

JOINT CITIES AND COUNTY WORKSHOP

JANUARY 24, 2024

Present: Commissioner Donald O'Brien, Commissioner David Sullivan, Mayor David Alfin, Commissioner Eric Cooley, Commissioner Scott Spradley, Town Clerk Jim Arden, Commissioner Jeffrey Schuitema and Deputy Clerk Stephanie Tolson

ITEM 1 - CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner O'Brien called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Board Chambers of the Government Services Building in Bunnell, Florida.

ITEM 2 - PLEDGE TO THE FLAG AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

Commissioner O'Brien led the Pledge to the Flag and requested a moment of silence.

ITEM 3 - APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 13, 2023 JT. MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Mayor Alfin to approve the meeting minutes from September 13, 2023. Seconded by Commissioner Sullivan.

Commissioner O'Brien called the question. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM 4 - PURPOSE: TO DISCUSS ISSUES IMPACTING OUR COMMUNITIES TO CONTINUE WITH A COLLECTIVE APPROACH FOR ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES WE WILL FACE IN THE FUTURE, INCLUDING SPECIFIC ITEMS FROM:

A - Flagler County

- **Economic Incentives**

Commissioner O'Brien shared the possibilities of developing an Industrial Development Authority which would then work with prospects/businesses to borrow money on a tax-free basis. BOCC directed staff to look into this possibility.

- **Flagler Beach Library**

Commissioner O'Brien shared through discussion with the County Administrator, the potential for the County helping with or taking over the library in Flagler Beach. Added at some point in the future to have a dialogue with the City of Flagler Beach to discuss helping with resources or assuming responsibility.

Commissioner Cooley asked if that is something he wishes they take back to their municipality for discussion or if he wishes to workshop it.

(Item 4a continued)

Commissioner O'Brien answered initially a discussion to see if there is a consensus to potentially move in that direction.

Commissioner Sullivan stated for the record, Chair Dance, Mayor Johnston, Commissioner Belhumeur, and County Administrator Petito are in chambers. Added the support from the Tourist Development office to Flagler Beach has been consistent and working well.

Commissioner O'Brien stated he was able to watch the discussion about the agenda and it helped to get a good understanding of Flagler Beach's priorities.

B – City of Palm Coast

- **Increase Marketing**

Mayor Alfin shared the City of Palm Coast has a collaborative spirit and willingness to work together. Would like to have an open dialog, so that the resident's they serve, know what they are going to experience as things continue to grow. Added they are in the final rehearsal of the State of the City Address will be immediately followed by the beginning of the strategic action planning process. During this process is when the City Council's vision and priorities are established. This would be the time to make a list of priorities.

Commissioner Cooley shared appreciation for Mayor Alfin calling out the proactive and working together approach.

C – City of Flagler Beach

- **Continue discussion of how to collaboratively create a solution or implement improvements to the increasing homeless population now being seen throughout the county (continued from last mtg.)**

Commissioner Cooley lead the discussion. Shared if an individual is claiming residency and is on any City or County property, they have the right to stay there. Stated we have an obligation to these residents and have a quality-of-life issue. Shared concerns about the long-term effect this has on the County. Asked what the best way to approach this issue is.

Mayor Alfin asked if the County is working on a facility at the Fairgrounds.

Commissioner O'Brien answered not a shelter. Added there were discussions pre-COVID but no agenda item about a shelter. Reliance has been on non-profits and religious organizations to provide services whenever possible.

(Item 4c continued)

Mayor Alfin stated at the last meeting he shared that this isn't just a local problem or financially solvable with a local initiative, but perhaps regional or bigger. Added this is a time for grant funding, it could be a positive way to address this problem.

Commissioner Cooley asked if a collaborative legislative funding request signed by all the municipalities be advantageous.

Mayor Alfin asked if everyone on the dais agreed.

Commissioner Cooley asked if there are thoughts on a funding request from either State or National levels.

Commissioner O'Brien shared with regards to a legislative ask for a shelter, he doesn't know enough about it, but it can be taken back to Social Services and County Administrator to see if that's something that can be asked for.

Mayor Alfin shared Flagler Cares has a homelessness priority, and they might be a good resource for grant opportunities along with some private funding.

Commissioner O'Brien stated the concept of partnering with a non-profit organization or experts is a better way to go.

Commissioner Spradley shared he likes the idea of going to the non-profit organizations and see what it would take to fulfill this request and then come back at the next joint workshop.

