APPROVED: 2/18/2021

MINUTES
City Commission Workshop

9:00 AM - Saturday, January 9, 2021 - Eustis Memorial Library

CALL TO ORDER: 9:42 A.M.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF QUORUM AND PROPER NOTICE

PRESENT: Commissioner Nan Cobb, Commissioner Willie Hawkins, Vice Mayor Emily Lee, Commissioner Karen LeHeup-Smith and Mayor Michael L. Holland

1. WORKSHOP ITEM WITH COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION

1.1 Discussion with County Commission Chair Sean Parks

Mayor Holland introduced Lake County Commission Chair Sean Parks and asked staff to introduce themselves.

Chairman Parks complimented the City on its library and commented on the importance of the City and County cooperation particularly in light of the current national situation. He expressed his value of the County's relationship with the City. He stated he would relay the message to staff and the other County Commissioners on the positive meeting he had with the Eustis Commission. He cited various important issues for the City and County to work on together including the following: 1) attainable housing; 2) roads; and 3) quality of life issues such as trails. He noted this is the year to begin a funding plan for the trails.

Chairman Parks then commented on County Commission budget concerns and their efforts to move to two and five-year budget plans. He noted that the new County Manager Alan Rosen would begin work February 8th. He then reported on the vaccination efforts and explained the Florida Dept. of Health actually has control over that process. He indicated they will be going to a reservation system.

Mayor Holland asked Mr. Parks about the City possibly purchasing the Lake County Fairgrounds and asked if the rest of the Commission is in favor of that. All but Commissioner LeHeup-Smith expressed support for the City obtaining the fairground property and Chairman Parks expressed agreement with entering into negotiations.

The Commission discussed how the property might be utilized including the possibility of locating the community center there and using the property for recreation programming.

The Commission discussed the County Attorney's comments at the previous Commission meeting and questioned whether or not the entire County Commission has authorized her to speak on their behalf and whether or not the

County Commission is actually willing to work with the City on the annexation issue.

Chairman Parks indicated she has been authorized in that she and staff were directed to attend the meetings. He acknowledged that Eustis has not been treated as fairly as other cities. He further indicated that the negotiations should not have been stalled and stated his intent to make sure negotiations are moving forward.

Ron Neibert, City Manager, asked if County staff has kept the Commission apprised of the negotiations with Mr. Parks indicating they have not been provided a briefing since he has been Chair.

Mr. Neibert explained there have been two negotiation sessions since then. He cited various issues that County staff has presented including requiring the City to assess the residents of the annexed properties for fire service. He expressed concern regarding the expectation that those residents would be triple taxed for fire service which should be under the auspices of the mutual aid agreement. He further commented on County staff indicating they didn't want to have the fire response charged on a per call basis claiming that it was too hard to track.

Chairman Sparks responded that tracking charges on a per call basis should not be too hard and stated he would address the issue with County staff.

Discussion was held regarding the joint planning area negotiations with the Commission noting that the County staff went from a short list of negotiation items to a much longer list. Discussion was also held regarding what was more effective, City and County staff working together or the two Commissions meeting together. Comments were made regarding some County Commissioners stating that it might be easier to go to a lawsuit.

Mr. Neibert expressed the City's concern regarding the County's dedication of the park property to a private organization in order to stop the City's annexation and noted the State's concern regarding the dedication of the park property which was in direct violation of their grant agreement with the State.

The Commission questioned whether the County is sending a court reporter to the City's meetings with Mr. Parks stating he is unaware of that occurring. It was requested that all City and County Commissioners be copied on the emails and information sent between the City and County staff. The Commission also commented on how the rules keep changing so the City can't perform to expectations and the difficulties that creates for City staff.

Discussion was held regarding the need for Mr. Parks and the rest of the County Commission to be kept informed about the negotiations as they proceed with Mr. Parks commenting on the lack of awareness by the County of whether or not the property could be developed at the 5 units per acre and the need for the County Commissioners to be more informed about the City's form-based code.

Mr. Neibert reported that the City has negotiated with the developers to agree to a maximum of three units per gross acre which may resolve most of the issues. He commented on County and resident expectations that Thrill Hill Road be improved immediately with the first development rather than incrementally as usually occurs.

Mr. Parks commented on it not being fair to expect Eustis to do more than other cities are expected to do with Mr. Neibert stating the City's willingness to comply with the normal procedures.

The Commission noted that Thrill Hill Road should have been improved ten years ago and questioned what were the County's plans for improving that road without the developments. The Commission also expressed concern regarding the County Commissioners going out and meeting with the residents making it difficult for the City to meet with the residents and reach an agreement.

Chairman Parks agreed that creates issues noting it has occurred to him as well. He assured the Commission that he would not do that. He indicated he would be happy to facilitate a meeting between the community and the City Commission.

The Commission also expressed concern regarding a County staff member taking it upon themselves to contact residents regarding the City's plans. They expressed concern that Chairman Parks is not being kept informed and County staff may not be giving him full information.

