

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Regular City Commission Meeting
Monday, January 8, 2024

The City Commission met in formal session Monday, January 8, 2024, at 5:00 P.M. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Nancy Sikes-Kline, and the following were present:

1. Roll Call: Nancy Sikes-Kline, Mayor/City Commissioner
Roxanne Horvath, Vice Mayor/City Commissioner
Barbara Blonder, City Commissioner
Cynthia Garris, City Commissioner
Jim Springfield, City Commissioner

Also Present: David Birchim, City Manager
Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney
Darlene Galambos, City Clerk
Meredith Breidenstein, Assistant City Manager
Reuben Franklin, Assistant City Manager
Todd Grant, Director, Public Works
Corey Sakryd, Director, General Services
Jaime D. Perkins, Neighborhood Services & Community Redevelopment Area Manager
Sue Wong, Director, Finance
Eric Walter, Grant Administration Coordinator
Melissa Wissel, Director, Communications
Anthony Cuthbert, Assistant Police Chief
Colleen Kuhn, Recording Secretary

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Father Matthew Ibok, from the Corpus Christi Catholic Church, delivered the invocation, and Commissioner Horvath led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

2.A. Modification and Approval of Regular Agenda

MOTION

Mayor Sikes-Kline **MOVED** to approve the Regular Agenda. The motion was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Springfield and **APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.**

3. Special Presentations, Recognitions and Proclamations

3.A. New Year Poem by St. Augustine Poet Laureate, Norma Sherry. (R. Horvath, Commissioner)

Mayor Sikes-Kline introduced Norma Sherry, St. Augustine Poet Laureate.

Norma Sherry presented her poem titled 2024.

3.B. Proclamation 2024-01: Proclaims January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month. (B. Blonder, Commissioner)

Commissioner Blonder presented Proclamation 2024-01.

Christie Pierce, American Association University of Women (AAUW) St. Augustine Branch accepted the Proclamation.

3.C. Certificate of Recognition - 2024-01CR - Recognizing the 100th year anniversary of STAAA, the St. Augustine Art Association. (N. Sikes-Kline, Mayor)

Mayor Sikes-Kline presented the Certificate of Recognition to Diane Bradley, President of the St. Augustine Art Association (STAAA).

4. General Public Comments (3 minutes per individual)

The Commission heard from the following member of the public:

- BJ Kalaidi

Public comment was closed.

5. Consent Agenda

David Birchim, City Manager, read the Consent Agenda.

CA.1. Preview of upcoming Commission meetings.

CA.2. THE FOLLOWING ORDINANCES ARE TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR SECOND READING ON JANUARY 22, 2024:

NONE.

CA.3. Reminder of Upcoming Meetings:

- January 19, 2024, 1:00pm, Public Art Committee Meeting
- January 22, 2024, 4:00pm, Community Redevelopment Agency Meeting
- January 22, 2024, 5:00pm, Regular City Commission Meeting
- February 12, 2024, 5:00pm, Regular City Commission Meeting

• February 26, 2024, 5:00pm, Regular City Commission Meeting
CA.4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR COMMISSION MEETINGS:

- Regular City Commission Meeting - December 11, 2023

CA.5. RELEASES OF LIEN FOR UNIT CONNECTION FEE MORTGAGE(S):

Code Enforcement Lien Release - 14 Poinciana Avenue - Gary Parks Estate

CA.6. PROPOSED PROCLAMATIONS, CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION/RECOGNITION. (COMMISSION APPROVAL REQUIRED). (TO BE READ AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING).

NONE.

CA.7. NOTIFICATION OF PROCLAMATIONS/CERTIFICATES OF RECOGNITION ISSUED:

NONE.

5.A. Additions, deletions or modifications to Consent Agenda

5.B. Approval of Consent Agenda

MOTION

Commissioner Horvath MOVED to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was SECONDED by Mayor Sikes-Kline and APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

6. Appeals

None.

