

**VERNON MYERS**  
MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

**MARY LAWSON BROWN**  
VICE MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

**ALLEGRA KITCHENS**  
COMMISSIONER

**PHIL LEARY**  
COMMISSIONER

**JAMES NORWOOD, JR.**  
COMMISSIONER



**MICHAEL J. CZYMBOR**  
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 WORKSHOP**  
January 29, 2013 – 4:00 p.m.

Proceedings of a regular meeting of the City Commission of the City of Palatka, Florida, held on the 24th day of January, 2013.

**PRESENT:**

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

Also Present: City Manager Michael J. Czymbor; City Attorney Donald E. Holmes; City Clerk Betsy Jordan Driggers; Finance Director Matt Reynolds; Police Chief Gary Getchell; Fire Chief Mike Lambert; Planning Director Thad Crowe; Main Street Manager Charles Rudd; Project Manager Jonathan Griffith

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Myers called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and read the following call, which was issued on January 23, 2013:

**TO COMMISSIONERS: 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 Tuesday, January 29, 2013 at the regular meeting place of the Palatka City Commission, Palatka City Hall, 201 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Palatka, Florida, to commence at 4:00 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss Riverfront Park & Redevelopment Area projects, grants and priorities

*Is/ Vernon Myers*  
**Vernon Myers, MAYOR**

We acknowledge receipt of a copy of the foregoing notice of an inaugural meeting on the 23<sup>RD</sup> day of January, 2012.

*Is/ Mary Lawson Brown*  
COMMISSIONER

*Is/ Phil Leary*  
COMMISSIONER

*Is/ James Norwood, Jr.*  
COMMISSIONER

*Is/ Allegra Kitchens*  
COMMISSIONER

**1. DISCUSSION TOPICS** – Jonathan Griffith narrated a PowerPoint Presentation on Topics.

**AREAS FOR CDBG NEIGHBORHOOD APPLICATION TO REPLACE OBSOLETE WATER/SEWER MAINS** – Mr. Griffith said Staff has looked at three potential areas. The first is St. Johns Avenue bounded by Moseley, the RR tracks and Ravines. Many of these lines are circa 1800 cast iron. The 2<sup>nd</sup> area is the “South Historic District” and an expanded area to include the surrounding neighborhoods. Commissioner Leary said on River Street from Dodge Street north, the elevations are dropping. This is putting a lot of stress on the pipes. He asked if they’ve looked at this. Mr. Griffith said they used to believe this was the point of origin for the entire system, but it is now known that this is not the case. Mayor Myers said the City has patched River Street in front of every home. As the system recedes the connections to every home has been pulled apart. Commissioner Leary said a bulkhead would stop that, and they may need to look at this in the future. Storm surges create continual erosion.

Mr. Griffith said the 3<sup>rd</sup> area is generally known as the North Historic District and surrounding areas. They would extend the new main, which stopped on Dunham Street, down to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. They have the same problems as the other neighborhoods. Staff recommends moving forward with the larger area #1 first and also order engineering on areas #2 and #3. With CDBG programs they can include additional projects, and it is conceivable they can do areas 2 and 3 with area 1. At this time they are talking about cutting open the road, laying the new pipe and patching it. To repave they’ll need to look at a bond or something similar.

Commissioner Norwood said it makes no sense to him to patch it and then put in new asphalt three or four years later. Commissioner Leary said the State is currently making modifications to the CDBG program. They need to know what funds are available and match requirements.

