

VERNON MYERS
MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

MARY LAWSON BROWN
VICE MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

ALLEGRA KITCHENS
COMMISSIONER

PHIL LEARY
COMMISSIONER

JAMES NORWOOD, JR.
COMMISSIONER



ELWIN C. "WOODY" BOYNTON, JR.
CITY MANAGER

BETSY JORDAN DRIGGERS
CITY CLERK

MATTHEW D. REYNOLDS
FINANCE DIRECTOR

GARY S. GETCHELL
CHIEF OF POLICE

MICHAEL LAMBERT
CHIEF FIRE DEPT.

DONALD E. HOLMES
CITY ATTORNEY

Regular meeting 2nd and 4th Thursdays each month at 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES
CITY OF PALATKA CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP
February 23, 2012

Proceedings of a workshop meeting of the City Commission of the City of Palatka, Florida, held on the 23rd day of February, 2012.

PRESENT:

Mayor	Vernon Myers
Commissioner	Mary Lawson Brown
Commissioner	Allegra Kitchens
Commissioner	Phil Leary
Commissioner	James Norwood, Jr.

Also Present: City Manager Elwin C. "Woody" Boynton, Jr.; City Attorney Donald E. Holmes; City Clerk Betsy Jordan Driggers; Finance Director Matthew Reynolds; Planning Director Thad Crowe, Police Chief Gary Getchell; Fire Chief Mike Lambert

CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Myers called the workshop to order at 4:00 p.m. and read the following call, dated February 13, 2012:

TO MESSRS: MARY LAWSON BROWN, ALLEGRA KITCHENS, PHIL LEARY AND JAMES NORWOOD, Jr.:

You are hereby notified that a workshop meeting of the Palatka City Commission is called to be held on February 23, 2012, at the regular meeting place of the Palatka City Commission, Palatka City Hall, 201 N. 2nd Street, Palatka, Florida, to commence at 4:00 p.m.

The purpose of the workshop is to:

1. Discuss Potential changes to historic preservation ordinance, creation of a downtown historic district, and property tax exemptions for historic properties
2. Hear an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy Presentation – Bob Taylor

Isl Vernon Myers
Vernon Myers, MAYOR

The following commissioners acknowledged receipt of a copy of the foregoing notice of a special meeting on the 13th day of February, 2012.

/s/ Mary Lawson Brown
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Phil Leary
COMMISSIONER

/s/ James Norwood, Jr.
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Allegra Kitchens
COMMISSIONER

INVOCATION – Commissioner Norwood

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Commissioner Leary

Mayor Myers welcomed participants.

Potential changes to historic preservation ordinance, creation of a downtown historic district, and property tax exemptions for historic properties – Thad Crowe, Planning Director, said he has had discussions regarding historic preservation ordinance upgrades with the Historic Preservation Board and this was discussed with the Commission during the EAR update process. He has experience in historic preservation planning as spent three years as a preservation planner for Gainesville in the 1980's and has some experience in nominating historic districts, and streamlined their historic preservation ordinance to streamline the process. He also developed historic zoning code to encourage renovation. He served as a consultant to Keystone Heights in the mid 1990's, and in 2001 mediated a renovation of a Publix grocery store. He helped to establish the Seabreeze Historic District in Daytona Beach. With historic districts come increased regulations on property owners, but historic districts can be a powerful tool for economic development and regeneration.

Mr. Crowe said there are two types of historic registration: local and national. The national is a recognition program and allows for the use of federal tax dollars for renovation. It does not provide any protection of historic property. Local registration is where the protection comes in. There are two historic districts in Palatka now. New development and renovation must be compatible with historic character. There are 8 buildings in the City that are listed on the National Registry. Two are locally designated. Per Commissioner Browns' question, Mr. Crowe said Bethel AME is not on the historical registry through the National Parks Registry. Mr. Crowe said the City has not pursued a historical designation within the last 20 years.

As to the ordinance, Mr. Crowe said they propose streamlining of the ordinance to allow staff to approve certain things instead of having to take everything to the Historic Preservation Board. If something does not conform to design standards, it will go to the Historic Preservation Board. They also want to develop design standards. The standards now are fairly vague. They also recommend enacting an economic hardship provision, as one does not currently exist. This is a constitutional issue. Historic districts are required to have this provision. There are also things in the ordinance that need to be clarified, as in contributing and non-contributing properties. The ordinance needs to be more graphic and user-friendly.

