

**CITY OF PUNTA GORDA, FLORIDA  
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2020, 9:00 A.M.**

**COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:** Carey, Cummings, Matthews, Miller, Prafke

**CITY EMPLOYEES PRESENT:** Kristin Simeone, Finance; Rick Keeney, Public Works; Tom Jackson, Utilities; Phil Wickstrom, Human Resources; Joan LeBeau, Urban Design; Pamela Davis, Police; Ray Briggs, Fire; City Attorney Levin; City Manager Kunik; City Clerk Smith

**Mayor Prafke** called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Invocation was given by Mr. Carlo Gargiulo, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

City Manager Kunik read public comments received via email into the record as follows:

Mr. Karl Thober and Mr. Neal Gumbman commented on how properties should be assessed to pay for widening the Ponce de Leon Inlet (Inlet); and Mr. Mike Savino, Mr. Tom Jeremiason and Ms. Cathy Hunt commented the existing width of the Inlet was acceptable; Mr. Tom Hackett requested Gilchrist Park be reopened and power be restored at the pavilions for music in the evening; Ms. Tina Nusbaum voiced concern regarding the dry ponds for Cloudberry Lodge; Mr. Shane Siro questioned why there was an event planned for this Friday.

**PROCLAMATION/PRESENTATIONS**

None.

**Introduction of Board/Committee Member Nominees**

None.

**NOTE: City Council recessed and reconvened as the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) (see corresponding minutes).**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**QUASI- JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**CP- 02- 19 An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Punta Gorda, Florida, amending the City of Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map to include newly annexed lands; amending the future land use map to reflect the change in the current designations of Low Density Residential/County (LDR/County) to Medium Density Residential/City (MDR/City) for 16.33 +/- acres, consisting of parcels of land addressed as 26150 Angelica Road, 26041 Cuneo Road, 26021 Cuneo Road, and being more particularly described in the boundary survey attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit "A"; providing for conflict and severability; and providing an effective date.**                      **SECOND READING**

City Attorney Levin read the ordinance by title.

Ms. Lisa Hannon, Zoning Official, explained the Department of Economic Opportunity had no comments on the proposed amendment, technical assistance comments were received from the Southwest Florida Water Management District and the Florida Department of Transportation determined the proposed amendment had no significant adverse impacts on resources or facilities of state importance and would not form the basis of a challenge. She stated the Utilities Director indicated the utility issue had been resolved. She concluded the ordinance would become effective 31 days after the State land planning agency notified the City that the plan amendment package was complete.

Councilmember Matthews **MOVED** approval of CP-02-19, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Cummings.

**MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

**PD- 03- 19 An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Punta Gorda, Florida, rezoning 16.33 +/- acres being a portion of Section 33, Township 41 South, Range 23 East, more particularly described in the boundary survey attached hereto, and addressed as 26150 Angelica Drive, 26041 Cuneo Road, 26021 Cuneo Road; from its current Charlotte County zoning classification of residential single- family 5 units per acre/County (RSF5/County) to Planned Development Neighborhood/City (PDN/City); providing for conflict and severability; and providing an effective date.**

**SECOND READING**

City Attorney Levin read the ordinance by title.

Ms. Hannon explained the ordinance for this Planned Development would become effective immediately upon the corresponding Comprehensive Plan Amendment becoming effective. She reiterated the Utilities Director had indicated the utilities issue had been resolved.

Councilmember Matthews **MOVED** approval of PD-03-19, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Miller.

**MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilmember Matthews **MOVED** approval of the Consent Agenda, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Carey.

**MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

- A. City Clerk's Department
- 1. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting of May 20, 2020

- B. Legal Department
  - 1. Monthly Litigation Report
- C. Public Works Department
  - 1. A Resolution of the City of Punta Gorda, Florida, approving a State Highway Lighting, Maintenance and Compensation Agreement (Contract No. ASH12 Financial Project No. 413536-1-78-02) with the Florida Department of Transportation; authorizing the City Manager to execute the Agreement on behalf of the City; and providing an effective date.

