

Proceedings of a regular meeting of the City Commission of the City of Palatka, Florida, held on the 20th day of May, 2004.

PRESENT:	Mayor	Karl N. Flagg
	Commissioner	Mary Lawson Brown
	Commissioner	Hernan Azula
	Commissioner	James Norwood, Jr.
	Commissioner	George E. Sanders

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Allen R. Bush, City Attorney Donald E. Holmes, City Clerk Betsy Jordan Driggers, Finance Director Ruby M. Williams, Police Chief Gary Getchell, Fire Battalion Chief James White, Planning Director Adam Mengel, Parks Supt. Jeff Norton, Main Street Manager Cathy Butler

INVOCATION - The Reverend Frederick Demps, Pastor; Calvary Missionary Baptist Church

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE- Chelsea Merritt

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 4/29/04 Workshop, 5/4/04 Town Hall and 5/6/04 regular meetings. Commissioner Azula moved to adopt the minutes as presented. Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

STUDENT OF THE MONTH - May, 2004 - Commissioner Sanders joined Mayor Flagg in recognizing the following students for their academic excellence, leadership, citizenship and attendance at their respective schools:

Luis Nieves	Beasley Middle School
Rami Brown	Browning-Pearce Elementary School
Shertell Roberts	Central Academy School of Excellence
Carl Glenn	Childrens' Reading Center
Erica Smith	E. H. Miller School
Katelyn Moss	James A. Long Elementary School
Courtney Johnson	Jenkins Middle School
Jeffrey Plemmons	Kelley Smith Elementary School
Loreka S. Holloman	Mellon Elementary School
Bryant Williamson	Moseley Elementary School
Allie Munch	Palatka High School
Frankie Comer	Peniel Baptist Academy
Audrey Woods	River Breeze Elementary School

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ruby Singleton, 408 E. Palmetto Street, Palatka, said she is here to speak about Booker Park (Lefty Turner Field). The sign is very run down and you can't tell it is there. There are several Lefty Turner Field signs that are very tall and bright, but the very small Booker Park sign is very small and needs to be replaced. She would like to know when Booker Park became Lefty Turner Field, which should be the name of only the field if anything. Per the question, Mr. Bush said he believes the park carries both names, Booker-Turner Park. Commissioner Brown said the park was named Booker after Booker T. Washington visited the City; the park was named after him in honor of his visit. Mayor Flagg asked that the minutes be researched and the sign reflect the intent of the Commission.

CONSENT AGENDA - There were no Items.

Mayor Flagg adjourned the Regular Meeting of the City Commission to hear Agenda Item #5.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENDA - SOUTHSIDE HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD REQUEST - Mayor Flagg re-convened the Commission as the Community Redevelopment Agency in order to hear a request from the Southside Historic Neighborhood to release \$55,455 in tax increment funds for Phase II renovation of Hammock Hall. Mr. Bush said an attached memorandum (filed) shows the

Commission's requirements for submissions of this type, which spells out the documentation needed in order to have these requests considered. The Southside Historic Neighborhood Association's specs were mailed out and an advertisement for bids was run in the Palatka Daily News. They received one bid from David Church Construction for \$55,455.00.

David Franke, Building Committee Chairperson, SHNA, 521 Kirby Street, said he mailed out bid packages to six contractors and received one bid. When they received only one bid, other construction companies were called, but they declined to bid. Mayor Flagg noted that the minutes of the May, 2004 Association meeting were not signed; although that is a technicality, it is still an important detail. He would like the entire comprehensive plan for that building submitted to City Hall. He is concerned because the bid amount is nearly equal to the balance in their tax increment account. He wants to make sure everything is in full compliance. Mr. Bush said they wanted to do as much as they could with the money available, and they took the amount of money in their account into consideration when they put the specs together. Commissioner Azula moved to allocate \$55,455 from South Historic District Tax Increment Funds for Hammock Hall Phase II Construction, with the stipulation they bring a copy of the master plan to City Hall. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion, which passed unopposed. Mayor Flagg said there has been talk in the community about some "problems" with respect to dealing with "red tape" at City Hall, and understands that comments that have been made by their membership that there is too much bureaucracy and red tape involved in these matters. Mr. Franke said those were actually comments made by the contractors in stating they didn't want to deal with City Hall, which is why they didn't want to offer a quote for the work.

