

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ZONE COMMITTEE (EDZC) MINUTES  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2018 10:00 A.M.  
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Jessica Hawkins and Vice Chairman Gary Rooney; Members: Joseph Cataldo, Bob DelVecchio, Mike Williams and Linda Moore **Also Present:** Dave Currey, Police Chief; Kira Honse, Assistant City Attorney and Heather McCarty, Records Retention Specialist

**Excused Absence:** Terry Torres

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairman called today's meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A) September 17, 2018**

The minutes were unanimously approved.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. DelVecchio said that he would like to hear from Mrs. Feeney about the Complete Streets event that they put together.

Mrs. Suzy Feeney said that about a week and a half ago, she was able to put together a meeting of about 17 stakeholders. Those in attendance included Mr. Larry Wallace, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT); Mr. Donovan Pessoa and Mr. Phil Matson, Indian River County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); Indian River Bike Walk; Mrs. Dori Stone, I.R. County Chamber of Commerce President; a number of business owners, including Mr. Robert Bracket, Board member Joe Cataldo, and Mr. Scotty Chisholm, and Mr. Monte Falls, City of Vero Beach Public Works Director. They went through several hours of questions about Complete Streets. She said they need to be able to pull together the local leadership and the citizens. She said towards the end, Mr. Wallace said they have three (3) options. The first is that they could turn it over to the City and the City can do whatever they want and pay for the whole thing. The second was a variation on their 3R project and the third was to apply to get a Complete Streets grant that would give them everything they want except the landscaping. She explained that within the next year, they would apply for that grant and go on FDOT's five (5) year plan. She added that Mr. Matson was very encouraging because Vero Beach has never applied for any kind of significant grant so they are very high on the list of being able to do that. She added that this group is a key component because it is where things get triggered to go to City Council. She said it is key to be able to know where they stand in the timeline of the 3R project.

Mr. Cataldo said that he heard some things differently. There is Complete Streets, which has their own projects. He explained he was told they didn't have to wait for the 3R project, although it probably would be less expensive. He said they were encouraging them to get the political support because FDOT has a lot of money and most of their funds for projects have been in South Florida and they have not had the Treasure Coast ask for anything so the timing is great to incorporate a project in this area.

At this time, item 4-C) was discussed.

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

**A) Representative from Florida Department of Transportation to discuss “Complete Streets”**

This item was discussed earlier and later on in the meeting.

**B) Discuss having a Joint Meeting with the Tree & Beautification Commission to discuss Art Displays in Green Space**

This item was not discussed.

**C) Homeless Situation in Downtown – Chief David Currey**

Mrs. Hawkins explained they wanted to discuss some of the issues with the homeless in downtown. She added there is a church group that is going around and feeding them.

Chief Currey said it was the Salvation Army and they are now going to pick individuals up and take them to their facility if they want a meal. He is not aware of any other groups who are doing it.

Mrs. Hawkins said the Heritage Center has coordinated getting the power source turned off in the park to eliminate cell phones from being charged. She said there have been some indecent exposure situations and urination in the park and some parents have voiced some concerns. She asked if there is any way to deter them from being in that area.

Chief Currey explained they are doing what they can, but they have to be aware of their rights as well with regard to it being a public park. He said they have been dealing with the park and people in that area for many years. They do make arrests for nuisance crimes, such as open containers, trespassing after hours, and there have been sexual assaults, which is the reason the gazebo behind the Chamber of Commerce was taken down. Also on the benches they are putting arms in the middle to hinder lying down on them. He added that he thinks there are too many benches in the park. He feels a problem area is the corner by the fountain and that they could take out some of those benches there.

Mrs. Moore asked if better lighting in the park would help. Chief Currey said more lighting anywhere is always good. He noted that the benches on 21<sup>st</sup> Street from 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the Chamber of Commerce are rarely being used and that is because there is not much shade there. He said they are not here to violate anyone’s rights and they treat them the way they should be treated. They do as much as they can with foot patrol and the bike patrol. They encourage the community to call if they see something. He said there have been some incidents in the bathrooms. He said there are a couple of gazebos with tables and one (1) table needs to be replaced or removed because it is rusted and is a danger. Also, they are having the sign at the entrance updated with the correct non-emergency police department number.

