

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Regular City Commission Meeting Monday, January 13, 2025

The City Commission met in formal session Monday, January 13, 2025, 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
Barbara Blonder, Vice Mayor/City Commissioner
Jim Springfield, City Commissioner
Jon DePreter, City Commissioner

Absent: Cynthia Garris, 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

MOMENT OF SILENCE and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Nancy Sikes-Kline requested a moment of silence and Vice-Mayor Barbara Blonder led the pledge of allegiance.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

2.A. Modification and Approval of Regular Agenda

MOTION

Commissioner Jim Springfield **MOVED** to approve the Regular Agenda. The motion was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Jon DePreter and **APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.**

3. Special Presentations, Recognitions and Proclamations

3.A Proclamation 2025-02: Proclaims January 2025 as Human Trafficking Awareness Month in the City of St. Augustine. (B. Blonder, Vice-Mayor)

3.B Farewell poetry reading for the 2023-2024 City of St. Augustine Poet Laureate, Norma Sherry. (M. Wissel, Director Communications)

4. General Public Comments (3 minutes per individual)

The Commission heard from the following members of the public:

- Roger Van Dusew
- Chris Fulmer

- Scott York
- James Carr
- Tom Reynolds
- Melinda Rakoncay
- Eric Ostrander
- Martha Mickler
- Brad Beach
- 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 JANUARY 27, 2025:

•Ordinance 2024-34: Amends the Zoning Designation of 30.15 acres of property from City of St. Augustine Industrial and Warehousing (IW) to City Planned Unit Development (PUD) at 404 Riberia Street.

CA.3. REMINDER OF UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- January 27, 2025, 3:30PM-Community Redevelopment Agency Meeting
- January 27, 2025, 5:00PM- Regular City Commission Meeting
- February 10, 2025, 4:30PM-De Aviles Award Presentation, The Forson Family
- February 10, 2025, 5:00PM- Regular City Commission Meeting

CA.4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR COMMISSION MEETINGS:

- December 2, 2024, Special City Commission Meeting
- December 9, 2024, Regular City Commission Meeting

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 2025-01: Proclaims January 17, 2025, as Arbor Day in the City of St. Augustine. (N. Sikes-Kline, Mayor)

CA.8. Approval of an Interlocal Agreement Between the City of St. Augustine and St. Johns County Regarding Maintenance for Roadway, Utilities, and Drainage Improvements on West King Street. (J. Beach, Chief Resilience Officer and Deputy Director, Utilities & Public Works)

CA.9. Approval of a Cost Share Agreement between the City and Vista Hotel IV Inc to memorialize the final relocation of utilities on the vacated Missouri Ave. (D. Birchim, City Manager)

End Consent Agenda

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

(None)

5.B. Approval of Consent Agenda

MOTION

Mayor Sikes-Kline MOVED to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Blonder 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 2024-01: Annexes Parcels of Land including the St. Joseph Academy Catholic High School at 155 State Road 207. (A. Skinner, Director Planning and Building)

Amy Skinner, Planning and Building Director, presented Ordinance 2024-01.

Public hearing was opened, and Commissioners heard comments from the following members of the public:

- Melinda Rakoncay
- BJ Kalaidi

David Birchim City Manager replied to public comment, and said the property was and would remain tax exempt as it was a school. He said the City was providing security to school with a contract directly with the St. Augustine Police Officer assigned and to protect the City from liability issues the City contacted St. Joseph's Academy and the St. Johns County Sheriff's office. He said they asked if the Sheriff's office could provide security for the school and they were unable to do so at that time, and St. Joseph's could not provide private security for the campus; however, wanted to maintain our City's Police Officer for security. He said the only way for that to happen was to annex them to the City. He said they were on City utilities and there would be no change. He said that was the basis for the annexation

and protect the campus using the City's Police Department similar to other public schools and Flagler College. He said it was a service provided to the community, and they paid for it. He said a contract would be entered into and St. Joseph's would pay in a manner that would not increase the City's liability.

