



MINUTES

REGULAR CITY COMMISSION MEETING

MONDAY, JULY 6, 2021, AT 6:00 P.M.

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE BEACH, 2200 A1A South, St. Augustine Beach, FL 32080

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor England called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor England led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor England, Vice Mayor Samora, Commission Rumrell and Commissioner Torres.

Commissioner George tried to connect with Zoom but could not connect. She is out of town.

Also, present were City Manager Royle, Assistant City Attorney Taylor, Police Sgt. Hammonds, City Clerk Raddatz, Finance Director Douylliez, Building Official Law, and Public Works Director Tredik.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING ON JUNE 7 AND COMMISSION WORKSHOP ON JUNE 17, 2021

Mayor England asked if there were any discussions regarding the minutes. Being none, Mayor England asked for a motion.

Motion: to approve the Regular Commission minutes for June 7, 2021, and the Commission Workshop on June 17, 2021. **Moved by** Commissioner Rumrell, **Seconded by** Vice Mayor Samora. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor England moved on to Item 1.

V. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS OF THE AGENDA

Mayor England asked if there were any additions or deletions of the agenda.

City Manager Royle advised that Items 2, 5, and 6 will be rescheduled. He advised that the Commission has received additional information on the dais for Item 7, and it can be discussed once the Commission gets to that item.

VI. CHANGES TO ORDER TO TOPICS ON THE AGENDA

Mayor England asked if there were any changes to the order of topics on the agenda. Being none, Mayor England moved on to Item VII.

VII. PRESENTATIONS

A. Interview of Mr. Eugene Mariutto for Position of Senior Alternate on Code Enforcement

Board

Mayor England introduced Item VII.A. and asked Mr. Mariutto to come to the podium. She then asked Mr. Mariutto if he would like to give any information about himself.

Mr. Mariutto advised he wanted to be on the Code Enforcement Board to help the community.

Vice Mayor Samora asked if he served on any of the City Boards.

Mr. Mariutto advised no.

Vice Mayor Samora advised Mr. Mariutto that City Attorney Taylor would be able to explain the Sunshine and Ethics laws to him.

Mayor England discussed having the process of the Code Board should be done as quickly as possible because some cases are getting old. She explained that some residents hide in their homes when the Code Enforcement Officer comes to their doors or even fail to respond within the 30-day notice requirement.

Building Official advised that the Board is the only one that can give fines, and it is a lengthy process.

Mayor England asked for a motion.

Motion: to appoint Mr. Mariutto to the Code Enforcement Board as the Senior Alternate. **Moved by** Commissioner Torres, **Seconded by** Commissioner Rumrell. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor England moved on to Item VIII.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor England opened the Public Comments section. The following addressed the Commission:

Attorney Doug Burnett, St. Johns Law Group, 104 Sea Grove Main Street, St. Augustine Beach, FL, (spoke as a resident) presented a PowerPoint presentation (Exhibit 1). He advised that there are a couple of problems with Ocean Hammock Park, but the Commission does have a solution to correct the problems. He explained that the City has to follow its adopted ordinances. The Comprehensive Plan is adopted by an ordinance. The City adopted a new Comprehensive Plan, the 20/40 plan, back in January 2020. The City in purposing parking next to residential land must have visual screening, which has been done before but needs to be expanded upon. He explained that the City cannot develop Ocean Hammock Park without demonstrating that it is maximizing preservation. He explained that Ocean Hammock Park has been planned already, but the new Comprehensive Plan that was adopted after Ocean Hammock Park was acquired and did not write in exemptions for Ocean Hammock Park; therefore, Ocean Hammock Park must go by the Comprehensive Plan. He advised the Commission needs to maximize preservation at Ocean Hammock Park. The City's Comprehensive Plan talks about preservation of open space, which parking would eliminate. He explained that the Comprehensive Plan could be amended, but the Commission cannot do it without the amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. The City cannot comply with the Future Land Use Map currently because of the ordinance that sought Maratea from becoming a Planned Unit Development (PUD). The City amended the Comprehensive Plan, but did not do a zoning ordinance. Maratea is a PUD. The Comprehensive Plan modified it to recreation. This parcel was mixed use at the time and the ordinance that the City tried to pass in 2018 was to turn the property into recreation. The problem is that the land use change was to recreation and did not do anything

for zoning and did not notify the public. In 2018 the map was changed to Parks and Recreation. In 2019 the City goes through the adoption of the 20/40 Comprehensive Plan and the Future Land Use Map is the 2019 map after 2018 and adopted it in 2020 by ordinance, which changed it back to mixed use because you used the 2019 map. The challenge would be that the current map would indicate as attached to the Comprehensive Plan in 2019, which would be mixed use. Also, the ordinance did not get rid of the PUD. Whether Ocean Hammock Park is mixed use or parks and recreation, the City does not have a defined use. The Future Land Use Map did not align with the Comprehensive Plan because the text in the map is not consistent. There are uses shown on the map that are not written in the text, such as the allowable uses. The only way the Commission can have a recreational parcel under the Comprehensive Plan is if it is mixed use in support of residential. He advised a park in Sea Grove, Sea Colony or Anastasia Dunes, but not a park independent of residential. If it is parks and recreation, there is no definition of what recreation is in the Comprehensive Plan. The PUD Ordinances 05-09 and Ordinance 09-01 were rezoning the property. Ordinance 05-09 was to rezone the whole parcel and Ordinance 09-01 was to rezone it to scale it back after the City bought the front portion. After the City bought the front portion, no one went back and modified the PUD ordinance to take it all to the City. The ordinance with the site plan shows along the bottom as conservation area and a retention pond another area. The language in the preamble to the ordinance said it did away with the previous ordinance, but it could not have because it was never rezoned as an ordinance. The City has a stormwater management modeling requirement, which has not been done. It requires a habitat management plan to be done for all new development. The City cannot build a park plan without a recreation master plan, which requires an adopted level of services. The Comprehensive Plan has a minimal number of services, but the City does not have an inventory for recreation square footage and how it effects the City. The City must maintain open space and recreation according to the Comprehensive Plan. He asked why the east Ocean Hammock Park would be developed before the west Hammock Park. There is a problem in protecting the east park and the tourist and residents who go there because it is remote. The Police Department has challenges with opening and closing the park and his neighborhood has had problems from time to time. It would be better to develop the west park and it would help with the parking needs. Publix would be more accessible to the public with the west park than the east park. He asked why more parking is necessary and if the Commission is creating more parking for the businesses. Creating more parking for the businesses would be a disadvantage to other businesses. The Comprehensive Plan put in conditions like businesses not burdening the City. All developments should have parking for their own business and pay for their own development, not the City. Using parkettes for parking goes back to the open spaces in the Comprehensive Plan and the parkettes are misidentified in the Future Land Use Map and are shown as part of the rights-of-ways. They should be relabeled as parks and recreation on the map and parks and recreation needs to be redefined in the Comprehensive Plan. The plans show conflicting traffic patterns and eliminates stacking and would not meet the requirements for in and out for those parking spaces. Every road in the City is at a level service "D" and yet the Commission is trying to accommodate more traffic and more parking. The business developer should be paying for those improvements. He suggested amending the Comprehensive Plan and the Future Land Use Map first before moving forward. The Comprehensive Plan overrides the zoning regulations. There are no variances to the Comprehensive Plan. It would need to be amended.