The Commission cited the need for there to be a level playing field for all of the cities. It was noted that negotiations are being held with the City of Mount Dora being allowed to do things that Eustis is not being allowed. It was noted that Ms. Marsh did say that the County and City staff were working well together which gave both the residents and the City staff hope.

The Commission thanked Chairman Parks for coming indicating he was invited to attend out of respect for him.

Chairman Parks confirmed the direction from the meeting with Mayor Holland citing the need to schedule a meeting with Chairman Parks, Mayor Holland and the City Manager to negotiate on the fairgrounds and for Chairman Parks to be more involved with the joint planning negotiations.

Mr. Neibert reported on the most recent negotiations. He stated the County staff kept pushing for a full ISBA and stated his feeling that the intent was just to stall the negotiations. He indicated they finally pinned down the three main issues - density, fire service and Thrill Hill Road.

Chairman Parks suggested scheduling a meeting between him, Mayor Holland and Mr. Neibert to discuss the approach to be used for the joint planning area negotiations.

The Commission asked which Covid 19 vaccinations will be provided with Chairman Parks indicating he is unaware of the Johnson & Johnson but that the County would be provided primarily Moderna and Pfizer. He stated this next week the entire state of Florida will only receive 286,000 vaccines. He commented on how Lake County had initially planned to do the 3,000 first responders first and then end of January start the 65 and up. He stated Lake County will not be using E-vite as there was some type of information breach with that.

Mr. Neibert noted that the City will have designated computers at the library for members of the public to use to come in and do their reservation for the vaccines.

Chairman Parks indicated he would try to create a schedule to come regularly to City Commission meetings. He expressed enthusiasm for working with the City on the issues. He left the meeting at 10:33 a.m.

Recess: 10:33 a.m. Reconvene: 10:44 a.m.

1.2 Review of annexation policies

Lori Barnes, Development Services Director, provided an overview of the annexation incentive program. She stated that, when initiated, it was marketed to those property owners living in the enclaves. She provided a breakdown of results for the first three years stating that the combined total to date is 43 properties totaling 438.85 acres with additional ad valorem revenue to the City of $57,000 dollars. She noted an additional 13 properties are in the process for year three totaling 399.86 acres. She provided an updated map showing the locations of the annexed properties.

Ms. Barnes then stated that the program will expire April 4, 2021 and indicated it would need to be approved for continuation prior to expiration and asked for direction from the Commission.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission for the program to be continued.

Mr. Neibert cited properties north of 44 and to the northwest of the City. He commented on the ability of the City to force annexation of some of the properties under existing developer agreements. He asked if the Commission was willing to proceed.

Ms. Barnes reviewed which subdivisions are ripe for annexation and Mr. Neibert suggested that, if the Commission is willing to proceed, staff could prepare information on the financial impact on the City.

The Commission discussed the need to focus on the annexation of enclaves and then proceed with the other annexations and the effect on fire service.

CONSENSUS: It was consensus of the Commission for staff to prepare the financial impact information.

Ms. Barnes explained that, in the past, staff has provided information to the enclave property owners regarding the benefits of annexation. She noted state statute does have a provision for enclaves of less than 110 acres to be annexed under an interlocal agreement with the county. She noted that Lake County had previously suggested the City concentrate on annexation of the enclaves; however, when staff approached them about the interlocal agreement they were rebuffed.

Ms. Barnes suggested that, when the City proceeds with any annexations, that the residents be provided prior notice before proceeding.

Commissioners Cobb and LeHeup-Smith suggested holding community meetings.

Mr. Neibert noted that those whose homes are valued at more than $150,000 will see a net increase; however, they will also realize an improvement in their insurance rates due to a higher ISO rating for the City's fire service.

Mayor Holland commented on a meeting held some years ago with the County where cities were told they needed to do infill annexation to make the public safety systems function efficiently.

1.3 Review of Strategic Plan and City Charter

Mr. Neibert explained the need to review the Strategic Plan and City Charter.

The Commission discussed increasing the City's candidate application fee with City Clerk Mary Montez suggesting she determine what other cities are charging and Mr. Neibert suggesting staff research and see where the City would rank at $150.

The Commission then discussed amending the Charter to allow the swearing in of Commissioners right after the election with Mr. Neibert explaining it would require a referendum and asking if there would be a primary in 2022.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission to have the City Clerk research the minutes for previous discussion with the possibility of a referendum on the primary so any amendment would be effective for the November 2022 election.

Review of Strategic Plan

Mr. Neibert noted the date on the plan stating that the goals are still relevant. He explained the Capital Improvement Plan is based on projects to accomplish the goals of the strategic plan. He asked if they would like a workshop to fully review the plan. He cited Goal #3, Actions (k) with the goal of staff compensation being in the top quartile. He explained the inability of the City to meet that goal. He indicated he did not intend to get into a deep discussion and asked if they have comments. He commented on the possibility of holding a workshop and then updating the plan. He indicated a number of the actions have been accomplished.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus to hold a workshop to conduct a thorough review of the Strategic Plan.

