

## CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Regular City Commission Meeting  
Monday, September 9, 2024

The City Commission met in formal session Monday, September 9, 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  
Stephen Slaughter, Director, Public Works & Utilities  
Amy Skinner, Director, Planning and Building  
Melissa Wissel, Director, Communications  
Jennifer Michaux, Police Chief  
Carlos Aviles, Fire Chief  
Elyse Wiemann, Recording Secretary

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### **MOMENT OF SILENCE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Sikes-Kline moment of silence and Commissioner Horvath led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **2. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

#### **2.A. Modification and Approval of Regular Agenda**

#### **MOTION**

Commissioner Horvath **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. Certificate of Recognition:**  
**Recognizes the Honorable Marivi Monteserin, Mayor of Avilés, Spain and her delegation for their contributions to and participation in the 100th Anniversary Celebration of our sister city relationship with Avilés, Spain. (N. Sikes-Kline, Mayor)**

**3.B. Proclamation 2024-28: Proclaims the month of September 2024 as National Recovery Month in the City of St. Augustine-Discover and Recover Community Organization. (N. Sikes-Kline, Mayor)**

**3.C. Proclamation 2024-28: Proclaims the month of September 2024 as National Recovery Month in the City of St. Augustine-Oxford House. (N. Sikes-Kline, Mayor)**

**3.D. Proclamation 2024-29: Proclaims the week of September 17th through September 23rd as Constitution Week in the City of St. Augustine. (N. Sikes-Kline, Mayor)**

**4. General Public Comments (3 minutes per individual)**

The Commission heard from the following members of the public:

- Shannon Sapp
- BJ Kalaidi

**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 DATE: SEPTEMBER 23, 2024.

- Ordinance 2024-30: Amends the existing definition of Historic Structure and clarifies Section 28- 89 regarding proposed or partial demolition of existing historic structures.

CA.3. Reminder of Upcoming Meetings:

- September 19, 2024, 5:05PM, Special City Commission Budget Meeting
- September 23, 2024, 4:30PM, Order of La Florida Award presentation to Pastor Laverne March
- September 23, 2024, 5:00PM, Regular City Commission Meeting
- October 14, 2024, 5:00PM, Regular City Commission Meeting

CA.4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR COMMISSION MEETINGS: NONE.

CA.5. RELEASES OF LIEN FOR UNIT CONNECTION FEE MORTGAGE(S): NONE.

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:

Proclamation 2024-30: Proclaims September 29, 2024, as VFW Day in the City of St. Augustine. (N. Sikes-Kline, Mayor)

Certificate of Recognition for the 150th Anniversary of the St. Augustine Lighthouse. (N. Sikes- Kline, Mayor)

CA.8. Ratification of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of St. Augustine and the Professional Firefighters of St. Augustine. (D. Hayes, Human Resources Director)

End Consent Agenda

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

(None)

**5.B. Approval of Consent Agenda**

**MOTION**

**Commissioner Springfield 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**

(NONE)

**8.B. Ordinances – First Reading (only if required by law)**

(None)

**8.C. Resolutions – Public Hearing (only if required by law)**

(None)

**9. Ordinances and Resolutions - No Public Hearing Required**

**9.A. Ordinances – First Reading**

**9.A.1. Ordinance 2024-30: Amends the existing definition of Historic Structure and clarifies Section 28-89 regarding proposed or partial demolition of existing historic structures. (A. Skinner, Director Planning and Building)**

Amy Skinner, Director of Planning and Building reviewed the Ordinance 2024-30. She said the ordinance proposed to clarify language within the code regarding historic structures and the section related to demolition.

Mayor Sikes-Kline said she thought this would help any applicants in the future understand the code better.

**MOTION**

**Mayor Sikes-Kline MOVED to pass Ordinance 2024-30 on first reading and moved to second reading. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Horvath.**

Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney, read the Ordinance.

