

**CITY OF PUNTA GORDA, FLORIDA  
LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
CHARLOTTE HARBOR EVENT CENTER  
MONDAY, January 13, 2020 9:00 A.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mary Boeringer, Burnt Store Isles; Julia Bowser, District 3; Tom Cavanaugh, Team Punta Gorda; Kelly Gaylord, District 2; Jay Gile, Burnt Store Meadows; Mary Harbour, Visual Arts Center; Melissa Lockhart, District 5; Ashley Maher, Charlotte Community Foundation;; Gene Murtha, History Center; John Peterman, District 1; Jim Sanders, Economic Development Partnership; Bob Sifrit, Historic District Homeowners Association; Gary Skillicorn, Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association; John Welsh, Boaters Alliance; John Wright, Punta Gorda Chamber

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Don Sabatini, District 4; Robert Toth, Seminole Lakes

**CITY EMPLOYEES PRESENT:** Debby Carey, City Councilmember; Melissa Reichert, Communications Manager; Kristin Simeone, Finance Director; Mitchell Austin, Chief Planner

**CALL TO ORDER/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Ms. Melissa Reichert, Communications Manager, called the meeting to order.

**WORKSHOP TOPICS**

- A. Citizen Comments
  - Mr. Sarkisian spoke in favor of constructing additional pickleball courts within City limits.
  - Ms. Sheila Jaeger pointed out the City's Pickleball Committee had identified Trabue Park as a possible alternative to the Gilchrist Park pickleball courts.
  - Ms. Christy Federici requested members consider the homeowners near the Gilchrist Park pickleball courts when taking action concerning on pickleball.
  - Ms. Nancy Johnson spoke in favor of considering the Henry Street property as a unified location, noting it would contain five major attractions if the Peace River Wildlife Center (PRWC) were to relocate there.
- B. Approval of November Meeting Minutes
  - Mr. Sanders stated the minutes should be corrected to note Mr. Sifrit had requested the CIP detail sheets.
  - Ms. Mahar MOVED, Ms. Gaylord SECONDED approval of the November 18, 2019 minutes as amended.
  - MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- C. Sales Tax Action Item Register November
  - Ms. Reichert confirmed there were no questions regarding the action register.



D. Sales Tax Projects January 2020

- Mr. Mitchell Austin, Chief Planner, provided a presentation on the City's proposed local sales tax program projects.

**Capital Project Management**

- Would fund a staff member in Public Works to manage construction of various City projects. Certain projects managed would foster public health and safety and benefit economic development. Effect on operating costs would depend on project. Would enable continuation of projects from 2014 sales tax program. Certain projects managed could have joint participation. Certain projects would benefit environmental quality. Would serve entire City. Certain projects were State or federally mandated.
- Project's alignment with the scoring criteria reviewed.
- Ms. Carey questioned how management of capital improvements was funded in the past.
- Ms. Simeone replied one project manager was paid for through the sales tax program to manage sales tax program projects and the other was funded through the General Fund to manage general construction projects, explaining both positions would be funded through the General Fund if sales tax funds were not allocated for this position.
- Scoring sheets completed.

**Septic to Sewer (Areas 1-3 Charlotte Park) – Design**

- Would fund design and engineering of sewer system for Areas 1 through 3 of the Septic to Sewer Master Plan. Would improve and protect water quality in Charlotte Harbor. Project was dependent on Charlotte County for creation of a special assessment district. Would foster public health and safety. Increased operating costs anticipated.
- Project's alignment with the scoring criteria reviewed.
- Mr. Wright confirmed the City could apply sales tax funds to a project in the County.
- Discussion ensued regarding City funding of improvements to homeowner's properties and the process for scoring and ranking projects.
- Ms. Carey confirmed funds could be redistributed if a project did not move forward after funding was approved.
- Mr. Cavanaugh questioned if the City could require residents of Charlotte Park to connect to the City's sewer system.
- Ms. Simeone replied the City could do so if service lines were available; however, none were.
- Mr. Wright noted customers outside of the City paid a surcharge for utilities service, inquiring if same could be applied toward the project.
- Ms. Simeone replied those funds would be applied toward the project's construction.
- Mr. Welsh questioned if same had been sequestered already.

- Ms. Simeone replied sequestering those funds would begin once staff knew the project would move forward.
- Scoring sheets completed.

**Gilchrist Park – Harborwalk Improvements (Seating & Shade)**

- Would install additional seating and shade structures. Project was not included in the budget for future phases of the Harborwalk.
- Project’s alignment with the scoring criteria reviewed.
- Mr. Cavanaugh questioned if reserved funds from other projects at Gilchrist Park would be available to fund this project.
- Mr. Austin replied funds might be available in theory, but same was not likely in practice.
- Scoring sheets completed.

**Trabue Park Improvements (No pickleball courts)**

- Would improve landscaping and site furnishings and create a community gateway feature. Creation of community gateway and branding accounted for significant portion of costs.
- Project’s alignment with the scoring criteria reviewed.
- Mr. Murtha inquired as to selling the property for commercial use, questioning the property’s value.
- Mr. Austin replied the City would have to reimburse the Federal government \$450,000 before the property could be sold as same had been purchased for hazard mitigation purposes, opining the property’s value was negatively impacted by its location within the velocity zone as any structure would have to be built on stilts.
- Ms. Gaylord confirmed the Trabue Park Improvements (With pickleball courts) Project did not include branding.
- Discussion ensued regarding the project’s costs and the suitability of this location for commercial use, with Mr. Austin confirming commercial use of the property was inconsistent with the Citywide Master Plan.
- Ms. Gaylord noted the eastern portion of Punta Gorda lacked parks, commenting favorably on the property’s use for hazard mitigation purposes.
- Scoring sheets completed.

