



MINUTES

City Commission Workshop: Grants

5:00 PM – Thursday, May 04, 2023 – City Hall

CALL TO ORDER: 5:00 P.M.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF QUORUM AND PROPER NOTICE

PRESENT: Vice Mayor Emily Lee, Commissioner Nan Cobb, Commissioner Willie Hawkins, Commissioner Gary Ashcraft and Mayor Michael Holland

1. WORKSHOP ITEM WITH DISCUSSION, PUBLIC INPUT AND DIRECTION

1.1 Grants Strategic Planning Workshop

Nadine Mann, Grant Writing Specialist, noted her overview of the grant management life cycle and strategic planning on March 16th. She stated the purpose of the workshop is to review the list of high priority projects to identify which projects should be included in the year one strategic plan. She provided a high level overview of the strategic planning approach noting it would be followed by discussion with the City Commission to prioritize the eighteen projects.

Ms. Mann explained that once the projects are prioritized the process will proceed as follows: 1) Looking at projects to insure there is full understanding of the scope; 2) Drilling down on key deliverables and milestones; and 3) Considering any special requirements for a project. She stated that before they can look for grant applications they must understand what the requirements and specifications are for all of the projects. Following that, staff would be looking for grant opportunities.

Ms. Mann then explained that once the projects are prioritized staff can look for appropriate grants for both current and future. Once the grants are in place, staff will map out the deliverables into a one year plan. She provided an example of how the process would work and samples of the milestones and deliverables.

Ms. Mann confirmed for the Commission that the purpose of the workshop is for the Commission to identify two short term and two long term projects to begin the process with. She noted that they will be able to still keep an eye out for projects that may be further in the future.

Tom Carrino, City Manager, noted that there will always be grant opportunities that come up that require the City to re-prioritize. He stated the need, as much as possible, to map out the approach to grants. He added that staff is looking for the Commission to provide their highest priority projects so that staff can then go searching for those grant opportunities.

Ms. Mann discussed prioritization of the 18 projects for the City Commission to consider. She explained the intent is for each Commissioner to select their top five projects. She explained there are thirteen short term projects and five long term. She stated that a short term project is one that can be implemented within one year and long term projects are those that require more than one year up to four years or more. She noted two changes from the March 16th presentation as follows: 1) Coolidge Expansion (Phase I) was \$4 million and the estimated cost is now \$2.8 million; and 2) Coolidge

Expansion Phase 2 - staff is now seeing if it can apply for a Lake County CDBG Program grant for that project. She added that they have added some projects mentioned during City Commission meetings.

Ms. Mann then explained the first step would be for each Commissioner to highlight their five project priorities and she will check off who is selecting which project. From the list of those priorities, they will ask the Commission to narrow down two short term projects after which they will discuss two long term projects. Once the list has been narrowed down to two short term and two long term projects, staff will ask them to select a sequence for prioritization.

Ms. Mann asked the Commission to be mindful during the selection process - which projects are ready to begin based on pre-planning, due diligence, scope and purpose from preliminary planning details.

Commissioner Hawkins asked if any of the projects have already been started such as the kayak launch.

Mr. Carrino explained there are projects included that are moving forward; however, there are available grant opportunities that the City could explore to help fund those projects. He acknowledged that some grant applications do not allow you to apply if you have already begun work on the project. He added that with construction projects, you can do the design and engineering and may still be able to apply for construction funding. He noted that the City has been awarded some grant funding from EDA for the incubator feasibility study.

Discussion was held regarding timing for the incubator project and the need to move quickly to get that funding.

Vice Mayor Lee asked about Coolidge Project being split into Phase 1 and Phase 2 and if that would count as one project with Mr. Carrino indicating it would count as one.

Commissioner Cobb announced she would attend the County Commission meeting regarding CDBG funding for that project.

Ms. Mann asked each Commissioner to present their priorities.

