

The City Commission of the City of Fernandina Beach, Florida, met in a Work Session on Tuesday, June 14, 2011 at 5:00 pm in the City Commission Chambers. Present were Mayor Susan Steger presiding, Vice-Mayor Tim Poynter, Commissioners Jeffrey Bunch, Eric Childers, and Arlene Filkoff. Also present were City Manager Michael Czymbor, City Attorney Tammi Bach, and City Clerk Mary Mercer.

Mayor Steger called the meeting to order and dispensed with normal formalities.

3.1 PRESENT, REVIEW, AND DISCUSS THE DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN: City Manager Czymbor reminded the City Commission of the Forward Fernandina efforts that included a series of surveys and community events to solicit input about things that people value in the community. He explained that over the last few months staff has put together a comprehensive start for discussion. He recognized Community Development Department (CDD) Director Marshall McCrary, City Planner Adrienne Dessy, and City Planner Kelly Gibson for their work in putting the document together. He also recognized members of the Restoration Foundation.

Mr. Adam Kaufman, Restoration Foundation, extended his thanks to City staff. He explained that the objective at the end of the process is to have the City Commission own the plan. He suggested that prior to formal adoption of the plan to have a Town Hall meeting scheduled significantly in advance of a final vote so that public can comment and that comment can be included in the final adoption. He pointed out that the adoption of the plan will evidence concurrence and agreement as to what the City needs to accomplish and what success will look like upon achievement of its goals and objectives. He suggested adding another F2 to the vocabulary after the plan's approval "focus and finish". He explained that the hope was that after adoption that there will be an understanding and acceptance by all concerned that the focus of the City's efforts in the years to come will be the finish of the projects set forth in the strategic plan.

Mr. Ed Preston reviewed the four goals: 1) complete the waterfront park and waterfront improvements; 2) focus on downtown revitalization; 3) work toward 8<sup>th</sup> Street improvements; and 4) address neighborhoods surrounding the downtown core. He reviewed the strategies for the four goals as contained in the strategic plan report. Commissioner Filkoff inquired if the City had any maintenance activities that might be best done while some of this work is in progress. She questioned if so were they factored into this plan. Mr. Preston pointed out that the City already has an annual budget and maintenance costs are included along with that. He stated that the assumption of this process was that all of that would continue on and be taken care of with processes apart from this process. Commissioner Filkoff explained that the City may have something opened up at the waterfront and there might be some other project that is related in that area for maintenance. She questioned if there could be a dovetail of timing. Mr. Preston noted to review regular maintenance with regard to these projects to see if there are any advantages of scale and timing. There was a brief discussion about this.

Commissioner Childers pointed out that beach renourishment would have to be dealt with in 2013/2014 and inquired if that should be included in this plan or dealt with separately. Mayor Steger commented that this strategic plan is focused on certain areas of town excluding the beach. City Manager Czymbor stated that it could be put in as a goal, but reminded the City Commission that the City adopts a five year capital improvement plan and that would be included in the plan. He pointed out that the strategic plan will become an integral part of the Capital Improvement Plan. It was noted that beach renourishment could potentially cost the City \$3 million dollars.

Mr. Preston referred to page 14 of the strategic plan and reviewed the individual goals and action strategies including projected costs and performance measures. Vice-Mayor Poynter inquired how much Zev Cohen had completed for construction plans and project phasing. Mr. Curtiss Burkett explained that after going through the various concepts and the master plan that was approved a couple of years ago they came up with an overall construction budget. He stated that the total including the work to be done with the railroad was a little over \$5 million and the park itself was about \$3.2 million. He pointed out that they decided to look at developing 60% plans for the entire park so that any phase or any piece could be done, because geometrically all the pieces would fit together. He explained that the construction plans could be done either to a level to go out to bid or it would be to City staff level to do the improvements. He briefly clarified that a stormwater permit is good for five years and the district would allow two 1 year extensions. There was some discussion about the components of the approved master plan noting that the area could still accommodate the Shrimp Festival, Petanque, and other events.