Mayor England thanked Attorney Burnett for the research he has done and asked for a copy of his PowerPoint. She said that this is the perfect time to discuss the issue because no decisions have been made yet. She thanked everyone for their input at this time. She suggested getting other agencies involved to help the City with this issue.

Commissioner Torres appreciated Attorney Burnett's research and his community participation.

He advised that he would be researching the Comprehensive Plan and with Attorney Burnett's permission, he would like to discuss it further with him.

Attorney Burnett said of course. He advised that he appreciates the Commission listening to the residents on these issues and allowing him to speak tonight.

Mayor England advised that residents all have three minutes to speak; however, if what Attorney Burnett has said is your point of view, please make it concise due to time restraints.

Tom Reynolds, 50 Brigantine Court, St. Augustine Beach, FL, advised that this should have been on the agenda; advised that it was wrong to allow Attorney Burnett ten minutes instead of three minutes like everyone else; advised Attorney Burnett is unethical; advised that more parking means more money the City will get; advised half of the parking at Pier Park is employee parking for Salt Life; agrees with more parking is needed; and explained that beach renourishment will not continue without more parking.

Russell Denea, 405 Ocean Grove Circle, St. Augustine Beach, FL, was concerned about the protection of the environment and safety of the public because of the boundaries between the residents and the public.

Bill Pelzer, 461 Ocean Gove Circle, St. Augustine Beach, FL, advised that he has lived here since 2008; Ocean Hammock Park was supposed to be a conservation park and wetlands; the plans for Ocean Hammock Park do not include and security and could be a refuge for the homeless; suggested that all entries have locking gates and a firm commitment that the Police will patrol the premises at night, and no trespassing signs will be displayed.

William Alonso, 938 Deer Hammock Circle, St. Augustine Beach, FL, explained that people come over the 8-foot fence into Sea Colony and if bathrooms are installed, it could attract the homeless. He said that traffic will be a problem.

Debbie Foppe, 901 Ocean Palm Way, St. Augustine Beach, FL, read a letter to the Commission and asked to keep the City green and not a big parking lot for private businesses. She advised that there are safety and pollution concerns and does not want development. She collected over 700 signatures against the development and gave them to the City Clerk (Exhibit 3).

Nancy McManus, 413 Ocean Grove Circle, St. Augustine Beach, FL, advised that she picks up beer bottles and syringes in Ocean Hammock Park and the traffic is busy now and will get worse.

Tamra Rushing, 848 Ocean Palm Way, St. Augustine Beach, FL, advised that she left the west part of St. Johns County because of the congestion and moved to the beach. She asked the Commission to decide what the City wants to be and portray and advised that the demand will not slow down. She explained that the residents' safety should come first and not try to accommodate all of St. Johns County. She explained that parking should not be done to help non-residents.

Kevin Hoey, 1657 Makarios Drive, St. Augustine Beach, FL, thanked Attorney Burnett for his research and advised that he lives down the street from Sea Colony. He has seen an Increase in traffic and bad behavior in the past years. Changing the parkettes to parking spaces would not make the residents happy. It seems that most of the focus is for the tourists and the businesses, not the residents and wants to preserve the City as it is.

Dan Miles, 928 Ocean Palm Way, St. Augustine Beach, FL, advised that he was born and raised in St. Johns County and the City has fallen victim of their success. Eliminating the last green space along A1A Beach Boulevard with 160 parking spaces will not make a difference. He advised that he appreciated Attorney Burnett for his research and all he has done for the community.

Roger Wentz, 117 Spanish Oaks Lane, St. Augustine Beach, FL, advised that he thought he found

paradise, but this would change it. He suggested that the Comprehensive Plan should have in its permeability of the ground and the less paving the better it is.

Amanda Rodriguez, 32 Versaggi Drive, St. Augustine Beach, FL, advised the Commission to think out of the box and protect the residents. Utilize the shuttle and other parking south of the City. She advised that there is no protection for the residents, and it could grow into a problem.

Robin Streit, 114 D Street, St. Augustine Beach, FL, bought her house 1997. She lives next to the parkette and has a personal interest. The parking has been an issue on D Street and requested not to have a parking lot on 2nd Street.

Jane Collar, 716 Ocean Palm Way, St. Augustine Beach, FL, advised that there is plenty of parking on the beach and there is no need for more parking. She has had homeless people follow them and disappear into the woods. She suggested developing the west park first. Fighting and partying goes on in the middle of the night on the beach and adding parking and bathrooms will make it more dangerous.

Mayor England closed the Public Comments section and thanked all the residents who came out to express your opinions. We are just looking into the project. Please let us know your concerns. This will help the Commission to talk to St. Johns County about these issues. The Commission has not made any decisions yet and we are only researching it because a previous Commissioner asked us to do that.

Commissioner Rumrell thanked the residents for coming because it is important to get your input, but there are also neighbors on the alphabet and numbered streets that have people constantly parking in front of their houses. He does not think of it being a problem to add parking spaces because it will help. He advised that he is not for 162 parking spaces and feels that some solutions are shuttles, and other mobilities. Combining the shuttles and adding parking would be a solution. He said that the input helps but saying no we do not want any parking is not the right answer. He advised the answer is how do we find the right parking and where do we put the right parking. He is not for changing the parkettes, but there are some parkettes that people do not know about because they are not maintained. He said that the other neighbors constantly email him to get the parking off their streets and it is to the point where we have residential parking only signs to stop people from parking in front of houses. He wants to work with everybody.

Vice Mayor Samora advised that this is not new regarding parking and staff is doing their due diligence to give the Commission ideas to solve the problems. He explained that the Commission is very early in the process and as Mayor England said it is a perfect time to hear the comments in order to guide our decisions on this issue.

City Manager Royle advised that this will be brought up at the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board meeting on July 20th at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission room. They will be discussing parking throughout the City, not necessary just Ocean Hammock Park. The Chairman of the Board asked the members to make a prioritize list of where they feel the parking spaces should be added. So far only one list was received from the Chairman.

Mayor England then moved on to Item IX.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Mayor England asked Commissioner Torres for his comments.

Commissioner Torres advised that the majority of the people that came today was because there was a big sign on A1A Beach Boulevard about Ocean Hammock Park. He stated that the Commission has made no decisions on parking as of this date.

Commissioner Rumrell advised that it is good to get information from the residents now, but there are 7,000 residents and none of the Commissioners have said the parking is to help businesses. He advised it was to help the residents and need to work to see what the longtime solution would be to fix the problem of parking in front of houses. There has to be a compromise of some sort. The Commission does not want to lose the integrity of the beach and wants ideas to make things work for a permanent solution.