Commissioner Cobb listed her priorities as follows and discussed the benefits of each: 1) Coolidge project; 2) Bates Avenue expansion; 3) Public Safety complex; 4) Events and Tourism Salute to Veterans; and 5) Georgefest.

Mr. Carrino commented on the timeliness of certain projects, including Bates Avenue, due to the Rescue funds being used for those and needing to proceed as soon as possible.

Commissioner Ashcraft listed his priorities as follows noting his feeling that the City should work on the larger projects first: 1) Public Safety complex; 2) Coolidge project; 3) Bates Avenue; 4) Police license plate reader; and 5) City beautification.

Commissioner Cobb clarified whether the license plate reader is 100% funded with Mr. Carrino indicating that the City can apply for 100% funding.

Commissioner Hawkins listed his priorities as follows: 1) Public Safety complex; 2) Bates Avenue; 3) Coolidge project; 4) License plate reader; and 5) Basketball court.

Vice Mayor Lee asked about conducting an asset based economic growth study.

Al Latimer, Economic Development Director, explained that an asset based study finds out what assets in the community can serve as an inducement to attract new businesses. He indicated they are currently looking at all of the City-owned properties to determine which are real estate assets and available to businesses. He cited other situations that would qualify as assets. He added that it would also identify available skill sets.

Mr. Carrino stated it would be unrealistic to think the City could go after every business out there. A study would analyze what are the City's competitive advantages and what is available to attract or retain certain sectors to determine where they should focus their efforts.

The Commission asked if they shouldn't already have that information based on staff's experience with Mr. Carrino responding that most of what they know is anecdotal. The study would provide the hard data. He commented on the City's ag background and cited those local businesses that are agriculturally based. He stated his opinion that the City would be well positioned for businesses in the ag space or food chain space but he has no data to support that.

Discussion was held regarding how the study could be utilized to attract new business.

Vice Mayor Lee cited her project priorities as follows: 1) Coolidge expansion; 2) Bates Avenue; 3) Asset based study; 4) Beautifying the City; and 5) Public Safety complex.

Mayor Holland reviewed his priorities as follows: 1) Public Safety building; 2) Coolidge project; 3) Bates Avenue; 4) Automated police plate reader; and 5) Economic development.

The Commission discussed how the City could itself pay for the City beautification projects with Vice Mayor Lee changing her priorities to eliminate the City beautification and add the license plate reader.

Ms. Mann explained that the next step would be to look at the short term projects selected and narrow those down to two. She stated those short-term projects selected by one or more Commissioners are the following: 1) Automated license plate reader; 2) Basketball court roof; 3) Economic development target industry smart growth study; 4) Events and Tourism Georgefest; 5) Salute to Veterans Day; and 6) Beautifying the City.

Mr. Carrino clarified they need a consensus on the top two.

The Commission each reviewed their top two short term projects and then discussed their selections. It was noted that, if a grant opportunity came along for one of the other projects, staff would look at applying for that. It was agreed to select three short term projects.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission to select the top three short term projects as the automated plate reader, the basketball court roof and the economic development study.

Ms. Mann then asked to prioritize the long-term grants citing those initially selected by one or more Commissioners as follows: 1) Bates Avenue; 2) Coolidge expansion; 3) Salute to Veterans Day; and 4) Public Safety building. She asked if they could narrow those down to two projects.

Commissioner Hawkins asked if the grant awards expire noting that the City doesn't plan on proceeding with the Public Safety building for another eight or nine years.

Ms. Mann explained that in order to apply for a grant they need to know in advance the scope of the project, the deliverables and the start and end dates. She indicated that any grants for the Public Safety building would probably be federal or state grants and all of that information would be required in order to apply.

Mr. Carrino responded that if the Commission prioritizes the Public Safety building, staff would not be seeking construction money at this time but funding for research, design and feasibility. He explained they would need to assess the department needs, look at the growth areas and decide where should a complex be sited.

The Commission questioned whether that would be part of the master plan with Mr. Carrino indicating it would be part of the strategic plan. He stated the master plan would be more specific to the downtown but not just the Waterman site.