1.4 Discussion regarding Comprehensive Plan amendments

Mr. Neibert explained Ms. Barnes would be presenting various amendments that staff is recommending due to regulations that were enacted in the past to limit growth.

Ms. Barnes stated she was presenting some comprehensive plan amendments that staff feels are necessary to help the City move forward. She explained that the purpose of the future land use element and adopted future land use map series discusses strategies to build long-term community value, discourage urban sprawl and insure that public facilities and services are provided in the most cost effective and efficient manner. She cited the 19 maps in the future land use map series and stated that Maps #1 (future land use map) and #19 are the only maps designated as regulatory in nature with the others being strictly for reference purposes.

Ms. Barnes cited areas on the future land use map circled in blue which represented properties with non-conforming uses or non-conforming lot sizes. She reported staff has reviewed the industrial land use areas and determined the City is deficient in adequate industrial land use properties. She cited properties that were developed as industrial and historically used as industrial; however, at some time, probably during the 2008 comprehensive plan update, were somehow assigned a Suburban Residential designation. She explained this results in nonconforming uses with the property owners not able to put any other use on the site. She explained the form-based code is designed to allow for mixed use and explained the relevant area on the map.

CONSENSUS: The Commission discussed the problem with a consensus for staff to review the nonconforming uses with the intent of resolving the issues.

Ms. Barnes then discussed issues with non-conforming lot sizes. She explained there are pre-platted areas with properties as narrow as 33 feet wide. She stated those are designated as Suburban Residential which has a minimum lot width requirement of 55 feet. She acknowledged that there is a provision that, if the lot was platted prior to 2008, they can use any lot type designation regardless of lot size. She recommended that specific lot types be designated for those smaller lots which will make it clear it is a buildable lot. She reviewed what lot types would be usable.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission for staff to bring back a plan amendment to address the issue.

Ms. Barnes then discussed the Urban Residential Land use. She commented on the need to revise the definition which currently states it is intended for higher densities near the downtown core or to change the designations for properties outside the downtown area designated Urban Residential. She indicated they could be changed to Mixed Use Residential for those non-downtown areas currently designated Urban Residential. She recommended changing the definition. She stated that where there is existing commercial or mixed use are perfect areas to have a higher density residential.

CONSENSUS: Following discussion, it was a consensus of the Commission for staff to proceed with the definition change.

Ms. Barnes then discussed the Agricultural future land use definition. She explained the use of the designation and cited areas within the City with that designation. She stated that those properties do not meet the definition of agricultural and are nonconforming. She explained that the City is not intended to be agricultural but is intended to be urban. She stated Eustis is the only city with an agricultural zoning or land use designation. She commented on how the designation is handled in other area cities. She stated staff does not believe there is a good reason to maintain the Agricultural designation and noted two green areas on the land use map that are designated Conservation.

Mr. Neibert indicated that changing the land use would not change the property owners' agricultural exemption with Ms. Barnes indicating that is based on the actual agricultural use not on the land use designation. She explained how the agricultural exemption is granted through the Property Appraiser's office.

Tom Carrino, Economic Development Director, cited the City's property that is designated Mixed Commercial/Residential; however, the City has an agricultural exemption due to the property being used for cattle.

The Commission asked how the City would address property use changes with Ms. Barnes explaining that for any map designation staff could individually notify any affected property owners or the City could hold a community meeting.

CONSENSUS: Following discussion, it was a consensus of the Commission to eliminate the agricultural land use designation.

Ms. Barnes then identified properties designated as Rural Residential at one dwelling unit per acre. She reviewed the description and use of the Rural Residential designation and cited areas specified in the definition. She commented on the East Crooked Lake area noting that many of the properties are not one acre although designated Rural Residential. She explained that the comprehensive plan states that the Suburban Residential accommodates the majority of the residential development in the City at up to 5 du/acre. She indicated that if a developer wants to develop at one unit per acre they may do so under Suburban Residential; however, the comprehensive plan also talks about assigning densities that provide for the provision of cost effective services. She presented an email she sent to Tim McClendon at Lake County when they were discussing an ISBA. She commented on the different densities that are appropriate for cities versus counties. She stated that the American Planning Association recommends that where water and sewer is lacking should be limited to four units per acre. If there is no water or sewer but have a well and septic, you need to have an acre. However, if you have City water but no sewer, you can go from 1 unit per half acre to 4 units per acre dependent on the characteristics of the site such as proximity to a water body. She emphasized that the principles of good planning require that greater density is warranted/necessary for cost effective provision of public services where both water and sewer are provided. She stated that when the du/acre falls the cost per capita increases. She stated that the Rural Residential designation is not appropriate within a municipality. She cited other limitations within the City's code that would adequately protect the natural resources. She indicated that if a developer wants a one unit per acre development they can do that under SR. She stated that the Rural Residential designation is not appropriate within the City.

