

City of Belle Isle  
City Council Meeting  
Tuesday, June 4, 2024 \* 6:30 PM  
MINUTES

Present was:

Mayor - Nicholas Fouraker  
District 1 Commissioner – Frank Vertolli  
District 2 Commissioner – Holly Bobrowski  
District 4 Commissioner – Jason Carson  
District 5 Commissioner – Beth Lowell  
District 6 Commissioner – Stan Smith  
District 7 Commissioner – Jim Partin

Absent was:

District 3 – OPEN

**1. Call to Order and Confirmation of Quorum**

Vice Mayor Lowell called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm, and the Clerk confirmed quorum. City Manager Rick Rudometkin, Attorney Dan Langley, Chief Grimm, Public Works Director Phil Price, City Planner Raquel Lozano, and City Clerk Yolanda Quiceno were also present.

Mayor Fouraker joined the meeting.

**2. Invocation and Pledge to Flag - Commissioner Smith, District 6**

Commissioner Vertolli gave the invocation and led the Pledge to the Flag.

**3. Citizen Comments**

Mayor Fouraker opened for citizen comments.

- Kristina Giles shared her concern with her neighbor about the buildout of a contested dock boat, omitted permitted swale issues, dredging without a permit, and planting a wall of foliage near the lake. Ms. Giles requested Council consideration for an agenda item on June 18<sup>th</sup> to expand her concerns. A copy of her talking points was provided to the Clerk for the record.

There being no further comment, Mayor Fouraker closed citizen comments.

**3. Presentations – No report.**

**4. Consent Items**

Mayor Fouraker called for approval of the Consent items.

- Approval of City Council Workshop Minutes – May 21, 2024
- Approval of City Council Meeting Minutes – May 21, 2024

**Comm Vertolli moved to approve the minutes as presented.**

**Vice Mayor Lowell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously at 6:0.**

**5. Unfinished Business**

a. Property Acquisition/Municipal Complex Workshop

CM Rudometkin spoke briefly on Council goals and the FY 24/25 budget items, including City Hall renovations and ARPA Funds. He noted that the Municipal Complex is one of the items discussed.

CM Rudometkin spoke on the property by Fish on Fire, 30 acres of cow pasture, and an opportunity for 20.5 acres on Judge and Conway to be considered in the City of Orlando, including a conservation easement and a 2-acre retention pond. He noted that he and the Mayor have met with the City of Orlando and are willing to sell the property. He noted that there is potential for City Staff, Police Department, and Public Works to be in the same complex as a one-stop shop. He said another option is to leave it at City Hall and expand on the footprint for a two-story building with a covered parking lot with Public Works staying at their current location; some of the concerns would be the concern of the surrounding neighbors.

CM Rudometkin asked for directions to proceed with a location or to expand at the current location.

Vice Mayor Lowell said this was the first time she had heard of the concept of including public works. She said the Council would have to determine what the City is looking for in a Municipal Complex.

Mayor Fouraker asked if the City had any information and rating sheets (data, concept plans, or reports) from previous consultants who worked with Mr. Francis during previous Council discussions. Since the discussions transpired, the City of Orlando has 20 acres available. He and the City Manager met with them, and they were tasked with how much the city would need for a municipal complex. Some mitigating factors must be sorted out, and the Council should discuss its vision. He noted that no price was discussed. Mayor Fouraker opened the door for discussion on other pieces of property, scenarios, and steps moving forward. Discussion ensued.

Comm Smith asked if the City has any pricing on the required studies and mapping of the proposed areas. City Manager Rudometkin said the City does have ARPA funds allocated, and he is working on one last quote. He noted that he has asked for a discounted price for the unusable land or if they are willing to sell off some of the acres separately. The City Manager briefly discussed costs, debt service, or millage increase. Comm Smith said the Council will need more time to discuss a millage increase.

Comm Smith said that sometime in 2022, the City was approached by a consultant for the Masonic Lodge with a turn-key concept. There may be other options once we have an environmental study or conceptual plan.

Comm Partin said he does not favor springing this to the public and would like a design and conceptual plan. The first step may be to perform an environmental study. Discussion ensued.

Vice Mayor Lowell asked if the City of Orlando had any reports available on the buildable 20 acres. Mr. Rudometkin said the city must complete a study before moving forward. Vice Mayor Lowell said the Council should have options 1,2 and 3.