Fred Fox, Fred Fox Enterprises, said these funds have been cut around 25% at the federal level, which translates to fewer projects being funded. The amount of funding has not changed. This year the Department is requesting a redesign of the program. The Department would like to put everything into Economic Development. They have had 40% of the funds in the Commercial Revitalization category up until now. At this time those two categories equal around 80% of the pot. You can get a waiver for the cap of \$750,000 for certain economic development projects. The applications will be due in the fall of 2013. He suggests they define the areas, which have been done to some degree. This is all about benefitting low income people. They may not find those low income levels in the historic districts. The State has redefined low income, which is a much lower number than HUD’s number. If they don’t have the income levels to be competitive, the odds of having a successful application in those two areas are doubtful. Mr. Griffith is asking for permission to do surveys in those neighborhoods and come back with what they find. They need the Commission’s permission to do this. The survey determines family size and income group. Commissioner Leary said the residents in the North and South Historic Districts won’t meet the income criteria. After further discussion, there was consensus that Area No. 1 is the most likely to qualify.

Commissioner Brown said there are other areas in the City that will qualify very easily. There are other places that need new infrastructure just as badly. Mr. Griffith said they identified other areas, but these are the areas where those upgrades are most urgently needed. They could look at two or three other areas and bring those up at a future workshop. Commissioner Leary said they need to make fire flow their chief consideration, as they are looking at putting a Fire Service Fee in place. Mr. Griffith said that is one of the reasons the first area almost doubled in size.

Sharon Buck, 610 S. 14<sup>th</sup> Street, concurred with Commissioner Brown, noting the people along River Street are more affluent than in other areas of Palatka. She'd like to see a plan that includes the north and west areas of Palatka.

Commissioner Brown said Mr. Fox has been doing these grants for a long time; he knows better what the City can and can't do. As they move forward they need to heed his advice.

**POSSIBLE PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO PROVIDE MARINE FUELING IN DOWNTOWN PALATKA AREA** – Mr. Czymbor said they've spoken of the need for fuel sales somewhere on the St. Johns Area close to downtown in the Riverfront area. There is a privately owned marina which serves transient boats. The last application for funding from FBIP was focused on attracting and servicing transient boaters. They need to talk about working cooperatively with the adjacent private property owner to fund a fuel farm through grants and partnerships. The property owner has expressed an interest in holding a dialogue and forming a partnership on the public/private sale of fuel. Before they put any more energy into this they need to gauge the Commission's feelings on this.

Scott Lagasse, 135 Middlepoint Lane; owner, Boathouse Marine, said he is partners with Marlene and Skip Lagasse. Mr. Lagasse said the purchase of the marina was based upon the pending revitalization of the downtown area. They've chosen not to invest in fuel sales for transient boaters due to a lack of stability in the economy. There is no consistent fuel need; this is a big deterrent to their business. They welcome the opportunity to partner with the City to sell fuel. The marina did offer fuel at one time, but the tanks and pipes needed to be removed and replaced. They removed them and did not replace them. He suggested they look at regular, diesel and aviation fuel. Mayor Myers asked if they've looked a recapture of their investment; Mr. Lagasse said he'd like to do more homework before they provide an educated answer to that. This will be based upon a partnership; everyone, including the businesses downtown, needs to cooperatively find ways to attract the boating public to Palatka.

Commissioner Leary said a public/private partnership with the Lagasses is the best way to go. If they are to continue to promote the downtown, they need a boat fueling facility. This is a good staging area between Jacksonville and Sanford.

Mr. Czymbor said they will look at a 50/50 or 60/40 partnership; if they have to come up with \$100,000 match for a grant they would look at sharing that expense and a similar sharing on sales. The point of having a municipal marina is offering amenities like fuel, clean restrooms, etc. The challenge would be packaging and marketing those amenities. They don't have a lot of fixed cost for a marina. They have transient boating facilities without a lot of fixed cost. They can transfer a lot of that cost to a private marina and share in the revenue. This is an enviable spot to be in.

