

**CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION MINUTES
December 8, 2008**

The meeting of the Winter Park City Commission was called to order by Mayor David Strong at 1:35 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

Also present:

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

Absent:

Commissioner Karen Diebel

Mayor Strong commented that there were two issues he wanted to look at: 1) to critique themselves and see how effective they might be next year; and 2) to resolve some issues in early 2009. He commented that he also asked Mr. Knight to critique the Commission.

City Manager Knight commented that the Commission packages go out a week earlier and it was for their benefit to ask questions before the Commission meeting rather than have questions and answers during the meeting. He spoke about keeping residents on track with speaking to the subject matter at hand. He suggested changing the Action Items into two sections to include Consent Agenda items where no discussion is necessary and Discussion Items that may require a presentation and/or discussion. He commented that anyone can speak to the Consent Agenda items but items should not be pulled off the agenda for residents but the Commission can move consent items to discussion items, if they choose. He added this might streamline things from how they are now. Mr. Knight answered questions.

Attorney Cheek briefly spoke about the constitutional amendment regarding public comments being allowed for 15 minutes at the beginning of the meetings that did not pass in Tallahassee.

Commissioner Bridges addressed her preference of having public discussion at the beginning of the meeting. Commissioner Anderson agreed with it at the beginning but wanted to limit it to one (1) minute to state the topic they want to discuss and also keep the four (4) minutes at the end. Commissioner Bridges stated they should be consistent and if they are going to call 'point of order' for citizens, then that should also apply to the Commission. Mayor Strong stated that was a good point. Commissioner Dillaha stated they should consider the people that cannot attend until after five. She also commented about staying on the subject matter and not to belabor the topic for meetings to run more efficiently.

Commissioner Dillaha spoke about possibly sending the agenda package to the Commissioners on Tuesday or Wednesday. She stated that it was helpful for her to have it in advance so she can ask staff questions. Commissioner Bridges agreed. There was consensus for the agenda to be sent out on Tuesday instead of Monday

beginning with the January 12 package and dividing the actions items on the agenda into two sections as discussed above.

Commissioner Dillaha addressed Commission meetings being lengthy because there is so much to talk about and this is the only opportunity they have to discuss issues/topics other than at work sessions. Commissioner Anderson suggested that any of them be allowed to request a work session and not require a quorum. He commented that the public notice will state that two or more Commissioners will attend (at least 24 hours in advance). Mayor Strong asked if they need a recording secretary. Attorney Cheek commented that the law does not require an audio recording, but some type of minutes are required which can be brief to include time, date, the parties present and the topic of what is discussed. Mayor Strong commented that it would be better to have these work sessions at a City venue with a City employee taking minutes but it does not need to be broadcasted or recorded. He also suggested that when a Commissioner requests a work session they determine if they want a staff member there for a particular topic.

Attorney Cheek commented that they operate more informally than other elected bodies. Mayor Strong and Commissioner Dillaha preferred the informality. There was further discussion on the way other boards operate. Upon discussion, there was a consensus to allow a one (1) minute time limit at the beginning of the meeting within a 15 minute timeframe for public comments and the New Business item will remain at the end with four (4) minutes allowed per person.

Commissioner Bridges asked for further analysis with items in their Commission packets to help them better follow staff's recommendation. Mr. Knight commented that they will try to do so.

Commissioner Dillaha asked if Commission members have to be present at a meeting to participate and vote. City Manager Knight explained that as long as there is a physical quorum present someone can participate by phone but this is a policy decision and they set their policies. Attorney Cheek stated that the Attorney General's opinion says that if there are enough people present for a quorum there is no bar on allowing others to participate through electronic means and this is consistent with what the City has done. Mayor Strong commented that they may want to revisit this if someone is never here but does not mind it being electronic occasionally. Commissioner Bridges stated she has done it once and found herself at a disadvantage. She commented that there should be some parameters when calling in such as listening to everything before they cast a vote. Mayor Strong commented that she suggest a policy. Attorney Cheek stated that they should look into this more because voting for each of the Commissioners is a statutory requirement.