Commissioner Sullivan added there is a history as to stops and starts on how to handle the homelessness problem. Shared there was going to be a deal with Volusia County for their newly built shelter where Flagler County would pay part of the operation costs, then Flagler County could utilize beds there; however, that didn't end up working out.

Commissioner O'Brien stated this issue is just one of many that the County is experiencing as we grow from a rural county to a more urban county.

Town Clerk Arden stated this is a very complex issue with a 20% increase in the homeless population over the past couple of years.

(Item 4c continued)

- **Define “Local Match” verbiage in the Army Corps of Engineers Federal Agreement**

Commissioner Spradley recapped information about the Dune Renourishment Project which is set to begin July 5th. Added there will be a massive ramp built to get the equipment onto the beach. Stated the allocation of costs for the initial project is Federal paying 65% and the Non-Federal paying 35%. This is a 50-year project, meaning we will get help as needed throughout that time. Every eleven years there will be renourishment activities and the costs for that are delineated to 50% Federal and 50% local. Asked what local means in that delineation, whether it's County or contributions from others.

Commissioner O'Brien stated when discussion was going on to enter into this agreement with Army Corps., he wasn't elected to the Board yet; however, when the agreement was signed, he was part of the Board and one of the points he made was he didn't want to bind a future commission to the numbers of what the renourishment would cost. Added it's his understanding that the renourishment is optional if they want to pay for it. Should be based on what the future commission would choose to do.

Commissioner Sullivan shared most of the money is coming from Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

Commissioner Spradley agreed that it would be appropriate for the future commissions to make that decision.

Commissioner O'Brien added the Beach Management Plan is in the works to be adopted and there may be several funding opportunities to consider in the future.

- **Update: Beach Visitor's Survey**

Commissioner Cooley shared background about how the beach survey began. Added Flagler Beach is set to start the survey this Spring; however, at the Tourism Development Council (TDC) meeting this morning, our Tourism Director, Amy Lukasik, is using a software that is used from apps on your phone that tracks who was at all what locations. That information might be more comprehensive than the survey they were looking to complete.

Commissioner Sullivan stated Flagler Beach City Council may want to be briefed on the software once it's fleshed out.

Commissioner Cooley added it would make no sense to spend \$30,000 on a survey if the software can duplicate it and in a superior way.

(Item 4c continued)

- **Consider a collaborative Legislative Funding request for an additional weather radar to provide coverage for the gap in Flagler County**

Commissioner Cooley stated the radar gap was brought up after the last tornado in Flagler County.

Jonathan Lord, Emergency Management Director, shared the County has been working with the State this past year, along with two other counties to fill in some of the National Weather Service radar gaps. Added Marion County and Lee County has a gap as well. State Legislature last session allocated some funding for the counties to fill these gaps, we are one of the recipients of that funding. Potential location for a radar site is the old radio tower if it's acceptable or a few other County properties are an option.

Commissioner Cooley shared that this has been a long time coming.

- **How do we collaboratively address the impacts of growth?**

Commissioner Spradley shared he was pleased to hear the results from the TDC meeting. Added at prior meetings, the six hidden beaches were brought up by the County or are on their radar to talk about improving them to be able to accept growth.

Commissioner O'Brien asked what the hidden beaches are.

Commissioner Sullivan stated it's six secret beaches that aren't as known as Flagler Beach, but they are there.

Commissioner Spradley added they are maintained by the County and have parking lots. Suggested those could be destinations to relieve the pressure off Flagler Beach.

Commissioner O'Brien recalled Ms. Lukasik referring to that. Added he says all the time, every time someone moves to Palm Coast it means Flagler Beach gets another customer.

Commissioner Spradley stated how each municipality has a planning board and to be more mindful of what Flagler Beach is trying to do.

Commissioner O'Brien asked if there are any concrete things in mind.

Commissioner Sullivan stated there was discussion about the Route 100 bridge and the Hammock Dunes Bridge and trying to get more people to use the Hammock Dunes Bridge by expanding turn lanes and adding a traffic light.

(Item 4c continued)

County Administrator Petito shared the light would go on A1A at Camino Del Mar.

Mayor Alfin stated it sounds like a Development Local Impact (DLI) which could be a group that considers the good neighbor policy and the effect on the municipalities that are being bound by what the project is.

Commissioner Spradley concurred with Mayor Alfin.

Commissioner O'Brien shared one of the things that could be done, which is already being done, is to have the Administrators and Managers have a good communication process.

- **Flagler Beach's capacity for growing population & use of beaches**

Commissioner Cooley stated there are multiple projects going on in Flagler Beach and there needs to be marketing to show residents and tourists where the beach access will be. Would like to see some traffic alleviation to the beaches without running into big logistical problems.