Mr. Preston continued the review of the individual goals and action strategies including projected costs and performance measures. *1.02.01 Work cooperatively with railroad to open and improve the railroad crossing.* Mayor Steger questioned the Alachua crossing, because she thought the City was

ready to move forward with the current funding. City Manager Czymbor explained that some money was set aside, but this would be opening, reconstructing the crossing as well as a part of Front Street and Broome Street up to the crossing. He reminded the City Commission that the City could contract with the railroad for that engineering.

The City Commission reviewed the action strategies under the second and third goal. CDD Director McCrary clarified 3.03.03 for a citywide market study with a focus on commercial corridors and determination of incentives and zoning strategies that may start in the first fiscal year and go into the second fiscal year. He pointed out that this goes into encouraging reuse and redevelopment along existing commercial corridors (i.e. 8<sup>th</sup> Street). The City Commission continued the review of the action strategies for the third goal and began the review of the strategies of the fourth goal.

*4.02.03 Establish and implement uniform signage and way finding system.* Vice-Mayor Poynter questioned how much more work would have to be done on the Sign Ordinance since it was so comprehensive the first time. CDD Director McCrary clarified that the way finding signage was to provide consistency in City signage in terms of better communication to the public. He commented that this could have implications on private signage as well.

City Manager Czymbor requested clarification of 4.03.01 Creation of neighborhood planning areas. CDD McCrary explained that part of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) one of the major issues was neighborhood preservation and the notion of zoning addressing the things that a given neighborhood might want to retain. He stated that throughout the Comprehensive Plan you'll see the burden put back on the City to open the door to neighborhoods and provide a way to delineate and identify the unifying characteristics of a given neighborhood. He pointed out that this looks at landscape type, housing type, etc. to approach the community to see if they want the City to help foster some communications on whether there needed to be regulations to enhance unique aspects of the neighborhood to preserve them for the future.

Mayor Steger referred to 4.02.03 and commented that it would enhance the community if there were more uniform signage as far as real estate signage goes. CDD Director McCrary noted this.

*4.04.01 Replacement of street trees.* Mr. Preston questioned if this was a maintenance item or a brand new capital facilities item. CDD Director McCrary stated that this is a maintenance item, but staff would also like to see a strategy and an actual plan with a policy that the City adheres to.

*4.04.03 Evaluate reduced plan review fee in exchange for tree replacement/planting.* Vice-Mayor Poynter questioned the current fee. CDD Director McCrary replied \$50 and commented that staff could also evaluate other types of planning related fees. He pointed out that if the City could incentivize getting additional landscaping or trees that was something the City should do.

Mr. Preston pointed out that in just year one and two there was about \$5 million dollars' worth of improvements. It was noted that the following could be done in-house for no cost: 2.01.01 and 2.01.02.

City Manager Czymbor referred to page 35 of the strategic plan and reminded the City Commission of the presentation on various alternatives including voted debt and non-voted debt. He pointed out that staff also talked with bond counsel and an underwriter consultant on non-traditional financing of public improvements. He stated that the first question was whether the City Commission was going to pursue voted debt or non-voted debt (voted debt would be similar to the Greenway Bond Issue). He briefly explained that a bank loan would require annual debt service that could come from electrical franchise fees, natural/gas franchise fees, or community redevelopment agency (CRA) revenues. Vice-Mayor Poynter questioned if non-voted debt would give the City more flexibility to use those dollars. City Manager Czymbor briefly explained if the City Commission were to adopt the plan and the cost was \$5 million dollars; that for a 20 year bank loan of \$5 million dollars that would be debt service of approximately \$408,000 and pledging electric franchise fees that would raise everyone's electrical fee 1.46% (i.e. \$100 bill a person would pay an additional \$1.46 a month to pay off the debt service). He pointed out that right now residents pay 4.5% which was lowered three years ago. He explained that with the addition of the gas franchise fee and the CRA revenues the electric franchise fee could be lowered. He explained that the underwriter said that there is an opportunity to do a special assessment district in the City and every property owner would benefit from the improvements so the City Commission could levy a special assessment based on the net benefit. There was some discussion about the idea of a bank loan, a special assessment district, a revenue bond, or voted approved debt.