Mayor Flagg adjourned the Community Redevelopment Agency and reconvened the Palatka City Commission meeting, and returned to the City Commission's Orders of the Day.

PRICE MARTIN CENTER RENTAL POLICY - Mr. Bush said he has attached his memo, which he read into the record (filed). He noted that additional time can be purchased for \$25 per hour, which is a reasonable charge. Currently, the General Fund subsidizes over half of the Price-Martin Center's Operating Budget as it is, and its rates are quite reasonable and affordable. It is his recommendation to retain the current policy. Commissioner Brown said they need to replace the stage curtains; she knows they are expensive, but they need some attention. Mr. Bush noted they have been replaced once since the Center was built. Commissioner Norwood and Jeff Norton noted the City is seeking a grant for the building, and curtain replacement will be one of the items they will accomplish if they can get that grant approved through DCA. Commissioner Brown said many organizations helped with the Ravine Gardens Civic Center; they should be willing to help with the Price-Martin Center, also.

100 BLOCK MAINTENANCE - Mr. Bush noted Joff Fillion, the Chief Building Inspector, has submitted a memorandum into the agenda (filed), which notes his recommendations to do superficial cleaning and painting to the façades and clean out the pigeon droppings and dead carcasses from the 2nd and 3rd floors. The cost to clean up the pigeon droppings, etc. is over \$600,000. The City doesn't have plans to spend that kind of money on the building. Commissioner Azula said this is fine and addresses his request to do something with the appearance of the buildings. They owe that to the citizens, who have waited long enough for something to be done with that Block. They really need to take an active approach towards doing something with those buildings in the near future, whether they get the High-rise from HUD or not. They need to either sell them or get a developer in there to do something with them. Mr. Bush said the marketing experts they have consulted with have said the 100 Block itself is too small to attract a serious developer. They don't want to do the downtown redevelopment piecemeal. They do intend to do the first four items on Mr. Fillion's list, which will address the superficial aspects of the facades, windows and trash left behind by the old tenants. Commissioner Azula said they have been waiting for something to happen with this property for much longer than the five years he has been sitting on the commission. They need to do something with it. They could try to contact other developers to see what they would be willing to do. They need to hear other alternatives; something that can be accomplished

within the next two or three years. He doesn't mind keeping the buildings if they are structurally sound, but they need to come up with an alternative plan in case the High-rise demolition doesn't come to fruition. They need to make it viable in the instance that they only have the 100 Block to offer for re-development.

Commissioner Sanders said he doesn't concur; if they do something other than what they've planned, they are defeating their purpose. They need both blocks in order to attract a serious developer. There are key people on the Federal Government level that are working on this issue, and it may be resolved sooner than they all believed. If the City accomplishes the four listed items, they will be accomplishing something for the moment, which should be sufficient for now. Commissioner Norwood said he agrees with both Commissioners Azula and Sanders, and agrees that they need an alternative plan. The citizens need to know what that alternative plan is. It will take Code Enforcement to tell them whether or not they are addressing all the minimum maintenance standards by only addressing these four items. They cannot ask others to adhere to standards the City does not adhere to. In his Downtown Infrastructure and Appearance Committee discussions, the 100 Block always comes up when people in the other blocks are approached about MMS violations. He asked if the City intends to hold onto this block as it is for the next 20 years, or is there a projected 'sunset' date for this project?

Joff Fillion, Chief Building Official, said the City does have a responsibility to maintain its structures to a minimum degree, which is the spirit of Code Enforcement. The items he has outlined in his memorandum will meet Minimum Maintenance Standards. Code Enforcement did a MMS inventory in December of all the Downtown buildings, but have done nothing with it as so far as contacting the downtown merchants about infractions, because the City needs to do something with the 100 Block before they can enforce the same standards on other buildings. Mayor Flagg said they need to give the City of Palatka a time certain to get these buildings secured and appearances addressed, or otherwise set a date to make a decision as to what to do with them. Commissioner Azula moved to give the City of Palatka 60 days to bring the buildings into compliance with Minimum Maintenance Standards. Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion, which passed unopposed, per the results of a roll-call vote. Mayor Flagg asked Mr. Fillion to give the members of the Commission an inspection report at 30 and 60 days.

