



MINUTES WORKSHOP VIRTUAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING MONDAY, MAY 18, 2020, 6:00 P.M.

Pursuant to proper notice a Workshop City Council Meeting of the City Council of the City of Neptune Beach was held on Monday, May 18, 2020, at 6:00 p.m., by Communications Media Technology, pursuant to Governor Executive Order Number 20-69, issued on March 20, 2020 and extended by Governor Executive Order Number 20-112, issued on April 29, 2020.

Attendance

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Elaine Brown
Vice Mayor Fred Jones
Councilor Kerry Chin
Councilor Josh Messinger
Councilor Scott Wiley

STAFF:

City Manager Stefen Wynn
City Attorney Zachary Roth
Police Chief Richard Pike
Public Works Director Leon Smith
Deputy Public Works Director Megan George
Community Development Director Kristina Wright
Senior Center Director Leslie Lyne
Grant and Resilient Coordinator Colin Moore
City Clerk Catherine Ponson

Call to Order

Mayor called the virtual workshop meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AWARDS / PRESENTATIONS / RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

Congressman John Rutherford

Update from Congressman John Rutherford. Congressman Rutherford gave an update on the CARES Act. He reviewed upcoming legislation meant to help small businesses and their employers.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Report

City Manager Stefen Wynn reported the following:

- City Hall will reopen May 20th, limiting it to four people in the lobby. Glass barriers have been installed in the lobby. There will be additional cleaning and sanitization practices in place.
- We are in the process of hiring a Chief Financial Officer and Staff is handling additional duties.

City Attorney Report

City Attorney Zachary Roth reported to Council he had received a phone call from the attorney for The Local requesting a potential modified special exception for the June 1 meeting.

Councilor Wiley commented that this is not the appropriate meeting to bring that up. He would not be favor of doing anything during a Council workshop in regards to that issue.

**Grant and
Resiliency Report**

Grant and Resiliency Coordinator Colin Moore reported that there is an amended agreement for the scope of work for Jarboe Park. This is to better align with what was planned for Phase 1. This was originally a recreational trail grant for a 1,000-foot trail on the east side of the ponds. Most of the improvements for Phase 1A are on the west side. The trail has been changed and will be about 1,300 feet and the bridge will be immediately in front of Neptune House. The grant is still for \$200,000 with a \$50,000 match, but it is going to be focused solely on constructing the multi-use path and the bridge.

Councilor Messinger questioned if this grant change is what was discussed in Committee and fall in line with the phasing that was brought up by Staff and in Committee.

Mr. Moore replied that the changes were discussed, and the City was able to get with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to make the change in the scope.

Councilor Messinger requested shading or a diagram of what is being changed.

Councilor Chin asked for clarification if the bridge by the Neptune House would cross over to Florida Boulevard.

Mr. Moore replied that it would, and it is a wider bridge since it is going to be a kind of spur of the East Coast Greenway.

**Police Chief
Report**

Police Chief Richard Pike reported that the opening of the beaches has been going smoothly. The beaches were busy and Neptune Beach lifeguards rescued four people out of the ocean and they were transported to the hospital. He thanked Captain Rich Banks for putting on a full staff of Ocean Rescue for the beaches reopening.

COMMITTEE REPORTS**Finance/Boards/
Charter Review**

Committee Chairman Wiley reported his committee would meet on Wednesday, June 10, 2020.

**Strategic
Planning/
Transportation**

Vice Mayor Jones reported his committee would meet on Wednesday, May 27, 2020.

PUBLIC COMMENTS / NONE**Proposed Ord. No.
2020-02, Neptune
In Need**

Proposed Ordinance No. 2020-02: An Ordinance of the City of Neptune Beach, Florida, Added a New Section 23-90: Voluntary Program for Collection of Funds to Help the Needy with Neptune Beach Utility Bills; Providing an Effective Date.

Mayor Brown explained this is an ordinance that would enact a voluntary program for collecting funds to help people who need assistance with their utility bills here in Neptune Beach. This would be a way for people to round up their utility bills with the additional funds going to the program.