Mr. Crowe said Certified Local Government (CLG) is a state program and is a partnership between the State parks service and local government. Its role is more particularly described in his memorandum (filed). There are grants available for CLGs which requires a local match. It does not assert any local influence or control over local decisions.

Regarding a downtown historic district, Mr. Crowe said at this time there is no protection for Downtown. There is vague language in the zoning code referring to redevelopment. There are also no incentives for downtown such as direct financial incentives for those who are fixing up old historic buildings. Commercial districts are different from residential districts. Regulations for commercial areas are more flexible to allow for a more responsive business atmosphere. A downtown district can run the gamut. It allows for more commonplace buildings or can make for a tighter district. There is a broad collection of buildings in a commercial historic district. With a downtown district there are financial incentives available, such as a 20% historic district tax credit. The County also has the ability to do this, but the County Commission will have to approve that. The most common type of exemption is a 10-yr exemption on property tax increases attributable to the historic renovation for the 10 years they are abated. There are other federal tax credits available. There are three types of exemptions available, as outlined in his memorandum. These are very flexible and very "giving" as far as tax exemptions go. These tax exemptions are only for the increases attributable to the renovations and not the entire value. If the City only approves this, this will only apply to city taxes. Mr. Crowe noted The EAR which the City recently adopted expresses support for historic designation for Downtown, so this is not new. When the Plan was updated the plan included these possibilities.

Mr. Crowe said he can come back with a streamlined historic preservation ordinance including design standards. He can come back with a proposal for CLG designation. He can come back with an application for historic designation, and he can come back with a program for historic renovation tax abatement.

Mr. Leary asked for a Planner's definition for "historical" versus "old." That's what his concern has been during this process. Mr. Crowe said the historic districts they have and any district have a stated term of significance. For the two current districts it's for any building constructed between 1880's and 1940s. There are some architectural styles that go past the WWII era. This is flexible and the City sets the criteria on what they believe is historic. It can range from any type of architecture. If they decide to pursue historical tax exemptions, those are direct benefits for taxpayers. Property values in historic districts tend to be stable or rise; people feel like this is a safe investment. This contributes to the "value added" aspect. Mayor Myers said the disadvantage is more regulation.

Commissioner Norwood asked how this will affect the development of the Riverfront. Mr. Crowe said they can look at each project on a case-by-case basis; they need to look at the value and historical significance of each building, and economic criteria. A downtown district can be shaped any way they want it shaped. Commissioner Norwood asked for confirmation that that new development must be compatible with existing buildings. Commissioner Brown said other cities do that, especially St. Augustine. Even fast food restaurants have to follow those regulations. This only pertains to the exterior. The interior is quite modern. Mr. Crowe said Secretary of Interior's guidelines are very vague but they recommend you do similar design and window arrangement, but shouldn't duplicate period architecture; it should be constructed to blend in and keep with the character of the area.

Commissioner Leary asked if they've done a survey analysis of every downtown building. At this time there are holes that need to be filled before they can move forward. He agrees that having staff approval and making this an administrative process instead of a Board process is desirable. Mr. Crowe said they have to have a survey if they go for a national designation, in order to provide a baseline. Commissioner Kitchens said the UF did a complete survey in 1983, but it needs to be updated. This would be a good

starting spot. This survey is in his office. Mayor Myers concurred with preserving the integrity of historic look; on the other hand, they've had some improvements on St. Johns Avenue that look quite modern and are a great improvement over what was there, specifically the Gullet Building. This was not a historic renovation and does not resemble "old Palatka." There is a difference between being old and being historic. He'd hope they would have some definitive conclusions on that regarding types of architecture, etc. Mr. Crowe said when it comes to a downtown area it comes down to a "pedestrian feel" of the buildings. They don't want fake history. Mayor Myers asked if he'd had feedback from the property owners on St. Johns Avenue. Mr. Crowe said they will get that feel once they receive direction from the Commission as to whether or not to proceed with that. He has also made this presentation to the Historic Preservation Board. Ultimately the boundaries of the District will be determined by the inventory; it is hard to say at this point whether it will include Reid Street and Oak Street and beyond. This not only pertains to current structures, but would also pertain to new structures. Commissioner Norwood said there are a lot of churches in the downtown district and asked should they want to make renovations or want to add on, how would this affect them? Mr. Crowe gave as an example St. Monica's Church, which is in the South historic district, and recently received approval for an addition. Commissioner Leary asked if there would be an exemption for churches; Mr. Crowe said they can look into this; the economic hardship may enter in here.