7. General Public Presentations, Items of Great Public Importance, and Other Items Requiring Public Hearings

7.A. General Public Presentations

None.

7.B. Items of Great Public Importance

None.

7.C. Other Items Requiring Public Hearing

None.

8. Ordinances and Resolutions – Public Hearing Required.

8.A. Ordinances – Second Reading

8.A.1. Ordinance 2023-32: Amends the St. Augustine Historic Area Community Redevelopment Agency's Redevelopment Plan and modifies the Agency's operational timeframe. (J. Perkins, Neighborhood Services & CRA Manager)

Jaime Perkins, Neighborhood Services & Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Manager presented Ordinance 2023-32 amending the Historic Transportation Parking Community Redevelopment Area Plan extending the operational time frame and modifying the trust name to Historic Area Community Redevelopment Area (HACRA). She said the Trust had \$30,127 remaining following the repayment of the garage debt service and any administrative cost that occurred during the year. She noted the current fiscal year was the first year with projected revenue following the debt service repayment and administrative cost was projected to be \$543,000 which was allocated on the HACRA budget in line items for anticipated projects and programs for the HACRA. She said the recommendation was to hold a second reading of the ordinance and adopt.

Public hearing was opened; however, there was no response.

Commissioner Horvath asked for an update of Eddie Vicker's Park.

Ms. Perkins said they were in the design phases and had received American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from St. Johns County which was a partnership to help pay for the modifications and construction of the two basketball and six pickleball courts. She said that solicitation was being conducted to help that portion of the project move forward. She said they were moving forward with the complete design phase for the park.

Commissioner Blonder thanked Ms. Perkins for addressing all the questions regarding the project.

Commissioner Garris asked if there was a projected time for the completion of the park.

Ms. Perkins replied the courts would be completed within eighteen months. She said during the agency meeting on January 22, 2024, she would provide a full report on the park and all the projects within the CRA.

MOTION

Mayor Sikes-Kline MOVED to pass Ordinance 2023-32 on second reading. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Horvath.

Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney, read the title as follows:

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-32

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA, PERTAINING TO THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY, ADJUSTING THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY'S OPERATIONAL TIMEFRAME; MODIFYING THE ST. AUGUSTINE

HISTORIC AREA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AND EXTENDING THE TIME CERTAIN IN THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN ; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HERewith; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VOTE ON MOTION:

AYES: Sikes-Kline, Horvath, Blonder, Springfield, Garriss

NAYES: None

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

9.B. Resolutions

9.B.1. Resolution 2024-01: Authorizes the City Manager to apply to the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) for a grant in the amount of \$300,000.00 for Salt Run Navigation Channel maintenance and dredging; and authorizes the entering into the Interlocal Agreement between the City and the St. Augustine Port, Waterway and Beach District. (E. Walter, Grant Administration Coordinator)

Eric Walter, Grant Administration Coordinator, reviewed Resolution 2024-01 and described the activities that would be funded by the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) grant. He said these funds were needed for the 2024 Salt Run maintenance and dredging project. He asked for approval of Resolution 2024-01 and the Interlocal agreement for the St. Augustine Port, Waterway and Beach District.

Commissioner Blonder asked if wildlife protections were all built in and approved.

Mr. Walter confirmed that was a consideration.

Mayor Sikes-Kline thanked the staff for their work and FIND for their support. She said her understanding was this went from

the inlet to the boat ramp or would it extend past the ramp.

Mr. Walters advised it would be past the boat ramp all the way to Anastasia State Park.

MOTION

Commissioner Horvath MOVED to pass Resolution 2024-01. The motion was SECONDED by Mayor Sikes-Kline.

VOTE ON MOTION:

AYES: Horvath, Sikes-Kline, Garriss, Springfield, Blonder

NAYES: None

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION

Commissioner Horvath MOVED to approve the Interlocal Agreement. The motion was SECONDED by Mayor Sikes-Kline.