Ms. Lopez replied to the question regarding fireworks and stated there was a state statute that allowed fireworks to be used during 'firework holidays'; however, it did not preempt local government from having prohibitions on fireworks, which the City had.

Commissioner Blonder reminded the public that these three ordinances were heard on first reading in February 2024.

Mayor Sikes-Kline felt the reasons explained were acceptable to the annexation and she was in support of the three Ordinances. She said they wanted to do everything they could to make the schools a safe place. She noted the City would be collecting income from the 'fire assessment fee' and thought it was more than adequate to help off-set any additional cost.

Commissioner Springfield stated that brining in that many acres into the City and the school decided to move, the property would be left in the City and in the future the property could be a taxable use. He said having some control over a local school with security was key. He said the school would not use that officer one hundred percent of the time, so the City was able to have a little extra benefit with having an extra officer available when needed. He said just like Flagler College the officer would be paid for by the school. He noted that he was in support of the annexation.

Commissioner DePreter advised that he was familiar with the property and had been on the Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) when recommended for rezoning.

He was in favor of the annexation. He noted that the property per the land development code would change from County Residential to County Institutional and thought the Planning Board made the right decision with that category of zoning. He said then the zoning changed to an Open Land category which was good as that allowed a 20% lot coverage. He agreed with the annexation as this school was a member of the community and it was for public safety.

Commissioner Blonder agreed with her fellow commissioner and was in support of the annexation.

MOTION

Commissioner Springfield MOVED to pass Ordinance 2024-01 on second reading. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner DePreter.

Ms. Lopez read the title as follows:

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-01

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA ANNEXING APPROXIMATELY 39.8 ACRES OF PROPERTY NOW LOCATED IN ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA, LYING WEST OF THE CITY LIMITS OF ST. AUGUSTINE, NORTH OF STATE ROAD 207, AND SOUTH OF COLUMBUS STREET AS DESCRIBED HEREIN; REDEFINING THE BOUNDARY LINES OF THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE TO INCLUDE SAID PROPERTY; AMENDING SECTION 1.04 OF THE CHARTER LAWS OF THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR FILING OF A COPY HEREOF WITH THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA, WITH THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA AND WITH THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CITY CODE; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF CONFLICTING

ORDINANCES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERANCE OF INVALID PROVISIONS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VOTE ON MOTION:

AYES: Springfield, DePreter, Blonder, Sikes-Kline

NAYES: NONE

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

8.A.2. Ordinance 2024-02: Amends the Future Land Use Designation of 39.8 acres of Annexed Property at 155 State Road 207 from St. Johns County Residential-D to City Institutional. (A. Skinner, Director Planning and Building)

Amy Skinner, Planning and Building Director presented Ordinance 2024-02.

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

MOTION

Commissioner DePreter MOVED to pass Ordinance 2024-02 on second reading. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Blonder.

Ms. Lopez read the title as follows:

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-02

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM) DESIGNATION OF APPROXIMATELY 39.8 ACRES OF PROPERTY LOCATED NORTH OF STATE ROAD 207 AND SOUTH OF COLUMBUS STREET AS PORTIONS OF THE HUERTAS GRANT IN THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREINAFTER, FROM ITS CURRENT DESIGNATION OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY RESIDENTIAL-D TO A CITY DESIGNATION OF INSTITUTIONAL; PROVIDING REPEAL OF CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; PROVIDING FOR

SEVERANCE OF INVALID PROVISIONS;
AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VOTE ON MOTION:

AYES: DePreter, Blonder, Springfield,
Sikes-Kline

NAYES: NONE

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

8.A.3. Ordinance 2024-03: Amends the Zoning Designation of 39.8 acres of Annexed Property at 155 State Road 207 from St. Johns County Residential single family- three (RS- 3) and Open Rural (OR) to City Open Land (OL). (A. Skinner, Director Planning and Building)

Amy Skinner, Planning and Building Director presented Ordinance 2024-03.

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

MOTION

Commissioner DePreter MOVED to pass Ordinance 2024-03 on second reading. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Springfield.