Commissioner Leary said they are fortunate to have a planner that has this type of background, and what he's presented is outstanding. They should allow him to move forward on this. Mayor Myers confirmed there was consensus for the Planner to move forward on all points.

Commissioner Leary asked when the last time the State Historic Grants-in-aid program was funded by the State. Mr. Crowe said it has been several years. Commissioner Leary said he doesn't see this being funded anytime soon. There is no federal tax incentive.

Roberta Correa, 703 Emmett Street, said, as to prior discussion regarding the First Presbyterian Church's historic registry designation, the Church is located in the South Historic District, which is in the National Historic Registry, so it is registered by virtue of being within those boundaries.

Robert Taylor, Architect, said he's reviewed what Mr. Crowe has put together and wholeheartedly supports this and thinks this is a positive step forward.

Commissioner Brown said they forget about the north side of Palatka. They had a black historic district; there are a few buildings left there. She'd like to know if they can also be considered for such a designation. Booker Park was a central focus of the black community. They need to look at the City holistically. Mr. Boynton asked Mr. Crowe for a time frame to hold these series of meetings and to make presentations to the Commission. Mr. Crowe said the next step is to chart this out and come back with a rough time schedule. Mr. Boynton asked if they would be looking at the end of the year on the CLG application, etc. Mr. Crowe said they can bring the CLG resolution back at any time. The survey will take longer. Mr. Boynton said he'd like an update for the Commission at least every other month on the progress on these four items. Commissioner Leary asked if he could come back to the next meeting with a timeline. Mayor Myers cautioned him that people do not want more regulation; he doesn't want to put more obstacles in the way of development. Mr. Crowe said they want to make this very user friendly and very clear; the standards they have now are very vague. Clarity will free more things up.

Wayne Annis, 1610 Moseley Avenue, identified himself as a State Certified General Contractor, and asked, if this is passed and the downtown becomes a historic area, and tax abatements are enacted, will the rest of the businesses in Palatka have to make up for the taxes that are abated? Mayor Myers said they don't increase taxes to make up for tax abatements. Mr. Annis said this seems like a round-about way to keep the buildings on the 100 block. Mayor Myers said this has nothing to do with the preservation of the buildings on the 100 block.

2. **ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION STRATEGY PRESENTATION** – Bob Taylor, 710 St. Johns Avenue, said this is the culmination of six months of work and 30 citizens' input. This is the 5th of their public meetings where they've taken public input. He's been involved in 13 different small groups which were involved in the development of this strategy. He's distributed a report based upon the recommendation and subcommittee's vision. He gave them the "tip of the iceberg" presentation. The first presentation is transportation.

RIDE SOLUTIONS' PRESENTATION - Boyd Thompson said Ride Solutions serves the economically disadvantaged of Putnam County. 57% of the citizens in Putnam County are transportationally disadvantaged. This is almost double the state average.

Myra Strange, Ride Solutions, provided a power point presentation (filed) entitled "Our Need for Regional Transit." This included a proposal for regional transit and ways to implement this. Many families have to work to afford to get to work and sometimes have to choose between buying gas and buying food. Some families spend over 50% of their income on car expenses. Energy volatility also increases the need for regional transit. Gas prices are based upon supply and demand. Demand is beginning to outstretch supply, and when the market is volatile, money can be made. My mid-2013 demand will exceed supply by 3% which could double current gas and oil prices. As the world economy improves, fuel prices increase, which dampens the economy. Lowering the cost of living will increase discretionary income. The shallow economic recovery could be attributable to manufacturing jobs being lost overseas. Increase of household discretionary income equals the same as job creation. A human service transit/transportation system will lower the cost of living and create economic stimulus. The Ride Solutions report contains data to enhance this information (filed) and information on the Northeast Florida's Mobility Management System, modeled after the Mobility Services for All Americans model. This features use of the Brevi Bus, which was designed and manufactured in Putnam County. Regional transit can make a significant contribution to economic recovery.

Mr. Taylor provided highlights of the study. He discussed the 2010 Sustainability Survey and that is contained in his report. Waste Management and renewable energy regeneration were the top two investment categories. Green Efforts were discussed regarding the workability of a sustainability program. It has been shown that this reduces the cost of government. Barriers to accomplishing the County Sustainability strategy is funding. The lowest barrier is political and public support.