VOTE ON MOTION:

AYES: Horvath, Sikes-Kline, Garriss, Springfield, Blonder

NAYES: None

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

10. Staff Reports and Presentations

10.A. Update on the Bridge of Lions intersection improvements. (R. Franklin, Assistant City Manager)

Reuben Franklin, Assistant City Manager, provided a presentation on the Bridge of Lions and King Street Projects. He noted the drainage improvements would be complete near the end of February or the beginning of March. He discussed the area currently and what was proposed to be done in that location. He said the proposed changes could drastically help with the amount of traffic that builds up before and after the Bridge of Lions was opened. He said in the future a decision to proceed with the proposed intersection would be needed or would there be a need for more

discussion with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). He said the first public meeting would take place on February 20, 2024, regarding the design concepts for intersection and he would welcome public input. He noted he wanted more input from State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO) regarding how the park was perceived regarding Historic Preservation. He said once the information was provided it would be brought back to the Commission to review.

Commissioner Horvath asked for clarification on the design. She said she felt the initial design was more elegant and simpler. She advised not to approach SHPO until it was finalized. She said the slip lanes near the monuments were not being used and were kept as they were. She said if those could be used it could provide a little more flexibility as they seemed to be redundant. She felt more green space was always better.

Mr. Franklin noted the slip lane near Ponce Circle was turned into green space. He said the slip lanes were currently used as commercial loading areas. He said if those were used it could make for a better pedestrian experience connecting King Street to Cathedral Place.

Commissioner Springfield noted the concept had two traffic lights and another option had four.

Mr. Franklin explained the proposed concept added one light and signalized pedestrian crossing; however, more details would come.

Commissioner Horvath agreed that a crosswalk at the Lions. She said the signage was not addressed but thought it was too large for the space. She said it needed to reflect the City and asked for an update.

Commissioner Springfield said perhaps there could be a bypass to A1A; but was concerned that even with improvements

more traffic was inevitable. He said the vehicles coming east on King Street to go across the bridge could create more traffic past St. George Street.

Mr. Franklin confirmed King Street had to remain with two lanes east bound, but Cathedral Place did not.

Commissioner Blonder asked if there was any modeling for a signalized crossing at the Bridge of Lions and would it be on demand and how it could affect traffic flow. She said it was important that the design be clear and not confusing. She asked for more details regarding the timing of the project. She said her concern was starting another project with others ongoing.

Mr. Franklin said he would bring back information on the pedestrian crossing at the bridge based on what FDOT added and he believed it would be tied to traffic signaling. He reviewed the timeline information from the presentation and noted he would bring back a more detailed timeline.

Commissioner Garris expressed concerns about pedestrian safety and suggested maybe a site visit to help visualize how the crosswalks would work and where they would be.

Mayor Sikes-Kline agreed that eliminating cars downtown and having bypass traffic would be good; however, she would like to hear from business community. She said they had discussed before whether Cathedral Place could be closed off for pedestrians only during certain events and liked the concepts and possibilities as that leaned more towards a European city. She agreed with concerns about signage based on what was included in the drawings. She stated that St. Augustine did not fit into an FDOT box, and it should be more tailored to the City. She said she wanted to hear from SHPO regarding shaving off a piece of the park. She was in favor of less pavement and more green space.

Mr. Franklin said after the public input on February 20th, he would bring the information back to the Commission or it could be a workshop.

10.B. Public Works quarterly update. (T. Grant, Director Public Works)

Todd Grant, Public Works Director, provided a quarterly Public Works update. He highlighted the following:

- Resilience Program
 - Newsletter
 - Flood Mitigation Assistance
 - Regional collaboration; Regional Resiliency Action Plan
 - Community Rating System; Flood Insurance
 - Seven Projects ending 2026
 - Review of Resilience Program Studies
- Sustainability
 - Staff Updates
 - Recycling Events and Activities
 - Tree Canopy
 - Mayor's Monarch
- Mobility
 - Nights of Lights
 - Star Circulator

Commissioner Blonder commended Mr. Grant noting there were almost \$70 million dollars and 83% of the projects were funded through grants.