Mrs. Moore asked if there are bike patrols downtown. Chief Currey answered yes, that they now have close to 10 officers who are certified and they are sending one of their Sergeants to learn to be an instructor to teach more of them. Also, this fiscal year they purchased another bicycle. He talked about

the detail they have every weekend between the ocean side and downtown area. Mrs. Moore asked if they could come down towards her business more. She said there have been some issues of people sleeping on the couches outside of Southern Social. Chief Currey reiterated to make sure they call the police. He explained that private property is an easy fix, but public places are not as easy, as they are allowed to be on a sidewalk or in the park sitting on a bench during park hours. He added that in many cases, it's more a matter of uneasiness and not necessarily illegal.

Mrs. Hawkins asked if there are park hours for the grass area between the Heritage Center and the Chamber of Commerce. Chief Currey said the park closes at 10:00 p.m. and that is not just the playground.

Mr. Rooney asked about the schedule of the bike patrols. Chief Currey said that they have a detail with one (1) officer from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and their area of operation is downtown and the ocean district.

Mrs. Moore questioned the timing of the patrols. Chief Currey said they are out on patrol when people are out and about and at dinner and crimes of opportunity could happen. He commented they want to be seen and people want to see them. Whenever they can put them out at additional times, they do. For example, they are going to have someone out this weekend during the day in the park area.

Mr. DeVecchio asked if there is a homeless problem beachside. Chief Currey answered not as much as in the downtown area. He pointed out that they go there because they are close to transportation, the First Baptist Church was allowing them to shower, and there is a food pantry there. Also they were being fed several times a week, but now the Salvation Army offers to pick them up to be taken for a meal.

Mr. Cataldo questioned if that wouldn't cause them to congregate where they get picked up. Chief Currey agreed that is where they are congregating. Mrs. Hawkins pointed out that having them picked up on 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a safety concern.

Mr. Rooney pointed out that they also urinate and defecate on private property. He agrees with the general approach, but it is affecting property values and the desire to go downtown. Chief Currey said they treat everyone with respect until they dictate otherwise.

Mr. Williams asked if there is just one (1) bike for both the beach and the downtown. Chief Currey said they have three (3) bikes total, but generally it is one (1) out at a time. Mr. Williams said that they have never seen any. Chief Currey said they would like to do more.

Mr. Rooney asked if there is more time spent on the beachside than on the mainland. Chief Currey answered no.

Mr. Williams said they have a big problem downtown, but also the gas station on the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and US 1 is a problem where the homeless sit all day long. Mr. Rooney asked about having more no trespassing signs. Chief Currey said that could be helpful. He explained that almost every business on US 1 has a trespass affidavit. He said that is a real easy fix and they have arrested many for trespassing, some of them many times.

Mr. Williams said that the owner of that gas station allows them to sit there and there can be up to 20 of them at one time. Chief Currey explained that is part of the frustration. He said the gas station owner is okay with them sitting there.

There was a discussion about spots that there are homeless problems throughout the City.

Mr. Rooney asked if the pickleball people have any issue with the homeless in that area. Chief Currey said that he hasn't heard about that.

Mr. DelVecchio noted that a couple of locked cars have been broken into. He added that he has seen people sleeping on that rusty table that Chief Currey referred to.

Mrs. Hawkins said they would email Chief Currey any ideas they come up with and thanked him for coming to speak with them. Chief Currey said that he would work on getting the benches reduced.

Mr. Rooney asked if there are any surveillance cameras in the parks. Chief Currey said the only ones that would be available would be ones that businesses might have put in, but there are not any specifically in the park.

Mr. Rooney asked if it would be helpful if there were cameras so that they could monitor the park. Chief Currey said they have a list of who has video cameras inside and outside so they know where to go if something happens and that has helped them quite a bit.

Mr. Williams said they have cameras at his store and sometimes it has been used for accidents that are in that area.

Mr. Rooney asked if there are any cameras at the old Courthouse. Chief Currey said there may be and they could find out. He explained cameras come down to position and location and operation.

Mrs. Hawkins pointed out that the Heritage Center is owned by the City and the City could put them there and reduce incidents within the park. She said there have been reports of drug deals behind the fountain so they could put a camera pointing at that corner, but there is also a problem with the lighting in that area.

Chief Currey said they are going into an agreement with a company called Ring at no cost to them. He explained it is for law enforcement and any Ring customer in Vero could give them permission to go into their surveillance portal if they have the device and either see something as it happens or get the video of something that took place. He added Ring is also going to give them some devices to give to the community.

At this time, the Committee returned to their discussion of Complete Streets.

