

## Dale Martin

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**Subject:** FW: July 4th After Action Meeting

**From:** Brittany McDermott <[BMcDermott@palmcoastgov.com](mailto:BMcDermott@palmcoastgov.com)>

**Sent:** Monday, November 20, 2023 4:53 PM

**To:** Lauren Johnston <[LJohnston@palmcoastgov.com](mailto:LJohnston@palmcoastgov.com)>; Jared Dawson <[JDawson@palmcoastgov.com](mailto:JDawson@palmcoastgov.com)>; Brittany N. Kershaw <[BNKershaw@palmcoastgov.com](mailto:BNKershaw@palmcoastgov.com)>; Jason DeLorenzo <[JDeLorenzo@palmcoastgov.com](mailto:JDeLorenzo@palmcoastgov.com)>; Gary Potter <[gpotter@palmcoastgov.com](mailto:gpotter@palmcoastgov.com)>; Kyle Berryhill <[kberryhill@palmcoastgov.com](mailto:kberryhill@palmcoastgov.com)>; Matthieu Johnson <[MJohnson@palmcoastgov.com](mailto:MJohnson@palmcoastgov.com)>; Shannon P. Martin <[SPMartin@palmcoastgov.com](mailto:SPMartin@palmcoastgov.com)>; [rsieger@flaglercounty.gov](mailto:rsieger@flaglercounty.gov); [bdenker@flaglersheriff.com](mailto:bdenker@flaglersheriff.com); Commander Phil Reynolds <[PReynolds@palmcoastgov.com](mailto:PReynolds@palmcoastgov.com)>; Scott Vedder <[SVedder@flaglersheriff.com](mailto:SVedder@flaglersheriff.com)>; Matthew Doughney <[MDoughney@fbpd.org](mailto:MDoughney@fbpd.org)>; [mlutz@flaglersheriff.com](mailto:mlutz@flaglersheriff.com); Holly Albanese <[halbanese@flaglercounty.gov](mailto:halbanese@flaglercounty.gov)>; Michael Tucker <[Mtucker@flaglercounty.gov](mailto:Mtucker@flaglercounty.gov)>; James Hirst <[JHirst@palmcoastgov.com](mailto:JHirst@palmcoastgov.com)>

**Subject:** RE: July 4th After Action Meeting

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Hi everyone,

It might seem a little early to be planning July 4<sup>th</sup> next year, but here we are! The City of Palm Coast is very excited to continue our partnership and to host another United Flagler 4<sup>th</sup> for our community in 2024. To keep everyone in the loop we intend to secure a 1-year contract with two 1-year renewals (up to a max. of 3 years) with a fireworks vendor for July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks. We are working on getting the bid up on Bonfire soon and plan to take the selected proposal to our City Council early next year. I will be sure to let everyone know of our progress on this.

In the meantime, Happy Thanksgiving!

Thank you,

Brittany McDermott  
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-----Original Appointment-----

**From:** Brittany McDermott

**Sent:** Tuesday, July 18, 2023 9:34 AM

**To:** Brittany McDermott; Lauren Johnston; Jared Dawson; Brittany N. Kershaw; Jason DeLorenzo; Gary Potter; Kyle Berryhill; Matthieu Johnson; Shannon P. Martin; [rsieger@flaglercounty.gov](mailto:rsieger@flaglercounty.gov); [bdenker@flaglersheriff.com](mailto:bdenker@flaglersheriff.com); Commander Phil Reynolds; [svedder@flaglersheriff.com](mailto:svedder@flaglersheriff.com); [MDoughney@fbpd.org](mailto:MDoughney@fbpd.org); [mlutz@flaglersheriff.com](mailto:mlutz@flaglersheriff.com); Holly Albanese; Michael

Tucker

**Subject:** July 4th After Action Meeting

**When:** Monday, July 31, 2023 10:00 AM-11:00 AM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada).

**Where:** Seminole Woods Conference Room

## **Simultaneous Fireworks in Palm Coast and Flagler Beach? 'Unworkable, Unsafe and Unsound'**

JANUARY 14, 2022 | FLAGLERLIVE | 14 COMMENTS

"Insufficient staffing, signage and other resources make a simultaneous fireworks display with Palm Coast unworkable, unsafe and unsound, and I have many reasons for that," Scott Spradley, chairman of Flagler Beach's Ad Hoc Committee on July 4, told the Flagler Beach City Commission Thursday evening.

Spradley, a Flagler Beach attorney, was responding to interest among three of the Palm Coast City Council's members, expressed earlier this week, that the Palm Coast fireworks should no longer be held on July 3, though that's been the tradition for more than a decade, since Palm Coast started having a fireworks show of its own. The show was started by Flagler Broadcasting and the Rotary Club in 2010 as an addition to, not as competition with, the Flagler Beach fireworks, and as such, the Palm Coast fireworks were to always be scheduled the night of July 3. (See: "'You Had Me at 8-Inch Shells': Palm Coast Would Shift Fireworks to Airport, But on July 4, Clashing With Flagler Beach.")

Last year the Flagler Beach City Commission considered ceding the July 4 fireworks to Palm Coast. It appointed a committee to study the feasibility of continuing with fireworks, and other issues related to Independence Day events in Flagler Beach. The events' growing attendance has been overwhelming the small city to some degree. The committee met nine times since August and completed its work. Spradley wrote the committee's final report and presented it to the commission on Thursday—with the recommendation that the city's fireworks shows continue.

