

**CITY OF WINTER PARK
WORK SESSION OF THE CITY COMMISSION
September 9, 2005**

The work session of the Winter Park City Commission was called to order by Mayor Kenneth "Kip" Marchman at 11:00 a.m. in the Commission Chambers, 401 Park Avenue South, Winter Park, Florida.

Members present:

Commissioner John Eckbert
(arrived at 11:05)
Commissioner Barbara DeVane
Commissioner Douglas Storer
Mayor Kenneth Marchman

Also present:

City Manager James Williams
Deputy City Clerk Tania Haas

Members absent:

Commissioner Douglas Metcalf

1. Develop elements surrounding the Town Meetings including dates, times, agenda, and process.

Mayor Marchman stated that the purpose of the meeting is to reach consensus on a couple of matters including scheduling town hall or public input sessions to help deal with issues that face the City. He explained that the Commission proposes to schedule a strategic planning process with the aid of a facilitator to lead Commission discussion.

Mayor Marchman elaborated on the petitions related to development that were provided to him. He asked that the City Clerk distribute copies of the petitions to the Commission for review. He asked the Commission to provide comments on how to structure the town meetings.

Commissioner DeVane expressed that the main issue is the redevelopment that is occurring in the City. She spoke of the amount of misinformation and the lack of information that is in the community concerning redevelopment. She suggested multiple town meetings that begin with a presentation outlining the redevelopment that is occurring in Winter Park. She said the presentations should include materials that can be shared with the community, a map of the city that indicates the properties that are currently under redevelopment and properties that may be redeveloped. She said the meetings need to provide information on the design guidelines that exist and the charrettes that have taken place on the redevelopment that is occurring. She said dialogue should occur on whether improvements need to be made in the redevelopment process. Lastly, she said that information on the guiding principles on such projects as the redevelopment of the City Hall site needs to be presented for public input. She said the town meetings should result in outcomes that can be used to move forward and that we should obtain a productive product from the exercise.

In response to the Mayor's question of whether the town meetings should be handled by the Commission or by a facilitator, Commissioner DeVane responded that the presentations on the specific issues can be provided by staff. She suggested the use of visual representations that demonstrate where we are and what we are doing and the use of a survey during the meeting for those who do not want to verbalize their comments.

Commissioner Storer concurred with Commissioner DeVane that communication is essential. He said we need to communicate the initiatives that we have been working on for a number of years. Commissioner Storer spoke of the concern that has been expressed over the redevelopment that is occurring in the City. He elaborated on the current economic cycle that is self-regulated and the impact to the construction industry as a result of Hurricane Katrina. He commented on the level of activity that is occurring because of the economic cycle and how that may be affected. Mayor Marchman spoke of the need to begin a process that informs citizens of the current zoning restrictions, density, height, and setback restrictions.

Commissioner Eckbert expressed that he believed the current process is inadequate. He said the challenges and the interactions that have occurred recently are a result of a process that is not working as it should be. He spoke of the tension that is caused by attempting to preserve the community and moving forward with the redevelopment. He said although a town hall meeting is a first step, a much more aggressive and purposeful process needs to take place that engages the public fully in conversations.

Mayor Marchman suggested including the facilitator that was retained by the City to obtain public input. He said we need to be certain that we are utilizing all our communication opportunities. Mayor Marchman stated the Commission needs to receive as much public input as possible prior to attending a strategic planning session. He said we need to get beyond the misconception and incorrect assumption that the City is conspiring against its citizens. He asked whether the facilitator should be included to help determine additional areas that can be communicated. Consensus was to include the facilitator (Mr. Marlowe) retained to assist in determining additional areas for communication.

Commissioner Eckbert expressed his concern that he did not want the strategic planning discussion to solely focus on redevelopment. He said he did not want to lose the larger scope of strategic planning.

Mayor Marchman explained that an element of the meeting needs to advise people where we are and what is happening in the City. He said how to structure such a meeting is what needs to be decided. He expressed his preference that all five commissioners attend the town hall meetings. Commissioner DeVane asked that current and past members of the Planning and Zoning Commission also participate in the meetings. Discussion ensued on the need to obtain the citizen's vision for the City.

Mayor Marchman elaborated on the public's misperception that staff or Commissioner's themselves have engineered the projects that are occurring in the City. He elaborated that property owners are entitled to certain development rights provided that they adhere to zoning and planning concerns. He said an explanation of development rights needs to be included in the town meetings. Commissioner Eckbert commented that the real purpose of a town meeting is to listen to the citizens, but cautioned the Commission on lengthy presentations that will result in extending the meetings and frustrate citizens. Commissioner DeVane said that citizens will appreciate an overview of the policies that are currently in place.

There was discussion of adding information in the City's "Update" publication. Commissioner Storer suggested splitting up the topics for discussion over multiple meetings. Mayor Marchman explained that the meetings should cover a variety of topics.

Mayor Marchman suggested hold two town meetings with different venues. Discussion ensued on possible facilities. Mayor Marchman confirmed whether there was consensus that all the Commissioners attend the meetings to listen to public comments rather than someone providing a report of the outcome. All Commissioners were amendable to attending the meetings and obtaining input. Mayor Marchman restated that the facilitator will be included in the town hall meetings, and that the entire Commission will attend and obtain input in a stacked time forum for citizen input. Commissioner Storer added that it is important that staff presentations are completed early and that the information is available for citizens to review. He suggested posting the presentations on the City's website and that staff provide brief presentations at the meetings.

2. Discuss the process for the strategic planning session.

Mayor Marchman elaborated on the need to obtain input from citizens on where the City should be five to ten years into the future. He spoke of the need to review broad time lines between the comments obtained from the town meetings and the actual strategic planning session itself. Discussion ensued regarding possible town hall meeting dates. Commissioner Eckbert commented why he suggested the City of Coral Springs should assist with this process. Commission deliberations continued on the timeframe for the town meetings. Commissioner DeVane suggested that one of the town meetings focus on development and to present that topic in two parts; the first part at one meeting and the continuation at a second meeting. Commissioner Eckbert expressed his concern on whether a series of town meetings will result in a full understanding of the priorities for the City preferred by citizens. He expressed that he believed a survey was a more effective tool for soliciting feedback from citizens. Mayor Marchman suggested that staff plan on having two meetings to discuss development by October 15. He suggested to include the facilitator with the town meetings and to develop a strategic planning process that involves the entire city by the Thanksgiving holiday. Commissioner Storer elaborated on re-inviting the public to Commission meetings because comments can be provided earlier in the meeting under New Business. Commissioner Eckbert spoke on the need to develop ideas on how to draw the public into the development process. Commissioner DeVane suggested a specific time during Commission meetings for the public to provide comments on new business or to provide residents the opportunity to e-mail their comments while the meetings are in progress.

Communications Director Clarissa Howard explained that Mr. Marlowe has submitted the dates that he is available to participate. She said Mr. Marlowe has expressed an interest in facilitating the town meetings as a neutral party. Commissioner Eckbert elaborated that someone needs to be designated to coordinate the input received and to design the process. There was discussion on who has been charged to recommend a strategic planning process. Mayor Marchman asked that the City Manager meet with the facilitator and have him propose a strategic planning process.

Following additional deliberations, the consensus was to schedule two town meetings as follows: Thursday, September 29, 2005, 3:30 p.m., and Thursday, October 6, 2005, 7:00 p.m., with the strategic planning process determined and ready to be recommended to the Commission by December the 1. Locations for town meetings to be determined as per availability of the Winter Park High School, the Ninth Grade Center, and the Rachel Murrah Civic Center.

Mayor Marchman adjourned the meeting at 12:16 p.m.

Mayor Kenneth R. Marchman

ATTEST:

City Clerk Cynthia Bonham