

Proceedings of a called workshop of the City Commission of the City of Palatka, Florida, held on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2000.

PRESENT:	Mayor	Tim Smith
	Commissioner	Mary Lawson Brown
	Commissioner	Hernan Azula
	Commissioner	Ish Edwards
	Commissioner	James Norwood, Jr.

Also Present: City Manager Allen R. Bush, City Clerk Betsy Jordan Driggers, Police Chief Bill Dolinski, Fire Chief Rudy Howard, Planning Director Adam Mengel, Water & Sewer Supervisor Sam Willis, Main Street Manager Debbie Banks.

The Mayor called the meeting to order and read the following call:

October 19, 2000

TO MESSRS.: MARY LAWSON BROWN, HERNAN AZULA,  
ISH EDWARDS, AND JAMES NORWOOD, JR.

You are hereby notified that a workshop of the City Commission is called to be held at the regular meeting place of the City Commission at City Hall, 201 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, in the City of Palatka, at 11:00 a.m., Monday, October 30, 2000.

The purpose of this meeting is to hold a workshop on a proposed changes to the alcohol sales ordinance.

/s/ Tim Smith  
MAYOR

We acknowledge receipt of a copy of the foregoing notice of a special meeting this 20<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2000.

/s/ Hernan Azula  
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Mary Lawson Brown  
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Ish Edwards  
COMMISSIONER

/s/ James Norwood, Jr.  
COMMISSIONER

Mayor Smith said this meeting was to discuss possible changes to the ordinance governing the times alcoholic beverages may be served. He noted that a list of police nuisance and felony calls the police responded to since the beginning of the year which were broken down by bar/restaurant during certain hours, was passed out, along with a list of all calls in the City since the beginning of the year, for the Commission’s information. It was noted there are about the same number of calls at bars that do not stay open and serve beverages after normal closing times as the bar/restaurants who have ‘after hours’ hours, and in some instances there were more calls made from establishments who close at regular hours.

Adam Mengel, Planning Director, presented the Commission with a chart comparison of Palatka’s ordinance to those of various other surrounding communities. He noted that Palatka’s and Bunnell’s ordinances are the most conservative in terms of serving hours, on the whole. He presented the Commission with other communities’ alcohol sales ordinances. The state puts its own regulations on the sale of alcoholic beverages, but local municipalities can set their own rules and further regulate those sales.

Clem Saccarechia, Steamboat Willies/Peabody’s Restaurant, said if they are doing something wrong, please let them know, but don’t change the ordinance. Their business is geared to these hours and while she knows the patrons can get rowdy, mostly it’s the

ones who arrive that way. Many of her patrons are shift workers or work in the bar and restaurant industry and don't get off from work until after midnight. Palatka is a 24-hour town, like it or not. They would like the opportunity to work out any problems their neighbors are having with their businesses before any changes are made to the Code. For the most part, their patrons not the rowdy type. They appreciate that the Commission did not pass this ordinance.

Commissioner Azula explained why he first brought this up and asked it be placed on the agenda. He said he did it in response to complaints from surrounding businesses and neighbors whose homes and businesses are being vandalized by late-night revelers. People have had their glass storefronts broken out, there are beer bottles smashed on streets and against houses, people urinate and vomit in flowerbeds and against buildings, the noise level is high, and many of these problems can be solved by an ordinance change. The activity seems to center around the bars that stay open after regular bars have closed. He is open to suggestions as to handling the problem with alternative solutions.

Walt Riddle, Palatka Office Supply & Cynthia's Gifts, said he has nothing against bars, but he has lost four plate glass windows to drunken bar patrons (and one to skateboarders) during the early hours of the morning, and people vomit in his entryway and smash beer bottles against his building. His businesses are located right next door to Steamboat Willie's. He believes more of this occurs after the regular closing hours of most bars. He has to clean up this mess most every Monday morning, and is called out at all hours of the night when his windows are smashed. He would like something done to curtail all this, whether it takes an ordinance change or more police presence.

Askew Vickers, Owner of Vicks, said he has been in business at this location since the late 1970's. He has did not think there was a problem. He keeps three cooks in the building at all times and hires off-duty police and deputies to keep the peace at his business. He does not have much of a problem with his regular patrons, but he does have somewhat of a problem with kids who sit in his parking lot. That is why he hires extra off duty police, to keep unwanted people out. They have had a few problems over the years, but overall there has been little complaint. There are no problems between his bar and the bar next door. He is willing to do whatever it takes to keep the ordinance on the books as it is. His business depends on being to sell beer and wine after hours.

