

City Commission Meeting

May 14, 2024

6:00 p.m.

ELECTED / APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Adrian Petrilă, Mayor – present via Zoom
Rich Lorenzen, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, District 4
Karen Marriott, Commissioner, District 1
Nick Filtz, Commissioner, District 2
Betty Rzewnicki, District 3

STAFF PRESENT:

Wayne Saunders, City Manager
Amber LaRowe, City Clerk
Matthew McConnell, Assistant City Attorney
Jennifer McMahon, Chief Operating Officer
Mike Clarke, Public Works Director

Vice Mayor Lorenzen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. PRESENTATIONS

a. Employee of the Second Quarter

The following individuals were nominated by their peers as Employee of the Second Quarter:

- Brandon Berry, Community Development
- Kevin Hennessey, Fire
- Cody Keers, Fire
- Anthony Laws, Fire
- Adam Poirrier, Fire
- Alexa Sawyer, Library
- Chris Tarkenton, Finance
- Eileen Torres, Community Development

Kristin Coman, Community Development Director, made comments regarding Brandon Berry. She highlighted Mr. Berry's attitude, knowledge, and work ethic. She was proud that he was selected as Employee of the Quarter as it is well deserved.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

City Manager Saunders requested the addition of Pump Station #1 Rehabilitation as handed out before the start of the meeting and is made a part of the record. This was added as item 5 and all agenda items were renumbered accordingly.

Commissioner Rzewnicki requested a discussion item be added for Don CeSar Place Neighborhood flooding, this was added as discussion item 7.d.

Motion: **Commissioner Marriott moved, Commissioner Filtz seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the May 14, 2024, City Commission agenda as amended.**

3. AUDIENCE COMMENTS

The following Don CeSar Place Neighborhood residents spoke to the City Commission about all the issues with flooding that they are having, have been having, and enduring whether it rains or not. There were pictures displayed that were made a part of the record. Each resident expressed their unique situation and implored the City to help solve this issue.

- Ed Chima
- Mary McReynolds
- Gerard (Jerry) Iacangelo
- Craig Stephan
- Becky Purple
- Kathy Garchow
- Bill Price
- Ken Folsom
- Leanne Faris
- Eric Watter
- Thomas Lennon

Resident John Kurzman provided comments on flooding issues by discussing NOAA data. Mr. Kurzman then expanded upon traffic and the recent development projects that were approved; a copy of his presentation is made a part of the record.

Resident Lisa Robinson provided comments regarding flooding in her street along Boca Ciega Drive and the issues that have been going on for years there for her and her neighbors alike; this is a City-wide issue.

4. CONSENT

- a. Approval of Minutes: City Commission Meeting 4/09/24; Special City Commission Meetings 4/11/24 and 4/15/24; Regular and Executive Session 4/24/24 4/23/24
- b. Debris Collection
- c. Debris Monitoring
- d. 2605 Sunset Way Sanitary Repair
- e. Fiber Circuit Upgrade – City Hall

Motion: **Commissioner Marriott moved, Commissioner Filtz seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the May 14, 2024, City Commission Consent Agenda.**

5. Pump Station #1 added

City Manager Saunders explained that there are components to this pump station that are nearing the end of their useful life. He mentioned the rehabilitation and the new pumps that were selected. A Request for Bids was issued in September and one bid was received. The bid was significantly higher than the probable construction cost estimated by the Engineer of Record. After further review and analysis, the award cost was reduced to \$3,981,888.15 and funding has been identified via two ARPA funding lines and the Wastewater Fund. Mr. Saunders confirmed that the funds will be replaced once the City approves the budget amendment at a future meeting.

Mike Clarke, Public Works Director, stated that the pipe has an estimated 10 years left in its life span. He touched on the process and technology in place that assists with evaluating the life of the pipe and any deficiencies.

Motion: **Commissioner Marriott moved, Commissioner Filtz seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the Master Pump Station #1 Rehabilitation Construction Award to TLC Diversified in the amount of \$3,981,888.15.**

6. ORDINANCES

a. First Reading Ordinance 2024-01: Technical Review Committee Attendance

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 22 – BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS, ARTICLE VI – TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (TRC), SECTION 22-146 – MEMBERSHIP; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; CONFLICTS; SEVERABILITY; CORRECTION OF SCRIVENER'S ERROR; CONSTRUCTION; PUBLICATION; AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Attorney McConnell stated that this Ordinance puts in place current practices; the City Clerk and City Attorney's Offices attend these meetings.

