

CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION MINUTES
January 5, 2009

The meeting of the Winter Park City Commission was called to order by Mayor David Strong at 3:05 p.m. in the Commission Chambers, 401 Park Avenue South, Winter Park, Florida.

Members present:

Mayor David Strong
Commissioner Margie Bridges
Commissioner Phil Anderson
Commissioner Beth Dillaha
Commissioner Karen Diebel (arrived 3:14 p.m.)

Also present:

City Manager Randy Knight
City Attorney Trippe Cheek
City Clerk Cynthia Bonham
Deputy City Clerk Nancy McLean

Survey results/strategic plan discussion

There was a brief discussion on the format of the Town Hall meeting scheduled for January 28 at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Strong commented that they will have the condensed presentation made at the Chamber of Commerce; each Commissioner will have 5 minutes to outline what is important going forward; followed by questions and answers. He stated that Communications Director Clarissa Howard will circulate a memo with an agenda.

City Manager Knight explained that Assistant City Manager Michelle de Valle and Ms. Howard put together the 2008 survey results and its relation to items addressed in the City's strategic plan. Copies were provided to the Commission.

Mayor Strong discussed items in the survey that were low priorities for the residents such as the post office and designating areas and buildings as historic in the downtown district. He stated that residents do not want to use tax dollars to support a new post office; however, he would like to pursue the post office with private funds. He commented that they should also pursue the historic district if it does not cost the City significant amounts of money and utilizes minimal City resources. He added that Brookshire is in that category as well. Mayor Strong reiterated that he would like to pursue these through private initiatives.

Commissioner Bridges commented that it was important for them as a City to recognize and preserve existing historic assets. Commissioner Anderson spoke about Brookshire having a neighborhood group that feels strongly about this matter and he and Mr. Knight will meet with them and explain that they have been informed that there are no legal barriers to having something work out with Brookshire. He stated that because of the survey it looks like there is no broad based support and there will have to be a grassroots initiated action in that neighborhood. Commissioner Anderson commented that residents were right about not wanting to spend tax dollars on the post office, but he believed there was value in finishing the long term plan for other City assets.

Commissioner Bridges believed that designating a historic district would be a benefit to the property owners. She commented that there are financial benefits for them because they have the advantage of getting tax credits and benefits. She stated one of the issues repeated in the historic properties and the commercial areas is there is deferred maintenance. She believed as a City they are partnered with these property owners in the sense that we are Winter Park because of these buildings. She addressed these buildings being the essence of Winter Park and representing the community in its entirety and without designating them as historic, property owners cannot get the tax credits or benefits to do improvements or maintenance that needs to be done. She commented that they should pursue this actively because it is an important asset.

She added that Historic Preservation consultant Donovan Rypkema had previously spoken about the economic value in restoring historic properties. Commissioner Dillaha commented that there needs to be education/discussion for these property owners to realize that this would be a benefit for them. Mayor Strong suggested Mr. Rypkema meet with the Merchant's Association or the Chamber of Commerce. Building Director George Wiggins stated that presently Senior Planner Lindsey Hayes is working on a survey to identify significant historic buildings downtown and a plan of action will follow. He stated they will also have input from consultant Nore Winter (Winter and Company) who is highly engaged in historic preservation who will be facilitating a work session in January. Commissioner Bridges hoped they make a concerted effort to educate them properly and asked that Mr. Rypkema return to the City. Mayor Strong agreed and commented that they could discuss this further at the next Commission meeting.

City Manager Knight stated that City Hall had a low response rate for support. Commissioner Anderson commented that if the survey says there is no short term desire to rebuild City Hall then they need to look at the capital improvements and extend the life expectancy of the facility by 10 to 15 years. Mr. Knight explained that he spoke to Public Works Director Troy Attaway regarding this matter and it will be part of their presentation for this upcoming budget cycle.

Mayor Strong spoke about the high priorities of the City's parks, the Winter Park library, open space, trees throughout the City and undergrounding. Mr. Knight explained they have bond money for Palmer Avenue, Temple Avenue and Glenridge Avenue but there are no plans after those three years. He commented that they already did Webster Avenue and North Park Avenue and started Lakemont Avenue and Aloma Avenue. Mr. Knight addressed that they will put together a long term plan and Electric Director Jerry Warren is presently working on the strategic plan for the electric utility with the Utilities Advisory Board. Mr. Knight and Mr. Warren answered questions regarding undergrounding.