### **BUDGET**

#### **FY 2021- 2025 Utilities Capital Improvements Program and FY 2021 Utilities Operations Fund Budget Status Update**

Ms. Kristin Simeone, Finance Director, drew members' attention to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020/2021 Budget Status Update, as delineated in the agenda materials. She briefly reviewed the Utilities Construction Fund Proforma for FYs 2020/2021 through 2024/2025, noting \$1.12 million was allocated for replacement and rehabilitation (R&R) projects each year in accordance with the City's financial policy. She then provided an overview of wastewater and water projects' funding, clarifying the septic-to-sewer project would initially be funded with utilities funds, financing and grants, with the costs being reimbursed through impact fees, assessments and new customers' water usage fees. She then reviewed the Utilities Operations Fund Proforma for FYs 2020/2021 through 2024/2025, noting revenue assumptions included no rate increase, though a rate study was underway; annual growth of 0.5% and additional wastewater revenues in FYs 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 from septic-to-sewer conversion customers. She reviewed expense assumptions, which included personnel and operating expenses, continued use of current revenue and operating reserves to fund the 5-year Capital Improvements Program and estimated debt service for the reverse osmosis (RO) project beginning in FY 2020. She reported a minimum \$3.1 million operating reserve would be maintained along with a \$1.5 million R&R capital reserve, concluding with a brief review of the Utilities Fund considerations.

**Councilmember Matthews** inquired as to the status of the lease renewal for the wastewater treatment plant's property.

Mr. Chuck Pavlos, Interim Utilities Director, replied a request for negotiations had been submitted to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission but a reply had not yet been received.

**Councilmember Carey** stated it appeared the City was going into debt, questioning whether it was appropriate to move forward with both the wastewater treatment plant and the septic-to-sewer projects.

Ms. Simeone replied staff would continue to work with the rate consultants to determine solutions, adding it was common for utilities to use debt rather than cash for construction. She stated it was anticipated sufficient revenues would be generated to fund the debt service.

Discussion ensued regarding incurring debt for projects and revenue projections.

Mr. Pavlos provided an update on the RO water treatment plant, noting construction was complete and the plant was in start-up/test mode. He voiced optimism water would be sent to the distribution system by the end of June 2020, noting the water produced would be close to a 50/50 blend, which would result in softer water.

**Award of Master Agreement and Specific Authorization #1 to Hans Wilson & Associates of Fort Myers, FL for design and permitting of Ponce Inlet Widening.**

Ms. Anne Heinen, Procurement Manager, explained the agreement would engage Hans Wilson & Associates (Hans Wilson) to assist with the renewal of certain City permits set to expire in 2021 and 2022 and Specific Authorization #1 would engage their services for design and permitting of the Ponce de Leon Inlet (Inlet) Widening Project with a not-to-exceed cost of \$92,800. She stated staff was requesting Council approve a \$9,300 contingency budget for a total of \$102,100.

Mr. Rick Keeney, Public Works Director, provided a summary of the Inlet Widening Project, as delineated in the agenda material. He stated the channel at the bottom was 20 feet wide and sloped at the sides, noting in the summer months there were few complaints as the water levels were higher due to rains; however, there were recurring complaints in the winter during lower water levels. He stated City Council was being asked to consider the general agreement as well as to decide whether to widen the channel.

**Councilmember Carey** opined the problem was the channel's depth rather than width, concluding she was not in favor of widening the Inlet.

**Councilmember Matthews** opined this was not the appropriate time to expend funds on an engineering study, voicing concern regarding the future cost of the project.

**Councilmember Miller** questioned if the Punta Gorda Isles Canal Advisory Committee had discussed the new figures.

Mr. Keeney responded the Committee would review same at their June 2020 meeting, noting he would inform them of City Council's discussion on this matter.

Discussion ensued regarding the depth of the Inlet, the Master Agreement and Specific Authorization #1, with staff reiterating Hans Wilson's assistance was required to renew various permits set to expire within the next two years.