Vice Mayor Samora agreed with Commissioner Rumrell and said that the Commission is only gathering information at this point and is happy to hear feedback from the residents. He advised that as a City we need to get out accurate and complete information and would like the Communications and Events Coordinator to get complete information out to the public on social media on parking, Ocean Hammock Park development plan, etc.

Mayor England advised that City Manager Royle and she have been asked St. Johns County to give in writing that they are going to move the fire station from Pier Park before the old city hall lease is over. She advised that there is parking available north of the City such as Pope Road and County properties. There could be development of parking at pier park. She explained that she has asked for two meetings with their staff and have not gotten any response, so she is going to the County Administrator Conrad Hunter to move forward on this. She was glad to see the residents come out and give their concerns so the Commission could bring it up to the County and the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization (NFTPO) to get help on the parking issues. She advised that the City of St. Augustine has a mobility study, and she would like to see if a tram could be between St. Augustine and St. Augustine Beach. She also asked County Commissioner Dean how much bed tax they are getting from the City and will ask for his help.

Vice Mayor Samora advised that the Tourist Development Council did talk about as part of the \$.50 bed tax intercity connectors could be funded by that increase. He asked the Commission to get to the County to support that increase. The River to Sea Loop plans and moving of the fire station should be advertised and put out on social media.

Commissioner Rumrell advised that there might be a way to forward the City's parking problem by doing a private /public partnership with the beach shuttle. If a bond could be issued to pay for the shuttle and people who use it pay the bond back, then the City would not have to pay for it. He advised that the City of Clearwater and other coastal communities do that.

Mayor England asked City Manager Royle to have Reuben Franklin, P.E., Public Works Director from the City of St. Augustine to come and give a presentation to the Commission on their mobility study.

Mayor England moved on to Item 1.

X. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Ordinance 21-07, First Public Hearing and Second Reading, to Provide Addition to Prohibited Uses in Section 3.02.03 of the Land Development Code (Presenter: Lex Taylor, City Attorney)

Mayor England introduced Item 1 and asked City Attorney Taylor to give a staff report.

City Attorney Taylor advised he changed the prohibited uses to keep out rehab centers and has not made any changes since the last reading.

Mayor England opened the Public Hearing. Being none, Mayor England closed the Public Hearing and City Attorney Taylor to read the preamble of Ordinance 21-07.

City Attorney Taylor read the preamble.

Mayor England asked for a motion.

Motion: to approve Ordinance 21-07 as read. **Moved by** Commissioner Rumrell, **Seconded by** Mayor England. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor England moved on to Item 2.

XI. CONSENT

None.

XII. OLD BUSINESS

2. Light Up the Beach for City's New Year's Eve 2021 Special Event: Update Report (Presenter: Ms. Melinda Conlon, Events and Communications Coordinator)

This item has been rescheduled.

3. Non-Ad Valorem Assessment to Construct 2nd Street West of 2nd Avenue: Request to Approve Resolution 21-23 and Agreement with the Tax Collector (Presentation: Bill Tredik, Public Works Director)

Mayor England introduced Item 3 and asked Public Works Director Tredik to give his report.

Public Works Director Tredik requested approval of the non-ad valorem assessment and the agreement with the Tax Collector. He presented a PowerPoint (Exhibit 2) to recap the information to the Commission from the last meeting.

Vice Mayor Samora asked if anyone has received any comments from the property owners.

The Commission did not hear anything from the residents.

Mayor England opened the Public Hearing. Being none, Mayor England closed the Public Hearing and asked for a motion.

Motion: to approve Resolution 21-23 and the agreement with the Tax Collector. **Moved by** Mayor England, **Seconded by** Vice Mayor Samora. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor England moved on to Item 4.

4. Ordinance 21-08, First Reading: to Amend Chapter 16 (Police Department) of the General City Code to Delete Obsolete Provisions (Presenter: Lex Taylor, City Attorney)

Mayor England introduced Item 4 and asked City Attorney Taylor to give his staff report.

City Attorney Taylor advised he made minimal changes. He explained that it brings the policies out of the code and into the Police Policy Manual.

Commissioner Rumrell asked if any changes have been made since the Commission saw it last meeting.

City Attorney Taylor advised no.

Discussion ensued regarding updating the policies on a timely basis.

Mayor England opened the Public Hearing. Being none, Mayor England closed the Public Hearing and asked for the preamble to be read.

City Attorney Taylor read the preamble.

Mayor England asked for a motion.

Motion: to approve Ordinance 21-08 on First Reading. **Moved by** Mayor England, **Seconded by**

Commissioner Torres. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor England moved on to Item 5.

5. Ordinance 21-09, First Reading: to Amend the Land Development Regulations to Allow the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board to Approve Certain Conditional Use Permits (Presenter: Brian Law, Building Official)

This item has been rescheduled.

6. Ordinance 21-10, First Reading: to Amend Chapter 18 (Streets and Sidewalks) of the General City Code to Delete Requirement for a Public Hearing Before Ordinance is Prepared to Vacate a Street or Alley (Presenter: Max Royle, City Manager)

This item has been rescheduled.

7. Ordinance 21-11, First Reading: to Amend the Land Development Regulations to Have First Public Hearing of an Ordinance to Change the Regulations Done by the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board (Presenter: Max Royle, City Manager)

Mayor England introduced Item 7 and asked City Manager Royle for his report.

City Manager Royle advised the Ordinance number is 21-09, not 21-11. He asked City Attorney Taylor if the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board public hearing would include land use amendments and suggested that the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board hear the first reading of the ordinance and then give their recommendation to the Commission for its final adoption.

City Attorney Taylor advised that he would put it in the preamble and change the ordinance for the next reading to reflect that.

City Manager Royle advised that this ordinance would allow the same number of public hearings, but the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board would do the first reading and give their recommendations to the Commission and then the Commission would adopt the ordinance, which would lessen the number of agenda topics.

Commissioner Rumrell advised that this will give the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board more of a roll in the process and then the Commission would do the final adoption.

Vice Mayor Samora asked if the timing of the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board would be enough in between meetings to advertise.

City Clerk Raddatz advised that the agendas and the Commission books are done a week before all meetings and then on the final reading is when the advertisements are put in the paper.

Mayor England opened the Public Hearing. The following addressed the Commission:

Meg O'Connell, 10 Versaggi Drive, St. Augustine Beach, asked if the public would still have the same number of public hearings.

Mayor England advised yes, and then explained the process.

Amanda Rodriguez, 32 Versaggi Drive, advised that she felt there would still be less of a chance for the public to speak after Mayor England explained the process.

Mayor England advised that was incorrect and then closed the Public Hearing and asked City Attorney Taylor to read the preamble.

City Attorney Taylor read the preamble.

Mayor England asked for a motion.

Motion: to approve Ordinance 21-09. **Moved by** Mayor England, **Seconded by** Commissioner Torres. Motion passed unanimously.

City Attorney Taylor advised for the record that he read the preamble with the addition of the verbiage requested by City Manager Royle.

Mayor England moved on to Item 8.

8. Use of City Meeting Room by the Public: Review of Recommendations and Fees (Presenter: Max Royle, City Manager)

Mayor England introduced Item 8 and asked City Manager Royle for his report.