Mr. Bush asked Chief Dolinski to report on whether or not his department perceives the after hours bars to present a problem. Chief Dolinski said they don't have a big problem with the after hours bars, more specifically Steamboat Willie's and Vic's Supper Club. The one bar they had a problem with ceased to be a problem after they met with the owner and discussed with him the specific problems they were having. If open containers and patrons arriving already drunk are the problem, then stepping up police presence should help with the situation. He will be more than happy to hold a workshop with the bar and restaurant owners to come up with solutions to these problems. If they can deal with these problems effectively, it won't be necessary to change the ordinance.

Bert Scoggins said people throw beer bottles, disturb her sleep and urinate in her yard. It is a problem in downtown. She suggested letting all establishments stay open extended hours so all the drinkers will stay put at the bar they got drunk at and not come downtown for after hours drinking. If they can't do that, then the ordinance should be changed.

Commissioner Norwood said if they will enforce the ordinances already on the books, there won't be as much problem with open containers, exceeding the maximum seating capacity, and DUI's. This Commission does not need to put more ordinances on the books or change any existing ordinances. The problem as he sees it is that the ordinances that are on the books now are not being enforced. If they are enforced, the problems will be minimal or may disappear altogether. Mayor Smith agreed and said the police, code enforcement officers and Fire Marshall need to concentrate on code enforcement.

Mr. C. Emerson said he lives on the hill by Beasley middle school, and is awoken from his sleep many times in the early morning hours by the noise from downtown. He has

made many calls to the police to report the excessive noise. He has gotten in his car in the middle of the night and driven around until he locates the noise, which most times is coming from a downtown bar. He has registered many complaints, sometimes three or more a night. He is a light sleeper, but if he is disturbed that far from downtown, others who live closer are surely disturbed. He believes the ordinance should be changed.

Allegra Kitchens said the ordinance should be changed, but it will do no good to change the ordinance and not address the problem of bottle clubs, one of which is about to open in downtown Palatka. This club will be selling 'set-ups' and the patron pays a high cover charge and brings their own bottle of liquor in with them. There are no ordinances on the books to address this type of business. It will do no good to shut other clubs down at a certain time when this one can stay open all night and its patrons can drink all night. In addition to their getting around the liquor laws, they will also be featuring nearly nude women walking around on a cat-walk.

Mayor Smith said as far as he can tell, the people opening that bottle club are operating within the confines of the Code, and he will support their right to do so, even though he doesn't like it. He said the Commission should check into strengthening the Code as it pertains to bottle clubs. He asked Mr. Mengel to check into what other communities are doing with reference to bottle clubs.

The Commission by consensus directed Chief Dolinski to hold a workshop on compliance issues with the local bar/restaurant owners in hopes of cooperatively coming up with a solution to the problems their neighbors are having with unruly patrons and excessive noise. They directed the Building & Zoning, Police and Fire Departments to concentrate on code enforcement issues.

This concludes the items on the agenda.

RIVERBOAT GRANT - Commissioner Brown showed the Commission some information on a grant for funds to build or acquire a riverboat on behalf of Palatka Riverboat, Inc. She said she needs a government entity to accept the funds and administer the grant. She would like the City to do this on behalf of their group. Barbara Elkus, the St. Johns River navigator, met with them and is looking for dollars they can use to leverage with. The City will not be held responsible for coming up with any matching funds. Their group is actively looking for other funds for leveraging besides city funds. Mr. Bush said he attended the meeting and believes there is a question here of liability, but if that can be worked out, it sees no problem with it. Mayor Smith asked Mr. Bush to confer with the City Attorney to discuss the legalities of ownership of the Boat.

AREA CODE CHANGE - Mr. Bush said last week the Putnam County Commission voted to appeal the Public Service Commission's decision to change a substantial portion of Putnam County from the 904 area code to the new 386 area code. He asked the Commission if they would like him to also appeal the decision on behalf of the City of Palatka and the City Commission. By consensus, the Commission directed the Mr. Bush to join Putnam County in their appeal to the PSCS of the new 386 area code assignment

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

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CITY CLERK

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MAYOR