**ORDINANCE NO. 2024-30**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA AMENDING CHAPTER 28, SECTION 28-2 AMENDING DEFINITION'S HISTORIC STRUCTURE AMENDING CHAPTER 28, SECTION 28-89 CLARIFYING CRITERIA FOR THE REVIEW OF DEMOLITION; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**VOTE ON MOTION:**

**AYES: Sikes-Kline, Horvath, Garris, Springfield, Blonder**

**NAYES: NONE**

**MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

**9.B. Resolutions**

**9.B.1. Resolution 2024-34: Approves the purchase of approximately 2.47 acres of land on Evergreen Ave and Smith St. (R. Franklin, Assistant City Manager)**

Reuben Franklin, Assistant City Manager reviewed Resolution 2024-34 allowing for the purchase of 2.47 acres of land on Evergreen Avenue and Smith Street.

Commissioner Blonder said she thought the ranking system was working well but asked if there were any modifications or changes needed.

Mr. Franklin said it was working well and the matrix was very similar to other conservation programs. He said there were

several other applications that had been reviewed and ranked, which would be presented to the Commission soon.

Mayor Sikes-Kline appreciated the question from Commissioner Blonder because it just pointed out that everything was a work in progress and changing for the better.

#### **MOTION**

**Commissioner Blonder MOVED to pass Resolution 2024-34. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Garris.**

#### **VOTE ON MOTION:**

**AYES:** Blonder, Garris, Springfield Horvath, Sikes-Kline

**NAYES:** NONE

**MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

**9.B.2. Resolution 2024-35: Approves the purchase of approximately 0.97 acres of land located at the southwest corner of Christopher Street and Sidney Street. (R. Franklin, Assistant City Manager**

Reuben Franklin, Assistant City Manager reviewed Resolution 2024-35 allowing for the purchase of 0.97 acres at the southwest corner of Christopher Street and Sidney Street using stormwater funds.

#### **MOTION**

**Commissioner Garris MOVED to pass Resolution 2024-35. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Blonder.**

#### **VOTE ON MOTION:**

**AYES:** Garris, Blonder, Springfield, Horvath, Sikes-Kline

**NAYES:** NONE

**MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

### **10. Staff Reports and Presentations**

**10.A. Audit Review Committee's Recommendation for Annual Independent Financial Auditing**

#### **Services. (D. Falkner, Procurement Specialist III)**

Danielle Falkner, Procurement Specialist, reviewed and discussed the recommendations from the Audit Committee. She asked for approval of the committee's rankings, authorize City staff to engage in negotiations in accordance with the rankings, and allow the City Manager to sign the agreement.

#### **MOTION**

**Mayor Sikes-Kline MOVED to APPROVE the committee's rankings, authorize City staff to negotiate in accordance with the rankings by the committee, and allow the City Manager to sign the agreement. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Springfield.**

#### **VOTE ON MOTION:**

**AYES:** Sikes-Kline, Springfield, Garris, Blonder, Horvath

**NAYES:** NONE

**MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

**10.B. King Street Final Concept Plan Presentation and Discussion. (R. Franklin, Assistant City Manager)**

Reuben Franklin, Assistant City Manager, reviewed and discussed the final conceptual plans for King Street. He said the three major components that were being addressed was livability, history, and beauty. He reviewed the different options and advised that the next steps were to receive approval from the Commission and move forward with construction documents. He said updates would be provided as needed or requested and the City website would be updated with progress.

Commissioner Springfield spoke in support of the one lane options for Cathedral Street; however, was concerned with reducing the curbs along King Street and suggested having a modified curb. He said he could support the reduction in parking

since the Cathedral Basilica and Trinity Parish Church both had their own parking lots plus there would be parking at the Broudy garage. He said he liked the option to reduce the number of red lights creating a free flow environment.

Commissioner Blonder spoke in support of the ambitious recommendation with the free flow option and one lane on Cathedral Street. She said the historic photo was inspiring and felt it could be recaptured. She felt more could be done about helping with the needs of the delivery trucks as she thought adding more sidewalks and fewer parking spaces could help the City gain back more of its history. She stated that if parking was needed for the churches on Sunday that could be done with signage.

Commissioner Garris asked if this would turn into a roundabout.

Mr. Franklin replied that it would be a free flow condition, which was similar to a roundabout.