- **Expansion of Lifeguard coverage (continued from last mtg.)**

Commissioner Cooley shared when the beach project begins, there will be points where Flagler Beach will have extremely limited guarded areas and times where they won't be guarded. Added it may be time to consider other areas for guarded beaches and to consider the parking situation.

Commissioner Sullivan stated there is currently an agreement on cost sharing with the lifeguards between Flagler County and Flagler Beach.

Commissioner O'Brien asked for clarification.

Commissioner Cooley stated it's not a funding thing, more like if the work area shifts and there isn't a way to move the lifeguard equipment to a new area.

Commissioner O'Brien stated they can bring it up to the rest of the BOCC and if it means asking staff to participate to plan for that then they can do that. Asked if they are thinking about expansion of guarded beaches once the work is completed.

Commissioner Cooley shared yes as a long-term thing.

Commissioner O'Brien stated it can be brought back to the BOCC and staff.

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(Item 4c continued)

Commissioner Schuitema asked about the Flagler County and Flagler Beach agreement for the lifeguards.

Commissioner Cooley answered Flagler County pays for approximately \$85,000 but the total program is about \$350,000. Added the County pays into that to help supplement.

Commissioner O'Brien shared there are other areas where there are first responders for the lifesaving aspects.

Commissioner Cooley stated there are also substations close by.

Commissioner O'Brien added he understands though how that is still different from an actual guarded beach.

Commissioner Sullivan stated there would be a significant change if full-time lifeguards are put at all the beaches.

Commissioner O'Brien shared he would like to become more educated about the process.

Commissioner Schuitema asked if the expansion would be with Flagler Beach's lifeguards.

Commissioner Cooley stated that is an unanswered question and it could be any combination.

Commissioner Spradley added it is the natural conversation to have.

Commissioner O'Brien asked if they are in initial stages for paid parking or if any work has been done with it.

Commissioner Cooley answered no, it's more a long-term initiative.

Commissioner Schuitema stated the surveys will give some insight about the need for the expansion of the lifeguards.

D – City of Bunnell

None

E – Town of Beverly Beach

Town Clerk Arden stated the Comprehensive Plan from 1990 had a build out of 1200 and now he can't see how more than 800 people can live there satisfactorily.

F – Town of Marineland

None

G – Flagler County School Board

None

Commissioner O'Brien opened public comment.

Kim Carney, Flagler Beach, shared there is a state statute that mentions every municipality must have an assigned location for the homeless. Added Flagler Beach has it on record that it is the County Park underneath the bridge and anyone claiming residence in Flagler Beach, that park is where they should be sent. Spoke about the beach renourishment plan and originally it was to be done in 200 foot sections. Added if the entire State of Florida is surveyed, she would guess 80% of the coastal area is managed by the County and provided examples.

County Attorney Al Hadeed provided information about the beach renourishment. Added the contractors have every financial interest in accelerating the work done on the beaches because they are on a fixed price. Stated the length of the work will range from 500 - 1000 feet sections at a time. Added there will be a live website that states when and where the work is being done. Wanted to make everyone aware, the Army Corps. just published a great poster that gives all the details of the project.

Commissioner O'Brien closed public comment.

Mayor Alfin asked for a copy of the minutes from this meeting so when they go back to their Boards or Councils, they'll all get the same information.

Commissioner Sullivan shared he is very impressed by what is going on in Flagler Beach.

Commissioner O'Brien shared the Flagler Beach projects being done simultaneously is a good thing.

Commissioner Cooley echoed Mayor Alfin's comments. Shared Flagler Beach is reaching their 100-year anniversary. Thanked County Attorney Hadeed for all his help with the projects.

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Commissioner Spradley shared he's leaving the meeting very hopeful.

Town Clerk Arden commended everyone for solving some tough problems.

Commissioner Schuitema echoed Town Clerk Arden's comments.

ITEM 5 – SET NEXT MEETING DATE

Commissioner Cooley asked how the board would feel about a biannual meeting rather than quarterly because sometimes quarterly doesn't give them enough time to get things accomplished.

Commissioner Sullivan concurred.

Commissioner Cooley stated if something comes up then a meeting could be scheduled.

Members of the Board agreed.

Commissioner Spradley stated the next meeting could be in six months and then if the one following needs to be sooner than that could be set.

Commissioner O'Brien stated the Administrators and Managers meet on a regular basis, so the dialogue could continue then.

ITEM 6 – ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 6:51 p.m.