Mr. Cataldo said the biggest issue is that FDOT is not going to do anything without political support and won't do anything until the City says they want it. Another thing he heard that scared him is that it might be too late for them to add to the 3R project because they are close to them resurfacing because it usually happens every 15 years. He asked FDOT if their Committee wanted to do an improvement just on a corner or a block, could they apply for an FDOT permit to do that. He was told that if the City had a permit and if it met their criteria, there is no reason they wouldn't do it. He said an example that he thinks would be the quickest fix would be to build another bump out in front of the Jetson building to

match the one (1) in front of Scotty's Sporting Goods building which would slow the traffic down. Then they could do the same thing in front of Charlie Sullivan's law office and the Courthouse and add some parking in those areas.

Mrs. Moore asked how they would start that. Mr. Cataldo said the City needs to buy into it. He talked about the perception that is out there regarding getting through downtown and hurricane evacuations. He pointed out that the Kimley Horn study said that they would not have a problem for 20 years. He added that the delay would be somewhere between 30 and 40 seconds getting through downtown.

Mr. Williams pointed out that people are using outlets other than SR 60 to get out of town, and another one is going to be added at Oslo.

Mr. Cataldo commented that the City Council will be in favor of it if the people are. He said a lot more people are frequenting downtown now and they need to make it more walkable because it is not comfortable crossing those intersections.

Mr. Williams pointed out that if the road was two (2) lanes, they would be able to put in a pedestrian walk where cars would have to stop, but they can't do it with four (4) lanes.

Mr. Cataldo said the goal would be able to get it to two (2) lanes, but they need political support. He felt the neighborhoods surrounding downtown would develop as a result of a more desirable downtown with more walkability and that would increase the tax base, which could get them more police officers and more improvements. He said they need to figure out a way to get City Council on board through education.

The Committee agreed they should wait until after the City Council election.

Mrs. Feeney proposed that they take the next month while they are waiting for the election and pull together the answers they are trying to get from FDOT, the MPO, and Mr. Falls. That will start to lay a foundation for them to grow from.

Mr. Rooney said they should nominate a speaker from this Committee to go to the City Council after the election and show them where they are at and ask if they have their backing or if they should move on.

Mrs. Moore thought they should speak with them individually before that. Mr. Cataldo agreed. He added that he doesn't think they will all be against it once they are educated and he doesn't think the public will be against it, except for some segments. He thinks the timing is coming around to where this could work. He is more in favor of asking the candidates ahead of time to see where they stand.

Mrs. Moore referred back to the idea of a couple bump outs and some parking in that block. She thinks they should have a nice photo rendering of a before and after photo that shows how good the road could look after. Mr. Williams said they have had architects do that already.

Mr. Cataldo said that parking is a huge issue in this town and whatever spaces are created would create an added value to the downtown area. He said the Kimley Horn report needs to be updated, but it was a 20 year forecast and it dealt with the issues of evacuation, traffic flow, traffic counts, and impacts on adjoining neighborhoods.

Mrs. Feeney brought up that Mr. Brian Good with Kimley Horn was also in attendance at that meeting. She said they are working with Kimley Horn to get those pictures for them and they have a professional that is digitizing all of that. They also have people working towards being able to put together the example Mr. Cataldo was talking about and the financial information so that there will be a whole packet when they reach out to City Council. She said she has started to work with two (2) different organizations and it would probably take about two (2) months to get everything to them.

Mrs. Hawkins suggested that instead of having people from outside of this group compiling all that information, it needs to be people from their Committee who are coordinating with the MPO and the Chamber of Commerce to make sure that everyone is on board because they are the ones who can get other people on board. She said it needs to be members at this table who are getting with Mr. Matson from MPO and others and making sure that they can get County representatives on board. She said it is not just a City issue because that road runs through the City and into the County and it impacts everyone.

## **5. OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Williams said that he talked to Main Street and they are going to do one more kiosk in front of the Courthouse. He said it is going to be a Centennial kiosk and that it was paid for by Mr. Rooney.

### **A) Presentation to Council concerning the updated Master Plans.**

Mrs. Moore handed out an updated Master Plan that she typed up with all the changes they discussed previously (on file in the City Clerk's office). She said that she was at a Cultural Council meeting and they were talking about their gallery stroll and a problem they are having with people not being able to see the trolley stop signs. She said she added under B-1, Special Themed Lighting, "possibility to include lighted signage for trolley stops for gallery stroll."

The Committee agreed to add installation of cameras to A-2) Public Safety.

Mrs. Hawkins asked everyone to review the draft and bring their comments to the next meeting.

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

This item was discussed previously.

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

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

/hm