City Manager Royle advised that the public rooms have been closed due to the pandemic. Building C has started renovations for the IT Department under the Building Official's direction. The main meeting room proposal is to create the Communications and Events Coordinator office in half the space and the public meeting room in the other. He explained the time and weekdays it would be available and asked the Commission for their approval.

Mayor England advised that the meeting room is important for the public. She agreed with the times and calendar days.

Commissioner Rumrell agreed that the AA groups are the most important and he would like to make room for them.

City Manager Royle advised that there are several AA groups that met four days a week and evenings and some were very large groups. There would not be enough space for the large groups.

Discussion ensued on charging everyone who uses the room; the legalities that the City takes by having the public in the building and picking one group over another; security issues; having better working conditions for staff; letting the homeowner associations find their own place; not many places available in the City; whether to delegate the running of the meeting room to the City Manager; the size of the office for the Communications and Events Coordinator; having a conference room where the Communications and Events Coordinator's office is; using cubicles; where to have people for overflow at Commission meetings; and not wanting to limit public access.

Mayor England opened the Public Comments section. Being none, Mayor England closed the Public Comments section.

It was the consensus of the Commission to approve the regulations that the fees will be paid by anyone who rents the meeting room, that the time blocks will be 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 – 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and Saturday mornings from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. only.

Mayor England moved on to Item 8.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

9. St. Johns County's 2022 Legislative Action Plan: Discussion of Topics to Recommend be Included (Presenter: Max Royle, City Manager)

Mayor England introduced Item 9 and asked City Manager Royle for his report.

City Manager Royle explained that St. Johns County asked what issues the City wants to be put in the Legislative Action Plan. He suggested six items, or the Commission can change them. Beach renourishment will be done regardless.

Mayor England asked why the beach renourishment was not on the list.

City Manager Royle advised that every five (5) years the City is on a cycle to get a section of the beach renourished, so it does not need to be on the list. He advised that the City is on a 50 year Congressional authorized beach restoration process.

Mayor England asked to add public transportation between the City of St. Augustine and the City of St. Augustine Beach.

Vice Mayor Samora asked to add Home Rule, underground utility hardening, and funding for sea level rise preparedness to the list and delete the support of Visit Florida because it has multi-year funding.

Mayor England requested to add language to make cities and counties sustainable for stormwater management.

Commissioner Rumrell requested updating infrastructure of stormwater drains including roadways.

Mayor England opened the Public Comments section. Being none, Mayor England closed the Public Comments section and asked for consensus.

It was the consensus of the Commission to send the City Manager's list along with the additions to St. Johns County.

Mayor England moved on to Item 10.

10. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget: Scheduling Date for Meeting in Late July to Set the Preliminary Millage (Presenter: Max Royle, City Manager)

Mayor England introduced Item 10 and asked City Manager Royle for his report.

City Manager Royle advised that in past years the Commission has met on the last Monday in July to set the preliminary millage rate. He asked if the Commission would be available July 26th at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission room. He explained that the Property Appraiser needs to have this information by the first week in August.

It was the consensus of the Commission to meet on Monday, July 26th at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission room.

Mayor England explained that in her experience working, there was a rule that the salaries could only be increased by a certain percentage. She asked the Commission to talk to other businesses in the area to see what salary increases they are doing and what inflation is at this time.

Mayor England opened the Public Comments section. Being none, Mayor England closed the Public Comments section and then moved on to Item 11.

11. Florida League of Cities' Annual Conference: Selection of Voting Delegate (Presenter: Max Royle, City Manager)

Mayor England introduced Item 11 and then asked City Manager Royle to give his report.

City Manager Royle explained that the Florida League of Cities Conference will be in August and usually the Mayor is the delegate for the City.

After discussion on who was going to the conference, it was the consensus of the Commission that Mayor England would be the delegate for the City.

Mayor England opened the Public Comments section. Being none, Mayor England closed the Public Comments section and then moved on to Item XIV.

XIV. STAFF COMMENTS

Mayor England asked City Manager Royle for his comments.

City Manager Royle advised that there is a Police Department Blood Drive on July 13th between noon and 5:00 p.m. He also mentioned the St. Johns County Time Capsule event on July 21st. He advised that the Commission changed the rules for the City Boards that members could miss more than three meetings in a row because of the pandemic and would now like to go back to the normal regulations.

The Commission agreed to go back to the normal regulations.

Commissioner Rumrell asked about the grant for Ocean Hammock Park and what needs to be done before the City runs out of time and the grant will have to be paid back.

City Manager Royle advised that the Public Works Department has a management plan that staff has been trying to implement but could not be due to money constraints. The State of Florida could request the money back, but it is unlikely if the City is trying to accomplish the tasks.

Vice Mayor Samora asked to put the management plan and the park map on the webpage.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that he would put the management plan and park map on the webpage. He is going to do an entire page dedicated to the park project as the plans come forth from Gulfstream Design.

Vice Mayor Samora requested it be sent to the Commission as well.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that he had a neighborhood meeting regarding Ocean Hammock Park and a lot of residents attended. The neighbors were concerned about security, and he has discussed it with the Police Chief. They are formulating plans to keep the park safe, and he is talking with Gulfstream Design on making it safer.

Commissioner Rumrell asked if Hammock Dunes Park was brought up in the conversation, so the Whispering Oaks residents know of what was discussed about the project.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that there is a management plan that must be accomplished, or the grant will have to be returned. He must do a stewardship report every year on its progress. We must make progress. Hammock Dunes has challenges because it has wetlands that would have to be crossed to get to the interior from A1A Beach Boulevard. There are permitting challenges associated with Hammock Dunes.

Commissioner Rumrell thought that there was some confusion that the grant money was for the 162 parking spaces, which it was not. The only grant money was for Ocean Hammock Park. There is no grant money outside of Ocean Hammock Park.

Public Works Director advised that at most Ocean Hammock Park would only allow 20 parking spaces. All the parking will be out of the conservation areas. He advised that he would put on the webpage the plans for Ocean Hammock Park as requested by the Commission.

Mayor England asked to do a whitepaper regarding Ocean Hammock Park and its history and if any questions to please contact staff. She would like to work on the whitepaper outline with City Manager Royle.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that he has been interviewing candidates for the Civil Engineer position who either want a lot of money or have no experience, but he is still interviewing. He explained his preparations for Hurricane Elsa in case of an event. He advised that \$72,500 was reimbursed to the City for the Resilience Report. He explained he would like to have a conference

room next to where the Communications and Events Coordinator's office would be.

Building Official Law stated new laws that Governor DeSantis passed on the Florida Building Codes. He mentioned that the state will start requiring digital seals and plans online soon. The local governments will not regulate construction worker licenses anymore and so the local governments are going to follow the counties' Type 2 licenses.

Mayor England asked if staff wants them to research vendors at the Florida League of Cities Conference.