Vice-Mayor Poynter referred to the CRA and questioned if the City identified another area that could be beneficial to make a CRA could the City use dollars out of one CRA in another CRA. City

Attorney Bach replied no. City Manager Czymbor pointed out that the City Commission is the CRA Board of Directors and the City Commission has not met since 2005. He stated that some residents have proposed disbanding the CRA and reconstituting it with the lower property values. He suggested using the financial advisor to look at this to evaluate the benefits and drawbacks.

Vice-Mayor Poynter commented that the library was not mentioned, and questioned if it was part of the revitalization of downtown. Mayor Steger noted that the City Commission reached consensus that the City Commission would support a library downtown. Vice-Mayor Poynter inquired if there was any consensus on a percentage that the City would support or match. Commissioner Filkoff stated that she was willing to match the maximum that the City Commission heard collectively from the County. After a brief discussion, it was noted that the City would support a library downtown with a dollar for dollar match with a maximum amount to have a new or enhanced facility. The City Commission had some discussion about how to move forward with the strategic plan and whether to go with voter debt or non-voter debt. *The consensus of the City Commission was to proceed with non-voter approved debt and the consultant would provide a recommendation on project and funding source as well as how long it would take to pay it back.*

Commissioner Bunch questioned whether \$5 to \$7 million dollars was enough. Commissioner Childer replied no if you are going to include the Post Office and the library. City Manager Czymbor pointed out that the City doesn't have any detailed construction plans or adapted reuse of the Post Office in the event the City acquires the title. He commented that the estimates are anywhere from \$2.5 to \$4 million dollars. He reminded the City Commission that the initial talk was to secure the outside of the building and then move forward with a process for the best use of the building. He commented that if it was a significant contribution for the library that \$7 million dollars probably was not enough. Commissioner Bunch explained that he didn't want to come up short money and suggested \$10 million dollars to almost guarantee getting everything that was talked about accomplished. He pointed out that the funds could be used to fix up City buildings that need repairs or enhance drainage in other areas of the City. Vice-Mayor Poynter commented that for the Post Office the City has budgeted to secure the outside and then he was relying on the people that keep saying that there is money out there to fix it up. He pointed out that some of the things shown on the waterfront the City would not be done in favor open areas for concerts, etc. He stated that he didn't want to borrow too much or give the wrong impression to the community. Commissioner Bunch commented that there might be a lot of unforeseen items that could cost the City a lot more money than anticipated. Vice-Mayor Poynter pointed out that the City could borrow more if the City really had to have it. There was some discussion about a reasonable amount for the City to be borrowing for the proposed projects. A concern was raised about doing work in-house while still keeping up with the day-to-day duties. It was pointed out that there is also a cost associated with City staff doing the work in-house.

Controller Clifford reminded the City Commission that the first thing to do was deciding what would be done and then timing it out. She pointed out that when the City has financing with some flexibility in it that costs more. She explained that the financial consultant could prepare a couple of scenarios for the City Commission. City Manager Czymbor pointed out that there are specific steps that would be done based on the City Commission adopting the plan. After some discussion about moving forward, Commissioner Filkoff inquired if the City Commission needed to meet as the CRA before having final on the plan. City Manager Czymbor suggested convening as the CRA as part of the budget process to talk about the CRA and the statutory authority. Mr. Preston noted that there was consensus on the ideas and tying those ideas to dollars. Mayor Steger thanked Mr. Preston and City staff for all the work done on the plan. Commissioner Filkoff also thanked the Restoration Foundation members for their support. City Manager Czymbor suggested making the plan more accessible to the public and then hold a series of meetings to hopefully in July adopt the plan. Vice-Mayor Poynter requested to also include how the City was going to fund the plan so that people have a clear understanding of how this was going to affect them. City Attorney Bach pointed out to reconstitute the CRA or establish a new CRA it takes a State Finding of Necessity and she didn't think the City could accomplish this in 90 days. City Manager Czymbor explained that the City Attorney with the financial consultant would present the benefits and the disadvantages of reconstituting the base year. Vice-Mayor Poynter noted that this was just one aspect that was being considered to be pledged to pay off the loan. It was noted that staff would coordinate with the City Commission on future dates to meet again on the strategic plan. There was a brief discussion about moving the strategic plan forward.