**Trabue Park Improvements (With pickleball courts)**

- Would install eight pickleball courts, sound abatement measures, a restroom facility, landscaping, site furnishings and parking.
- Ms. Carey noted this location was recommended by the Pickleball Committee for installation of pickleball courts.

- Discussion ensued regarding the pickleball facilities available within the City and the County as well as potential locations for the installation of additional courts.
- Project's alignment with the scoring criteria reviewed.
- Scoring sheets completed.

**Sidewalk Connections West Marion: Bal Harbor to Shreve Street**

- Would install sidewalk connections and intersection treatments including crosswalks, High Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) System signals and traffic calming measures. Significant right-of-way constraints existed in the project area. Costs were related to the need to acquire adequate rights-of-way.
- Project's alignment with the scoring criteria reviewed.
- Scoring sheets completed.

**Henry Street Property Improvements**

- Would install walkways to connect Linear Park, the Charlotte County Public Library, the PRWC, History Park and the community garden as well as public parking to accompany enhancement of the Hounds on Henry Street Dog Park (Dog Park). Project did not include improvements for accommodation of the PRWC.
- Project's alignment with the scoring criteria reviewed.
- Scoring sheets completed.

**Henry Street Crosswalk**

- Ms. Kelley Frohlich presented the project.
- Much of the project was included in the Sidewalk Connections West Marion: Bal Harbor to Shreve Street Project. Would install a HAWK System at the intersection of Garvin Street and West Henry Street, a flashing beacon and signage ahead of the HAWK system and a non-signalized, standard crosswalk at the intersection of Caicos Drive and West Henry Street. Citizen support for the project existed. Would foster public health and safety. No additional operating costs anticipated. Would benefit special-needs populations and environmental quality. Less than 25% of City's population directly served.
- Project's alignment with the scoring criteria reviewed.
- Ms. Gaylord confirmed approximately \$55,000 was budgeted each year for installation of additional crosswalks, then inquiring as to the preparation of the project's costs.
- Ms. Frohlich replied she had consulted with the City Engineer in order to create an estimate.
- Scoring sheets completed.

**History Park Maintenance/Improvements/Restoration**

- Ms. Sandy Moon presented the project.

- Would address concerns related to safety and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Pavers and historic structures needed repair. Lighting was desired to improve safety and security.
- Mr. Murtha commented additional funds would likely be needed.
- Discussion ensued regarding whether sales tax program funds could be used to fund improvements for a non-profit organization, with Ms. Reichert clarifying this project was to be considered an economic development project.
- Scoring sheets completed.

### **Maud Street Angled Parking**

- Ms. Janet Watermeier presented the project.
- Would install approximately 36 angled parking spaces, providing 70% more parking for the Visual Arts Center. Would improve quality of life. Would foster public health and safety. Would benefit economic development and special needs populations. Would serve entire City. No or minimal operating costs anticipated.
- Project's alignment with the scoring criteria reviewed.
- Discussion ensued confirming the City owned the property to be utilized as parking spaces.
- Scoring sheets completed.

### **Visual Arts Center Expansion**

- Ms. Watermeier presented the project.
- Was considered an economic development project. Would install a sprinkler system, bring the structure into compliance with Punta Gorda Code and the ADA and construct a new gallery, which would allow the previous gallery to be used for classes. Grant funding anticipated. Would benefit economic and community development and special needs populations. Would improve quality of life. Would foster public health and safety. Would serve entire City. Visual Arts Center to absorb increased operating costs.
- Project's alignment with the scoring criteria reviewed.
- Scoring sheets completed.

### **Connecting City Points of Interest**

- Ms. Pat Campagna presented the project.
- Would construct a restroom, provide landscaping and install pathways to connect the Charlotte County Public Library, History Park, community garden, the PRWC, the Visual Arts Center, Fishermen's Village and the Military Heritage Museum. Included improvements to the Dog Park.

- Discussion ensued clarifying the differences between the City's proposal for the Henry Street property and this project, with Mr. Austin stating the City's proposal did not include construction of a restroom or parking beyond that required for the Dog Park.
- Scoring sheets completed.

**Park/Kayak Ramp**

- Mr. Cavanaugh stated a resident of Burnt Store Isles had requested installation of a ramp so that the public could access the canal system.
- Mr. Austin clarified the project was proposed for the previous Firestation II near Home Depot, explaining the location had frontage on Alligator Creek.
- Scoring sheets completed.

**Event Center Parking Garage**

- No discussion.

**South County Annex Replacement**

- No discussion.

**STAFF COMMENTS**

- None.

**MEMBER COMMENTS**

- Ms. Maher requested project scores be provided in chronological order, speaking in favor of beginning prioritization at the February 24, 2020 meeting.
- Ms. Reichert stated she could provide the project scores prior to that meeting.
- Mr. Cavanaugh questioned if another matrix would be required for evaluation of the projects.
- Ms. Reichert replied same could be discussed at the February 24, 2020 meeting.
- Ms. Gaylord spoke in favor of denoting any relationships between projects in the materials provided to members. She then expressed uncertainty as to whether the budget for Gilchrist Park improvements was sufficient to create additional parking.

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

- None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

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Communications Manager

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Recording Secretary