Motion: Commissioner Rzewnicki moved, Commissioner Marriott seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2024-01.

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

a. Freebee Vehicles

Christopher Walker, Regional Manager for Freebee, introduced himself, stating that he has been involved in St. Pete Beach since the original agreement in December 2019. He made a presentation to the Commission on the history of Freebee in the City, the additional vehicles and the delays, the evaluation of service, and the use of Tesla vehicles instead of the GEM vehicle. Reasons cited involved efficiency, heating/cooling abilities, battery life, and safety. A copy of the presentation is made a part of the record.

Discussion ensued on the use of Tesla versus the GEM car. Capacity in the Tesla is 4 instead of 5 in the GEM car and the Tesla can go through standing water and remain unphased whereas the GEM will stall out.

The Commission expressed hesitancy on transitioning the entire fleet to the Tesla, if at all. They requested more information as follows:

- Information from other cities that are currently using Tesla
 - What is the feedback they have
 - Pros and cons
 - Ridership
- Cost estimates on this service in years going forward

Mayor Petrila questioned Mr. Walker on the ability to ensure that residents receive priority over visitors. Mr. Walker informed the Commission that Freebee could create the portal for City access, but that the City would have to manually enter all approved residents in the portal which would then be something Freebee would recognize when that resident selected to ride. He estimated minimal if any expense for Freebee to build the portal with the cost being administrative time from the City to input the data.

Resident Greg Christopher opined that a mix of Tesla and GEM cars would be a nice possibility. He spoke of his understanding of the upgrades that are being made to the GEM.

Resident John Kurzman displayed information about Freebee based on the contract, various extensions, and modifications. A copy of his presentation is made a part of the record.

Resident Cameron M. expressed his opinions on removing Freebee from the City and using the tax dollars on the needs of the residents.

This item will come back to the City Commission at a future meeting.

b. Gulf Winds Drive Project

City Manager Saunders explained that the design for this project is very similar to that of Boca Ciega Drive; however, less negative feedback has been received. Staff is seeking Commission recommendations based on what is provided in the Agenda packet.

Mr. Clarke stated that the designs have been on the City's website for quite some time and there have been public meetings to share the designs. He touched on what the project entails including sidewalks and the reduction of impervious surfaces. There are a few places along Gulf Winds Drive that have traffic-calming devices such as speed tables and speed humps.

Mayor Petrila expressed concerns over the lack of dedicated bicycle lanes and opined that having bicyclists share a sidewalk with pedestrians is not the best idea. This appears to be the desire of the community and needs to be factored into the design.

Resident John Kurzman displayed slides from the Boca Ciega Drive meeting and discussed his thoughts regarding Gulf Winds Drive design; a copy of his slides is made a part of the record.

Resident Lisa Robinson expressed her opinions on the design and is not in favor of the increased size of the sidewalks and questioned why some areas have sidewalks on both sides of the road.

It was decided that both Gulf Winds Drive and Boca Ciega Drive designs would be redone.

c. Board Members/Public Decorum

Attorney McConnell reminded the Commission of the rules and procedures that were adopted in 2022. He touched on the environment and tension that has been felt during the meetings and in the community as of late. He talked about the ethics code both in Florida Statute and City Code that applies to elected and appointed officials alike; he read from that, stating that when in office you're here to enhance the public confidence in the integrity of its municipal government. Mr. McConnell advocates for due process and public comment, but not that which is done disrespectfully. He makes himself available and will continue to make himself available for any board member or resident.

Commissioner Rzewnicki expressed her desire for the Commission to work as a team and consider everyone on the same team. She acknowledges the rules that are in place and expects everyone to follow those or change them.

Commissioner Marriott agreed that it is not an us versus each other mentality and it is all of us versus the problem.

Commissioner Filtz expressed his opinions and stated that open communication, face to face, to solve problems and misunderstandings is the best way.

Amber LaRowe, City Clerk, stated that when she first started, there were rules and procedures in place. She took those rules and procedures, coupled them with what she knew from training and experience, and improved them. Mrs. LaRowe mentioned decorum expectations among residents to each other, staff, and the Commission as well as staff to residents and Commission to residents. There is an expected behavior in this room, just like in other places that you go, and if there is rude and disrespectful behavior, it needs to be shut down. She read the statement of decorum from the back of the speaker's cards and reminded the public that the rules and procedures are

available at the front of the room. Just like Attorney McConnell stated, Mrs. LaRowe's door is always open, and she is willing to meet with anyone who wants to talk about this or anything else.

