

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

City Commission Special Workshop Meeting Wednesday, February 19, 2020

The City Commission met in formal session Wednesday, February 19, 2020 at 2:02 P.M. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Tracy Upchurch, and the following were present:

1. Roll Call: Tracy W. Upchurch, Mayor/City Commissioner
Leanna S. A. Freeman, Vice Mayor/City Commissioner
Roxanne Horvath, City Commissioner
John Valdes, City Commissioner
Nancy Sikes-Kline, City Commissioner

John Regan, City Manager
Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney
Candice Seymour, Acting City Clerk
Meredith Breidenstein, Assistant City Manager
David Birchim, Director, Planning and Building
Todd Grant, Director, Public Works
Mark Simpson, Director, Financial Services
Glabra Skipp, Environmental Programs Coordinator
Barry Fox, Police Chief
Laura Morse, Recording Secretary

2. General Public Comments

Item 2 heard after Item 3.

Mayor Upchurch requested that general comments be moved to the end of the meeting, so the public could hear the discussions and provide more informed comments.

The Commission heard from the following members of the public:

Jeannette Moore
David Greene
Shelby Dixon

Public comment was closed.

3. Sustainability Discussion¹

Todd Grant, Director, Public Works, provided an overview of the topic and noted the following:

- Staff appreciated the opportunity to present the project to the Commission
- Significant talent of the team working on this project, along with City staff
- Sustainability and resiliency were co-mingled terms and used interchangeably
- The topics chosen for the workshop were initiatives of sustainability programs
- Core values and principles of the City guided these programs
- In-house sustainable practices, along with community outreach and

¹ Presentation attached to original minutes

program engagement should be achieved

Internal Sustainability Plan

Glabra Skipp, Environmental Programs Coordinator, reviewed the program areas, initiatives and the next steps of the Plan.

Ms. Skipp concluded that since the Plan was a year old, the committee would need to re-convene to review the programs and initiatives initially documented, and ways to implement them. She noted the committee would require the Commission's feedback on any requested future initiatives.

Mr. Grant asked the Commission to review the Tables in the back of the packet and highlight items of higher importance and they would be made the first key issues for moving forward.

Organic Waste Initiative

Mr. Grant introduced Rick Stevens, Manager, Solid Waste and Sanitation, Olivia Smith, Recycling Coordinator, and Mark Hartley, Manager, Streets and Grounds. He commended their talent and experience on the project.

Mr. Grant, Mr. Stevens and Ms. Smith discussed the survey distributed to the community, and the development and implementation of the three options for composting service. They noted the following:

- Organic waste was heavy and about one-half of the discarded item weight
- Intent was landfill waste reduction and beneficial use of organic waste composting
- Composting would keep disposal fees down
- Composting was a sustainable practice
- Most people did not compost; however, they stated they would if a program was in place
- Reviewed seven other cities and counties with similar programs for insight and none directly offered composting as a municipal service; however, they represented vendors that could offer space
- Program was subscription based where residents or businesses sign up to determine a feasible number of participants for sustainability
- Program was initially free for community, to determine accurate operational costs and volumes
- Cost assessment for the options was the primary focus, and once costs were determined, could assess a monthly fee and roll out as a true program for commercial and residential customers
- Range of fees assessed by cities using the curbside service was between \$8.00 and \$28.00
- Would analyze success and educate on what materials worked
- Driver and temporary help would take the material to a site for organic waste expulsion
- Compost location that currently used City wastewater treatment sludge to create commercial grade composting was interested
- The average family produced one ton of trash per year
- During pilot phase there would be co-collection for commercial and residential customers
- Tonnage and quality control of waste collection were important
- Pilot program would use the five-gallon bins owned by the City (sixty of them)

Discussion of curbside recycling ensued, and the following was noted:

- Since the City had taken over the program, pickup increased from 47 tons to 225 tons monthly, collected from residential and commercial customers
- New recycling accounts were being doubled and tripled

- Solid waste, recycling, vegetative and construction debris were being diverted from the landfill
- Appliances, 'white goods' and scrap metal were picked up by a separate claw truck
- Organic waste should be a part of the plan

Commissioner Freeman requested that the Commission receive a photo of the compost bin, or an example via email.