Commissioner Garris supported the reduction of red lights, which would be beneficial to the pedestrians as long as there was a safe way for them to cross the street. She said parking was definitely needed in the downtown area as convenience was a major factor for businesses. She thought the reduction of parking would hinder businesses. She said her two concerns were making pedestrians safe and respect the businesses by providing parking. She liked the designs proposed but felt the brick was not a good option as pedestrians did not know the difference between the sidewalk and the road.

Commissioner Horvath said she was highly in support of the proposed design. She said the raised cross walks would add a calming effect with the traffic and the free flow condition made a lot of sense. She supported the one lane on Cathedral Street and noted her high priority was having a left turn lane at Iberia Street. She was in

favor of reducing the parking by thirty-one spaces because the Broudy garage would be in use and the plan was to have a circulator in operation. She suggested widening the sidewalk in front of the Cathedral Basilica to help with church overflow and move the franchise vehicles to in front of the Government House as it was across the street from the STAR circulator.

Mayor Sikes-Kline agreed with many of the comments. She stated she loved that the utilities would be underground, and the lighting and landscaping would make the area more beautiful. She was in favor of the one lane free flowing conditions but did not like the sixteen feet wide travel lane and felt it would encourage higher speeds instead of slower. She said if the sixteen foot travel lane was used, she would recommend using additional traffic calming measures. She was in favor of the curbless street as she thought both cars and pedestrians watched more carefully with the true complete streets.

Mr. Franklin said that the reason for the travel lane size was parallel parking on the corridor and emergency services. He said if sixteen feet were kept, speed would be a key factor in order to slow traffic.

Mayor Sikes-Kline said parking would be a difficult factor but hoped everyone could come to an agreement as this project had been long anticipated. She asked if option one could be reviewed once more.

Mr. Franklin replied that option one had one lane on Cathedral Street, reducing the parking to fifty-eight parking spaces, and would have a free flow condition. He said he was unclear regarding the sidewalk curbs and if the sidewalk on the north side of the plaza would be increased reducing the size of the sidewalk on the south. He said it would make sense to increase the sidewalk on the north as that was where the businesses were located.

Commissioner Blonder said she would love to see more sidewalk dining and liveliness in front of the stores and restaurants on the north side of Cathedral Street.

Commissioner Springfield clarified that he was in favor of reducing the parking around the plaza. He said most of the problem was congestion and with a parking garage, it could help reduce the issue.

Mayor Sikes-Kline and Commissioner Blonder agreed on curb-less streets; however, Commissioner Horvath suggested curbed sidewalks on King Street as it would remain two laned and curb less on Cathedral Street as it would be one lane.

Commissioner Springfield suggested a rolling curb or a Miami curb so that it was noticeable to pedestrians.

Mr. Franklin said the proposal was to make Cathedral a curb-less with a wide eighteen-inch buffer; whereas King Street would have a more historic curb and parking would be available.

Mr. Birchim said the curb either historic or Miami style could be decided on at a later date.

Mr. Franklin agreed and said curb designs around the plaza could be presented and decided on at another meeting.

## **MOTION**

**Commissioner Springfield MOVED to APPROVE the King Street Design option one as presented to move forward with construction documents. The motion was SECODNED by Commissioner Horvath.**

## **VOTE ON MOTION:**

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

**NAYES: Garris**

**MOTION CARRIED 4/1**

## **10.C. Updated plans for Zora Neale Hurston Park. (S. Slaughter, Director Utilities and Public Works)**

Stehen Slaughter, Utilities and Public Works Director, introduced consultant Brett Kuzoian with Castle Bay Design Studios to review the plans for the Zora Neale Hurston Park.

Brett Kuzoian Castle Bay Design Studio presented an update with several options as recommended by the Commission. He said from past feedback, they had explored the freestanding wall design, the inclusion of the 'Purple Bench', the existing tree preservation, and the retaining of trees when able.

Commissioner Horvath said she liked that the existing trees were being incorporated into the design. She questioned the signage for the Nights of Lights since this was the location.