Vice Mayor Lorenzen recessed the City Commission meeting at 8:08 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 8:16 p.m.

d. Don CeSar Place Neighborhood Flooding added

City Manager Saunders informed the Commission that the Public Works Director will be preparing a report on this topic to include the past, present, and future plans to help the situation. This report will be presented at the District 3 Town Hall next Wednesday.

Commissioner Rzewnicki acknowledged all the emails she has received either directly or from the City Clerk; she named all those who submitted comments. Mrs. Rzewnicki discussed the history of her attendance at Commission meetings over the last decade whereby she made comments to the Commission and asked for the City's help. She acknowledged the studies that have been done and some temporary fixes that the City has placed in the area; however, those fixes have failed.

Vice Mayor Lorenzen mentioned his meetings with residents in Pass-A-Grille who have concerns about the flooding as well.

Commissioners Marriott and Filtz mentioned the receipt of the emails and empathized with the residents' concerns; they look forward to hearing what the City will come back with as far as possible solutions.

Mayor Petrila stated that this problem has been mentioned over the years with few solutions, and he would like to hear what solutions or suggested solutions there are.

The following residents spoke about the flooding issues and its impact on their quality of life:

- Mary McReynolds
- Cameron M.
- Kathy Garchow
- Ed Chima

The Public Works Director brainstormed a possible temporary solution for the 36th Avenue seawall and asked the current contractor to visit the site and determine if the solution is feasible and what the cost would be.

8. CITY CLERK, CITY MANAGER, CITY ATTORNEY, AND CITY COMMISSION REPORTS

Amber LaRowe, City Clerk – announced the qualifications have ended for the August 20th special election. District 2 had two qualifying residents, Nick Filtz, and Lisa Robinson. District 4 had one qualifying resident, Joe Moholland. All this information can be found on the City Clerk's page of the City Website; she reminded the public that she is not charged with registering people to vote, nor signing them up for mail ballots – links are also on the City Clerk's page to the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections should a resident need that information.

She commented on her recovery since being out on extended leave since February, thanking her staff for keeping the office moving along, for handling all the work that has been quite heavy, and thanked all those who reached out, sent cards, flowers, texts, etc. it was all very appreciated.

Wayne Saunders, City Manager – stated that if a resident previously registered for mail-in ballots, they must do it again because of the recent law that was passed; please reach out to the Pinellas County Supervisor of

Elections Office to do so.

He touched on the beach enforcement this year versus last year – in March of last year there were 33 warnings issued, and this year 174.

Attorney McConnell, Assistant City Attorney – asked the Clerk’s Office to circulate a Doodle Poll to schedule a joint workshop with the City Commission and the Beach Stewardship Committee and a joint workshop with the City Commission and the Historic Preservation Board.

Commissioner Marriott – mentioned the turnout for Monday’s “beer with a commissioner” metup she had at Mastry’s, she will continue to do that if there is interest.

Commissioner Filtz – liked the idea of a resiliency committee as mentioned by Mr. McConnell.

He announced his qualification and how much an honor it has been serving on the Commission so far, he would like to continue that.

Mr. Filtz recognized the Clerk staff that did a great job during the City Clerk’s absence and he is grateful to have Mrs. LaRowe back.

Commissioner Rzewnicki – welcomed the City Clerk back and expressed gratitude that she recovered/is recovering well.

She thanked all who put together the Fire 101 event held this past Saturday.

She touched on the recent resident meeting at Lazarillo Park and appreciated the residents coming out to discuss the flooding issues.

Mrs. Rzewnicki reminded the public of the following: Beach Stewardship Committee meeting is tomorrow at 9:00 a.m., the Don CeSar Property Owners Board meeting is May 21st at 6:00 p.m. at the Suntan, the District 3 Town Hall meeting is May 22nd at 5:30 p.m. in these Chambers, and the Don CeSar boat ramp community meeting is May 29th at 6:00 p.m. at the Community Center.

Mayor Petrila—expressed gratitude that Mrs. LaRowe was back.

Vice Mayor Lorenzen – commented on the beach renourishment in Pass-A-Grille and mentioned the timeline for the alley reopening for garbage collection.

He reminded the public of his meet and greet at Hurley Park tomorrow at 5:00 p.m., and no meet and greet on the 29th due to the community meeting.

Vice Mayor Lorenzen adjourned the meeting at 9:16 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: MAY 28, 2024



AMBER LAROWE
CITY CLERK



ADRIAN PETRILA
MAYOR