Mr. Neibert commented on the unsuitability particularly in areas which are surrounded by commercial use.

The Commission discussed the various areas that still retain a Rural Residential designation that are located in the City with Mr. Neibert stating it creates conflict when the City tries to move forward with suburban growth.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission to remove the Rural Residential designation.

Recess: 12:00 p.m. Reconvene: 12:44 p.m.

Ms. Barnes reminded the Commission that the only maps that are regulatory in nature are the joint planning area and future land use maps. She indicated that the future land use element discusses how the City shall continue to coordinate with Lake County regarding annexation and land use issues and shall rely upon the joint planning area (Map #19) or its successor agreement as describing the appropriate transition between the City's urban core and the County's rural areas. She then presented the proposed 2025 future land use area map, included in the comprehensive plan. She stated a prior Commission adopted a draft plan as part of the normal planning document.

Ms. Barnes cited the yellow areas as allowing for residential development of up to 2.5 dwelling units per acre and the beige areas, which are the County's rural transitional land use designation limit development with a planned unit development to one unit per acre with 50% open space. She explained the orange areas are Urban Low which, under the County's regulations, are a maximum of four dwelling units per acre. She then stated the JPA is an agreed upon area where public services should be provided and where the City may annex. She explained that the County classifies much of the undeveloped, unincorporated land in the JPA as Urban Low with an R-1 zoning (1 unit per acre) or Rural Transition (1 unit/acre via a PUD with 50% open space). She further stated the County defines R-1 as providing a transition between agricultural and conservation areas and the more urban residential communities. She noted that all of the periphery boundaries are limited to one unit per acre. She expressed concern regarding the width of the periphery and stated the joint planning area map does not provide opportunities for the City to grow. She cited the Florida Statutes which state the intent to discourage the proliferation of urban sprawl and directing density to the municipalities to reduce sprawl and protect true rural and agricultural lands. She explained that the staff reports provided when the City does a comprehensive plan amendment specifically address the eight indicators in the Florida Statutes that show an amendment discourages sprawl, as well as the 12 indicators that reflect if an amendment does not discourage the proliferation of sprawl.

Mr. Neibert explained that the word sprawl is frequently used incorrectly and stated that low density residential developments are what are urban sprawl and what the County is trying to encourage is sprawl.

Ms. Barnes reviewed a definition of urban sprawl and noted that the state statute that addresses sprawl questions where is the location of utility services. She noted the email to Tim McClendon provided to the Commission and stated that the information being provided by the County is misleading to the public.

The Commission questioned why the former Lake County Commission Chair made a comment as to whether or not the City's JPA is even legal with Ms. Barnes explaining that changes in the County's planning staff resulted in a loss of knowledge. She stated the City knows the JPA was adopted legally and can prove it. She further commented on the misleading information being provided to the public.

Ms. Barnes then explained Map #19 needs to be removed from the Comprehensive Plan and stated that there is nothing in the joint planning area agreement that requires the maintenance of a JPA map nor in Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes. She provided the following alternatives: 1) Leave it as is; 2) Remove it; 3) Prepare a Eustis visionary future land use map for the unincorporated areas in our boundary; or 4) Negotiate with the County for a new joint planning area map designating appropriate land uses within our joint planning area. She recommended that the references to joint planning area be deleted along with Map #19 and, at the Commission's direction, staff could prepare a new visionary future land use planning area map.

The Commission discussed whether or not removing the map would help the County with Ms. Barnes indicating omission of the map would actually help the City. She explained that the City Commission can change its regulations at its discretion provided they follow the required statutory notices of law and provide consistency with the comprehensive plan.

The Commission questioned what would happen if someone asks for the JPA map with Ms. Barnes stating the City will have its City limits map and future land use map which shows the joint planning area boundary and shows the unincorporated areas outside the City limits with no designations. She confirmed that removing the map would not change the joint planning area but only removes the visionary designations.

Mr. Neibert explained that the County is stating that the map indicates that those areas should be low density. If the map is removed, there would no longer be that argument. He indicated staff is not recommending actually changing the joint planning area agreement.

Ms. Barnes stated that the future land use map would include the boundaries of the JPA but would not show any proposed densities for properties not already in the City. She added that the City could create a visionary map; however, the City would not be tied to it as it would be nonregulatory.

Mr. Neibert indicated he doesn't have a problem with a visionary map as long as it shows the City's vision not someone else's.

CONSENSUS: Discussion was held regarding eliminating the joint planning area map with a consensus of the Commission for the JPA map to be eliminated.

Ms. Barnes noted she also has some minor language changes she would like to include in any comprehensive plan amendment as well as some technical changes that would be highlighted during the presentation at the Commission meeting.