Building Official Law advised that staff is keeping the Finance Department's software until they feel they need something else. It is not worth having several different software vendors. He mentioned that Governor DeSantis signed off on virtual inspections for easy things like installing a hot water heater and he will start developing a program for it. The City scored 100% on the annual CSR Flood program.

Police Sgt. Hammonds advised that the police calls were steady during the 4th of July weekend.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that the City Clerk will reach out to the Commission to schedule individual budget meetings the week before July 26th. She explained that she will only have preliminary figures for the budget for those meetings, but she explained that the City is still at a shortfall with revenues after the grant monies. She explained that in August she will massage the numbers to see where the City can set the millage rate. She explained that American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) will be sending half of the funding from the State of Florida by the end of July but there has not been an official amount given. She said according to her calculations the City may receive \$3 million. There is no clear direction on what they will accept for projects to use the funding on; however, with all the City's stormwater projects needing to be done, that would be the logical use.

Vice Mayor Samora asked to research if transient rental properties can be charged a different millage rate. He advised that he had a conversation from a different municipality and that they do that.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that she has not heard of that, but she will research it.

City Attorney Taylor advised that he will be attending the Florida Municipal Attorney Association Conference and may have some information to share with the Commission. He has been working with Building Official Law on the new legislation that has recently passed.

Building Official Law advised that the City cannot discourage a home occupational license and they do not have to go for a variance. There are some requirements regarding parking. He advised that he will be adjusting the table of uses to reflect that.

Discussion ensued regarding what could be done regarding the comments made from Attorney Burnett.

City Attorney Taylor advised that whatever the Commission wants to do it can be done but may require more steps to go through.

Building Official Law advised that Ms. Fleet who did the Comprehensive Plan will be calling the Building Department tomorrow to discuss the comments from Attorney Burnett.

Mayor England moved to Item XV.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor England asked for a motion.

Motion: to adjourn to meeting. **Moved by** Mayor England, **Seconded by** Commissioner Rumrell.
Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Margaret England, Mayor

Attest:

Beverly Raddatz, City Clerk



MINUTES

CITY COMMISSION BUDGET MEETING MONDAY, JULY 26, 2021, AT 6:00 P.M.

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE BEACH, 2200 A1A South, St. Augustine Beach, FL 32080

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor England called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor England led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor England, Vice Mayor Samora, Commissioner George, Commissioner Rumrell, and Commissioner Torres.

Also present: City Manager Royle, Deputy City Clerk Fitzgerald, Finance Director Douylliez, Building Official Law, Public Works Director Tredik, and Police Chief Carswell.

IV. REVIEW OF FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET

A. Introduction: Max Royle, City Manager

City Manager Royle confirmed that this is a one topic agenda for the FY 2022 budget and to set a preliminary property tax millage. He said that the millage will be sent to the Property Appraiser, who will send it to every property owner within the City in August. He advised that the first public hearing for the FY 22 budget would probably be September 13, 2021, because the first Monday in September is a holiday. He said that Finance Director Douylliez has prepared one of the best budget summaries that he has seen.

B. Presentation of the Budget: Patty Douylliez, Finance Director

1. Overview of Revenues and Expenditures

Finance Director Douylliez gave a PowerPoint presentation (Exhibit A) and said that the preliminary millage is set high at 2.5998 and that she is still waiting for numbers from the State. She said that the demographic statistical data from 2015-2019 shows the median value owner-occupied units at \$414,400, median household income is \$86,056, median family income is \$92,041, and median age is 48.

Commissioner George asked if the median value of owner-occupied units is from the current taxable value.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that the figure is the current value of the homes in the City. She said that the information is from the Census, which does not consider homestead exemptions, etc.

Mayor England asked if it is for single family residents only.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that it is an overall number for all owner-occupied

units. She gave examples of the ad valorem millage rates based on a median value home at \$414,400 to show as a comparison. She advised that the City could roll back to the millage rate of 2.3742 which would keep the payments flat year-after-year, or it could go as high as 2.5998, which is what the FY 22 budget is based on. She said that the comparison of the roll back millage of 2.3742 at \$983.87, to the proposed millage of 2.5998 at \$1,077.36 would be an increase of approximately \$93. She summarized some of the changes that are impacting the FY 22 budget, such as fund and department changes and capital projects. She discussed the Road & Bridge Department vs. the Road & Bridge Fund and that the only legal requirement for the Road & Bridge Fund is the Local Option Gas Tax which comes from the State and that a fund must be maintained. This will also help balance the Reserve Funds, which will be discussed in another slide. She said that the City needs to add employees, such as an additional IT Department employee to meet the City's requirements, an additional Building Department employee to fill the permit tech position that will be opening up soon, and the newly hired engineer for the Public Works Department. She said that there will also be a part-time plan reviewer in the Building Department and that two additional employees will be needed when the City takes over recycling during the last four months of this year. She advised that the City has significant capital projects that will happen this year and that many are funded through grants and impact fees.

Commissioner Rumrell advised that the Ocean Walk drainage project is completely covered by the funding from Tallahassee.

Finance Director Douylliez discussed the FY 22 total revenues by fund. She pointed out that there is a significant decrease in the Road & Bridge Fund because the majority of it is now in the General Fund. Overall, the total revenue is \$15,529,127 which is an increase over the prior year of \$924,742 due to impact fees and grants. She said that the FY 22 property valuation increased to \$1,524,903,565 and that the current millage rate is 2.4500, the proposed millage is 2.5998, and that each tenth of a mill is \$152,490 at 95%. The FY 22 revenue for the General Fund is based upon ad valorem taxes at a 95% collection rate which is an increase from the prior year and that the non-ad valorem is also at an increase from the prior year. She advised that the State revenues are just an estimate at this time. The Electric Utility Tax and Franchise Fees have also increased. The FY 22 expenditures include salaries & benefits at \$5,161,653, operating at \$1,637,329, and capital at \$5,605,800 which total \$12,404,782 for expenditures.

2. Salaries and Benefits

Finance Director Douylliez advised that FY 21 salaries were at \$3,171,192 and the FY 22 proposed salaries are \$3,303,709 and that the increase is based on a 1.3% Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) and a step-merit increase of 3% that was previously approved by the Commission. With the change in the economy, the COLA could possibly increase to as high as 5% next year. The employee benefits are based on estimates from the Florida Municipal Insurance Trust (FMIT) which indicate an increase of 5%, and an increase in the Florida Retirement System (FRS). She advised that the FRS is set by the State. FY 20 benefits were \$1,371,113 and the FY 21 were \$1,583,080. She said that workers' compensation insurance estimated an 8% increase and that the numbers show that the City is slightly under that by a few thousand dollars. However, the City budgeted 5% for health insurance and it is now at 9.8% which totals approximately another \$29,000 that is not shown on this PowerPoint Presentation.

3. Capital Outlay Requests

Finance Director Douylliez advised that capital outlay is the second largest portion of the

budget. Many projects are covered by grants and impact fees and that the City has a significant list of capital projects. She recapped the current capital outlay projects by department, with the largest coming from the Public Works Department.

Finance Director Douylliez said that the proposed millage rate of 2.5998 is large but that the City has significant requests for capital over the next four years and that there are a lot of projects that need to be done.