Commissioner Leary said the private sector can do things better and more cost effectively than government. He believes this is a good opportunity. Commissioner Brown said they should look at how many jobs they can create at the marina as well as ancillary jobs. They need to focus on job creation to get state and federal money. They have a free pump out station which they've had for many years. The St. Johns River is one of 14 Heritage Rivers. They have more to offer people and can put packages together. Commissioner Kitchens said a public/private partnership is a good idea. She noted the City has to put up a match, and asked where that money is coming from. Mr. Griffith said they could get money from the TIF district, since this business is in the TIF district. Mayor Myers said it may be a little too early to pin that source down. Mr. Griffith said this is within the South TIF district and they have a new commercial development program. Their first directive would be to minimize the City's cost.

Mr. Holmes said he understands that because Mr. Lagasse owns uniquely situated property, he may be the only private person that would be in a position to partner with the City. He believes the City would still be required to go through the bid process, and suggested they determine whether or not they will need to do so. Mr. Griffith said they can craft an RFP that would not be specific to the Lagasse's property.

Mayor Myers said the whole purpose of downtown revitalization is to bring more foot traffic to downtown, and this will do that. Commissioners Brown, Kitchens, Norwood and Leary concurred that this is a desirable project and Staff should look further into this.

## 2. SEEKING COMMISSION CONSENSUS:

**Layout of Southern Portion of Riverfront Park re: Florida Boating Improvement Grant** – Mr. Griffith went over existing conditions of the Riverfront park. He noted plans to go from 2 to 5 slips at the launch and, they would like to relocate the concession facility. They are recommending reconstruction of all facilities. They'd like to move parking for the boat launch up against the southern portion of the park and relocate other parking to the middle of the park. The restroom facilities would be located with concession facilities at the end of the City Dock. They propose a realignment of Laurel Street and reopening Memorial Drive to two-way traffic.

**Orientation of parking lot and realignment of Laurel Street, and reopening Memorial Drive to two-way traffic** - Rudd Jones, Rudd Jones & Associates, said this maximizes the amount of parking for boats, and will provide overflow parking for special events, while maintaining the green aspect of the Riverfront. There are three driveways on River Street, which causes a lot of confusion for drivers. That parking would still be available, but the current layout is very inefficient. They propose making Short Laurel into parking space, and extending Laurel Street down through the current park and onto Memorial Drive. This allows for an extra row of cars and boats. This also removes conflict involved with the multiple access points. They recommend a traffic calming device to keep people from speeding through the area to get to the bridge. This route will be more likely used by people coming to the downtown as a destination. They've had soil borings done at the site and they are moderately good for retention systems and water quality management, and may have the ability to provide additional treatment and storage for other areas that drain into this area. Commissioner Leary suggest they erect a sign that says "No Through Traffic" to further discourage traffic, and noted the current signalization encourages people to take that route.

Mr. Holmes said if you cease using Short Laurel as a Street, this constitutes an abandonment of the street, so half the street will go to the adjoining property owner; they need to keep this in mind. Commissioner Kitchens said it's not a good idea to close Short Laurel or put a roundabout there. One-way towards Reid Street was safer for church-goers. It would be better to put it back one-way towards Reid Street. She asked how many driveways are proposed to come and go out of the Park? Mr. Jones said there are two entrances and exits on the South end; the idea of the roundabout is to discourage people from using this as a throughway. With respect to the proximity to the church, the intent is to get it further away from the church. People would be moving very slowly through the roundabout. They considered the Church when drawing up these plans. Commissioner Kitchens expressed concern with patients' ingress and egress to the doctor's office there on Short Laurel, and noted this is a very old street. The intersection of Laurel and River Street is a bad intersection. There are many ways to reconfigure this by leaving Short Laurel open and discouraging through traffic. You can't "move" a street; you have to close it, vacate it.

Commissioner Leary said he can see many positive benefits in this design. It will likely improve traffic flow to Reid Street. It would behoove the City to speak to the adjoining property owners about this. Mr. Jones said currently, when the parking lot is utilized on Sundays, parkers have

to cross two streets. With the reconfiguration, parking is moved closer to the church, and there is more available parking.