Ms. Lopez read the title as follows:

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-03

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA REZONING APPROXIMATELY 39.8 ACRES OF PROPERTY LOCATED NORTH OF STATE ROAD 207 AND SOUTH OF COLUMBUS STREET AS A PORTION OF THE HUERTAS GRANT IN THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREINAFTER, FROM ITS CURRENT CLASSIFICATION(\$) OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY RESIDENTIAL SINGLE FAMILY-THREE (RS-3) AND ST. JOHNS COUNTY OPEN RURAL (OR) TO THE CITY CLASSIFICATION OF OPEN LAND (OL); PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF CONFLICTING ORDINANCES;

PROVIDING FOR SEVERANCE OF INVALID PROVISIONS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VOTE ON MOTION:

AYES: DePreter, Springfield, Blonder, Sikes-Kline

NAYES: NONE

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

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 2025-01: Requires a supermajority vote of the City Commission for PUD rezonings or amendments. (I. Lopez, City Attorney)

Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney, reviewed the Ordinance.

Mayor Sikes-Kline clarified that any Planning Unit Development (PUD) or amendments to a PUD that were currently in the process would not be affected. She felt by having the super majority it could provide the City with more leverage and this could be a good option. She said PUDs could be great tools or could be intolerable for the City. She said she was in favor of giving the Commission more control. She said it could protect the City from over commercialization, intensification of land use, and the City's character.

Commissioner DePreter said at the prior meeting there was discussion to update and clarify the PUD process regardless of the supermajority. He asked if the ordinance was to pass on first reading was

the PUD process part of the discussion or a separate issue.

Mr. Birchim replied that if passed on first reading the ordinance would be heard by PZB for review and the other aspects such as the comparative analysis, clearer public benefit, and simplification or summary of application would also be reviewed. He said those did not have to be codified in the ordinance but would make recommendations on those as well as the supermajority ordinance as that would be a land development code change and then would come back for second reading.

Commissioner DePreter stated he was concerned with passing the supermajority. He felt some of his concerns could be clarified with some of the discussions as mentioned, as it would be beneficial to the Commission but also to the public for better understanding. He said regarding the supermajority, he thought all PUDs were not equal and thought there were three categories for PUD's and depending on the type of PUD's, they could be classified and tiered. He said with smaller board, such as four or five, he was not support of supermajority. He asked if a supermajority had ever been done in the City.

Mr. Birchim replied that it had not been done before.

Commissioner DePreter felt this would be precedent setting and thought it should be discussed further by the PZB.

Commissioner Springfield stated PUDs were critical and could have a large impact. He agreed that negotiations were also critical and most times when applicants applied for a PUD, they wanted to do something completely different and hence the reason for the PUD. He spoke in support to pass this on first reading to hear from the PZB

Commissioner Blonder agreed that the concerns mentioned could be addressed if

passed on first reading. She said communities were deeply impacted by the passing of certain PUDs. She said a PUD allowed the Commission to examine and weigh the public benefit and to push toward the greatest public benefit. She said the Zoning and Land Use Codes protected the City from over development and higher intensity. She was in support of the supermajority ordinance and thought it was the right time and direction.

Mayor Sikes-Kline appreciated the support, and the comments, and perspectives. She said nothing had changed the face of the City more than the implementation of PUDs, and was not opposed to PUDs. She noted that the Commission was the precedent setting board and should move forward boldly with things that had never been done before.

MOTION

Mayor Sikes-Kline MOVED to pass Ordinance 2025-01 on first reading and moved to second reading. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Springfield.

Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney, read the Ordinance.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-01

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA, AMENDING SECTION 28-2 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE PROVIDING DEFINITIONS FOR SIMPLE MAJORITY AND SUPERMAJORITY; AMENDING SECTION 28-289 OF THE CODE PROVIDING FOR SIMPLE MAJORITY AND SUPERMAJORITY VOTING TO ESTABLISH OR AMEND A PUD; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VOTE ON MOTION:

AYES: Sikes-Kline, Springfield,
DePreter, Blonder

NAYES: NONE

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Commissioner Blonder asked if a commissioner was absent due to illness or another reason could they attend remotely, could they participate in the supermajority or was there a state preemption regarding that.