1.5 <u>Discussion regarding funding/revenue options</u>

Mr. Neibert stated that the City has previously discussed financial issues including elimination of the police dispatch and implementation of a fire assessment fee. He explained what is a fire assessment and stated it is not a tax. He indicated that it can be included on the tax bill or it could be added to the utility bill. He explained the differences between an assessment and a tax and explained it would constitute a non-ad valorem revenue source, would be dependent on the cost of services, not be based on taxable value and would broaden the tax base of those paying for fire protection services. He further explained the methodology for determining the amount of the assessment. He reviewed the schedule for implementation which would require the City adopt a resolution of intent by March 1, 2021, and adoption of other required legislation so that the assessment could be included on the November 2021 tax bill.

Mr. Neibert then commented on whether or not to charge tax exempt properties including the possibility of charging a reduced rate. He provided a sample of other cities' assessment programs including Fruitland Park, Leesburg, Minneola, Montverde, Mount Dora, and Umatilla. He reviewed staff's recommendation including $100 for residential property and 0.16 per sq. ft. for commercial property. He stated it would generate approximately $1,000,000. He stated all of the assessment revenue would go to the Fire Department; however, $500,000 of general fund revenue would then be diverted to the Police/General Fund. He indicated the Fire Dept. would realize six new paramedics and reactivate the rescue truck for a total annual cost of $504,000. He explained it would provide $100,000 to be applied to the pay inequities.

The Commission asked if there is an intent to lower the millage rate with Mr. Neibert responding negatively. He indicated the City still would have a lower functional millage rate than the other cities due to not transferring large amounts of utility funds to underwrite the General Fund.

Further discussion was held with Mr. Neibert indicating the only way to balance the budget is to either generate new revenues or cut expenses which results in lowering City services. He emphasized that to do what needs to be done, additional revenues are needed. He indicated that the end result will be six new firefighters and higher salaries for the police department.

Discussion was held regarding increasing the millage rate versus implementing the fire assessment fee.

The Commission asked what the cost savings would be if police dispatch was eliminated with Mr. Neibert responding approximately $200,000.

Discussion was held regarding how much the millage rate would have to be raised to realize another $1 million with additional discussion regarding how to sell the concept with Mr. Neibert indicating it would provide six new firefighters and free up $500,000 to improve salaries for the Police Department.

The Commission discussed the issue with the following comments: 1) Looking at the elimination of the dispatch due to duplication of services; 2) Using the cost savings to reduce the millage rate; 3) Issues that arose during previous discussion about eliminating dispatch; and 4) Impact of Covid 19 on sales tax revenues.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission for staff to bring the issue of the fire assessment fee back to the Commission for consideration with Commissioner LeHeup-Smith expressing opposition and Commissioner Cobb and Vice Mayor Lee also expressing concern.

Further discussion was held regarding the possible elimination of dispatch with Mr. Neibert indicating they already have a draft agreement with the Sheriff. He asked if the Commission wanted him to go ahead and approach the Sheriff. He indicated the savings last time was going to be about $250,000; however, the Sheriff's rate would probably go up so savings would probably be about $200,000. He then asked that if they are not 100% sold on the issue that they not move forward.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission to leave dispatch in place and for staff to move forward with the initiating process for implementation of the fire assessment fee.

1.6 <u>Discussion regarding Community Center and Fairgrounds</u>

Mr. Neibert reviewed the history of the donation of the fairgrounds property to Lake County for use of the fair. He stated that the Property Appraiser currently has the property valued at $1.4 million. He reviewed the various buildings on the property.

Mayor Holland noted the County Commissioners are aware of the City's interest in getting the property back.

Mr. Neibert asked what would the Commission be willing to pay for the property and how would it be used. He stated that he didn't think the City should pay more than $900,000.

Discussion was held regarding the Fair Board with Commissioner Cobb indicating they think it is too small because they think a larger facility will increase the amount they earn off the fair; however, that is not the case. She commented on how the City could utilize the venue with Mayor Holland noting that the County employees are not even allowed to market the property.

Discussion was held regarding funding that would be needed to improve the facility and how it could be marketed by the City with Mr. Neibert noting it could also be an alternate location for Georgefest once the three blocks downtown are redeveloped.

Discussion was held regarding how soon the City would need to renovate the facilities and how much benefit the City gets from the fair.

Mr. Neibert noted they would begin negotiating with the County and the Commission could schedule tours of the facility.

<u>Carver Park Recreation Facility Expansion and Community Center Projects</u>

Mr. Neibert cited the previous discussion regarding expansion of the Carver Park facility and the lakefront community building and reviewed the basic plans for both projects. He discussed needed repairs to the current community building and commented on limitations to the public access to Lake Eustis. He reviewed the benefits of a new community/conference/sailing center and stated the estimated project costs are $1.4 million for the Carver Park recreation facility expansion and $16.35 million for the community/conference/sailing center. He stated that, if they wanted to remove the sailing component, they could probably reduce the total cost by $4 million.