Commissioner Horvath asked if Lake Maria Sanchez was being dredged in phase one to accept more water.

Mr. Grant replied that dredging would not increase the capacity; however, the improvements would increase the stormwater system and improve drainage and eliminate flooding in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Mr. Grant reviewed the partnership with Florida Power and Light (FPL) for the parking garage, Visitors Information

Center, Francis Field, and the dental building as the parking garage was producing more power than it used. He said a solar canopy would be designed upon the fourth floor of the parking garage.

Mayor Sikes-Kline appreciated the efforts being made for the solar project at the parking garage.

Commissioner Blonder felt the parking garage would be able to produce more electricity and it could help save the taxpayers money by selling power back to FPL.

Mr. Grant replied that was correct and they were working with FPL regarding limits on power generation and consumption and investment tax credit.

Commissioner Springfield asked if there had been any considerations to charging stations for electric vehicles in the parking garage.

Mr. Grant advised he was working with the Fire Department to determine if that could be a possibility.

Mayor Sikes-Kline noted the Fort Mose Gardens area flooding and draining issues would need to be addressed in the future.

11. ITEMS BY CITY ATTORNEY

(None)

12. ITEMS BY CITY CLERK

(None)

13. ITEMS BY CITY MANAGER

Mr. Birchim announced the Code Enforcement Adjustment and Appeals Board (CEAAB) was canceled due to weather and City Hall may need to close early. He announced the new Finance Director, Sue Wong.

Mr. Birchim shared information on invocations, the process, and some public discomfort. He recommended adopting a moment of silence without commentary rather than invocation.

Commissioner Garris said she was a spiritual person and was concerned with having to move from prayer to moment of silence but understood why it was being suggested.

There was consensus to have a moment of silence.

Mr. Birchim noted a Resolution would be presented at the next meeting; however, there was an invocation already scheduled.

14. Items by Mayor and Commissioners

14.A. Discussion of the request by the Greater Fullerwood Neighborhood Association for approval for it to install a plaque in honor of former Mayor George Gardner in the Herbie & Annette Wiles Park on East Park Avenue. (N. Sikes-Kline, Mayor and B. Blonder, Commissioner)

Mayor Sikes-Kline and Commissioner Blonder led the discussion regarding the request for a plaque to honor former Mayor Gardner. She said Ms. Gina Burrell talked with the neighbors and they agreed and welcomed the idea.

The Commission supported the request.

Commissioner Springfield thanked staff for cleaning up the Alcazar Room and would like to have some meetings out in the community.

Commissioner Horvath asked for a workshop to discuss and update the Vision and Strategic Plans.

Mr. Birchim said he would talk with staff and bring back any ideas and budget considerations for the process.

Commissioner Blonder asked about adding the Long Leaf Pine to the City's list of significant trees. She felt that it should have been added to the list as it was one of the most endangered ecosystems in the southeast and should be protected.

Mr. Grant advised staff was working on this and it was in the process.

Commissioner Blonder requested support in recognizing Gina Burrell, a community volunteer, at the upcoming Arbor Day Ceremony, Friday January 19, 2024.

The request was supported by the other Commissioners.

Commissioner Blonder spoke with the City Manager regarding strategies on how to address litter during peak season. She shared concerns about a recent DUI and pedestrians who were hit.

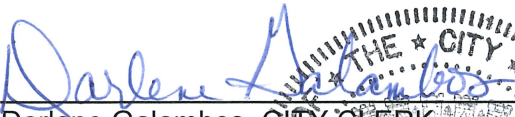
Mayor Sikes-Kline extended prayers to the families involved. She said this may be a community discussion as it was a problem.

15. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:06P.M.¹



Nancy Sikes-Kline, MAYOR



Darlene Galambos, CITY CLERK



¹ Transcribed by Colleen Kuhn