

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

City Commission Special Meeting
Monday, December 7, 2020

The City Commission met in formal session Monday, December 7, 2020 at 7:30 P.M. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Tracy Upchurch, and the following were present:

1. Roll Call: Tracy Upchurch, Mayor/City Commissioner
Roxanne Horvath, City Commissioner
Nancy Sikes-Kline, City Commissioner
John Valdes, City Commissioner

Absent: Leanna S. Freeman, Vice-Mayor/City Commissioner

Staff: John Regan, City Manager
Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney
Darlene Galambos, City Clerk
Barry Fox, Police Chief
Melissa Wissel, Communications Director
Cindy Walker, Communications Specialist
Candice Seymour, Recording Secretary
Laura Morse, Recording Secretary

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Reverend Ted Voorhees, St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church, delivered the invocation, and Mayor Upchurch led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Upchurch acknowledged the anniversary of Pearl Harbor which caused tremendous loss of life and he noted the importance of remembering those who dedicated their lives to serve this country.

2. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

The Commission heard from the following members of the public:

- BJ Kalaidi

Public comment was closed.

3. COMMENTS BY CURRENT SITTING COMMISSION

Commissioner Sikes-Kline noted she looked forward to the evening.

Commissioner Horvath also noted she looked forward to the evening.

Mayor Upchurch noted the specialty of the meeting which provided opportunity to thank outgoing Commissioners and greet those newly elected. He reminded the Commissioners of the farewell words delivered to Vice-Mayor Freeman at the previous meeting and the current opportunity to formally welcome Commissioner-elect Barbara Blonder. He indicated the excitement for her impending service and stated the Commission looked forward to working with her.

Commissioner Valdes apologized for his absence at the previous meeting. He noted

the appreciation, honor, and enjoyment of working with Vice-Mayor Freeman for many years, which began on the Planning and Zoning Board, and thanked her for her service. He stated he looked forward to working with, and learning from, a new Commissioner at the table.

Mayor Upchurch requested that Melissa Wissel, Communications Director, assist with the oaths of office.

Ms. Wissel introduced Darlene Galambos, City Clerk, to administer the oaths of office.

4. OATHS OF OFFICE

4A. Mayor Tracy Upchurch

Ms. Galambos swore in Mayor Upchurch, who was accompanied by Beth Upchurch.

4B. Commissioner Roxanne Horvath

Ms. Galambos swore in Commissioner Horvath.

4C. Commissioner Barbara Blonder

Ms. Galambos swore in Commissioner-elect Blonder, who was accompanied by David Haynes and Seth Blonder-Haynes.

5. ELECTION OF VICE-MAYOR

MOTION

Commissioner Horvath MOVED to nominate Commissioner Sikes-Kline as Vice-Mayor. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Valdes and APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

6. COMMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

6.A. Discussion and adoption of Resolution 2020-39, providing for the Operating Policies, Reorganization, Rules and Procedures of the City of St. Augustine City Commission.

Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney, reviewed the Resolution.

John Regan, City Manager, noted the Alcazar Room rules for public meetings had transformed during the pandemic, and the significant difference was the requirement to wear a face covering over nose and mouth at all times, with ability to only lower when speaking. He advised this change reflected the Commission's will, based on discussion at the last meeting.

Mayor Upchurch noted the rules for public meetings, Exhibit 'F' of the Resolution, lacked the detail of the rules distributed by Mr. Regan in the meeting.¹

Ms. Lopez advised the detailed rules were created when the Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) and Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) returned to in-person meetings in September 2020, and concern existed for holding public hearings. She noted that Resolution 2020-21 provided Mr. Regan with authority to 'tweak' the rules, and that whether the rules should be general or more detailed was at the will of the Commission.

Mayor Upchurch suggested the more detailed rules be included as a second page of 'Exhibit F'.

MOTION

Mayor Upchurch MOVED to include the more detailed rules as part of Exhibit 'F'. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Horvath and APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.