Mr. Neibert then reviewed the proposed project funding and noted that he received a phone call from a resident who has pledged $1 million to the community building project.

Discussion was held regarding including the sailing component but not marketing it for that with Commissioner Lee expressing opposition to the City paying for it and Commissioner Hawkins indicating he did not feel the Sailing Club was as committed to the project as the City.

Further discussion was held regarding the sailing component with Mr. Neibert indicating it could be left out for now and added at a later date if they wanted.

Mayor Holland commented on the lack of unity between the various sailing entities previously.

Stephanie Carder, Chamber of Commerce, commented on their efforts to market the project and cited the difficulty in working with the various sailing entities. She stated that, of the $10,000 the Chamber raised, only about $700 came from sailing members.

Mr. Neibert indicated that if they omit the sailing component they will still have a world-class, state of the art, community building/conference center.

Commissioner Cobb stated her belief that the City will not receive the $3.5 million from the Tourism Development Council (TDC). She commented on the possibility of improving the fairgrounds property instead.

Further discussion was held regarding whether the existing community building could be expanded with Mr. Neibert indicating the plans were for a building on the same footprint to retain land for parking. He indicated the City will receive $1.75 million from the sale of the sprayfield and that could be used for improvements at the fairgrounds.

Discussion was held regarding relocating the Carver Park recreation building to the fairgrounds and the number of children participating in the program.

Discussion was held regarding how the community center could be expanded with Rick Gierok estimating the sitework only would be approximately $1,000,000 without any renovations to the building. He noted it already is estimated to cost $250,000 to repair the roof.

Tom Carrino, Economic Development Director, stated the sailing component was a significant portion of the City's application to the TDC so the City would probably not get any funding from them.

Discussion was held regarding the following: 1) Whether or not the debt referendum would pass; 2) the possibility of improving and expanding the existing community center; 3) the possibility of selling the Woman's Club facility; and 4) whether to patch or replace the community center roof.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission for staff to look at improving or replacing on a smaller scale the existing community center and to proceed with patching the roof.

Recess: 2:59 p.m. Reconvene: 3:15 p.m.

1.7 Consideration of any other topics that may be requested by the Commission

Development Incentive Water & Sewer Impact Fee Waiver Program

Mr. Neibert provided an update on the development incentive for the water and sewer impact fee waiver program. He explained the impact fees have to be paid and were paid by transferring the funds from the water & sewer operations fund. He stated that the program will expire April 4, 2021 and asked for direction from the Commission regarding renewal of the program. He stated staff's recommendation for renewal.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission for staff to bring back the renewal for approval.

Lien Release and Reductions - delegation of authority to City Manager in certain circumstances

Ms. Barnes reviewed the City's current policy for reduction or partial releases of recorded code liens and noted those situations where the City is precluded from foreclosing on a lien. She stated that, when that occurs, the City still needs to release the lien in order to clear the title. She stated there is an Attorney General's opinion that a Commission could delegate to a collection agency the ability to reduce or compromise a lien. She inferred that would also extend to the Commission providing that ability to staff such as the Development Services Director, Code Enforcement Supervisor or City Manager to release those liens.

Ms. Barnes then reviewed those conditions where staff has brought to the Commission cases where a property owner has agreed to pay hard costs in order to have the lien released. She stated that any situations involving a property needing to be brought into compliance or to meet certain conditions prior to a release would be brought before the Commission. She stated that approval of the delegation of authority would not require a code change.

Commissioner Hawkins confirmed that the delegation to the City Manager would not involve sale of property.

Code Enforcement Board vs. Special Magistrate

Ms. Barnes reviewed the current Code Enforcement structure and explained that her department is continually looking for ways to streamline the City's processes. She noted that Lake County and all of the other area cities use a special magistrate for code enforcement purposes. She reviewed how the process would work under a special magistrate as follows: 1) Code Board Attorney would serve as the special magistrate; 2) Monthly meetings but would not have to determine a quorum; 3) Increased consistency in application of the code; 4) Increased efficiency/streamline presentation and consideration of violations; and 5) Decrease in costs. She commented on the cost savings related to advertising vacancies and conducting background checks.

Commissioner Hawkins confirmed that the special magistrate would solely make the decisions with Ms. Barnes explaining it would be based on application of the law alone.

Commissioner Hawkins confirmed the amount of annual savings would be approximately $2,000. He commented on, as a former Code Board member, his preference for having community members make the decisions.

Mayor Holland, as also a former Code Board member, concurred. He questioned why it takes so long to get applicants appointed.

Ms. Barnes commented on delays due to Covid and indicated they have recently asked Human Resources to move forward with processing applicants.

Commissioner Cobb and Vice Mayor Lee concurred with the need to retain the Board.

Commissioner LeHeup-Smith expressed support for the magistrate due to removal of the personal feelings.

Board and Committee Appointments

Ms. Montez explained the intent to have the Commissioners review the list of boards and committee prior to the appointing resolution being on the next agenda.