Ms. Lopez replied that if someone had a medical condition where they were unable to attend in person and could attend, if technologically possible, they could attend but their vote would not be counted. She said Florida law required physical presents for the vote.

9.B. Resolutions

9.B.1. Resolution 2025-01: Grants an ad valorem tax exemption for a historic property located at 121 Kings Ferry Way and provides an effective date. (J. Courtney, Historic Preservation Officer)

Amy Skinner, Planning and Building Director, reviewed the Resolution.

Commissioner Springfield said this was a tax benefit and over the years he had watched the Darnold's work, and he appreciated the incredible work they did for the City, and he thought this was a great example of that. He said he was in favor of the resolution.

Commissioner DePreter agreed and was in support of the resolution.

Commissioner Blonder felt this application was a great example for the program.

Mayor Sikes-Kline felt this was a great example for the program and how City staff would work with applicants as it was a lengthy process. She said the Darnold's had made a great impact on the City. She

was in support of the resolution and was very proud of the work shown.

MOTION

Commissioner Sikes-Kline MOVED to pass Resolution 2025-01. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Springfield.

VOTE ON MOTION:

AYES: Sikes-Kline, Springfield,
DePreter, Blonder

NAYES: NONE

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

9.B.2. Resolution 2025-02: Approves the purchase of Approximately 1.18 Acres of Land located on the South Side of May Street next to Hospital Creek. (R. Franklin, Assistant City Manager)

Reuben Franklin, Assistance City Manager reviewed the Resolution.

Mayor Sikes-Kline asked for clarification regarding the resolution.

Mr. Birchim said the City had a policy to purchase real estate and there were different tiers in how real estate could be bought and each tier had different requirements. He said in this case, the Conservation Program was committed to only purchasing properties at their appraised value; however, this property was offered to the City above the appraised value. He said when considering purchasing property above the appraised value the Commission had to find a paramount public purpose. He said there was discussion about this property and two other conservation applications that came before the Commission and those other two will be presented with their appraisals at the next meeting. He said those have been offered for purchase at the appraised value, whereas this property was offered at above appraised value and hence the reason for a straight real estate transaction.

Mr. Franklin explained that if the property was purchased the funds that would be used were unrestricted funds. He said currently the account had \$3 million available and after the purchase the balance would be 1.7 million available in the non-restricted general fund.

Commissioner DePreter asked if this property was purchased, would it cause the City an issue with purchasing the other two properties.

Mr. Birchim replied no it would not cause an issue; however, they would be using all the unrestricted reserve funds.

Mayor Sikes-Kline asked if all three properties were purchased would there be no funds left.

Mr. Birchim replied that if all three properties were purchased there would be enough money in unrestricted reserves and the conservation fund, but that would exhaust the fund.

Commissioner Blonder noted that the other two parcels purchased with conservation funds would be eligible for grant reimbursement as previous properties had been. She said it would not be immediate but once reimbursed, the funds could be put back into the unrestricted fund.

Mr. Birchim said that was correct. He said the City had been successful in receiving 50% reimbursement from the State through their Conservation Acquisition Fund.

Mr. Franklin replied that there was \$600,000 in the Conservation Program which would purchase the Hundred Acre Marsh property, and if Avery Street were purchased there would be \$520,000 left in the unrestricted fund.

Commissioner DePreter said he was familiar with the property and agreed that the best and highest use was residential. He said he did not feel this property being developed was good for the area; however,

he had a couple concerns. He asked if the Department of Transportation (DOT) access would be granted or would there be an associated cost with that.

Mr. Birchim replied that there would be a DOT right-of-way permit as it belonged to them. He said the City would apply to DOT for access off of May Street. He said the City had a right-of-way off San Carlos Avenue, which allowed access to the property. He said if purchased and if a park were established that design would be vetted by the community and approved by the Commission, which would show the access points. He said he would assume the DOT would grant the City access but that remained to be seen.

Commissioner DePreter said there had been concerns from residents about traffic on San Carlos Avenue. He asked if this property currently was involved in a lawsuit.