Comm Carson asked if the environmental study reports that the 20 acres are not viable; what is the next step. Mr. Rudometkin said the City could revisit Datwyler and the current City Hall location. Mayor Fouraker gave a brief history of the 20 acres and said the City of Orlando is waiting on the City before moving forward with other options for the property. Discussion ensued.

Comm Bobrowski said she is not in favor of the property by Fish on Fire. She noted that it is not desirable for events or a City complex. She does not favor an environmental study until the City of Orlando provides a selling price. If it is unattainable, the City should be fiscally responsible and

discuss the realistic amount it can spend on a municipal complex. Discussion ensued on costs, liquidating property, obtaining a bond, or using Lobbyists to obtain money for a new complex.

Mayor Fouraker said that at some point, if the Council agrees to go through the process, which has never gotten off-center, we agree to use any means to obtain the funds (raising taxes, obtaining a bond, or selling existing city property).

Comm Vertolli asked if the property is purchased on Conway, would the City then annex that property? Mayor Fouraker said yes. He said the City might consider partnering with the City of Orlando to separate the 25 acres and allow affordable housing through the Live Local Act on the portion of the land that is not needed.

Comm Partin expressed his concern about the undisclosed price for the City of Orlando Property. He would like to know how much of the 20.5 acres is buildable and if it is an option for the City. Discussion ensued on the vision and concept to support the City's growth.

Comm Bobrowski asked if completing an environmental study and a concept plan for the expansion at City Hall is cost-prohibitive. Mr. Rudometkin said the cost is not cheap and would like to do one at a time. Comm Bobrowski said that as a contingency plan, she wants to see the first choice for the property on Conway, and the second choice is the current City Hall location.

The City Manager stated that he would contact a consultant in Texas to start the process and bring it back to the Council for approval.

Vice Mayor Lowell asked if it was possible to have someone meet with the city staff to ask what we need in a Municipal Complex and to get an idea before hiring a consultant. CM Rudometkin said he could have internal meetings to obtain some information upfront. He noted that he has been through this process in previous cities.

The Council consensus was to:

- perform an environmental study on Judge and Conway
- continue negotiations with the City of Orlando
- submit an RFP for consultants to move forward with a conceptual plan
- internal meetings to establish a space needs analysis plan (SNAP)

Comm Bobrowski said the City of Oviedo has one of the nicest city halls she has seen, and she believes it would benefit the Council to visit their building.

## **6. New Business**

### **a. Cancellation of July 2nd Council Meeting**

City Manager Rudometkin asked if the Council would like to cancel the July 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting and if the Council will be in town for the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday.

**Comm Smith moved to cancel the July 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in observance of the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday week and the absence of Council members on vacation.**

**Comm Carson moved the motion, which passed unanimously 5:1 with Vice Mayor Lowell, nay.**

## 7. Attorney's Report

Attorney Langley reported that the appeal for the Quevedo lot split had filed a circuit court action challenging the decision of the city to deny the lot split in an FSS 7051 FL Land Use Dispute Resolution Act proceeding. The circuit court action was placed on the docket until July and will not be actively litigating. The applicant and their attorney requested mediation with the City on June 20, 2024. Attorney Langley asked that the City Manager be the City's representative. The person representing the City at the mediation does not have binding authority but has the authority to recommend to the Council what may arise from the settlement. The mediation will not result in a settlement, and any potential offer will be returned to the Council.

Mayor Fouraker said the Council voted unanimously that there would not be a lot of split. He said he stated at the last meeting the only compromise was that she said she had been injured financially on legal fees, a roof, and design plans. Mayor Fouraker stated that he and the City Manager met with the resident and extended the olive branch after the meeting. He stated that there is no bending and that granting the lot split should not be a compromise. He would like the Council to instruct the City Attorney to promptly leave after a settlement is offered rather than to pay for extended lawyers' fees in discussing something the city will not approve, within reason.

Attorney Langley clarified that after negotiating in good faith, the staff is not obligated to make or accept any offers other than what will be presented to the Council.

**Comm Bobrowksi moved to appoint City Manager Rudometkin as the City's representative in the mediation hearing.**

**Comm Partin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 6:0.**

Comm Bobrowksi asked if she could ask the City Planner a question.

Mayor Fouraker said staff could ask questions about this matter offline as it is not an agenda item. Additionally, he noted that their attorney is our former City Attorney, Tom Callan.