Mr. Birchim said historically, the structure was wooden with string lights that said 'Nights of Lights'. He said the use of a banner had been tried in the past; however, did not work. He said the wooden frame could be incorporated into the plan but asked for feedback from the Commission.

Commissioner Horvath replied that she did not want a wooden structure and suggested a metal frame that could be segmented, broken down, and stored.

Mr. Brichim said the concept would stay the same, and the sign would be installed during the 'Nights of Lights' celebration and when it was over would be removed.

Commissioner Blonder asked if Mr. Kuzoian could suggest something that could blend with the proposed designs.

Mr. Kuzoian replied that behind the wall they proposed having a base that acted as sleeves where the metal frame could slide in and then be removed.

Commissioner Springfield said he liked the concept but did not like the proposed design. He said this was not a user-friendly park. He said he loved the idea of the "purple bench" but felt his was not the right location. He suggested since the park was an entrance to City, it should say 'City of St. Augustine' and below could say 'Zora Hurston Park'.

Mr. Slaughter asked for specific feedback regarding font size. He said the sign could be altered to say, 'City of St. Augustine' and below that could include the name of the park.

Commissioner Blonder agreed. She said the 'purple bench' was great; however, this location was not conducive for conservations. She said there were many other favorable locations.

Mayor Sikes-Kline disagreed and thought this was a good site for the 'purple bench'. She felt the sign looked more like a subdivision entrance and did not like the lettering in the middle. She said it had been discussed to have a monument sign on Castillo Drive at the parking garage and thought both should look the same.

Mr. Kuzoian said this was conceptual and it could be completely redesigned. He said a presentation specifically on the sign could be provided, and leaving the rest of the park as it was. He said in general, they were just trying to understand how to proceed.

Mayor Sikes-Kline said the rest of the park was great, but she was not in favor of the sign.

Commissioner Garris stated she was not in favor of moving forward with this project. She said this was the entry way to the City, it should be beautified with landscaping. She said the 'Nights of Lights' sign at night when lit looked amazing compared to the daytime, when the wooden structure was seen. She said the City had many creative carpenters and thought they were capable

of creating a sign for the 'Nights of Lights'. She explained she was not impressed with the Zora signage in the park as it was not captivating and recommended using a marker as that could be more appropriate and less expensive.

There was a consensus on the concept with the notations to have no 'purple bench' at this location and to include the addition of a marker with a quote or poem for pedestrians and bicyclist.

## **11. ITEMS BY CITY ATTORNEY**

### **11.A. Update on Opioid Litigation. (I. Lopez, City Attorney)**

Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney provided a brief update regarding the opioid litigation. She said she would need a decision on whether to add the additional defendants to the case or not.

Commissioner Horvath asked would the City have to pay lawyer fees in portion to what the City could receive.

Ms. Lopez replied no; she said the damages that could be documented were small as the opioid crisis did not hit the City as hard as other locations in the United States. She said the City's recovery was not related to their attorney's fees. She said we were not the only ones associated in the lawsuit and if there was a loss, that could be proportionate if ordered by a judge.

Commissioner Horvath said philosophically it would be good to stay in the fight; however, it seemed like a big gamble as there was not a lot to win. She said it was not worth it if the lawyers' fees were large.

Ms. Lopez noted that there was a settlement from large pharmaceutical companies. She said the City's portion of the winnings were \$180,000, which would be paid over the next twenty-years. She reiterated that adding a few more

defendants there would not be a substantial payout in the end.

Mayor Sikes-Kline stated she was in support of staying in the fight as the lawsuit was never about the money. She said most people's lives had been touched by this epidemic and the risk had not changed. She said the risk had not changed, but now we had a win.

Commissioner Springfield expressed support of staying in the fight, but not adding these defendants to the case. He said this would not benefit the City even if there was a win.

Commissioner Garris agreed, but thought there was no reason to add the additional defendants.

Commissioner Blonder agreed with the mayor and said it was important statement to make and understood the negative consequences.

Commissioner Springfield asked for clarification on staying in the fight or not.

Ms. Lopez replied that the existing litigation had been settled and the decision needed was to add the companies previously mentioned to the litigation.