Mr. Wynn explained that this was mirrored after a similar program in Atlantic Beach. He would like it to be administered by an outside agency such as BEAM (Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry). This would not only give an opportunity to donate but round up your bill. The ordinance is written to allow the City to set up with an outside agency.

Mr. Roth indicated that the ordinance is set up to leave flexibility so as we learn and go through this we do not have to amend the ordinance.

Mayor Brown reminded everyone that no taxpayer dollars will be given without people asking for it to be done. It is strictly voluntary. She added that Councilor Chin has also signed on as a sponsor of this legislation.

Councilor Wiley stated that this is a great bill and is long overdue. He wanted to clarify that this is for Neptune Beach utilities and not electric.

Councilor Chin thanked Mr. Roth, Mr. Wynn and Mayor Brown for helping get this bill together. It goes hand in hand with other efforts such as No Empty Stockings. We are helping each other in this difficult time. We are going to see changes in the way society works.

Mayor Brown reported that Mr. Wynn is communicating with BEAM who has the ability to help us to make sure we are applying this correctly.

CONSENSUS: **TO MOVE PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2020-02 FORWARD FOR FIRST READ ON JUNE 1, 2020**

Proposed Ord. No. 2020-03, Homestead Exemption

Proposed Ordinance No. 2020-03: An Ordinance of the City of Neptune Beach, Florida, Amending Chapter 21, Taxation: Article VI, Additional Homestead Exemption; Amending Section 21-120, Additional Homestead Exemption; Increasing the Amount of the Additional Homestead Exemption; and Providing an Effective Date.

Councilor Wiley explained this is an ordinance recently passed by the Jacksonville City Council. It was brought to our attention by the property appraiser and it is the low-income senior exemption. This bill would give another \$25,000 exemption in addition to the current \$25,000 exemption. He thanked Mayor Brown for sponsoring the legislation with him.

CONSENSUS: **TO MOVE PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2020-03 FORWARD FOR FIRST READ ON JUNE 1, 2020**

Proposed Ord. No. 2020-04, American-Made Goods

Proposed Ordinance No. 2020-04: An Ordinance Creating a New Section 2-388 (Buy American Preference in Contracts for Goods and General Services), Chapter 2 (Administration), Article VI (Finance), Division 2 (Purchasing and Contracts), City of Neptune Beach Code of Ordinances, To Create a Preference for American-Made Goods and General Services in Contracts; Providing for Severability; Providing an Effective Date.

Mayor Brown stated that this is being introduced because of a preference to buy American. It would help American companies, businesses and corporations.

Mr. Wynn explained the intent would always be to look for local vendors and American-made products that are within a certain threshold.

Mr. Roth reported that it does provide a five-percent preference percentage when ranking entities if they are an American company. There is also some flexibility built in.

Mr. Wynn commented that any plans currently in process would be exempted from this ordinance, if enacted.

Vice Mayor Jones questioned if there was some sort of mechanism in place to allow flexibility if in trying to procure something it is not readily available, the costs is higher or it is not made here.

Mr. Roth advised that the City Manager has the responsibility to set up the administrative policy and it has its specific exceptions.

CONSENSUS: **TO MOVE PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2020-04 FORWARD**
FOR FIRST READ ON JUNE 1, 2020

ISSUE DEVELOPMENT

**Neptune Beach
Activity Center**

Neptune Beach Senior Activity Center. Mr. Wynn gave a brief history and reviewed the timeline of the Neptune Beach Senior Activity Center. This has been going on since August, 2017, with the noted water damage. The City is grateful to Mr. Alan Dickinson for providing a location for the Senior Center at 450 Atlantic Boulevard. Mr. Wynn is asking for Council to approve to move the Center on an interim basis into the Neptune House at Jarboe Park. There would be an \$800 cost in providing a sidewalk that goes from the front door to the existing parking lot. This would help get residents in safely who are using mobility devices. Staff would like to be able to move everything in by June 1 in anticipation of being able to offer some limited programming at a reduced occupancy rate based on the Governor's reopening plan.