## 8. City Manager's Report (CM)

City Manager Rudometkin provided an updated Task List and spoke on some highlighted items,

- Lancaster House Update—CM has spoken to CCA Chairman Brooks, and they will send a site plan language to carve out the section of the Lancaster House with stipulations. Once received, he will forward it to the City Attorney for review and present it to the Council. CM said CCA may not want to change the lease language but make the changes via an exhibit to the lease.
- DOT Grant For Hoffner Update—The FDOT Grant has been programmed and awaits a Notice to Proceed from the City. Before moving forward and working with Orange County, there is a \$3 million portion funding match. CM Rudometkin said the Grant sunsets in 2027/2028 and noted that there may not be a penalty if we change the scope or cannot match the grant; he will continue to verify before moving forward.

Mayor Fouraker clarified the next steps and asked the Council to consider a workshop to discuss fundraising for this obligation. The road is not ours; however, do we want control of it? Ask the County if they want to put up the match or give the funds to the County and have a little say in the project. Council consensus was to schedule a workshop for continued discussion.

- FY 2024/2025 Budget Update—Staff will submit a resolution for council approval. He has provided the Finance Director with the Council goals and other requests. He is looking at the stormwater fees for 2025 and forward. The small incremental increases approved by the Council will end this budget year. The goal is to get the proposed budget earlier than last year.

We do not have much money, and the assessed value will increase by approximately \$60m and remain with the same revenue.

**a. Chief's Report**

- Chief Grimm reported that STATs will be reported at the end of the month. He noted that one of the items he will bring to the budget discussion is adding Canine Officers to the Agency.
- Chief Grimm reported that he has been selected to participate in the Florida Police Chief Legislative Committee and will attend a conference the following week.
- Office Mathews is doing well and in good spirits.
- Chief Grimm reported on the FSS - Take Home Vehicles. He noted that the City is required to have insurance for regular staff; however, the Police Officers are required to be converted by the City if the vehicle is used to and from work. Comm Smith said he is attending a conference next week and will bring forward more information.

**b. Public Work's Report**

- Phil Price reported on the Orange County Weir and found that they pull two boards when the lake gets near normal high water. Last year, they exceeded pulling the boards, and too much water was going down south Florida, flooding that area. There was never an action plan in place for lowering the weir. Orange County, GOAA, and St. Johns River Management will schedule a meeting and invite the surrounding cities for discussion and possibly formulating a plan of action.
- Mr. Price said he has received a couple of calls from residents. He contacted some trappers and found it an expensive ordeal, and peacocks were difficult to capture. He gave some thought to educating the residents on managing the birds.
- Staff have received the quotes for the aerator and is working towards completing the upgrades in Trimble Park.

**9. Mayor's Report**

- Mayor Fouraker reported that there will be a community meeting with GOAA, and the City Clerk will post the agenda once it is received.
- Mayor Fouraker reported the City of Orlando had doubled their utilities fees. OUC is also instituting a spike rate to regulate costs and encourage the use of power after certain hours.
- Mayor Fouraker said he met with Bricksmore while attending a conference. If the Council is still interested in annexing Publix, they would like to present to their board a proposal that will not increase their tenants' rents with a 2-year tax abatement (i.e., JJs waste fees on a case-by-case basis). The council consensus was to have the City Manager assemble something for a workshop in the coming months.
- Mayor Fouraker wanted to make the Council aware, for the record, that a resident had called regarding a ticket they received. He told the resident that he could not be involved with a police matter and could not help them.

**11. Commissioners Report**

- Comm Vertolli addressed the peacock nuisance and would like the Council to consider an ordinance that speaks to not feeding wildlife.
- Comm Bobrowski said she has been learning about the City's and residents' responsibility for ROW maintenance. She joined marine patrol for a ride-along and was enlightened on the activities on the lake.

- Comm Smith asked about having the lobbyists give a periodic update on legislative laws, including Florida Statute 166.041(4)a re Ordinances. In addition, he asked about the appointment of a Vice Chair per Charter for the next meeting.
- Council thanked Marine Patrol for their presence on Lake Conway.

**Comm Bobrowksi moved to have Vice Mayor Lowell present her report.**

**Comm Smith seconded the motion, which passed unanimously at 6:0.**

- Vice Mayor Lowell reported that the City Manager has been with us for five months. She recently scheduled a meeting and met with the City Manager this morning. She said she would do that more often to ensure she provides the best service to the staff and residents.

## **12. Adjournment**

With no further business, Mayor Fouraker moved to adjourn the meeting, which was unanimously approved at 8:35 p.m.