Ms. Lopez replied the City was a defendant and several other property owners along Hospital Creek and was a long-running lawsuit with an individual who was suing the City and his neighbors regarding the placement of his dock on the creek. She noted that was pending but any action taken on the property would not negatively affect the City's position in that case.

Commissioner DePreter asked if the property were purchased would the land use would remain the same.

Mr. Birchim replied that he did not see a reason to change the land use.

Commissioner DePreter noted he received support from the community regarding the property. He said he thought this was a great location for water access and non-motorized vehicles. He said he was not in support of buying the property above the appraised value.

Commissioner Springfield agreed that he was in support of purchasing the property

at the appraised value; however, if bought, it would be taken off the tax roll and it was a million-dollar piece of property so that needed to be considered. He said if bought the purpose for the property did not need to be designated at this time. He said a lot of research should be done before establishing a kayak launch as there could be other hazards since it was near a bridge.

Commissioner Blonder was in support of the purchase but only at the appraised value. She asked what the procedure be if the resolution was denied.

Ms. Lopez replied that if there was a consensus that the City was interested in the property the resolution could be tabled, and directions could be provided to staff to follow up. She said the Commission had the ability to purchase property above the appraised value as noted in the City Code. Mayor Sikes-Kline said she did not feel as strongly as the other Commissioners regarding the appraised value; however, understood their reasoning. She felt the property was very important and agreed that a use for it did not have to be set as of yet. She said it could be used for creating a sense of arrival to the City. She loved there was deep water access, and the aesthetics were very important. She said she was more fear driven based on what the property could be outside of City ownership.

Kevin Van Dyke, owner of the property, requested to speak and said the appraisal viewed the property as residential and most of the comparisons were zoned for open land (OL) and most of those were commercial and he felt the appraisal did not take that into account. He said as a vacant lot it was valuable and understood the reasoning for not wanting to purchase above appraised value but thought this would be a great asset to the City and appreciated those who spoke in favor of the purchase.

Mayor Sikes-Kline questioned the uses of the property.

Mr. Birchim replied that OL was a mixed use commercial or residential zoning category. He said when created, the City was looking at property that could be preserved in the future and listed what was currently on that property. He explained the uses within the zoning category and noted for a subdivision, the property would have to be rezoned; however, there was potential for development.

Commissioner Blonder noted there was a proposed development presented to the Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) and it failed. She asked if Commissioner DePreter could provide insight.

Commissioner DePreter added that OL was twenty percent lot coverage, and the appraisal was made at the best and highest value, which was deemed residential. He said he was unsure how residential would work with the OL designation. He said the last proposal for the property was a marina with additional structures. He said his concern was the accessory uses could be lodging, which expanded beyond a marina. He said that it was a major concern for the PZB, and the applicant was not asking for a rezoning.

Commissioner Springfield said the reason for trying to be conservative was to allow funds for the other two properties. He said those other two were very valuable to conservation and having the funds to purchase them was important to him. He said all three were valuable but the other two were true conservation properties.

Mr. Franklin added that the City Archologist reviewed the site, and the vast majority was fill; however, the western bank was part of an archeological site known as the Miramar Village, which was a Native Indian Village. He said there were resources on the western bank portion of the site.

Mayor Sikes-Kline commented that money was set aside for important historic and archeological properties. She said she was unaware of the amount, but it could be used given the importance of the site.

Meredith Breidenstein, Assistance City Manager, agreed with the estimated funds mentioned by Mr. Franklin and noted that the fiscal year (FY) 2024 was not closed but based on FY end 2023 reserves and what was used in 2024, there was a three-million-dollar estimate. She said there would be around \$600,000 left in reserves and the remaining conservation fund. She said if all three purchases were made, it would leave around \$500,000 in non-restricted reserves. She noted that the City had three months of revenues for true emergency purposes. She said there was \$100,000 in the historical and archeological fund, which was funded by visitor dollars.

Mayor Sikes-Kline felt \$1.3 million dollars for waterfront property was a fair price.