Commissioner Kitchens expressed further concerns with boat traffic ingress/egress near the Church, and said commercial property is devalued when the street front access is removed. Commissioner Brown said roundabouts slow cars down and look nice when properly landscaped. Commissioner Norwood agreed and said they promote safety. They should explore the pros and cons of the design and do an evaluation of the area's assets. They need to start these conversations with the affected property owners.

Mr. Griffith said they've already met with SJRWMD regarding stormwater retention requirements. Mr. Jones said part of what they have to do is design a system to cover a fairly intense rainfall event, and this has to be designed based upon wet season conditions. There is currently a sediment control system that collects drainage and drains straight into the river. This is the only place they have on the waterfront that is undeveloped and they can build water quality improvements features into. They want to catch that first flush of runoff that comes after extended dry periods; this is the dirtiest runoff you will get. This system will catch that first rush of water every time. Mr. Griffith said they've met with the PD and they did not have a determination on which way to go, and don't have a preference on direction of Memorial Drive.

Commissioner Leary expressed concern with current stormwater runoff, which is discharged directly into the river. Mr. Jones said they may get additional stormwater management permit credits for doing more water quality improvements than is necessary; they can bank credits for doing extra things now while maximizing water quality.

Gay Esperson, 114 Riverview Drive, E. Palatka, said she likes the plan. She believes closing Memorial Parkway would further reduce the traffic in the circle.

Sharon Buck, 610 S. 14<sup>th</sup> Street, said many of the elderly who attend church use the small dirt area at the corner of Short Laurel and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street for parking. When boats are parked there it makes it extremely difficult for them to attend church. Elderly people don't drive that well. Per her question, Mr. Jones said 2<sup>nd</sup> Street will still be 2-way traffic. There would likely have to be an agreement with the Church and dentist's office to maintain a certain portion of parking for church and business purposes in exchange for closing the Street. Churchgoers will no longer have to cross two streets. Ms. Buck said she'd like to see traffic on Memorial Drive reversed, but remain one-way.

Mayor Myers said they need to work on access to the dirt lot, and noted her point was well-taken. They have issues to work out. Staff is looking for consensus on what they want to pursue, and whether or not the Commission wants to adopt these conceptual designs, and whether or not to reopen Memorial Design to two-way traffic.

Commissioner Kitchens expressed concern with making decisions at a workshop meeting. Mr. Czymbor said they aren't asking for a vote or a decision, but are seeking feedback. They will take this under consideration and come back with a redesign at a duly posted public meeting. Mr. Griffith said they will reach out to the adjacent property owners.

**Location of Riverboat Ticketing Facility, Concession Stand and Restrooms** – Mr. Czymbor said the City entered into an agreement with DPI to manage the operation of a concession facility in 2006. In 2008 they were put on notice that they were in default, and the former City Manager put out an RFP to seek proposals for a new lessee. A lessee was chosen, and that lessee sub-let out the facility. There is no lease on the building. They now have an opportunity to improve the facility and include a concession stand, riverboat ticketing

facility and restrooms in the same building, and then will issue a new RFP to seek a new lessee to operate both facilities.

Mr. Griffith said the recommendation is to locate the facility at the terminus at the end of the dock. This maximizes dollars to construct them all under one roof and will minimize maintenance of the facilities.

Commissioner Brown said before this new lessee moved into the concession stand the commission voted to specify that any lessee also operate a ticketing facility for the Boats. Palatka used to be a riverboat town, and if they allow the lobby of the ticketing facility to be used as a museum, that may open up historical grant funds for this facility. Discussion ensued centering around the size of this facility, and concern with keeping it on a small scale per recent discussion around keeping buildings on the Parkside to a minimum. Per discussion, Mr. Griffith said he was not aware of any minimum square footage requirements in the FDOT Riverboat Grant. Mr. Czymbor said they want to leverage grant funds from the FDOT grant with the FBIP grant to maximize available funds.