Mr. Taylor went over the benefits and importance of clean energy strategy benefits. They feel like a strategic energy plan best fits into a comprehensive plan through B&Z. This plan constantly evolves. They held five workshops, formed leadership teams, and development strategies and evaluated, identified and prioritized these. Then they identified funding and now need to finalize and adopt the plan.

This plan is based upon a Carbon Footprint, which is the total set of greenhouse gas that is created by a certain business. Private transportation is 10% and public transportation is about 3%. As for energy consumption, they use four different types of energy. Coal has a significant carbon dioxide emission as does petroleum based products such as gas/oil. In the last 100 years there has been a dramatic rise in CO₂ which results in a dramatic rise in temperature. Temperature has gone up .3 degrees in the past five years. This is significant. Coal use is going down while greenhouse gas emissions goes up. Petroleum based fuels use is going up. They need to get away from coal production or find a more efficient way to burn it. North America has the second-highest energy consumption and CO₂ emissions as well as pollution of all the continents, behind China.

Mr. Taylor discussed visions for land use and ways to limit sprawl of rural development without using city services. Many areas surrounded by the City have benefit of city services without paying taxes. "Complete Streets" were described as those with landscaping with sidewalks, pedestrians and bike lanes with cross walks. As to Transportation, the software is available to allow individuals to pick up a local "flex route" to go places they would normally drive, like parks and stores. This is according to the "new urbanism" concept of mass transit, which allows one to go shopping and run errands without having to use a car. Single occupancy vehicles are extremely inefficient. They also need to increase the use of Park & Rides; there is only one in Putnam County at this time. Government entities as well as the public should purchase economical vehicles. Ride Solutions is ready to adopt these principles but next need to get the public buy-in.

As to utilities, they include water, WW, reclaimed water, natural gas, electrical power and renewable water.

Water -- Less than 1% of the world's water is available for our use; water is a precious commodity. Many ways to conserve water are just common sense measures; irrigation of lawns is one of the biggest wastes of water. They just need to be aware of saving water and ways to do that.

As for natural gas. This is an opportunity to reduce the carbon footprint through its use rather than coal. The use of gas appliances is recommended. Natural Gas is much more efficient than electricity. Natural Gas use can reduce Greenhouse gas emissions by 20 – 29%. There are natural gas vehicles and distributors throughout the US, but none in Putnam County.

Renewable energy – one of the largest sources of this is hydro power. They use about 2% of the US renewable energy sources in Florida.

If there is 100% of radiant energy hitting the earth, 70% of that is absorbed into the land, water and clouds. What's important is the time it takes to re-radiate that; it takes longer to do this as carbon emissions go up. A local inventor is working on windmills as a source of local power. Other renewable energy sources are as noted in his report (filed).

Sustainable construction industry – goal is to keep building officials and those involved in the design and construction industry together on visions and goals. They need to have responsible ownership and evaluate the cost vs. the gain. Implementation is reduce, reuse, recycle. There is more detail in the narrative he's distributed.

80% of what Americans throw away is recyclable, but only 20% of Americans recycle. Virtually all municipal solid waste is recyclable. Even foodscraps are great for compost. As the amount of waste increases, the recycling rate goes down. Recycling aluminum cans and glass saves a lot of energy. Most plastic bottles are not recycled. Paper, steel.

Diversification of energy sources is key, as well as supply and distribution routes. They need to energize energy audits and provide for consumer incentives.

Florida has set energy rules, as have other states. Florida is one that has a state standard for interconnection programs. Florida does not have a loan program for renewable resources.

Mr Taylor thanked those participating in the study and special thanks to the City of Palatka.

Mayor Myers thanked Mr. Taylor for his presentation.

Mr. Boynton said the City received over 1.2 million in funding to upgrade city buildings and WWTP aeration system. Part of the requirement for that grant was to develop an energy conservation program. Mr. Taylor was at the helm of that project. Mr. Taylor will turn this into a manual he will provide to the Commission and will submit to the Dept of Energy for their review and acceptance. The Goals and Objectives are things they should be looking to implement and push towards in trying to cut down on their carbon footprint. The conclusion is where they are in the next 3, 5 and 7 years as to the City's carbon footprint and where they should be. Mr. Taylor said the narrative contains those objectives and they are looking to guidance on prioritizing those objectives.

Mayor Myers acknowledged Mr. Crowe, Mr. Kitner, Mr. Annis and Mr. Taylor and Thompson and Strange.

Adjourn at 5:40 p.m. upon a motion by Commissioner Brown.