MOTION

Mayor Sikes-Kline MOVED to pass Resolution 2025-02.

The motion was not SECONDED.

Commissioner Springfield said the City was not in the park business. He stated if facilities and buildings were added, there would be a need for a recreation department, which the City did not have, and would create more stress for the current departments. He said not only would they spend \$1.3 million dollars on the property, but there would also be additional cost for the maintenance.

Commissioner DePreter agreed that it was very important and thought purchasing it was just as important. He said once bought, then they could go through the process with the community. He said the main question was whether to purchase the property at the appraised value or not.

Commissioner Blonder asked if it was possible to make a motion to purchase the property at the appraised value if the owner was willing.

Ms. Lopez said that could be done or they could authorize the City Manager to continue negotiations with Mr. Van Dyke.

Mayor Sikes-Kline said she thought the best option would be to table the item and instruct the City Manager to bring back another offer, which would provide the community with a chance to understand what was taking place.

Commissioner Blonder noted that Commissioner Springfield brought up a very important concern regarding infrastructure and maintenance. She said this had to do with stewardship of the land and as we acquire more properties, we have to handle how they would be managed. She said we were devoting a lot of funds to removing invasive species, and this was why she did not want to purchase the property above the appraised value because every purchase came with a cost.

Commissioner DePreter MOVED allow the City Manager to continue negotiations with the property owner. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Blonder and APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

9.B.3. Resolution 2025-03: Requires review and consideration of the use of Florida- friendly landscaping and permeable infrastructure for city capital improvement and maintenance projects. (A. Skinner, Director Planning and Building)

Amy Skinner, Planning and Building Director, reviewed the Resolution.

Commissioner Blonder said she was very pleased and noted the most important part in the resolution was the following statement, "whereas public project can become a showcase of techniques and

design that can inspire private residents and business owners to better integrate environmentally friendly development". She said there would be examples all around the community that would inspire them to move in the same direction.

Commissioner Springfield commented that he thought property owners should be rewarded for their best efforts.

Commissioner Blonder agreed and was in support of creating a rewards program.

Commissioner DePreter commended Commissioner Blonder for coming up with this, as it was a good first step for the City and he thought more could be done when it came to residential development, such as building with piers and providing incentives.

MOTION

Commissioner Blonder MOVED to pass Resolution 2025-03. The motion was SECONDED by Mayor Sikes-Kline and APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.¹

10. Staff Reports and Presentations

10.A. 100th Anniversary of Sister City Relationship Presentation. (M. Wissel, Director Communications)

Melissa Wissel, Communications Director, provided a presentation on celebrating 100 years of Friendship with Avilés, Spain. She introduced Paul Weaver, Historian, who attended the trip and recorded history in the making.

Paul Weaver, Historian for the 100th Anniversary of Sister City Relationship provided a brief overview of what took place during the celebration on Avilés, Spain and in the City of St. Augustine.

11. ITEMS BY CITY ATTORNEY (None)

12. ITEMS BY CITY CLERK

12.A.1. Review and Consideration for the City of St. Augustine Poet Laureate Applications. (D. Galambos, City Clerk)

Darlene Galambos, City Clerk, requested an appointment for the next City Poet Laureate. She said the position was advertised and two applications were received. She added that both applicants were talented and qualified.

Commissioner DePreter said it was hard to judge something that was not quantifiable. He asked for clarification on exactly what were the responsibilities of the poet laureate.

Ms. Wissel replied that the poet laureate would be invited to attend City events and write original poems for the events. She said the first responsibility of the selected poet laureate would be to read an original poem for Arbor Day which was Friday, January 17, 2025. She said another opportunity was to participate in outreach within the schools or local organizations.

Commissioner DePreter said both individuals had their own unique style. He said Ms. Catherine Avery St. Jean had more of a rhyming aspect to her writing and Ms. Ann Browning Masters was more history, culture, and had the support from the community. He said after reviewing both applications, he was in favor of Ms. Anne Browning Masters.

Mayor Sikes-Kline agreed that both were very qualified individuals. She also spoke in support of Ms. Masters. She encouraged Ms. St. Jean to apply again in the future.