4. General Fund Reserves

Finance Director Douylliez said that the reserve estimate is a touchy situation, and it was an audit point last year. The City should be at 20% fully reserved. She is projecting that the City will be at the fully reserved level. She discussed the funds that the City received from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) and State funds.

5. Long Term Debt

Finance Director Douylliez advised that the City does have bonds that cannot be redone for another few years and that there is a pending deadline for the end of the debt service millage rate taxed at 0.5000 mills through 2028. There is a period of time when the City will have to pay the bond payments after the expiration of the 0.5000 mills. The balance is approximately \$3.2 million. The City must continue to put money into the reserves to pay for that.

Finance Director Douylliez said that it is nice not to have the reserves as an issue this year. Her main concerns for FY 22 are: cash flow, capital projects, employees, and emergencies. She said that even though the capital projects are funded from grants and impact fees, there is sometimes a delay getting the money back from the grants. She advised that the City would bill out as quickly as possible. The capital projects and the cash flow will have to be timed perfectly. She has concerns about the cost of living for the employees and also that the City is struggling to get employees. Other local companies are paying \$16-\$17 an hour and the City is paying \$13.69 to start. She is also concerned for any emergencies from storms, etc.

Mayor England asked for Commissioner discussion. Being none, Mayor England moved on to Item V.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor England opened the Public Comments section. The following addressed the Commission:

Laurel Dean, 205 A Street, St. Augustine Beach, FL, said that she does not want any new paved parking or over-development in Ocean Hammock Park. She asked that it not be included in the budget.

Commissioner George asked if there is funding in the budget for parking in the public plazas.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that there is paving work in the budget. The three areas designated for parking improvements in the upcoming year are: 4th Street parallel parking at \$35,000, \$25,000 for A Street and 1st Street plaza design and permitting, and 8th Street at \$90,000.

Commissioner George said that those are all existing parking areas that are being improved. She asked Director Tredik to provide budget information for Ocean Hammock Park.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that there is no plan for immediate construction of parking in Ocean Hammock Park. He said that it has not been designed and it is not in the budget for construction yet.

Tom Reynolds, 50 Brigantine Court, St. Augustine Beach, FL, urged the Commission to vote for the highest millage and a 5% COLA for employees. He said that he is embarrassed that City employees are only making \$13/hour and for the City to get them to \$20/hour. A City that averages an income of \$80,000 should be able to afford it. Employees are being cheated because of the subsidized waste disposal costs. He suggested an emergency meeting to get employees paid.

Nick Binder, 232 Big Magnolia Court, St. Augustine Beach, FL, complimented Finance Director Douylliez for an excellent presentation. He said that non-ad valorem taxes went from \$74 to \$178 to \$204 for garbage fees, and that County residents think that is a bargain. If the Police Department does not have body cameras, then the City should consider it under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and to also consider ARPA for construction, infrastructure, etc.

Mayor England asked if body cameras were in the budget for this year.

Police Chief Carswell advised that they are not in the budget.

Mayor England asked Finance Director Douylliez to discuss the American Rescue Plan Act after Public Comments.

Tamra Rushing, 848 Ocean Palm Way, St. Augustine Beach, FL, asked if the City is allotting maintenance money for infrastructure additions, such as the Ocean Hammock Park restrooms. She said that Chief Carswell commented at a recent Sea Colony Board meeting saying that crime is trending upward, and she wants to make sure that enough is budgeted for such things. The increase in crime is from visitors, not residents.

Linda Miles, 928 Ocean Palm Way, St. Augustine Beach, FL, said that it would be nice to hold the millage the same. She does not agree with raising millage to fund projects that residents do not want. Ocean Hammock Park has not been maintained as it is, much less with additions. She said that there was an item in the budget for cameras and she was not sure if those were for Ocean Hammock Park.

Mayor England asked Finance Director Douylliez if the line item for the cameras was for replacing the cameras in the Commission Room.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that the cameras are for City Hall.

Mayor England closed the Public Comments section and moved on to Item VI.

VI. SETTING PRELIMINARY PROPERTY TAX MILLAGE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022, AND DATE, TIME, AND PLACE FOR FIRST PUBLIC HEARING ON THE BUDGET

Mayor England asked Finance Director Douylliez to discuss the American Rescue Plan Act and to provide information as to what the City has applied for, the money received, and the future plans for the funds.

Finance Director Douylliez said that the City is eligible for approximately \$3 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). She advised that the latest information she received is that the first half of the funds (\$1.5 million) should be received by July 31, 2021, but that she has not had any direct communication from State. The \$1.5 million is going to be used for projects, in particular, the stormwater drainage project. A Master Stormwater Drainage update is at a significant cost of approximately \$100,000, but it would rank the projects in order by what is needed, and the City can utilize the ARPA money for those projects. It has been recommended by the auditors to use the ARPA funds for one-time projects, and not to inflate the budget since it will not last. If the money is budgeted for by December 31, 2024, then the City can continue to spend down the ARPA proceeds through December 31, 2026. She advised that having the Master Stormwater Plan is key to selecting projects to use the ARPA funding for. The money is not shown in the current budget, and she said that she would set up a new ARPA Capital Budget Fund to account for the funds specifically.

Mayor England asked where the ARPA funds are indicated in the FY 22 budget.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that the ARPA funds are not allocated in this budget at all. The projects listed in this budget are funded by other grants and the City is not able to use the ARPA funds to fund the City's share, it must be a City match.

Mayor England said that the City has money coming in that cannot be shown on the budget, expenses that are shown in the budget, and then the City wants to raise the millage.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that the expenses in the FY 22 budget are mostly covered by the grants. There are other projects that are not covered by grants such as vehicles, equipment needs, cameras, mowers, etc. She advised that parking projects are not funded by ARPA. She recapped the City's budget on page 36, which shows the breakdown of the projects. Of the other \$1.7 million in the budget, \$250,000 is resurfacing and maintenance of the roads that is not covered by ARPA.

Mayor England said that some of the \$1.7 million would be covered by the ARPA.

Finance Director Douylliez said that nothing that is the City's expense would be covered by the ARPA.

Mayor England asked for other Commissioner comments.

Vice Mayor Samora said that if there is nothing in the proposed budget that could be covered by ARPA, then would the Master Stormwater Plan be covered.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that she specifically asked if the ARPA funds could be used for the Master Stormwater Plan, and she was told a flat "no". The ARPA funds must be for a specific project and the Master Stormwater Plan is not a specific project. Once the projects are identified by the Master Stormwater Plan, then the ARPA funds can be used to pay for a consultant, a plan manager, etc.

Commissioner George said that she thought that the resurfacing was eligible.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that utilities, water, sewer, stormwater, broadband, infrastructure, etc. are eligible. She said that identified revenue losses from the prior year would qualify, but that the City's losses were minimal. She advised that the auditor said to focus on projects. She advised that the City's budgeted expenses would not be covered.

Commissioner George said most of the improvements are simply ongoing capital improvements, such as replacing worn out equipment.

Finance Director Douylliez said that the major expense item is the Mizell Pond Weir Project for \$476,000. She said that the current Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grant will be adapted from \$2.4 million to \$2.9 million, then the City would be responsible for 25%.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that he submitted paperwork to the State to increase the approved budget for the weir project. He expects it to be approved and that it would fund 75% of the total project. The St. Johns Water Management District portion is \$632,000, which leaves the City approximately \$95,000 short of paying for the project in full. He said that the reason that the ARPA funds cannot be used is because the HMGP does not allow the use of Federal funds as a match for a Federal grant. He said that the Master Stormwater Plan is being developed next year, which would create projects that can be directly funded by the ARPA.

Mayor England said that by the end of July the City should receive a written confirmation of what amount is allocated to the City.

Finance Director Douylliez said yes, and that half of the funds in the amount of \$1.5 million should also be received. It is not in this budget because it has not been received. She said that it will go into a separate bank account to track it directly.

Mayor England said that when the Master Stormwater Plan is updated, that it will create projects and that the ARPA funds could be used for the stormwater projects within two years.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that once the stormwater projects are identified, then staff would prepare a budget resolution for Commission approval to bring the revenue in.

Commissioner George said that the City has the infrastructure needs now and that there is no need to look for projects. She said that the current Stormwater Master Plan is very old, and the environmental conditions have changed drastically. This will utilize experts to engineer the projects. She also addressed some of the Public Comments. She said that even though Mr. Reynolds has left the room, that the City has adopted a step program to slowly increase the base rate of pay for employees. She also addressed the comments made by Ms. Rushing & Ms. Miles who said that the projects should reflect priorities of the City and its residents, and that the Commission agrees with that. She said that Ocean Hammock Park was purchased at market, and that there were developers that wanted to buy and develop the property. The City was able to utilize State grant funding to acquire title, but that the City had to commit to certain development plans. If the development plan is not carried out, then the City risks losing the grant funding. She believes that it is better for future generations if the City is able to keep the land. She advised that she would be willing to speak to anyone that is interested after the meeting in an appropriate forum.

Mayor England asked Public Works Director Tredik to recap the obligations that the City must fulfill for Ocean Hammock Park.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that he would be giving a presentation at the August 11, 2021, Commission meeting. He said that there is a lengthy list of requirements for Ocean Hammock Park, such as: an observation platform, a half-mile of trails, restrooms, picnic pavilion, education center, etc.

Vice Mayor Samora said that there is a lot of capital expenses and a lot of grant money. He asked Finance Director Douylliez how much of the capital expenses would be covered by grant funds.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that the grant money is combined with impact fees. She gave a quick estimate of slightly over \$3 million in grants. She said that the largest grant of \$2.9 million is for the weir and could be billed monthly instead of quarterly to recover funds quicker. She advised that the last HMGP grant took a couple of weeks to get money back, but that it is crucial to make sure paperwork is approved and in place. She said that Director Tredik will be working with the engineering firm to make sure that everything is ready to go.

Public Works Director Tredik said that the delay for the design was due to an amendment to the grant.

Vice Mayor Samora asked if the millage is set to cover the \$3 million.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that the millage is a separate fund and that the only portion coming from Capital Improvement Reserves is \$476,222.50, the rest is from impact fees.

Discussion ensued regrading impact fee monies; the grants; getting confirmation of the \$476,222.50.

Vice Mayor Samora asked if the Commission would be receiving a presentation for employee healthcare options.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that the healthcare coverage did not go back out to bid because it is time consuming with very little benefit. She said that the proposal is the exact same plan with a 9.8% increase.

Vice Mayor Samora said that the presentation shows that 30 employees are enrolled for healthcare. He asked if that includes the projected new hires.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that the presentation shows the City's base plan and that there is a buy-up plan available. She said that the City has approximately 59 employees that are covered under insurance, and that the presentation is showing the portion that the City pays for, which is based on the lower base plan rate. She advised that there are upcoming adjustments to be made and that the budget numbers will reflect the additional \$29,058.99 expense for the insurance increase when it is presented to the Commission again in August. She said that staff is also trying to reduce operating expenses or possibly remove a capital item from the budget to be able to continue to fund the insurance.

Commissioner Rumrell suggested that the City should explore selling its portion of Hammock Dunes Park on the west side of A1A Beach Boulevard to Forever Florida to preserve green space which will increase revenue for the City. He said that the original purchase price was \$1.25 million for the City's portion, and he asked what the current value is.

City Manager Royle said he believed that the value of the property has increased. Hammock Dunes Park was purchased for \$2.5 million, and that the City paid half and St. Johns County paid half.

Commissioner Rumrell said that maybe St. Johns County would want Hammock Dunes Park and that if the City is not planning to develop it, then selling it is revenue for the City. He would like to keep it a green space and possibly generate revenue. He also advised that the City of St. Augustine is raising their trash service rates an additional \$60 a year.

Finance Director Douylliez said that it is in the City of St. Augustine's proposal to go from \$235 to \$295 which is close to the City's costs of \$300-\$315. St. Johns County's trash service is through a non-ad valorem assessment, and it is currently \$230 a year which is anticipated to increase \$5 a year over the next 4-5 years. The County's contract with Advanced Disposal/Waste Management is \$224 per home and that their contract ends 2024. She advised that the County owns their own transfer station therefore they do not pay tipping fees.

Commissioner Rumrell asked if the City were to piggy-back on the County's contract, then would the cost be \$235.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that those discussions would need to take place with the County, but that other St. Johns County residents would pay approximately \$235 a year.

Commissioner Rumrell asked if the City pays almost \$300,000 a year subsidizing the trash collection.

Finance Director Douylliez advised yes.

Commissioner Rumrell said that since the residents do not want the City to do the Ocean Hammock Park project, which it is obligated to do according to the grants, then the City should look at Hammock Dunes Park and to keep it green space and do not develop it.

Commissioner George advised that the City does not pay a management fee for Hammock Dunes Park. She said that she is not keen on liquidating assets. She said that the referendum may require the City to have a vote to sell Hammock Dunes Park and that there is a reverter clause if it is not maintained as a park.

Discussion ensued regarding Hammock Dunes Park and how to develop, pay for, and maintain it; that the public does not want the City to develop Ocean Hammock Park; that ten-years is not a significant amount of time in the life of a city; maybe a future commission would have the funds to develop Hammock Dunes Park with parking and/or paid parking and it could generate revenue.

Mayor England said that personally she would rather see the County use its funds to move the fire station as opposed to buying the City out of Hammock Dunes Park. She urged caution selling Hammock Dunes Park.

Vice Mayor Samora asked if there was any debt service on Hammock Dunes Park.

Finance Director Douylliez advised no.

Commissioner Torres said that when he met with staff that there were some efficiencies that could be improved. Unfortunately, costs are going up and City staff is very lean and efficient. He said that an employee's salary rate does not factor in all the other benefits that they are entitled to. He is disappointed in the recycling services, and he would like to end it. The City could save the money owed to the contractor to put the City's recycling program in effect. He said that he does not even put his own recycling out anymore. Transient rentals are still being invoiced for trash and that there should be a more efficient way of doing it, such as a non-ad valorem. He agrees with making parking improvements to existing parking and he said that the City needs a vision to implement what is better for the City. He is not against where the millage rate is going.