He spoke as himself, not as a member of the committee, when he addressed the issue of simultaneous fireworks in the two cities, since the committee last met two weeks ago, before councilmen in Palm Coast made their surprising request. But based on the tenor of the Ad Hoc Committee's discussions, Spradley was very likely reflecting what would have been the opinion of the committee as well. Either way, his voice carries weight with commissioners, he echoed his position in a detailed email to Palm Coast Mayor David Alfin on Jan. 11, and it was unlikely to find dissenters at City Hall.

"I have many reasons for that," Spradley told commissioners of his opposition to simultaneous shows. "When we talk about the issue of law enforcement alone, it's not just the Flagler Beach Police Department. It's drawing on the Sheriff's Department," which in turn is drawing help from Bunnell and other agencies. "There's not enough support to do that. I've heard some say, well, it'll split the people. Half will go here, half will go there. I mean, I'm sorry. That's not how it works. What are you going to tell the officer at the intersection, only half of you has to be here now because it's only half? I mean, it doesn't work that way."

Palm Coast Mayor David Alfin and Council member Nick Klufas would keep their city's fireworks on July 3. The city administration is for keeping the fireworks on July 3—or, as an alternate, for persuading Flagler Beach to move its fireworks to July 3 so Palm Coast could do it on the 4th, as Parks and Recreation Director Lauren Johnston suggested behind the scenes. But there's always been strong resistance against—if not resentment of—Palm Coast "dictating" to Flagler Beach. Spradley himself does not expect Flagler Beach to concede that point, considering that Flagler Beach's fireworks pre-date the name "Palm Coast," let alone every single one of its property owners present or past, including ITT. When Spradley spoke of his call with "senior staff at Palm Coast" (he was referring to Johnston) about moving the show to July 3rd, members of the city commission sneered at the idea, as did Spradley. "With the disclaimer that I don't speak for the city of Flagler Beach, what I said was, I think the answer would be an unequivocal No, or an unequivocal Hell no," he told the city commission.

"I anticipate that by next Tuesday's city of Palm Coast meeting, which I'm going to attend, that hopefully that'll be the end of that discussion. It doesn't work. It just doesn't work at any level you want to look at it, in my opinion," Spradley said. "And again, because of the Sunshine Law I haven't been able to talk to the committee members about it, but I will say I think it's more likely than not that they would agree with me. I think the commission agrees with me. It's just not something that could be done."

In separate comments about the matter today, Spradley described it as a "logistical nightmare" if visitors to Flagler coming off I-95 were bifurcated by fireworks signs, one pointing to Palm Coast, the other to Flagler Beach. He said Altamonte Springs traditionally holds its fireworks show on an alternate day so as not to create traffic and safety management issues with Orlando's fireworks. "There has been no compelling reason given to change the status quo," Spradley said. "'If it aint broke don't fix it' seems to have great application here." Two Palm Coast council members who want the show on July 4 say that's Independence Day. One of them, Ed Danko—a foe of Spradley's—says holding the fireworks on July 3 is like moving New Year's Eve celebrations to another day.

But while the calendar is rigid about New Year's Eve, it is not so about Independence Day, with historians to this day debating whether the declaration of independence was (as opposed to the signing of the Declaration of Independence) was on July 2, as opposed to July 4. The Continental Congress voted to declare independence on July 2, and John Adams at the time thought that would be the day forever remembered. The Declaration was technically an afterthought, a sort of ratification that could be publicized, reprinted and memorialized, and it was completed and signed on July 4, and sent to the printer that day. Many communities' stretching their Independence Day festivities over several days, in other words, are closer to the historical facts and actions of the founders than today's calendar dogmatists.

It's an indication of the sensitivity—or centrality—of the issue that while Spradley's presentation to the commission was designed to provide a sum-up and end point to the committee he chaired, the matter of fireworks timing became the main event.

At any rate, the substance of the committee's work was no secret to anyone in the room, as it had been reported and discussed before repeatedly, as the committee was developing its ideas. Spradley summarized the panel's report—the diminishing parking on the island, the potential availability of over 700 new parking spots off the island, tied to shuttle buses, the coming mayoral campaign against underage drinking, the safety concerns and the need for the city to support as much law enforcement capabilities as possible during the event, the shortening of the parade, and of course the persistent desire to preserve the July 4 fireworks—on July 4. (In 2010, the city held them on July 3.)

Commissioner Jane Mealy praised the committee's work, calling its report "outstanding, very detailed, covered everything that I think we needed to think about." She had no questions: the report pre-empted them. But the detailed execution of the report is ahead.

"We're not going to solve everything Fourth of July tonight," Commission Chairman Eric Cooley said. "We're going to need to have a agenda item where we do tackle all this." He added later: "This is going to be a huge piece of the discussion that we have moving forward, which we're going to do shortly, and this is a lot of insight. There's a lot of data."

There's also been a lot of cooperation between Flagler Beach and Palm Coast administrations: "The acting city manager in Palm Coast, Ms. Bevan, has been in constant touch with me, she's been great," City Manager William Whitson said of Denise Bevan, the interim manager. "She picks up the phone and texts me and calls me on a regular basis and we have a very open and positive dialogue. Chief [Matt] Doughney has been amazing in this and is working directly with the sheriff himself. So I think we'll have more information and we'll be happy to put it on the next agenda if it's ready for discussion. It really kind of, the ball is more in Palm Coast's park, I would say."