Allegra Kitchens, 1027 S. 12th Street, said with regards to the pigeon droppings, in 1987 members of the Historic Society went in and worked all weekend to clean out the pigeon droppings, and this can be done again. Mr. Bush said the droppings are toxic, and if anyone contracts any of the numerous diseases that can be contracted, the City will incur liability, and he cannot allow that. Mrs. Kitchens said the 100 Block buildings are the cornerstone and heart of downtown Palatka. Grants can be obtained to get these buildings back in shape. The downstairs can be retail and the upstairs residential. They can become viable and income producing, and still go with the High-rise to a developer. Mr. Bush said a developer might come in with a plan that does not include those buildings.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

SUMMER MEETING SCHEDULE – Commissioner Brown - Mr. Bush said he has distributed a memorandum to the Commission. There is a budget workshop for Enterprise Funds on June 24 at 3:00 p.m. This workshop is usually scheduled in late June as he usually doesn't get the information he needs to finish preparing these budgets until then. Also, B&Z needs a called meeting on that date to address a reading on an ordinance. The only two meetings scheduled for July are both being held on the same date. He does not recommend any changes. Commissioner Brown concurred.

Commissioner Brown:

- Said she has been invited to attend a ceremony at FLC to honor the first recipients of the Florida Cities of Excellence Awards, and at that same ceremony she is being honored as a 20-plus year Commissioner. It is being held on June 26. They are all invited to attend, and the League President would like them to attend if they can.

Commissioner Norwood:

- Thanked Mr. Bush and the employees who accomplished the 19th Street drainage project. Mr. Bush was able to take care of the problem while being prudent with city funds. Also, the Streets Department cleaned up an overgrown lot by Turner-Booker Park, and did an excellent job. He congratulated Mr. Bush on the timely way he addresses the issues they bring before him. The community appreciates his responsiveness.
- Thanked Ms. Driggers and the other employees who made Coach Cooper feel so welcomed at today's Dedication Ceremony for the Community Center that was named after him.

Mayor Flagg:

- Asked if what FDOT is doing on Crill Avenue will affect storm water issues at Crill and Moseley. Mr. Bush said they have installed 10hp pumps there to address the heavy rainfall, which has a tendency to overflow those streets and particularly that intersection. He wants to speak to FDOT about acquiring the property at the SE corner of that intersection to construct a drain field. Mayor Flagg asked him to make that a priority, noting it will be a good project for Better Place Funds. Mr. Bush should set up a meeting with their engineers to make it happen. It is not just a neighborhood issue; it affects the entire community, as it is a major intersection. There is no system on the market that will accommodate the water that accumulates there. This is a safety hazard and should be a top priority. Commissioner Norwood said DEP regulates storm water, and has declared that drainage system inadequate. They know it does not belong to the City. They should contact FDEP and have them in on the negotiations with FDOT. Mayor Flagg said they need to get video of the next storm, as a picture is worth a thousand words.
- Noted that he and Commissioner Sanders participated in the Chamber Fly-In to Washington, D.C. They were part of a group of 75 from all over NE Florida. They met in the "Indian Treaty Room" for a Presidential briefing, and although President Bush was not available, one of his aids briefed them. They had lunch in the Library of Congress, and then met with Tad Galligan, who is the Senior Staff Assistant for the House Committee on Appropriations, and they discussed Palatka's riverfront and their request for almost \$1 million for that project. They went into the Rotunda area and met with Congressmen there, and then went into the House Chambers and watched them take care of the Nation's business. It was quite an experience. They left Palatka at 5:00 a.m. and returned at 12:00 midnight that night.

Commissioner Sanders:

- Said he attended that Fly-In and was very impressed by Congressman Mica, who was very positive. His aides were very gracious. He was very receptive to the topics they spoke about, and one of those was the future of the High-rise. Tonight they talked about putting a lot of money into the 100 Block, but their future may not be long in coming. In fact, he received a very positive e-mail from Congressman Mica concerning the future of the High-rise this morning. Mayor Flagg said they also met the Speaker of the House and invited all they met to the Blue Crab Festival. He noted that the Airport Manager is also attending an aviation meeting there this week. He left with the impression that the state congressmen, representatives and aides all have great respect for what they are trying to accomplish in the community.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m. upon a motion by Commissioner Brown.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR