

CITY COMMISSION TOWN MEETING MINUTES
January 28, 2009

The Town Meeting of the Winter Park City Commission was called to order by City Manager Randy Knight at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers, 401 Park Avenue South, Winter Park, Florida.

Members present:

Mayor David Strong
Commissioner Phil Anderson (left at 7:35)
Commissioner Karen Diebel
Commissioner Beth Dillaha

Also present:

City Manager Randy Knight
City Attorney Trippe Cheek
City Clerk Cynthia Bonham

Absent:

Commissioner Margie Bridges (City Manager Knight stated she apologized for not attending because was ill.)

The Town Meeting was opened with the City Manager thanking everyone for attending followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. A video was shown highlighting events and landmarks throughout the City. Mayor Strong welcomed everyone and provided a presentation highlighting the City's accomplishments from the past year.

A question and answer period followed with the following speaking:

Dave Johnston, 626 Darcey Drive, asked to take action on the establishment of a Charter Review Committee, hire an outside source to review and make sure government is running efficiently, and enter into negotiations with Rollins to make payment in lieu of taxes for services provided to them.

Pat McDonald, 2348 Summerfield Road, asked the Mayor why he voted for commuter rail. Mayor Strong addressed his reasons for the vote on Monday evening.

Jan Nichols, 1505 Bonnie Burn Circle, asked Commissioner Dillaha her position on commuter rail. Commissioner Dillaha responded and explained her concerns with the financial impact to the City.

Stephen Ziffer, 101 S. New York Avenue, expressed his concerns with the lack of a quiet zone for the railroad and diversion of freight trains to the Amtrak station around the City. City Manager Knight explained the \$300,000 that was budgeted but delayed because of waiting on commuter rail and the other 12 quiet zones all requiring \$300,000 to pay for them.

Tom Taylor, 797 Pine Tree Road, spoke about the businesses closing on Park Avenue and asked why we can have commuter rail without a dedicated of funds. Commissioner Anderson explained that commuter rail depends on a dedicated funding source and he voted for it to see what happens and make that decision in 2017. Commissioner Diebel addressed two things: the city has an option to opt out in 2017 if the source is not funded and have received congressional appropriations toward our commuter rail stop. Commissioner Dillaha and Mayor Strong spoke further on this issue.

Terry Roen, 1620 Elm Avenue, addressed the difficulty of the online citizen survey and expressed concerns with skewed results arising from its difficulty.

Sharon Brown, 200 St. Andrews Blvd., asked when there will be telecommunication services competition. Mr. Knight explained we have tried to invite competition and explained what prohibits them from coming into the City. She also asked why we continue to match utility prices with Progress Energy. Mr. Knight explained what has taken place up until now.

Linda Kulmann, 257 E. Canton Avenue, asked about the City bond rating. Mayor Strong explained where the City stands at this time. City Manager Knight explained the three types of ratings.

Donald Gallagher, Maitland, expressed his preference to beautify and further develop Fairbanks Avenue and asked where this is on the priority list. Mayor Strong and City Manager Knight explained the status of this project.

Dave Pitt, 1492 W. Fairbanks Avenue, expressed his preference to move forward with the Fairbanks Avenue project. He asked about cleaning Fairbanks of car lots and tattoo parlors. He also had concerns with bicycles on Fairbanks. Commissioner Anderson responded about the RV lot of the Hollers and the lawsuit filed against the City concerning this property. Planning Director Briggs spoke about changing the zoning code as related to tattoo parlors and over time they will disappear.

Pam Peters, 467 Lakewood Drive, asked to enforce pedestrian safety on Park Avenue and around Winter Park Village. She expressed concerns with redevelopment of Fairbanks Avenue because of the size of buildings and asked for a report/study before it moves forward.

Carolyn Cooper, 1047 McKean Circle, expressed concerns with non-profits not paying taxes. She asked about the commuter rail contract and ambiguities in the land use codes. She spoke about the need for the comprehensive plan not to have inconsistencies and to make sure it has a risk assessment by a land use attorney. She stated the City needs its own attorney. She asked how much time the Commission spends doing their job and if their salaries should be raised. Commissioners Dillaha and Anderson responded about the large amount of time they spend.

Ed Sabori, 446 Melrose Avenue, asked Mayor Strong why he voted Monday not to terminate the Orange County agreement for commuter rail and if he was for or against commuter rail. He addressed wanting to know where the City's leaders stand on a regular basis. He spoke about not knowing where the board stands on certain issues and the many times issues are tabled.

Patty Heidrich, 1112 Shultz Avenue, asked about the Ethics Board being formed because of an election issue at that time and believed the Ethics Board should be outside of the Commission and not report to them. Mayor Strong agreed. She asked when the Charter Review Committee will be formed. Commissioner Dillaha stated it is on the strategy plan. Ms. Heidrich stated the City should not turn down money for commuter rail. Commissioner Dillaha stated there is no Federal funding grant for the commuter rail project.

Sally Flynn, 1400 Highland Road, stated they know how the Commission stands on issues because of attending Commission meetings.

Linda Thornton, 210 Salvador Square, spoke in favor of commuter rail. She asked about the \$2 million of recurring costs taken out of the budget and what was eliminated. Mayor Strong explained what was cut from the budget. Commissioner Diebel spoke about what she believed was an inflated budget regarding employees and their benefits. Commissioner Anderson addressed cutting certain areas of the budget but not public safety. Commissioner Dillaha stated her number one priority is to ensure the citizens receive what they are used to and the services are still provided as they expect it.

Rick Ruddy, S. Virginia Avenue, asked if there are new updates to the plans for the post office and about the parks master plan and the extension of Lot A. Mayor Strong and City Manager Knight responded.

Commissioner Anderson left the meeting at this time. 7:35 p.m.

David Lamm, (address not provided) Winter Park, spoke in favor of the strategic plan and visioning and master planning. He spoke about commuter rail being a vision for the future 20 years from now and the need to rationalize how to deal with the land use issues and zoning issues.

Jean Cumming, 902 Golfview Terrace, asked what is the policy for repairing brick roads in residential areas and if there is a plan to do so. Public Works Director Attaway responded that many of the brick roads are very old and explained why there are holes and dips in the road.

Scott Peelen, 1555 Lakehurst, addressed the Commission as being somewhat divisive, the Commission making it sound like commuter rail is not wanted in Winter Park is not healthy, the Carlisle got the City in a mess, and believed that One Winter Park divided the City. He addressed the importance for the Commissioners to think before reacting to something that the community has spoken very loudly in support of. Commissioner Dillaha spoke about having differences of opinions on the Commission, cannot help some of what the paper prints, and the requirement to talk in the Sunshine. She addressed One Winter Park and the Carlisle not conforming to the comprehensive plan. Mayor Strong commented about the need to welcome conflicting viewpoints. Commissioner Diebel spoke about repealing the comprehensive plan process instead of taking the parts agreed upon and building on that. She stated that was not the right move for the community because there were many parts that many people agreed with and now the City is seeing affects of that now that started the divisiveness with the Carlisle. She stated we need to respect prior and ongoing leadership.

Patrick Chapin, Winter Park Chamber of Commerce, asked what the business community can do for the City. Commissioner Diebel responded about the projects that never went forward and asked any stakeholder to again present their opportunities because we are nearing a point at which we can move more quickly or be able to have clear vision on what the Commission can reach a consensus on. Commissioner Dillaha spoke about the need to pursue recruiting certain types of businesses. CRA Director Sherry Gutch stated she has already met with Mr. Chapin regarding this.

Martin Prague, unknown address, spoke about their three businesses on Park Avenue and the need for parking. He suggested having a Commissioner attend the Park Avenue Association meetings.

Maggie DeVane, 200 Carolina Avenue, commended city staff and expressed concerns with the budget cuts concerning the Outreach Programs and other citizen safety and prevention programs.

Carol Rosenfeldt, 1400 New York Avenue, spoke about the One Winter Park group and their purpose. She asked that the City come back together and work as one community.

Rebecca Swyers, American Cancer Society, thanked the City for their support of Relay for Life and asked for further support in the future.

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cynthia Bonham", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

City Clerk Cynthia Bonham