic Development Plan, and an opinion from the interim City Attorney regarding the use of their funds. He said the fund balance is projected to be \$73,000 at the end of this fiscal year and it should generate about \$88,000 a year over the next five (5) years, but that is subject to change depending on the economy. That should generate about \$500,000 over the next five (5) years. He explained they looked through the projects in their plan to see what could be justified based on the legal opinion and what was feasible and there were two (2) projects. The downtown lighting project anticipates the purchase of additional lighting and extending it south on 14th Avenue for the next two (2) blocks to the south of SR60. They also identified Old Dixie and 21st Street for some additional lighting. The other project is doing some sidewalk improvements on 14th Avenue from 18th Street to 19th Street. He said if they want to move this forward, they would need a motion to recommend this Plan, along with any amendments they want to make to City Council. Then once it is adopted by City Council, staff can start moving forward on implementing it.

Mr. Torres referred to the first project, Downtown Lighting and Security, which shows a total project cost of \$281,000. He said they have about \$80,000 to spend and asked if they could do this on a finance basis. Mr. Jeffries explained looking at the Plan, it shows the implementation spread over the next five (5) years. They would not be financing the project; they would be spreading it out and doing it as cash becomes available.

Mrs. Moore asked since it is going to be spread out, is it up to the Committee to prioritize what is more important to them to do first, or does staff decide what is the most sensible way to proceed depending on funds available.

Mr. Jeffries said first, the study needs to be done and there might need to be some adjustments. Right now, as it is planned, in the first fiscal year, they would do the study and the lights on Old Dixie. With some judgement made by staff, 14th Avenue would need to be done in conjunction with the sidewalk project, which is why it was moved to later years.

Mr. Cataldo asked what sidewalk improvements would be done. Mr. Jeffries said there would be some new curbing and new sidewalks.

Mrs. Moore said since they are putting in new sidewalks and new curbing in an area that is really bad with stormwater, maybe they could put in a rain garden to improve drainage. Mr. Jeffries said they could look at the drainage at that time.

Mr. Rooney asked who financed the work done previously to the south of 19th Street. Mr. Jeffries didn't know for sure, but said it was City infrastructure done prior to the EDZC. Ms. Cindy Lawson, Finance Director, added there has not been money for sidewalk improvements in years.

Mr. Torres asked if there are any areas where the sidewalks are going to be redone where they can widen the sidewalk by eliminating grass. Mr. Jeffries did not think any of the sidewalks had grass presently, but when they are redoing curbs and sidewalks, they can look at that. Mr. Torres felt they should get as much sidewalk width as they could while redoing them.

Mr. Jeffries reminded them that this upcoming fiscal year, the only thing being funded is lighting. It won't be until the following year that they are proposing the sidewalks so they have time for details and changes.

Mr. Cataldo asked as part of the curbing and sidewalk work, could they look at creating angled parking on the east side of 14th Avenue where it is parallel today to increase the parking. He commented that downtown has come a long way, but a lot of businesses still struggle and parking is a major issue. He said also the future funding of TIF is directly related to those downtown businesses.

Mr. Rooney agreed with him on principle. He said the most impacted people by this are the restaurants and they haven't put forth the effort to come to their meetings. He said it would be hard to convince City Council that they have that much vested. Mrs. Moore pointed out that there are two (2) restaurants represented here on this Committee. She said they have all talked to the other restaurants. She said that she gets asked all the time what can they do about parking. Mr. Rooney said they could do something by attending their meetings. He said it would have more impact for restaurants to come and say that at their meetings and then go to City Council meetings.

Mr. Cataldo said it is in the best interests of the City and this Committee to maintain stability downtown. He said there is turnover going on and parking is a major element of it. He feels there are some potential easy fixes, like squeezing in diagonal parking wherever they can. He said they have the funds to accommodate that and to start the lighting. He does think if just sign off on a five (5) year program for half a million dollars, they might as well go home because there would be nothing else to talk about. He thinks that without their oversight, downtown would be at risk. He thinks there is a perception that downtown is thriving, but it is not.

Mr. Rooney agreed, but they cannot do it by themselves. The people who are interested have to come to their meetings and for five (5) years, they have been asking them to. Mr. Cataldo thinks they might feel like they would be wasting their time coming here because City Council makes the decisions. He said they have money to spend that the City can use. He said if they can recommend things that everyone agrees to, they will get things done. He does not think that anyone would say that they don't need more parking downtown.

Mr. Rooney pointed out that it has been printed by Mr. Larry Reisman in TCPalm that they don't need more parking. Mr. Cataldo thinks supporters would come out if it got on a Council meeting as an agenda item.

Mrs. Moore said everyone wants more parking. She liked the striping idea, but said that requires a study too. She said the sidewalks aren't happening this year so there is time and they could look at things to do to create more parking. Mr. Jeffries said as the 14th Avenue sidewalk project is designed, they could have Public Works look at seeing if there is a possibility of striping for angled parking.

Mrs. Moore asked Mr. Cataldo if he is saying that they should not vote to approve the Plan because she thinks it seems like a really good start. Mr. Cataldo said if they approve it for the next five (5) years, they would just be funding the lighting and the sidewalk and they don't know what kinds of sidewalk or the scope of the lights.

Mr. Torres pointed out that they already voted for the lighting project. Mr. Cataldo said they all agree lighting is part of everything they are advocating, but he doesn't know if a half a million dollar lighting project is the best use of the funds. He said maybe there are other projects they can do and maybe a public/private partnership could be done or the City can kick in some money.

Ms. Lawson explained that in a five (5) year capital plan, the only part that is being appropriated is the upcoming fiscal year and with each year, the plan is reexamined and they have the opportunity to recommend changes or additions.