Commissioner Springfield said he was not shy about his inability to judge poetry and thought for the City to have a representative to write poetry about St. Augustine, Dr. Browning Masters was the best candidate.

¹ Break from 7:00p.m.-7:10p.m.

Commissioner Blonder agreed with her fellow commissioners and was in support of Dr. Masters. She added both poets were great artists and thought the City had a wonderful selection of artists that added to the fabric of the community.

MOTION

Commissioner Springfield MOVED to accept Dr. Browning Masters as the poet laureate from 2025-2027. The motion was SECONED by Commissioner Blonder and APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

12.A.2.Notification of Board Vacancy-Board of Trustees, St. Augustine Police Officers' Retirement System. (D. Galambos, City Clerk)

Darlene Galambos, City Clerk, notified the commission of a vacancy on the St. Augustine Police Officers' Retirement System Board of Trustee. She said the position would be advertised and it would be brought back as soon as possible.

13. ITEMS BY CITY MANAGER

David Birchim, City Manager, announced that the Utility Department would be replacing the City's watermain on the King Street Bridge. He said the community would see construction taking place there and this was ahead of the summer project by Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to replace the King Street Bridge, which would take place after the 4th of July.

Mr. Birchim said the City wanted to honor Mr. Tom Rainer, a 2019 La Florida Award recipient, who recently passed. He said the City would fly the American flag in his honor and presentation of the flag would be given to the family at a future meeting.

14. Items by Mayor and Commissioners

Commissioner Springfield spoke in regard to Nights of Lights! (NOL), and said he wanted to eliminate all vendors as he had

received several complaints about not being able to walk on the sidewalks. He stated he spoke with former Mayor Len Weeks about the original intent of NOL and the intent was to represent the architecture of the City with single rows of white lights. He said something had to be done to assist with the issues that occurred during NOL to help the residents. He said the City did not profit much off of NOL as it was mostly sales tax revenue; however, it helps the businesses. He thanked the streets and grounds crews for keeping the City clean.

Commissioner Blonder said she had received a large number of complaints from City residents regarding NOL. She said one of the main concerns was traffic, which was chaos. She said she was able to walk at a slow pace faster than the vehicles were able to drive. She said in 2017 a plan was supported by the commission to help make San Marco Avenue better and felt that plan would be supported by the community at this time. She agreed that NOL was great for the business community but not at the cost of taxpayers and residential livability. She felt that the county should assist and if no help was offered, she was unsure if NOL could be sustainable.

Commissioner DePreter said he had received the same emails about the street vendors. He agreed that the San Marco Avenue plan had been a lost opportunity. He said normally it was vehicle congestion but thought there were too many pedestrians as well. He said he was looking forward to the discussion regarding capacity within the City.

Mayor Sikes-Kline said she was thankful for the comments as she had received the same. She felt this NOL season was very different from past years. She noted the Tourist Development Council (TDC) had requested the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to spend an additional \$400,000 on advertising for the NOL specifically starting back in the summer, which was earlier than normal.

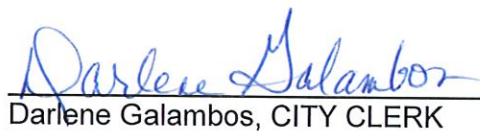
She said the campaign was very successful. She said this year was intense and she was looking forward to hearing the report from staff in the beginning of February.

15. Adjournment

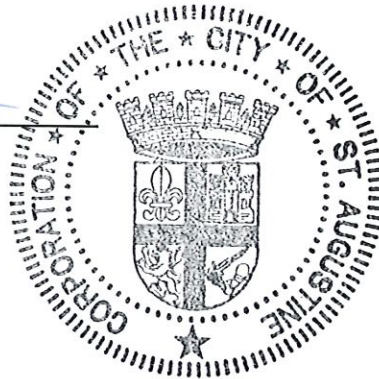
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 P.M.²



Nancy Sikes-Kline, MAYOR



Darlene Galambos, CITY CLERK



² Transcribed by Elyse Wiemann