City Attorney Levin suggested City Council approve Hans Wilson as the selected vendor for the Master Agreement this date but consider a specific authorization at a future meeting.

**Councilmember Cummings** reiterated it was necessary to approve the vendor to move forward with renewing the permits.

Ms. Heinen offered to bring back the Master Agreement with negotiated hourly rates with no specific authorization included.

Councilmember Cummings **MOVED** approval of Award of the Master Agreement to Hans Wilson & Associates with no specific authorization, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Carey.

**MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

**NOTE: A short break was called at 10:38 a.m.**

**Mayor Profke** confirmed Council was amenable to hearing the America in Bloom Update next.

**NOTE: America in Bloom was heard prior to Unfinished Business.**

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

##### **City Manager Recruitment - Candidate Short Listing**

**Mayor Profke** thanked the candidates who had applied. She remarked the City had been fortunate to have City Manager Kunik, commenting favorably on his work and the length of his commitment to the City.

**Councilmember Matthews** suggested sharing with the community interview panel that city managers were sometimes fired following changes in a governing body's membership.

Mr. Phil Wickstrom, Human Resources Manager, reviewed the candidate short listing, inquiring how City Council desired to proceed.

Discussion ensued with consensus to interview Ms. Caryn Gardner-Young and Messrs. David Condit, Steven Crowell, James Drumm, Chris Eldridge, Michael Morrow and Gregory Murray.

Mr. Wickstrom concluded interview rooms would be as follows: Mayor Profke - Mayor's Room; Councilmember Matthews - City Manager's Conference Room; Councilmember Cummings - Annex Conference Room; Councilmember Carey - Procurement Conference Room; Councilmember Miller - Human Resource Manager's Office; Interview Panel - Council Chambers.

## NEW BUSINESS

### Parks and Recreation 2020 Master Plan

Ms. Fabiana Solano, Urban Design Intern, explained the Parks & Recreation Master Plan (Plan) was required as part of the Comprehensive Plan and was updated every ten years. She provided a brief overview of the process to update the Plan, as delineated in the agenda material, beginning with a brief video. She explained a contest would be held to name the Plan and public outreach including website and video updates would be conducted, questioning whether City Council would like to participate in the videos. She briefly reviewed the timeline, which concluded with Council review and adoption in December 2020.

**Councilmember Carey** stated she did not want City Council to select the winner.

Ms. Solano explained if Council preferred, the public could select a winner from the top five to ten suggestions selected by staff.

**Mayor Prafke** inquired as to the reason for the contest.

Ms. Joan LeBeau, Urban Design Manager, responded the contest was intended to be a fun way to involve the public in the update process.

**NOTE: American in Bloom was heard prior to Unfinished Business.**

### America in Bloom Update

Ms. LeBeau stated Team Punta Gorda requested Council's approval to move forward with their proposed America in Bloom project.

Ms. Nancy Johnson, TEAM Punta Gorda, explained the America in Bloom concept, noting same would be a collaborative effort.

Mr. Richard Polk presented the America in Bloom pilot project, as delineated in the agenda material. He reviewed the project's budget and fundraising, noting the \$1,200 entrance fee had been paid by private partners. He stated the total budget for the pilot project which would beautify Taylor Street from Olympia Avenue to Marion Avenue was \$20,016, noting Mr. Alan Schulman had donated the entire amount. He concluded the group had already received much community support.

Mr. Robert Vedder explained Venice, Florida's program, encouraging City Council to support participation.

**Councilmember Miller** inquired as to funding.

Discussion ensued regarding Venice's program area and funding.

Ms. Johnson stressed the City was not being asked for funding. She stated the pilot project was to determine the feasibility of the program, adding next steps involved development of a coordinated plan and timeline; however, she was uncertain as to the

number of phases or future projects at this time. She noted the plant containers would be self-watering and maintained by committee volunteers.

Councilmember Carey **MOVED** to support the America in Bloom project, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Matthews.

**MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

**NOTE: Recommendation from City Officers was heard following Parks and Recreation Master Plan.**

**RECOMMENDATION FROM CITY OFFICERS**

**CITY MANAGER**

**Update on City actions relating to Declared State of Emergency (COVID- 19)**

Fire Chief Ray Briggs provided an update on statistics, noting the focus remained on community testing at this time with a mobile unit conducting testing throughout Charlotte County (County) in addition to the County Sports Park site. He stated emergency call volumes had returned to normal while census at local hospitals was approximately fifty to sixty percent. He noted the City was working with the County and State emergency management to determine what sheltering from hurricanes would look like in light of COVID-19.

City Manager Kunik noted City facilities had reopened on June 1, 2020, then inquiring whether City Council wished to allow the power to be turned back on in Gilchrist Park. Discussion ensued with consensus to do so.

City Manager Kunik then stated he had spoken with the Charlotte County Administrator regarding the City's decision not to issue a permit for a fireworks event for the Fourth of July, noting the County would like to provide a fireworks display to boost residents' spirits.

**Mayor Prafke** stated she had a lengthy conversation with Commissioner Tiseo regarding possibly using the empty parking lot area just north of Live Oak Park for the fireworks display.

Discussion ensued with consensus City Council was in support of the County's desire to provide fireworks but with strong objection to the proposed location as it would negatively impact the City and public safety, with consensus to suggest the County utilize either the County Sports Park or the Tracks and Trails property as an alternative. City Manager Kunik stated he would relay Council's discussion to the County Administrator. He then announced a protest march was planned to be held in the City on Friday, June 5, 2020.

Police Chief Pam Davis reported organizers were adamant the march would be a peaceful protest, providing an overview of the organizers' plan and voicing support for

the march. She explained protests were not required to obtain permits, concluding the organizers had indicated they would practice social distancing.

Discussion ensued regarding use of the City's parking lot on West Retta as the ending point of the march.

**Councilmember Matthews** expressed preference for protestors to be directed to Harvey Street.

**Councilmember Miller** suggested an arrangement be made for Carmelo's customers to use the adjacent hotel parking lot on the night of the march.

#### **CITY ATTORNEY**

City Attorney Levin announced court hearings were being scheduled for the Vlcko case and the Shoreline Foundation case.

#### **BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

##### **Announcement of Vacancies**

Building Board – Alternate

City Clerk Smith announced the vacancies.

##### **Nominations**

Board of Zoning Appeals – Alternate

Councilmember Matthews **MOVED** to nominate and appoint Ms. Michelle Merolla to the Board of Zoning Appeals as an alternate, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Cummings.

**MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

Building Board – Alternate

Councilmember Matthews **MOVED** to nominate and reappoint Mr. Perry Hoff to the Building Board as an alternate, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Miller.

**MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

Planning Commission (2)

Councilmember Cummings **MOVED** to nominate and reappoint Mr. Brad Gamblin and Ms. Donna Peterman to the Planning Commission, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Miller.

**MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

#### **POLICY AND LEGISLATION**

**PRAFKE:** Noted the City had been nominated for the USA Today 2020 10 Best Readers' Choice Awards in the Best Small Town Food Scene category, encouraging everyone to vote to support local restaurants.

**CUMMINGS:** No comment.

**MATTHEWS:** Announced she had co-authored a letter with Mr. Mitchell Austin, Chief Planner, requesting feedback from local homeowner's association presidents on the

Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) Corridor Vision Plan, explaining responses would be compiled and submitted to FDOT to be incorporated into their planning process.

- Noted the downtown area lacked an ordinance prohibiting boat parking, proposing same be discussed at a future meeting.

**MILLER:** No comment.

**CAREY:** Stated Ms. Regina Buckley had stepped down as the Executive Director of the Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association, expressing appreciation for her service.

- Commented positively on the collegiality of this City Council.

#### **CITIZENS COMMENTS**

Citizens' comments were read into the record at the beginning of the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

---

Mayor

---

City Clerk