Mayor Strong commented that they do not have the resources to deal with the library at this time. Commissioner Bridges thought they were going to expand it and believed that fund raising would be appropriate. She stated this should be a joint effort of public and private partnerships but it was not her top priority. Commissioner Anderson believed they should continue to look at adjacent parking and if the hotel is built if they can accommodate that parking expansion. He also commented that he was disappointed to see little support for the community funding a new Brookshire school.

City Manager Knight stated he would like to schedule another strategic planning work session in early February. Commissioner Dillaha commented that some of these initiatives are short term and others are long term and that some need to be updated, removed, or prioritized. Mayor Strong added that some initiatives need more partnership participation. He believed the post office is taking the proper course of action and we have half the funds to build it. He reiterated that people do not support spending City money to build a new post office and the money to build a new post office and distribution should come from private sources. He viewed this as something that will happen within the next 18-24 months. He stated the worst that can happen is that they continue with the post office already there.

City Manager Knight commented that the Plan the Possibilities study is not completed and they were waiting on the survey and on Commission direction on how to proceed. He stated that ZHA (consultants) is at a stopping point, they still have contract money available if they want to continue with uses for the other properties, and can take this further if the Commission desires.

Commissioner Diebel stated that they need to look at what the right mix of support is for the library and does not want to create a dependency on the hotel knowing that there is a significant

funding gap. She suggested that maybe the solution is to start accruing the capital for the improvement on the library and do it when the funding achieves itself. Commissioner Anderson commented that they can build it into a five year plan. Mayor Strong asked what the expansion cost of the library would be. Library Director Bob Melanson stated it would be approximately \$9 million and would double in size.

Commissioner Bridges commented that the survey results show that residents believe that water quality and habitat is important. She encouraged focusing energy and support for the Lakes and Waterways Board and to ensure the funding that they need.

City Manager Knight spoke about developing funding criteria for outside organizations which was one of their initiatives and asked how they would like staff to proceed based on the mixed results. He stated that during the budget process he presented a policy that was not adopted by the Commission and the Commission funded the library and the Historical Association and a few others. Mayor Strong stated the Commission results were consistent with the resident's views. He stated the library and the Historical Association are City functions and they ended up with the right result in their budgeting from last year.

Commissioner Bridges believed there are other organizations that are truly City organizations and wanted to see the Commission look at a policy and provide more clarification for staff. She wanted consistency and reliability for those groups and believed they cannot always get the outside funding. She stated that these organizations contribute to our quality of life and maybe they can look at different ways of funding.

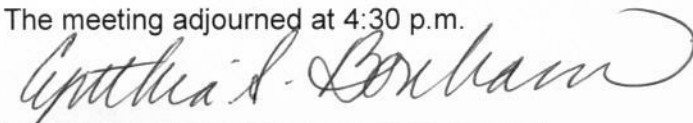
City Manager Knight stated there will be an agenda item on fee waivers at the next Commission meeting. Commissioner Diebel commented that she is the liaison with the Parks Board and it is on their agenda in January as well.

Commissioner Dillaha commented that only 24% want to provide financial support to outside organizations and believed the fee waivers tie in with that. She stated that times will become tougher going forward and this might be an indicator that this is not a priority for the residents. She stated the money should be going to other initiatives such as the library and undergrounding the wires. Mayor Strong agreed that the role of the City spending tax dollars to support a lot of things should be minimal if not non-existent.

Mayor Strong asked how much they spend on cultural/special events. Parks and Recreation Director John Holland stated he would return with the figures on the cost of these events. Mayor Strong stated he also wanted to spend time on the Parks Master Plan and the individual Park Plan for Mead Gardens and Fleet Peoples Park.

The Ethics Board work session was rescheduled to January 20 at 2:00 p.m. immediately followed by the Parks Master Plan meeting the same day. Mayor Strong announced the Town Hall meeting on January 28 at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Wiggins addressed the work session with Nore Winter on January 23 and 24. There was also another Strategic Planning Session scheduled for February 6 at the Country Club from 9:00 – 12:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.



Cynthia S. Bonham, City Clerk