Mayor Myers said he likes the concept of Short Laurel being done away with and expanding parking. He knows there are issues that need to be worked out with adjoining property owners. Consensus to bring these matters back as agenda'd items.

Sam Carr, 108 Riverside, said he's a member of Putnam Trails. They are thrilled with these proposals. The idea of orienting these facilities and their design is good. They need a facility for people to clean up and shower when they are traveling the trail. They need to build a world-class facility to attract families and trail-traversing public.

**Prioritization of Riverfront and Redevelopment Area Projects** – Mr. Griffith said the Michael Redd Master Plan was accepted in 2009. Staff has pulled projects out of the Plan and has prioritized them in a spread sheet, a copy of which was included in the workshop packet (filed). Staff has provided a prioritization. They are looking for Commission and public feedback on these priorities. These are all future projects. Mr. Griffith said this includes the area from the Presbyterian Church to the Amphitheater.

Mayor Myers said much of this will take some discussion. The Redd Plan was approved as a concept only. They developed this through charrettes. This is a collection of everyone's ideas. This is not an exact roadmap; they need to modify this master plan to something that is more in keeping with what they want. They don't want a restaurant or a cypress stand. Commissioner Kitchens concurred and said acceptance of the Master Plan doesn't constitute approval of each of its components. They can pick and choose which portions they want to undertake. The public is adamantly opposed to building things on the Riverfront Park, especially a restaurant. They throw out what they don't like and use what they do like. Discussion ensued regarding "world renowned facilities" and what those involve. Commissioner Leary said that includes someplace to eat. He agrees they need to re-evaluate the plan to make it more realistic. Commissioner Norwood concurred. Commissioner Brown said they need to put some of this in place. People are going to come; they will either come through here, or will stop here and spend money. Times have changed. They either have to move and change with the times or this town will die. They need to move forward on what they can move forward on now. Most of what Staff has proposed is good; plans need tweaking from time to time. They have to try some of these concepts. Once they put them in place, people may like them.

Commissioner Kitchens said plans need to be flexible. Mr. Redd has done wonderful work and was a very good salesman. Everything that was suggested, he included in the Plan. It doesn't fit with what the citizens like or want. They need to make decisions based upon individual components. They need a mix of vehicle and foot traffic.

Mayor Myers said some of the items on this list are dated and are dead issues. Moving the clock tower and torpedo are dead issues. They don't need a sandy beach. The drawing keeps getting thrown up to them as an approved concept, but they don't want to implement each part of it. Mr. Griffith said a master plan is a guiding document; much of this won't come to fruition. This list doesn't include items that are somewhat controversial. If they accomplish everything that's in progress they will have accomplished 75% of this plan in five years.

There was consensus to move forward with Plans in place.

Pam Garris, 603 Emmett Street, said there used to be many more azaleas in the landscape. They need to implement the planting of traditional Formosa azaleas. Encore azaleas bloom ¾ of the year and come in Formosa colors. They should be appropriately placed and prominent.

Commissioner Leary said azaleas use a lot of water; they've been in a deficit rainfall for the past 20 years and much of the natural vegetation has died off. They've been looking at using fewer water-using plants.

Jerry Hafner, 122 Hilton Lane, said he's somewhat concerned as he understands many of the items brought forth in the Redd concept don't suit many of them. At the time the torpedo issue came up, the room was filled with veterans who didn't want the torpedo monument moved. When the charrettes were held, a large number of citizens were present, and a large number of them discussed these aspects. The citizen participation is pretty much reflected in the Plan. The Commission needs to remember the number of people involved in that process. He and many of his friends invested a lot of time into that process. He didn't like the cypress trees and beach, but did like the restaurant. Many of these items have great appeal. He doesn't want this plan to be thrown aside and not considered. A master plan is a guiding document and is to be used as such. They need to incorporate those ideas.

3. **CLOSING COMMENTS** – There were none.
4. **ADJOURN** – There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m. upon a motion by Commissioner Brown.