Commissioner Blonder noted a scrivener's error on Exhibit "C", Meeting Procedures, page 11, Section K 'Exhibits':

- At end of first sentence 'possibly' should be 'possible'

¹ Attached to original Commission packet

MOTION

Mayor Upchurch MOVED to approve Resolution 2020-39 as amended. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Sikes-Kline.

VOTE ON MOTION

AYES: Upchurch, Sikes-Kline, Horvath, Valdes, Blonder

NAYES: None

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

6.B. Resolution 2020-40: Urging Governor DeSantis to reinstate the provisions of EO-20-69 allowing the use of CMT to conduct meetings.

Commissioner Horvath reviewed the Resolution and requested the support of other Commissioners. She noted the uncertainty of Governor DeSantis' agreeance, but stated it was worth the attempt.

Commissioner Blonder stated the science was very clear, case numbers were increasing exponentially in many states, and it was a responsible decision to respect residents' safety and make the Commission's voice heard.

Commissioner Valdes recapped the COVID-19 cases in Florida and believed the peak was still months away. He stated essential functions such as jobs and shopping were necessary; however, alternatives existed that should be pursued to avoid placing citizens and City staff at risk, and he supported the Resolution.

Mayor Upchurch noted his appreciation of City staff for accommodating the Alcazar Room for meetings. He stated it was unfair for staff and law enforcement to be in the room during meetings while Commissioners participated virtually; however, the Resolution provided Commissioners the option to remotely or physically participate and he would support the Resolution.

There was Commission consensus to proceed with the Resolution.

Commissioner Horvath MOVED to approve Resolution 2020-40. The motion was SECONDED by Commissioner Blonder.

VOTE ON MOTION

AYES: Horvath, Blonder, Sikes-Kline, Valdes, Upchurch

NAYES: None

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

7. CLOSING COMMENTS BY MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Valdes thanked City staff for the tremendous efforts to make the architecturally challenged room safe for staff, citizens and Commissioners. He stated the importance of public meetings to serve citizens, but suggested a better facility to accommodate size, airflow and air quality, and if an alternative could not be found, the Commission should return to their duties virtually. He noted the regret of losing home rule and expressed resentment for the Governor's decision on the return to in-person meetings, as science should be listened to and followed.

Commissioner Horvath stated she was hopeful for the vaccine protection. She welcomed Commissioner Blonder.

Mayor Upchurch welcomed Commissioner Blonder and congratulated her election during a difficult set of circumstances. He advised they worked together for many years at Flagler College, and stated she would be a passionate, effective, and talented Commissioner.

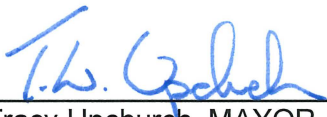
Commissioner Blonder echoed the statements of Commissioner Valdes and Commissioner Horvath regarding meeting in the Alcazar Room. She emphasized that vaccines were forthcoming in a short period of time, compared to everything

sacrificed the past ten months. She stated the request for a safer meeting location was temporary, and if not viable, then she preferred virtual meetings until people could be safely vaccinated.

Commissioner Blonder thanked Vice-Mayor Freeman for her professionalism and respectful communication during and after the campaign. She stated how honorable Vice-Mayor Freeman was and she left an indelible legacy with projects such as the 7-11 proposal in North City and Fish Island. She expressed her excitement to be part of the Commission.

8. ADJOURNMENT

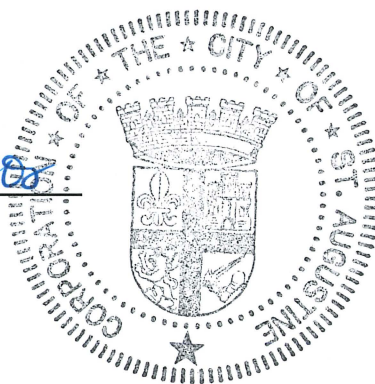
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 P.M.²



Tracy Upchurch, MAYOR



Darlene Galambos, CITY CLERK



² Transcribed by Laura Morse