Mayor Strong had concerns regarding spending money on consultants and projects not moving forward. This included the Parks Master Plan and the subcategories of Mead Gardens, Fleet Peoples Park, Central Park, and the golf course. He believed these projects need to be brought to fruition and wanted to hear from the other Commissioners. Commissioner Bridges added the tree reforestation plan to the list. She also had concerns about the Parks Master Plan in terms of the language, formation, and the implementation. She stated some of these master plans did not come from consultants but rather from citizens and believed they need to set some policy. City

Manager Knight commented that normally the Commission accepts plans rather than approves them but staff needs direction on whether they should follow a plan or not.

Attorney Cheek commented that he has revised a memorandum of understanding with the Friends of Mead Gardens and with the Friends of Fleet Peeples. Commissioner Bridges expressed the importance of putting a timeline in these agreements as to when their fundraising has to be accomplished.

Attorney Cheek commented that with these memorandums he ensured that things are consistent with the comprehensive plan. He spoke about timeframes and how the agreements are terminated. Attorney Cheek stated his only concern was that these outside groups may be applying for grants and the contractual relationship they have with the City is probably going to be part of the grant application and he did not want to do anything that would interfere with the grant process. He also addressed the need to start being specific as to what they are doing with a master plan.

Mayor Strong commented that the Parks Master Plan identified some surpluses and deficiencies and they have not talked about whether they agree with that. He stated they should make a decision and if they agree, think about how to implement it. He added that may affect Mead Gardens and all the parks.

Commissioner Bridges commented that they need an in-depth discussion on the Parks Master Plan since that affects the entire community. Commissioner Dillaha commented that she would like to start looking at why they are using consultants and follow their recommendations to help achieve their strategic goals and strategic initiatives. She added that she would like to have a detailed plan of action on each of those initiatives and move forward. She also wanted the boards to be involved and have them assist the departments in achieving the goals of the strategic plan. Commissioner Bridges believed that they could create direction/policy for the boards and staff.

Commissioner Anderson suggested they choose between four or five issues to follow through on and focus on issues they feel strongly about. He believed the Parks Master Plan is a major issue and they need to move forward with Plan the Possibilities. He commented that he would like to see some types of economic development in the form of a hotel somewhere in the City. He also wanted their bond refinanced as soon as the market window opens again. Mayor Strong commented that the Parks Master Plan, Plan the Possibilities and the code are Commission items and they cannot delegate those because they have to make some important policy decisions.

Mr. Knight commented that he would like the Strategic Planning session scheduled sometime between January to April. Mayor Strong agreed.

Commissioner Dillaha spoke about modifying codes to be consistent with the comprehensive plan. She suggested that they start identifying codes now as opposed to waiting until the comprehensive plan is actually adopted. Commissioner Bridges agreed. Mr. Briggs briefly explained the schedule of the adoption of the comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Anderson commented about doing a pilot program for the special taxing district for the Park Avenue merchants. He stated they use some CRA funds to phase in this special taxing district. He commented that he has heard from several merchants

that a boutique hotel would work and create some variable traffic through the City. He also spoke about the possibility of a more affordable type of hotel being on Aloma Avenue that could serve Full Sail, Rollins College and Florida Hospital. Commissioner Bridges agreed with the special taxing district and stated there are a number of things from an historic preservation aspect. Commissioner Anderson commented that the CRA is a mission directed organization that is to prevent economic blight and they should act on its mission. Commissioner Dillaha added that the Economic Advisory Board is also working on a strategic plan.

Commissioner Anderson added Fairbanks Avenue improvement to the list he wants to move forward on and questioned the Lee road extension. Commissioner Bridges asked about the status of the post office. Mayor Strong commented that the post office agreed to an extension for one year and believed that there should be a retail post office on the north part of the arrowhead and a distribution center somewhere else in the City and these should be built with non-City revenues. He commented that they will resolve this with Plan the Possibilities within the next 12-18 months.

Commissioner Bridges stated that maintenance is going to become a significant financial obligation for City Hall and other City buildings. She wanted the Commission to work with staff to direct resources to these particular areas.

Commissioner Anderson asked to have a work session on funding projects for the CRA. The Commission agreed to schedule a work session on December 15 at 4:00 p.m. Mr. Knight stated he may want to add discussion of the bond issue. Mayor Strong suggested he call an emergency meeting if something happens.

The meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.



Cynthia S. Bonham, City Clerk