The Commissioners volunteered for the various positions as follows: 1) Audit Committee and Lake County League of Cities - Mayor Holland with Vice Mayor Lee as alternate; 2) Lake Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization - Commissioner Hawkins; 3) Arts & Cultural Alliance - Commissioner Cobb as primary; 4) Upper Ocklawaha Basin Working Group - Commissioner Hawkins; 5) Lake Community Action Agency - Commissioner Hawkins with Commissioner LeHeup-Smith as alternate; and 6) Lake County Educational Concurrency Committee - Commissioner Hawkins.

Commissioner Cobb expressed interest in appointing Kelly Batson Howard as the alternate to the Arts and Cultural Alliance with Ms. Montez explaining she would have to submit an application prior to her appointment being considered.

Other Topics by Commissioners

Vice Mayor Lee commented on the need to increase opportunities to improve the community's workforce. She suggested partnering with Lake Tech and Lake Sumter State College to help provide resources for the City's workforce. She cited the need for the City to better market City properties when they are for sale. She then expressed support for utilizing the Resource Center for the purpose it was intended. She commented on the improvements the City has made to Palmetto Park and how it has been used for illegal activities. She expressed concern regarding issues with the Mai Yung Sun store and emphasized the need for surveillance and bicycle patrols. She asked for the Police Department to look at new strategies to discourage illegal activities and for the City to get businesses and faith-based organizations involved in that effort. She stated that City offices need to be more user friendly and expressed concern regarding the housing rehab program. She stated that if it is not working, then the City should take the funds and put it into improvements to the community.

Mayor Holland agreed with the need to redirect the housing rehab funding. He concurred with putting funds into education and then can look at housing.

Vice Mayor Lee stated the City has to look at the quality of life and expressed concern about the children lagging behind.

Mayor Holland commented on issues with the Lake County education system.

Vice Mayor Lee indicated she would like to see the Community Garden re-activated.

Mayor Holland asked Ms. Lee to speak with Dr. Culpepper to request a meeting.

Commissioner Hawkins cited the need to improve the City's footprint and emphasized the need to improve the entrances to the City. He expressed concern regarding how well the City markets itself and commented on the historical museum noting he had only seen it open once.

Discussion was held regarding structural issues with the building and roofing issues with Erin Bailey indicating they just re-opened and currently they are open only on the weekends.

Commissioner Hawkins stated the downtown businesses don't feel the City supports them. He expressed their concerns regarding street closures and feedback he had received from them.

Discussion was held regarding the street closures and parking issues with Mr. Neibert reporting that staff is scheduling a meeting with the downtown businesses to discuss whether or not to continue holding events downtown and whether or not to close the streets.

Commissioner Hawkins commented on the lack of water fountains in Ferran Park and the limited hours at the swimming pool

Mr. Neibert explained the City has had issues finding lifeguards so they can keep the pool open longer.

Commissioner Hawkins asked about possibly building another pool with Commissioner LeHeup-Smith commenting on the high cost to keep the pool functioning and Mr. Neibert indicating the pool heater has not been repaired due to the high cost and the low number of people using the pool.

Commissioner Hawkins commented on the City library and stated local students are not aware of all the programs available. He suggested having a booth at First Friday.

Ann Ivey, Library Director, stated she would prefer to have after hours events to bring people into the library. She stated that, prior to Covid, she was considering establishing a youth advisory board to find out how to attract young people.

Commissioner Hawkins questioned how often the library goes into the schools with Ms. Ivey responding that at the beginning of the year they offer tours. She added that, when she has reached out to the schools, they have not responded.

Further discussion was held with Mr. Neibert suggesting they could add a youth member to the Library Advisory Board.

Commissioner Hawkins then asked about Sharp's Mobile Home Park with Mr. Neibert responding that the property was sold; however, the new owner wants to continue to operate as a mobile home park. He cited issues with the park and stated they will be testing the legality of replacing the mobile homes. He commented on efforts the City has made with enforcement.

Commissioner Hawkins commented on the need for the City to get good press and then cited issues with the homeless population and Open Door. He commented on problems with people hanging out at the parking garage.

Mr. Neibert reported that the Police Dept. has increased foot patrols. He explained that if someone is caught doing wrong, then they are trespassed from all City properties. He explained the City cannot trespass from sidewalks and streets only from actual City property.

Commissioner Hawkins asked about the crime rate in the City with Bill Howe, HR Director, distributing a report based on the Uniform Crime Reports. He noted that the 2019 crime rate was lower than most of the years since 1995. He asked if City officers have been directed to limit the number of arrests with Chief Calhoun responding, that due to Covid, they have been told to limit contacts on minor traffic infractions not on crimes. He then provided a report comparing the crime rate between the City and the cities of Leesburg, Mount Dora and Tavares. He added that drug crimes and trespass are not reported nationwide.

