

Commission Meeting Minutes
May 16, 2023
5:30 pm

Mayor Scott Roberts said before we begin the official meeting of the Starke City Commission there will be a time of voluntary prayer. Those willing to do so are asked to stand and Commissioner Shannon Smith will lead us in prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Roberts called the meeting to order at 5:29 pm. He reminded everyone to fill out a form if they wish to be included in citizen participation.

This meeting was the second regular meeting of the month. Members attending included Mayor Scott Roberts, Commissioner Janice D. Mortimer, Commissioner Danny Nugent, Commissioner Andy Redding and Commissioner Shannon Smith. Also present were Executive Assistant Cathy Bradley, City Clerk Jimmy Crosby, Deputy Clerk Lisa Heeder, Finance Director James Hughes, Police Chief Jeff Johnson, Attorney Clay Martin, Building and Zoning Official Kevin Powell and Fire Chief Gary Wise.

Mayor Roberts asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda. Clerk Crosby asked to remove item 4.B. and note that item 4.C. is Resolution Number 2023-37. Mayor Roberts entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Nugent made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Roberts entertained a motion to approve the consent agenda. The consent agenda consisted of the minutes of the May 2, 2023 Commission Meeting, Resolution Number 2023-37 Woodard & Curran Services Agreement, the Splash Bash parade route and the commissioner bill review. Commissioner Mortimer made a motion to approve the consent agenda. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Roberts asked for emergency items. There were none.

Mayor Roberts asked for old business. There was none.

Mayor Roberts read the statement for citizen requests "The City of Starke welcomes you to this meeting. This time is set aside for our citizens and general public to address the city commission. This is not a question or answer time. It is not a political forum, nor is it a time for personal accusations or derogatory remarks to or about city personnel. If you would like to address the commission, please complete a form, come to the podium when you are called, speak into the microphone and state your name and address for the record. Please also limit your comments to not more than three minutes. Your participation is welcomed." Mayor Roberts asked Kevin Baker to come forward. Mr. Baker said he heard they were moving Veteran's Memorial Park. He said there are 28,000 people in Bradford County and 2,000 of

them are veterans. Mr. Baker said the park was an attraction to him and his wife to move here. He said he does not want it pushed to the edge of town. Mr. Baker said Veterans are the backbone of society. He is a pastor and the two things he wants to show people when they come to Starke is Veteran's Park and the courthouse with the ten commandments.

Mayor Roberts asked to move on to Ordinance Number 2023-02 declaring a moratorium on telecommunication towers and antennas. Attorney Martin read the ordinance by title. He said the appropriate motion would be to approve the ordinance on second reading. Mayor Roberts entertained a motion. Commissioner Mortimer made a motion to approve the ordinance on second reading. It was seconded by Commissioner Nugent. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Roberts asked to move on to Ordinance Number 2023-04 amending the zoning map pursuant to application Z 22-03. