

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

City Commission Special Meeting
Wednesday, June 21, 2023

The City Commission met in formal session Wednesday, June 21, 2023, at 9:00 A.M. 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
Mark Simpson, Finance Director
Todd Grant, Utilities Director
Amy Skinner, Director, Planning and Building
Jennifer Michaux, Police Chief
Elyse Wiemann, Recording Secretary

2. General Public Comments

The Commissioners heard from the following members of the public:

- Vicki Pepper

Public comment was closed.

3. Strategic Plan Review and Discussion (David Birchim, City Manager)

David Birchim, City Manager, introduced the topic. He noted that the Strategic Plan was created from the City's 2014 Vision Plan and reviewed the Goals and Objectives as outlined within the Commission's meeting materials.

Mr. Birchim said that based on the Commission's budgetary requests, he identified where their requests fell within the Objectives, and offered

recommendations for updating the Vision and Strategic Plans.

Mayor Sikes-Kline suggested having each Commissioner review the updates provided and note any changes or modifications.

Commissioner Horvath requested that a feasibility study be conducted to add solar panels to the top of the Parking Garage and Visitor Information Center (VIC) and suggested this be included under Resiliency and Sustainability.

Commissioner Blonder confirmed the development of funding for land acquisition, pension plan reform, and expansion of the Composting and Tree Canopy Programs were included. She requested funding for shading along City streets to address the Urban Heat Island issue. She advocated for sustainability in a significant and strategic way by joining the Race to Zero signatory.

Mayor Sikes-Kline indicated the Race to Zero may be a big enough initiative to need its own category.

Commissioner Horvath and staff discussed what was happening with commercial glass recycling, challenges with space and internal resources, potential solutions for starting a program for local businesses, and how a reorganization within Solid Waste may allow the City to offer services that were not currently provided.

Mayor Sikes-Kline noted that there may be a need to add Key Performance Indicators to Sustainability.

Commissioner Blonder suggested a Key Performance Indicator could be to become a signatory on the Race to Zero or the addition of measurable goals in Climate Sustainability.

Mayor Sikes-Kline suggested making Sustainability its own Objective since it was a significant component of the Plan.

Commissioner Blonder concurred with this suggestion.

Commissioner Garris reviewed her request for funding for sidewalks and repaving on South Dixie Highway. She requested the creation of a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) for West Augustine, as well as drainage improvements in the area.

Commissioner Springfield confirmed his interest in funding for land acquisition. He requested that funding be added to research best practices in recruitment and retention of employees. He noted funding for the upcoming Sister City event, the evaluation of enhancements to Francis Field, and funding for electric tools and vehicles. He suggested looking at areas of the Plan that could be reduced or removed. He expressed interest in developing a better relationship with the City's lobbyist.

The Commission discussed work being done by the Commission, the City's

lobbyist, and staff prior to the next legislative session.

Mayor Sikes-Kline confirmed her request to add funding for exhibits at the VIC, support for the Neighborhood Office and expansion of Grants Program, increasing the monetary amount for the Citizen Award Program winners, and addition of staff in the Communications and Police Departments.

The Commission and staff discussed funding for planning of the park land in the Madeira annexation.

Commissioner Blonder suggested calling attention to the Civil rights and African American Heritage elements within the City for consideration within the VIC.

The Commission discussed the Event Planning and Management element of the Strategic Plan and how it might be updated based on changes that have occurred since the Plan was written.

Mayor Sikes-Kline noted the sale of the property on Dolphin Drive and the proceeds being used to build a new Archeology Center. She said this new civic asset should go into the Capital Improvement Plan. She requested continued financial support for the University of Florida Program at the Governors House, and the LaFlorida Projects.

The Commissioners and staff discussed the third phase of the Madeira Project and the high-quality bird colony in the area. They talked about challenges with public access given it was in a private gated community and how the City might partner on solutions.

Commissioner Garris provided an update on the success of Juneteenth event.

Mayor Sikes-Kline asked for an inventory of City owned property and the condition of those assets. She reminded the

Commission that they had discussed adding a feature or statue to the May Street project. She noted that additional funding may be needed and that she would like to see this addition take place within the next year. She suggested a Native American component could be considered and said she would like to see proposals around this concept.

The Commission and staff discussed the process for creating a committee to develop proposals, the size of the group, and how Sunshine Laws would impact this type of committee. The Commission agreed that Commissioner Horvath should head this Committee and its work.

Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney, asked the Commission if they would like to continue voluntary Tour Guide testing since the law requiring testing was scheduled to sunset on July 1, 2023.

The Commission agreed voluntary testing would be good and wanted the participants to receive a Certificate of Completion. They requested the test be reviewed.

Commissioner Blonder said that with the new City Leadership and Commissioners, it would be good to hold a formal Strategic Planning process since it had not been done in about nine years.

The Commission agreed that holding a formal process in 2024 would be good.

Mr. Birchim noted it would be necessary to include funding for a consultant to help facilitate a formal planning process for the 2024-2025 budget cycle. He said he would talk with staff and come back to the Commission with a response.

Mr. Birchim shared the City had received \$16,000,000 in funding from the State, which would be used for the Lake Maria Sanchez project, repair of City Hall, the Pena Peck House and the VIC, and the addition of a sewer/force main and lift

station for the Holmes Blvd property for affordable housing.

The Commission agreed with the recommended changes to the Strategic and Vision Plans which reflected the already achieved Objectives and new priorities for the upcoming budget cycle.

Mr. Birchim said staff would update the Plans and present them to the Commission soon.

4. Items by Mayor and Commissioners

Commissioner Springfield commented on the success of the Juneteenth event.

Commissioner Blonder said she was participating in the weeklong training on Building Beloved Community Leaders.

Commissioner Garriss shared that she attended the County Commission meeting where Eddie Vickers was recognized. She said she would let the Commission and Melissa Wissel, Communications Director, know when the award would be given to Ms. Vickers.

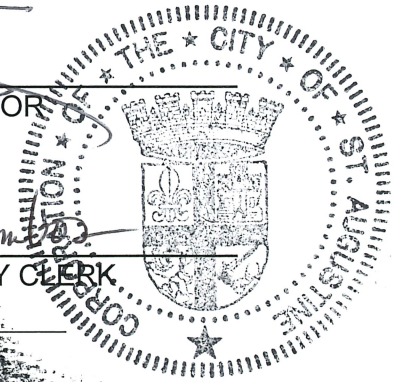
Mayor Sikes-Kline expressed her appreciation of Commissioner Garriss' representation of the Commission and participation in the Juneteenth event.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 A.M.¹


Nancy Sikes-Kline, MAYOR


Darlene Galambos, CITY CLERK



¹ Transcribed by Elyse Wiemann