The City Commission took a brief recess at this time.

3.2 REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF NASSAU COUNTY FIRE/EMS STUDY BY TRI-DATA AND DISCUSS PROPOSED INTER-LOCAL AGREEMENT WITH NASSAU COUNTY FOR SERVICES: Fire Chief Dan Hanes explained that his professional recommendation was that the City

maintain their own Fire Department. He presented a map of the island and pointed out the current response zone that the City of Fernandina Beach has (north end of the island to the City limits including part of the unincorporated area). He pointed out total EMS calls to the unincorporated area from January 1, 2010 until May 30, 2011 were 153 calls. He explained that the City has an interlocal agreement with the County for mutual aid. Vice-Mayor Poynter questioned the percentage of calls versus the City's calls. Fire Chief Hanes stated that he could get that data, but this area was the heaviest call volume in the entire County. He pointed out that the County EMS calls in the City were 58 calls, but most of these calls City trucks were also sent as well as the County trucks. He stated that he wanted to make the City Commission aware that the City Fire Department was providing a service because they are closest. He explained that normally a 3 to 1 ratio is not handled by an interlocal agreement it is more of a contracted service area. He clarified that the City of Fernandina Beach is a stakeholder in any emergency service that is provided by the County to the unincorporated areas of the County. He presented a map showing 183 fire calls to the unincorporated areas (total of 336 calls (EMS/Fire) into the unincorporated area). He pointed out that the County needed to hear from the City during these joint planning committees and to know what the City thinks about the proposed cuts to the service for the unincorporated areas. He explained that when he started talking about the City being better positioned to provide the service and questions were raised of why doesn't the County provide Fire/Rescue for the whole entire County including the City. He recommended against this, because the City wants to have control over the level of service that it provides for its residents. He pointed out that the City also wants to control how much money is spent on the Fire Department, which is done through the budget process. He referred to the TriData Assessment that the County had done and commented that it was a top notch assessment. He pointed out that there were 24 recommendations in assessment and highlighted the fact that there was no real movement to correct these issues. He explained that there are two recommendations about dispatch and read from page 15 of TriData's assessment. He also read from page 74 recommendation #12 regarding dispatching 911 calls for Fire/Rescue and the need for additional staff to meets standards. He pointed out that there was a critical need to receive calls in a timely manner. He then read recommendation #24 from page 79 of the assessment, which was also identified as a critical system need.