Mr. Cataldo thinks they should approve the study for lighting and additional parking and sidewalk improvements, cross walks, etc... because they all are tied together.

Mr. Rooney asked who would do the study and how much would it cost.

Mr. Jeffries clarified that it is not a study, but rather engineering for the lighting. Right now, they just put target numbers in and once they do the engineering, they will recommend the actual amount of lights needed. He said they put in about \$20,000 for the engineering for the lighting. He said there are some other parking studies and things that they can do with internal staff in Public Works or Planning. He referred to the mixed-use project on 14th Avenue that was approved. He said that staff is looking at re-assessing the original plan adopted in 1992 that identified there was a surplus of parking and given all the development that has occurred downtown, if it is still justified. He will talk to Public Works about looking at different street corridors to see if they can squeeze out any more parking.

Mr. Torres asked about the \$20,000 for engineering. Mr. Jeffries explained they do not have the capacity to do that internally and projects like this are outsourced.

Mr. Cataldo asked if they know about how many lights they get for \$80,000. Mr. Jeffries said they estimated about \$3,000 per fixture, plus some other costs as well.

Mr. Cataldo commented that it seems like a good project and that they should approve the first round.

Mr. Torres said he assumes they could have some lights in place by the end of the fiscal year and that they are very close to having a tangible project with tangible results that will liven things up and make people take notice. He would really like to see phase one (1) happen and happen quickly.

Mr. Torres made a motion that they approve the phase one (1) project for \$83,500 and recommend to the City Council that they authorize the expenditure, including \$20,000 for engineering and get that outsourced as soon as possible so they can get this project underway.

Mr. Torres restated his motion that the EDZC recommends to City Council the authorization of \$83,500 in expenditures for the 2019/2020 year with approximately \$20,000 going to engineering and that they outsource the engineering as soon as possible.

Mrs. Elaine Jones, President of Main Street, said they were at a conference recently and it is her understanding that Main Street is allowed to get a planning grant for improvements at no cost. Mr. Jeffries said there are grants through the State Historic Preservation office and they can apply for those, but they apply now for their future fiscal year and they have already closed the cycle for their next fiscal year. He said the State's fiscal year starts July 1st. They can definitely apply in future years for future funds when it is opened again. He said the next application cycle would most likely match up with their 2021/2022 fiscal year.

Mrs. Moore asked if they have anyone who writes grants. Mrs. Jones said that they could get that done.

Mr. Rooney questioned why they missed it. Mr. Jeffries said the cycle closed in May. Mrs. Jones added that when they came back from the conference, a plan was already made, which is why they didn't apply for the grant.

Mr. Jeffries said they would need to coordinate with Main Street. He explained these are funds that Main Street Organization can apply for directly and there are ways that the City can apply as a certified local government through the Historic Preservation Commission. Mrs. Jones said she does have all the paperwork and would be glad to work with them on that.

Mr. Jeffries clarified they should make sure in their motion that they are recommending City Council adopt their Economic Development Plan as submitted and adopt the five (5) year capital plan.

Mr. Torres said his motion is as Mr. Jeffries said, to adopt the Economic Development Plan and the five (5) year Plan. Mr. Rooney seconded the motion.

Mr. Cataldo asked if they would then be committed to the five (5) year plan. He likes approving their Economic Development Plan, which is general in nature and then specifically only the first phase of the lighting.

Mr. Torres agreed he would like to leave it as the first year of the five (5) year plan because that is all they have funding for right now. He doesn't want to include the other years in the motion because they don't know what they are going to have for the 2020/2021 year. Mr. Cataldo added that they also don't know the future with the sidewalks and if they could get a grant.

Mr. Jeffries reminded them that every year, they are going to look at it and can readdress the available funds, so they are not actually adopting all the years.

Mr. Rooney said their concern is that they want to be able to carve out future money for other things.

Ms. Lawson explained why they put it in the form of a five (5) year plan and that only the first year is being appropriated. She said they do not have to do a five (5) year plan. If their recommendation to City Council is just to appropriate the funds for that first phase of the lighting project, they would put just that amount in the 2019/2020 budget year and they can forget the rest of that, or they can have a five (5) year plan knowing that in 2020/2021, they are going to readjust it and so on. Every single year, they are only adopting that amount in the first year and that is all that is appropriated because they cannot appropriate future year funds.

Mr. Cataldo said his concern is that since they do not appropriate anyway, if they delegate that through their approval of the five (5) year plan, he is not sure what they would do anymore.

Ms. Lawson explained that as part of the regular budget process, every single year in the spring they would relook at their five (5) year plan to see if that is still what they want to do for the next five (5) years, but they could do it whichever way they wanted.

Mr. Torres wanted to restate his motion for clarity.

Mr. Torres made a motion that they approve the Economic Development Zone Plan and that they approve the first year appropriation according to the Historic Downtown Vero Beach Economic Development Zone budget that was created by Mr. Jeffries for \$83,500.

Mr. Torres said he is limiting it to what they are going to do in the first year. They have the funds to do the first year and he is not including the rest of the five (5) year plan.

Mr. Torres clarified his motion is that they recommend to the City Council that they approve the Economic Development Zone plan and that they approve the budgeted amount that was created by staff in the amount of \$83,500 for the first year. Mr. Rooney seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mrs. Moore asked if this would get on the October City Council agenda.

Mr. Rooney asked how exactly the motion that they just passed was going to be transmitted to City Council.

Mr. Jeffries said they don't need to get sponsored because it is an administrative matter. He will do a transmittal memo and a Resolution will have to be drafted. He said City Council would get his cover memo and it would include their Committee's recommendation and the original staff recommendation and the minutes would be attached.

Ms. Lawson said she would be working with Mr. Jeffries on the Resolution. Mr. Jeffries added he would get it placed on the City Council agenda in October.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

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