The Commission expressed concern regarding the number of drug related crimes and questioned what is going to be done.

Chief Calhoun indicated that, as soon as they are aware of an issue, they respond and curtail it.

Commissioner Hawkins expressed concern regarding lack of police presence in the Bates Avenue area.

The Commission discussed the possibility of putting a substation in the area.

Chief Calhoun noted that the department does have an officer assigned to the County drug task force. He was unsure how much time the task force works in Eustis.

Mayor Holland questioned whether or not cameras were ever put in the park with Mr. Neibert responding negatively.

Commissioner Cobb commented on the history of the Palmetto Park improvements with Mr. Neibert noting the City received a $750,000 grant towards the project.

Commissioner Hawkins concurred with the need to re-open the Resource Center. He then asked about the mow-to-own program with Mr. Neibert explaining there needs to be sufficient lots available to make it worthwhile.

Ms. Barnes noted there are a number of lots that she wants to get demolished. She said by fall they should be doing another program.

Commissioner Hawkins commented on the Headstart program and their needs. Suggestions were made that they provide a presentation to the Commission and the Chamber. He then asked about the City offering internships to high school students. He commented on the benefits to the students.

Mr. Howe noted that the City has had students intern in various departments.

Vice Mayor Lee commented on a partnership the City previously had between the culinary arts program and the community garden.

Mr. Neibert noted that the City has used the high school culinary arts department for the food at the health fair.

Commissioner Cobb commented on the need for City facilities to be better maintained. She cited the fence at the disk golf park needing repair. She commented on the gateway grant program and offered to go out to the businesses with brochures. She suggested holding a meeting at the community building to provide information to the businesses and asked about issues with the intersection at Bay Street and McDonald.

Rick Gierok, Public Works Director, explained that will be part of a current DOT project. He offered to give her a copy of a presentation that shows all of the projects in process.

Commissioner Cobb commented on the need for additional code enforcement with Ms. Barnes citing the large number of cases processed in the past year. She reviewed the process utilized and explained how long it takes to complete a case.

Discussion was held regarding compressing the timeframe and eliminating the initial courtesy notice.

Ms. Barnes indicated she would review the timeframe with the Code Enforcement Board with Mr. Neibert indicating the Commission indicated their preference for sending one notice and then taking offenders to the Code Enforcement Board.

Following further discussion regarding the process, it was a consensus of the Commission to leave the process as is.

Commissioner Cobb noted that Dallas Meringolo from Lake County 4-H would be providing a presentation at the next Commission meeting regarding the Community Garden. She then noted the City does not have an art center and suggested putting an art center at the Lake Community Action Agency (LCAA) building since that rent agreement expired December 31st.

Commissioner LeHeup-Smith commented on the lack of foot traffic at the former Arts Center.

Mr. Neibert suggested she form an ad hoc committee to consider options.

The Commission discussed LCAA with Mr. Neibert commenting on their request for the City to lower the rent ever since they lost Headstart.

Commissioner Hawkins questioned what benefit the LCAA provides to the City with Mr. Neibert explaining that they do weatherization and similar programs.

Commissioner Cobb asked about the Cemetery maintenance with Mayor Holland indicating he would be discussing the cemetery with a local funeral director who was interested in purchasing it.

Mr. Neilbert indicated the City subsidizes the cemetery with $100,000 of general fund monies.

Mayor Holland noted that another alternative would be to bring in a third party manager. He noted that the Cemetery sexton and assistant are both about to retire. He commented on the uptick in cremations in the state.

Commissioner Cobb expressed concern regarding the active panhandling particularly near the Gate Station.

Chief Calhoun confirmed that if they are standing in traffic they can be arrested.

The Commission discussed other locations with panhandling with Mr. Neibert explaining the issues with addressing that problem.

Commissioner Cobb asked for not-for-profits be required to provide a presentation along with financial reports and proof of performance before being considered for a grant.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission for the community grant applications to be presented to the Commission directly during a workshop.

Discussion was held regarding the Bay Street Theater.

Mayor Holland expressed concern regarding the cleanliness of the City and emphasized the downtown and entryways need to be kept up. He also commented on the need for lighting on Hwy. 441. He expressed support for Commissioners requesting workshops.

Vice Mayor Lee commented on the need for entranceway signs with Mayor Holland noting there are entrance signs but they have solar lighting. He cited the need to have improved lighting and landscaping.

Commissioner Cobb stated the medians looked better when City staff maintained them.

2. ADJOURNMENT: 5:07 P.M.

**These minutes reflect the actions taken and portions of the discussion during the meeting. To review the entire discussion concerning any agenda item, go to www.eustis.org and click on the video for the meeting in question. A DVD of the entire meeting or CD of the entire audio recording or verbatim transcript of the meeting can be obtained from the office of the City Clerk for a fee.*

Mary C. Montez

MARY C. MONTEZ
City Clerk

MICHAEL L. HOLLAND
Mayor/Commissioner