Discussion was held regarding the needs assessment for public safety and whether or not the departments need to be co-located. Discussion was also held regarding timing for the complex with Mr. Carrino noting that, at that time, the complex is tentatively placed five years out as part of the Capital Improvement Plan. He added that decisions would need to be made about how to fund the complex stating that it would require either bonding or a new revenue source.

The Commission asked whether or not there is any advantage for the departments to be co-located.

Fire Chief Mike Swanson responded that being co-located would not affect the City's ISO rating.

The Commission further questioned if there are any other advantages to co-locating the departments with Chief Swanson stating that grants consider whether or not funding will cover more than one thing. He indicated that co-locating might be more likely to be approved. He noted several cities that have already done that.

Mayor Holland stated that if the State of Florida was looking at a grant program they would look more favorably at a joint facility rather than a stand alone.

Mayor Holland stated his long-term projects as follows: 1) Coolidge project; 2) Public Safety building; and 3) Bates Avenue.

Ms. Mann asked to prioritize the three short-term projects with Mayor Holland responding that, based on votes, the license plate reader would be first, the economic development study would be second and basketball roof would be third.

Commissioner Hawkins' three long-term projects were as follows: 1) Coolidge; 2) Public Safety; and 3) Bates Avenue.

Commissioner Cobb stated her long-term projects were as follows: 1) Coolidge; and 2) Public Safety. She asked about the funding for Bates Avenue with Rick Gierok, Public Works Director, responding that the ARPA money must be spent by the end of 2025. Any grant money could be used to offset the funding to come from impact fees. He stated the only additional funding available he is aware of are low interest loans. He noted that SRF is no longer available for that project. He indicated that the eastern plant received some grant funding because it was in the Wekiva Basin but the Bates Avenue plant is not.

Commissioner Ashcraft's priorities were as follows: 1) Coolidge; 2) Public Safety building; and 3) Bates Avenue.

Vice Mayor Lee concurred with Coolidge, Public Safety building and Bates Avenue.

Ms. Mann announced that she is pursuing a Community Development Block Grant for the Coolidge expansion project which has a closing date of May 31st. She added they are in the development phase of the Duke Energy Foundation Economic Development Grant Program to procure a marketing consultant. She commented on the America in Bloom assessment which will provide the details to apply to T-Mobile.

Ms. Mann reported that Development Services is working on an award for a historical survey which has been received. They have now selected their consultant. She stated the Police Department is in the development phase for a de-escalation training grant and they have submitted a grant application for traffic safety.

Ms. Mann then announced they are ready to apply to Duke Energy once they receive the America in Bloom assessment. She stated that Public Works has been approved for a grant for a generator for Fire Station #22 and they are working through the agreement.

Vice Mayor Lee confirmed the Commission can provide information to her if they learn about a grant opportunity.

Ms. Mann expressed appreciation to the Commission and stated the next step would be to build out the strategic plan through researching the grant opportunities available. Once the strategic plan is fully in place with timelines and deliverables, then that would be reviewed with the project team. She stated it would provide a projection of what would be needed.

Commissioner Cobb reported that she has been working with Rep. Truenow's office regarding the Coolidge project and they will be working to get that on a list of priorities and they are looking for other state funding as well.

Ms. Mann summarized that, once all of the resources involved are in place, they would execute the strategic plan and start to move forward with developing the applications.

Commissioner Hawkins asked that they provide a running list of grants being applied for and their status with Mr. Latimer stating that is already in the works.

2. ADJOURNMENT: 6:01 P.M.

**These minutes reflect the actions taken and portions of the discussion during the meeting. To review the entire discussion concerning any agenda item, go to www.eustis.org and click on the video for the meeting in question. A DVD of the entire meeting or CD of the entire audio recording of the meeting can be obtained from the office of the City Clerk for a fee.*

CHRISTINE HALLORAN
City Clerk

MICHAEL L. HOLLAND
Mayor/Commissioner