Mr. Wynn continued with asking for approval for the Senior Center to go back to its original location at 2004 Forest Avenue. The City has looked at some of the most economical ways of producing a building that is not only aesthetically pleasing but also meets the needs of the Senior Center. The City is looking at a modular-type set up for a facility. The proposed modular building is a specific model. The target date for opening would be January 2021.

Senior Center Director Leslie Lyne stated that everyone is anxious to get back together. She has provided a limited schedule of events because the Neptune House is one big room. Activities will be scheduled one event at a time. She also pointed out that the acoustics are less than favorable and, if approved, she would like to be able to put some aesthetically pleasing window coverings and maybe hang something from the ceiling to absorb the echo. She commented that she appreciated Council giving this serious consideration as they need to move forward and give the Seniors something to look forward to.

Mayor Brown clarified that the City is seeking Council approval to move forward to designate Neptune House as the temporary housing for the Senior Center and go ahead and get it ready with minimal dollars. More information will be coming on the cost of a more permanent facility that would be located at the previous location at 2004 Forest Avenue.

Mr. Wynn confirmed that is what is being asked and to perform any of the remodeling that is needed such as a sidewalk and window coverings.

Councilor Chin stated that it is a good plan to go back to the original location. He commented that the schedule of activities seems very comprehensive and fills up most of the days. He questioned what would happen if a resident came and wanted to rent the space for a certain amount of time.

Mr. Wynn reported that going back to May 4, 2019, the Neptune House had been rented about 11 times. He proposed to temporarily stop the ability to rent Neptune House unless it is something that could be accommodated, however, it would be easier to say no rentals during the interim period.

Councilor Chin added that he understands that the rentals have been few and far between. He reported that he heard from people that the rates were a little high for what they needed the building for. He stated that this would be something think about but he understands if the moratorium is the way to go.

Vice Mayor Jones commented that this is a good use of resources. The City has the property and the graphic illustrates how you can make a modular structure look like a permanently brick and mortar structure. He also commented that having a temporary moratorium or suspending public rental options of Neptune House will allow the City to explore some of the shortcomings of the buildings, such as the sound.

Councilor Messinger stated this is great all the way around. The City is using Neptune House and using resources wisely as an interim solution. The modular solutions are a great solution and can be aesthetically pleasing. He looks forward to working on what it will ultimately look like. He added there are some good opportunities to get something in immediately and also plan for potentially future expansion. He remarked that the City is moving in the right direction and he would like to see the City get there sooner rather than later.

Councilor Wiley showed his support by commenting this is a great plan and is long overdue. He added it would be nice, during the temporary moratorium for using Neptune House, to look at the rates for using the Neptune House when it opens back up. He thanked Alan Dickinson for working with the City and looks forward to making it come to fruition.

Mayor Brown summarized that the first step, and it looks like Council agrees, is to go ahead and plan on getting Neptune House ready when the Seniors can come back and utilize it. There will be more information on the breakdown of costs.

CONSENSUS:

APPROVE THE TEMPORARY MOVE OF THE NEPTUNE BEACH SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER TO THE NEPTUNE HOUSE IN JARBOE PARK AND BEGIN WORKING ON ACQUIRING PERMANENT MODULAR BUILDINGS TO BE LOCATED AT 2004 FOREST AVENUE

PUBLIC COMMENTS / NONE

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Chin thanked City staff and Mr. Wynn for getting the virtual meetings working. He feels the participation from the residents is more than when the meetings are in Council Chambers. It will be something to think about how to continue that participation moving once Council meets in person again.

Vice Mayor Jones agreed with Councilor Chin and added there would be a paradigm shift in the way we do public business.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the workshop meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

ATTEST:


Catherine Ponson, CMC
City Clerk


Elaine Brown, Mayor

Approved: 6-1-2020