Mr. Grant responded to Commissioner Sikes-Kline's request for explanation of the customer composting process and stated that the City would purchase a compost bin, provide to the resident, then provide education on composting by means of workshops and literature "do's and don'ts."

Mr. Grant stated to the Commission that since the topic was being presented for the first time, more research would be done, and a true pilot option refined. He noted that supplying residents with compost bins would also be reviewed.

Mayor Upchurch commended Mr. Stevens for the dramatic difference in the appearance of St. George Street and how well it now looked.

Tree, Canopy Enhancement

Mr. Hartley reviewed the topic and noted the following:

- Storm damage had reduced tree canopies over past several years
- A South Florida bug that destroyed trees was being closely monitored due to the age of the City trees
- Age naturally decayed trees, and crews actively reported these trees to Mr. Hartley who had a professional arborist look at any tree in question
- Over the past five years, about 12-20 trees were planted and the plan was to increase the number to

catch up from trees lost over the years

- The existing tree code was a blessing due to required oversight
- The code problem was that the City was compact and had mostly aerial power lines, which trees should not be planted under
- "Right tree, right place" dictated future tree growth, their expansion and canopy, and answered whether trees would expand into a sidewalk, a curb, or provide a mobility issue with trips or falls
- Healthy trees were a sign of a healthy City and how well the area was being maintained
- The City was a 37-year recipient of the Tree City Award, a significant accomplishment
- Wanted to plant the right trees in the right place with the right variety and public education would assist and escalate this
- Trees were vital from aspect of aesthetics and carbon footprint
- During Arbor Day, 250-300 saplings were given out; however, could not track how many were planted
- Suggested local school or the City grow 100 saplings and hand out with one-year growth, somewhere around one-gallon size (2 to 3 feet)
- Canopy loss was difficult to accurately measure

Mr. Hartley noted that the intent was to introduce a public-private tree program and tree planting.

Mr. Grant continued by stating that ways were being reviewed for residents to plant trees on their own private property; however, there were ramifications and he requested that Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney, provide clarification.

Ms. Lopez noted the three issues with planting trees on private property:

- Required a finding of public purpose to expend City funds for

someone's private property. The City could legitimately articulate a public policy reason for this

- There were contractual and documentary issues with property access (fences, walls): Would the City have a continuing conservation easement, or the right to access property for a tree health check, would this be recorded, would it pass to the next property owner
- As per state statute, last year Florida legislature gave private property owners the right to cut down any tree without a permit if an arborist drafted a report that stated the tree was dangerous or diseased

Ms. Lopez stated that the City must consider the level of control and oversight it wanted. She noted that staff considered the simpler route: to hand out larger trees vs. seedlings, to educate the public, rather than administer a complex conservation easement with potential access disputes or disputes with uninformed owners.

Mr. Grant discussed the resident right-of-way (ROW) tree request:

- City would plant a tree in the property's front ROW, per property owner's request which the property owner would agree to maintain
- Resources would be used to plant trees on a requested basis with species diversification
- Per code, a tree would be planted if a tree was cut down, on a 1:1 or 2:1 replacement, and the initiative was to plant more than in past years
- The location of planting was an issue if a ROW existed

The Commission discussed:

- When trees were removed, the City was obligated to plant and was held to same rules as citizens
- The tree mitigation fund would be another resource

- When the City requested the citizens to plant trees, two-thirds were lost
- Resident monetary compensation into tree fund for approved tree removal was suggested, then City would plant trees in other areas to ensure the trees were planted correctly and properly maintained

Business Recognition Program

Mr. Grant and Ms. Skipp discussed the program and the initiative:

- Many communities promoted businesses that recognized 'green' initiatives
- The City partnered with Dr. Natalie Stephenson's graphics design class at Flagler to develop logo options and program criteria
- Different initiatives would obtain a higher achievement level such as bronze, silver or gold
- Ideas would be presented about window decals, or other recognition options, with suggestion to use City logo on the business' marketing
- A legal disclaimer was being developed for the winning student
- The Commission would review several of the student drafted designs and the program criteria, to determine what they liked
- Students would present the designs to the Commission for experience in being in front of a board
- 'Green' was used ubiquitously with many of these programs; therefore, the intent was to keep the word from the City's program and still develop a unique brand and logo that represented a business and expressed what they were doing

Mayor Upchurch noted that the City of St. Augustine Beach had a similar program and suggested that the City partner with them, as their ethic and outlook mirrored the City's and would be mutually beneficial.

Ms. Skipp noted she was planning a meeting with a representative from the City of St. Augustine Beach's sustainability committee to discuss the topic.

Mr. Grant noted that the logo options and program criteria would be brought back to the Commission at the conclusion of the Flagler semester.

Big Belly Solar Trash Cans

Staff discussed the topics:

- An enormous impact was made on St. George Street
- The Historical Architecture Review Board (HARB) provided approval for installation
- The cans had a compactable trash side and a non-compacting recycling side
- The compacting was solar powered
- Built-in software package for remote monitoring which notified when full and required emptying
- Staff hours were reduced for trash cleanup on St. George Street
- Cans provided notification every 12 hours on a phone list report with a red light that would signal time to check
- Data was real-time, so if something jammed or a door left open, it was known immediately
- More datapoints were available to be collected by a service provider
- From reports, could trend hot-spot areas with heavy foot traffic and apply special attention to that area
- Contamination on recycling side was minimal because the can front was different than trash can
- Cans were super durable and withstood abuse
- Pair of Cans cost a little over \$6,000
- Can compaction rate was 3:1 and it held 5 to 6 times more than a conventional can, reducing trash bags by 50%

- 'Organix' compostable bags were being reviewed since they break down with time
- Cans were installed for Night-of-Lights and were full in hours
- 10 pairs were installed on St. George Street, which removed 25 to 28 of the 46 trash cans. With 5 to 7 more pairs, all trash cans could be removed from that street
- Units easier to clean and could be wiped down with a handi-wipe
- Cans positioned for correct amount of sun, partial sun charged the cans for several days
- Desired placement in high traffic areas for removal of trash cans
- It was not believed that removal of trash cans would cause proximity issues, based on feedback from businesses
- Construction waste would be dropped off next to compactors

Commissioner Sikes-Kline noted her intent to connect Jeff Sheffield, Executive Director at the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization, with the City team, to provide this data and assist other cities as part of the 'Smart City' initiative.

The Commission noted that business owners really liked the cans and were also happy with the pressure washing being done on St. George Street.

FPL LED Street Light Program & Utility Undergrounding

Mr. Grant discussed the FPL LED Street Light Program:

- FPL developed a program where private companies replaced existing lights with LED at no up-front charge since it was a cleaner and more efficient usage of energy
- Private companies would take savings from electricity as profit for the service
- FPL did an analysis on the number of City's lights and they welcomed

program discussion for replacement of all streetlights with LED

- Trying to install two on Cordova Street at entrance to Spanish Street parking lot for observation
- LED's were much cleaner, safer and directional which avoided a wide casting of light
- Many lights were high pressure sodium and not efficient

Mr. Grant discussed the Utility Undergrounding topic:

- FPL had three projects on the books: North Davis Shores, Downtown Carrera Street and North City
- Projects based on FPL's criteria for underground installation which was based on the electrical grid system, where they identify places with re-occurring outages or outages with restoration difficulties
- As a policy, the City always offered for utilities to go underground at the time when construction required digging up the road
- Underground utilities were best; therefore, the City Attorney was exploring the issue of people declining the placement of utilities from poles to underground
- Telecommunication statutes could interfere with removing the poles due to the carrier antennas
- The first project was about 1-1/2 years from construction and attempts were being made to get other utilities underground during the process for overhead cleanup

The Commission and staff discussed:

- Latest 5G technology with large pieces of equipment being placed on power poles in lieu of towers
- Places such as Europe had indicated 5G was unwanted because of aesthetics
- Requested that HARB be consulted on the light replacements, due to

hot spots and consideration of historic districts

- FPL offered two lighting options on the Kelvin scale, the higher the brighter and once the examples were seen, would know more
- LED Light color and illumination were very important and should start with lower wattage in the historic district and higher wattage outside district
- The City's policy was to evaluate undergrounding on every project since the underground issue was important to everyone
- The City garage opened in 2006 with motion sensing LEDs, which cut the energy bill in half
- Intent was to build relationships with FPL executives for possibility of increased funding, therefore, a celebration was recommended with FPL that would occur with the unveiling of Coquina Park
- Solar and canopy were suggested for certain building tops, the City had PhD students that were evaluating buildings such as fleet and solid waste with low pitched roofs

4. Items by Commissioners

Commissioner Horvath suggested the creation of a bulk item refill facility, where container items such as soap would be refilled to avoid throwaway plastic. She noted that the topics discussed would be great agenda items for a meeting with City of St. Augustine Beach.

Commissioner Freeman discussed the following:

- Setting goals was how a program moved to the next level; however, our City's size and resources had been a disadvantage in the past
- Sustainability plan purposefully left out reduction of landfill or passing a zero-waste resolution because they were new programs

- Partnerships were important, whether with individuals, businesses, or neighboring governments
- If a pilot program was a temporary six-month program, it should be a full-scale service pilot to determine what the community could tolerate, as it could be scaled back
- Needed to make composting easy for people

Commissioner Valdes discussed the following:

- Should encourage people who were building, buying or creating to underground their entrance services, as it was not expensive and would assist with aesthetics
- Solar shading was a great idea
- Energy could be captured from the significant tidal changes and hydro-turbines were suggested and should look at feasibility
- City had looked at alternative energy supply such as structural solar shades on the garage, and prior analysis showed that the capital investment did not pay off for the benefits
- A different measure and definition of success might assist with viewing the financial aspect, such as reduction of carbon footprint and intrinsic social value
- Concerned about individual composting due to the considerable number of residences no longer owner occupied

Commissioner Valdes noted his enlightenment on the topics presented in the meeting, expressed appreciation for the participants and noted the value of strength in numbers.

Mayor Upchurch discussed the following:

- Current yard debris was being disposed to 'Indianhead Biomass' who ground it with some

wastewater treatment sludge to make a compost

- Current state of recycling needed educational outreach via flyers and videos
- Certain products like glass were equal to or cheaper to re-produce a new bottle
- A reduce / reuse campaign was being researched
- The State pre-empted the City from banning single use bottles, single use plastic bags and Styrofoam
- People paying into the tree mitigation fund made sense as opposed to purchasing a sapling

Mayor Upchurch noted he was delighted with the presentation and pleased with the staff and the shared vision, and he looked forward to more information.

Commissioner Sikes-Kline discussed the following:

- Stormwater tidal valve program and development of a master plan was extremely important to the citizens
- New design requirements to make lift stations more resilient was an important large ticket item and needed to be addressed
- FEMA funded 10 of 13 lift stations for a complete revamp
- Downtown lighting plan proposal was under review for a lighting assessment and placing lights on private property to light public space. Businesses were already participating

Commissioner Sikes-Kline summated the requests made to the Commission from the presentation:

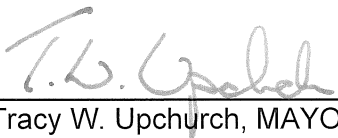
- Respond to suggested pilot program on organic waste
- Respond to ROW / Tree planting oversight program options:
 - Replace or cut down a tree
 - Give out small saplings

- Provide larger trees during Arbor Day
- ROW request for a tree by a private property owner
- City would purchase 20 large trees, and first 20 citizens that make request will get a tree
- Respond to deployment of second phase of Big Belly Trash Cans which would be proposed in budget for next year

Mr. Grant suggested that it would be beneficial to incorporate some of the discussed items from the Public Works and Utilities quarterly updates so the Commission could maintain awareness of the stages of progress.

5. Adjournment

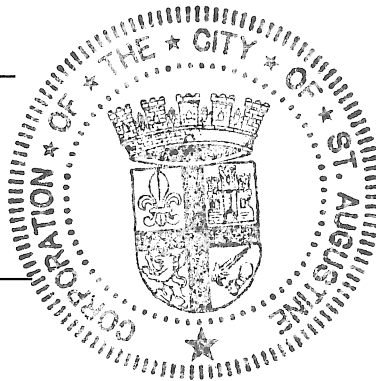
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:53 P.M.²



Tracy W. Upchurch, MAYOR



Darlene Galambos, CITY CLERK



² Transcribed by Laura Morse