#### **MOTION**

**Commissioner Blonder MOVED to add the additional defendants. The motion was SECONDED by Mayor Sikes-Kline.**

#### **VOTE ON MOTION:**

**AYES: Blonder, Sikes-Kline, Garris**

**NAYES: Springfield, Horvath**

**MOTION CARRIED 3/2**

#### **12. ITEMS BY CITY CLERK**

**12.A. Request for three (3) appointments-Planning and Zoning Board (PZB). (D. Galambos, City Clerk)**

Darlene Galambos, City Clerk asked for three (3) appointment to the Planning and Zoning Board. She announced a total of five candidates to chose from and the Commission would need to vote.

Ms. Galambos announced that Charles Pappas and J. Carl Blow had five votes each, Virigina Wheatstone had one, and Susan T. Johns, Esq, and Erick Revuelta each had two. She said since there was a tie a second ballot would have to be done to determine the third member.

Ms. Galambos said after the second ballot, the new member would be Susan T. Johns, Esq.

**12.B. Request for two (2) appointments-St. Augustine Police Officers' Retirement Board. (D. Galambos, City Clerk)**

Darlene Galambos, City Clerk requested two appointments for the St. Augustine Police Officers' Retirement Board. She said these positions were advertised as required and two applications were received from existing board members, Mary Jane Liles and Daniel Hilbert, who were eligible for reappointment.

#### **MOTION**

**Mayor Sikes-Kline MOVED to appoint Mary Jane Liles and Daniel Hilbert to the St. Augustine Police Officers' Retirement Board. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Horvath and APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.**

#### **13. ITEMS BY CITY MANAGER**

Mr. Birchim thanked Commission for their thoughtful approval of the King Street project. He said in this would dramatically affect, in a positive way, the community for generations to come.

#### 14. Items by Mayor and Commissioners

Commissioner Garris recommended that prayer be brought back to the meetings, as prayer could change the outlook of the people in the room. She said the County had not removed prayer from their meetings. She understood the reason for the change to the moment of silence; however, she felt our local pastors should be recognized and allowed to bring peace to the room prior to the start of the meeting.

Commissioner Springfield said that the Sister City visits were very successful and future visits should be made a priority. He congratulated the mayor for representing the City during the celebration. He complemented Mr. Franklin on the King Street plan and how he was able to communicate with the public. He said regarding the request to bring prayer back to the start of the meetings, he suggested each commissioner could present their own prayer or poem; however, was not in favor of asking local pastors.

Commissioner Blonder said she was fine with what was decided when it came to bringing prayer back; however, was not in favor of presenting a devotional of any type as that was very personal, nor burden any other commissioners in the future. She thanked the staff for working hard and presenting great ideas. She agreed the mayor represented the City beautifully during the 100<sup>th</sup> celebration.

Commissioner Horvath agreed, and said it was a great event all week. She was concerned with public comment that mentioned that the police were not using their bodycams. She asked for more information regarding that topic.

Mr. Birchim said it was an ongoing police investigation and did not want to comment.

Commissioner Garris congratulated the mayor on a job well done and agreed the relationship should be built upon yearly.

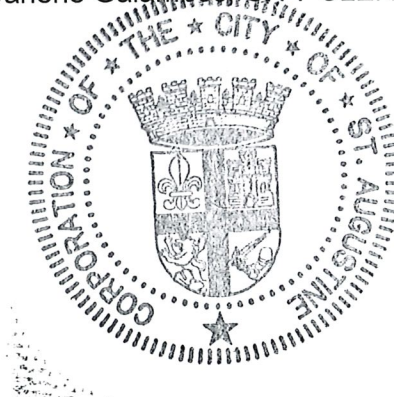
Mayor Sikes-Kline thanked everyone for their kind words and for participating as much as possible. She said it was 100 years and the mission was to develop the relationship more with the community. She said the community contributed many things and felt it was a great beginning.

#### 15. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 P.M.<sup>1</sup>

  
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Nancy Sikes-Kline, MAYOR

  
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Darlene Galambos, CITY CLERK



<sup>1</sup> Transcribed by Elyse Wiemann