Vice-Mayor Poynter inquired if the City has to use the County system. Fire Chief Hanes replied the City was solely dependent on Nassau County's communication system. He pointed out that communications area is very important in Fire/Rescue due to firefighter safety and safety of the community with a timely response. He briefly explained how every second counts and if on average we are losing 60 seconds in the communications center that is an issue. He encouraged the City Commission to read the entire report from TriData. He commented that if you have an active fire prevention bureau there are less fires and the fires aren't as catastrophic and then read from page 10 outlining the lack on fire prevention in the County. He also read from page 70 recommendation #5 to establish a Fire Marshal to be a non-appointed career position to be in charge of the Fire Prevention Bureau to cover all aspects of fire prevention. He commented that it sounds like they want the City's Fire Department, because the City has a Fire Prevention Bureau, a Fire Marshal, and does fire inspections. He pointed out that the County was not ready to provide these services for the City. He suggested to meet several of the recommendations in the assessment and to provide a high quality level of service would be for the City Fire Department to provide service for the entire island. He explained that could be done with an advanced life support ladder company at Station 20 with an advanced life support rescue unit for a total of five people. He stated that this would be two less people than the County, and he explained this could be done with fire prevention and public education activities as well as an island-wide response of resources. He recommended that the County redeploy their personnel west of the island, which with six people that would equal another rescue truck in their system. He pointed out that this would enhance the level of service on the island and put another rescue truck west of the island to handle the calls where they are needed, while not one firefighter has lost a job and everyone has the amount of firefighters that they need. City Manager Czymbor noted that the suggestion was that the City would provide a proposed interlocal agreement that the County for a certain amount of dollars would contract with the City to provide this level of service to the island. He commented that the County would make a determination of either to save that \$500,000 dollars by laying off those six firefighters or to redeploy those firefighters in the western part of the County. Fire Chief Hanes agreed and stated that the City's finance people would have to meet with the County finance people to figure out what the value of six firefighters is. He pointed out that there would be some capital expenditures that the City would have to make and suggested that the agreement with the County should be for a period of 8 to 10 years. He commented that there would have to be considerations for County station.

Vice-Mayor Poynter noted that the report had no dollars assigned to rescue. He inquired if the \$500,000 savings was taken into consideration or was the City not getting its fair deduction of cost because the City supplies its own fire/rescue. Fire Chief Hanes suggested the finance people take a look at this and explained that he was saying that the City could do this with six less people than the County. Vice-Mayor Poynter commented that there is a cost that the City was not getting the benefit

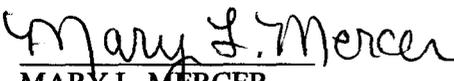
of. He inquired what kind of costs would be involved if the City did their own calls. Fire Chief Hanes stated that there would be equipment costs and the plan would to share the facility with the Police Department. He commented that Jacksonville offered CAD space on their system and there would be annual maintenance paid to them. He estimated costs of \$200,000 for startup. Commissioner Filkoff inquired if the Police Department suffered the same delay. Police Chief Hurley replied absolutely, because they take the call, ask questions, and then they refer the call to the City dispatchers. There was some discussion about the 911 system and whether it was a priority to be updated to increase the level of service.

Vice-Mayor Poynter inquired if the County was not interested in the City providing services island-wide could the City move towards a contracted service where the County would pay the City for City responded calls. Fire Chief Hanes pointed out that this issue should be addressed island-wide and if the County doesn't agree then we need to have these discussions. He explained that the City needs mutual aid just like the County needs mutual aid. There was some discussion about mutual aid and contract service over the point of mutual aid.

Commissioner Filkoff commented that the firefighters in the City Fire Department are really professional and they appear to be proud of where they work. She stated that she would much rather have people that are proud of what they are doing rather than people that received that kind of report. Fire Chief Hanes thanked Commissioner Filkoff and pointed out that the County people are good people too. Commissioner Filkoff agreed, but the system is broken. Fire Chief Hanes stated that he believed that the County Commission was proactive, but he didn't think it was explained to them appropriately. Mayor Steger inquired if on the financial end if the County agreed how long would it take the City to begin manning that station. Fire Chief Hanes replied his realistic timeframe would be January 1<sup>st</sup>. Mayor Steger expressed her concern that at the Joint Local Planning Agency meeting there didn't seem to be a sense of urgency. She expressed her hope that the City takes a serious look at this to do what is best for the citizenry on the island. *The consensus of the City Commission was to allow Fire Chief Hanes to go forward to talk with the County.*

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 pm.

ATTEST:

  
MARY L. MERCER  
City Clerk

  
SUSAN HARDEE STEGER  
Mayor-Commissioner