Mayor England advised that some of the parking was to improve existing parking and that the 8th Street parking would be new. She pointed out that some departments spent less on operating expenses than what was budgeted in FY 21, but the FY 22 proposal increased this year. She suggested to review it closer. She said tonight is to set a preliminary millage rate.

Commissioner George said that the Oceanside Circle project is approximately \$300,000. She asked Public Works Director Tredik how many homes are on that street.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that there are at least 10 homes and some empty lots on Oceanside Circle.

Vice Mayor Samora asked if the Oceanside Circle project is paid from impact fees.

Finance Director Douylliez said yes.

Commissioner George said that the City would be getting contributions for the 2nd Street extension over a six-year plan.

Commissioner Rumrell suggested to better schedule staffing to avoid overtime.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that staffing is stretched thin and that he is struggling to find and keep employees because other jobs in the area are paying higher wages. He said that the workload is full, and that overtime has been reduced. Overtime is an incentive to fill the weekend shifts that maintain the restrooms at the beach, maintain the chemicals at Splash Park, and empty the trash cans on the Boulevard. He advised that the weekend shift is considered seasonal, so it is not fulltime during the winter. Scheduling a fulltime employee for the weekend is difficult because that means that they would not be at work on Monday or Tuesday. He said that the City is seeing increased volume on trash routes and so it takes longer to complete the routes which means unplanned overtime.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the increase in trash is from people not recycling anymore; whether the City's tipping fees have increased; that tonnage has increased; that ending recycling means that everything goes into the trash; that Public Works cannot eliminate overtime, but it could be reduced.

Commissioner Rumrell asked about vehicle repair and maintenance for this year.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that the trash is already \$11,000 over budget and that there have been two large repairs to vehicles. She said that the \$33,000 proposed for FY 22 may be a low number. The addition of a new garbage truck is in the budget, and it may help lower the repair costs. She said that it could be eight months before the City gets the new truck.

Public Works Director Tredik said that the fleet is aging and that replacements have been continually delayed.

Discussion ensued regarding the costs for new vehicles; that a new Ford F150 is approximately

\$60,000.

Building Official Law advised that he buys his vehicles from the Sheriff's contract through the State at a discount for \$35-40,000 for a pickup truck, plus extra for tags.

Mayor England said that she would like to give staff direction on the personnel costs. She said that she does not have a problem with 1.3% COLA or 3% average merit.

Commissioner Torres said that would like to bring all everyone to \$15, but that he understands the trickle effect that that kind of jump would have. He said that he agrees with the 1.3% COLA and the 3% average merit.

Mayor England said that the Police Department reduced their budget and operating expenses and she commended Chief Carswell for that. She asked Chief Carswell to discuss why the body cameras are not in the FY 22 budget.

Police Chief Carswell advised that it would cost \$146,000 for body cameras. He said that the cameras would link to the Sheriff's dispatch and CAD system and that the Sheriff's Office is not going to have body cameras this year either. He advised that it would also require data upgrades and possibly an extra employee for records and upkeep. He said that there has been a decrease of complaints on City officers. There is an average of about 15 minor complaints a year, with only 1 excessive force complaint that was unfounded.

Vice Mayor Samora asked if the City would be able to move forward with body cameras if the Sheriff's Office implements them.

Police Chief Carswell advised yes.

Vice Mayor Samora asked if there is funding in the budget for the Sustainability and Environmental Planning Advisory Committee (SEPAC).

Finance Director Douylliez said no. She advised that SEPAC submitted a request after the packets were prepared asking for \$10,000 for a design by a green landscape architect and that they were hoping that the money could come from Tree and Landscape Fund which has approximately \$35,000 in it. She advised that Director Tredik was going to use some of those funds for the Ocean Hammock Park project.

Public Works Director Tredik advised that there are special conditions that Ocean Hammock Park requires, such as wetland planning and upland plantings. He said that there is also the concern that the trails are too close to neighboring yards. He said that the plan was to use a portion of the Tree Fund money to do the plantings and buffering.

Building Official Law advised that part of the Tree and Landscape Fund money comes from Planning & Zoning. He said that \$50 out of each building permit goes to the Fund. He said that the code was crafted so that the Public Works Director could bring projects to Commission for approval. If there is money left over, then SEPAC could present their project to Director Tredik who could then go to Commission. He said that SEPAC's purpose was to beautify the City, so why pay a planner. He suggested using the St. Johns Water Management District's guide for Florida friendly plants.

Commissioner George said that she believed that the guide deals more with water management than landscaping.

Vice Mayor Samora asked to find money for SEPAC.

Mayor England advised that there are no SEPAC operating expenses, and it would have to balance with their output. She said that it should be for specific projects that they will do from start to finish.

Commissioner George suggested to give SEPAC clear direction on how to spend their time and money, and to bring projects to the Commission with the possibility of using the Tree Fund money.

Commissioner Rumrell suggested that they should become a club and not Board so that they would not be bound by the Sunshine Law. He said that they could still give presentations to the Commission. He believes that they could accomplish more work as a club.

Discussion ensued regarding citizen boards; who must follow the Sunshine Law; the change of the Committee's name over the years; the Commission not supporting SEPAC projects.

Vice Mayor Samora said that if the City is going to keep SEPAC, then they should be funded.

Mayor England advised that SEPAC could be discussed at another time. She said that she would be flexible to fund their projects.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that funding was not included because SEPAC did not present their request until after the book was printed and that changes could be made to add funding for SEPAC before September. She said that SEPAC's allocation of funds would show in the General Fund under the Road & Bridge Department. She said that there is a line item for SEPAC's funding on page 21, titled "Beautification Projects" and that their operating expenses are not tracked. She advised that the overtime for employees that are required to attend SEPAC meetings comes out of the General Fund or Public Works.

Discussion ensued regarding if SEPAC becomes a club instead of a City Board that it would eliminate those operating costs; what is the City's current cost is for SEPAC meetings.

Finance Director Douylliez said that she would get those figures.

Mayor England asked for discussion of the millage rate.

Commissioner George said that she is flexible to setting the preliminary millage rate higher because it can be reduced.

Commissioner Torres said that he agreed with Commissioner George.

Motion: to set the operating millage at 2.5998 as recommended by staff. **Moved by** Commissioner George. **Seconded by** Commissioner Torres. Motion passed unanimously

Motion: to set the debt millage at 0.5000. **Moved by** Mayor England, **Seconded by** Commissioner Rumrell. Motion passed unanimously.

It was the consensus of the Commission to schedule the first Public Hearing for the budget on September 13, 2021, at 5:01 p.m.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor England asked for a motion.

Motion: to adjourn to meeting. **Moved by** Mayor England, **Seconded by** Commissioner Rumrell. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Margaret England, Mayor

Attest:

Dariana Fitzgerald, Deputy City Clerk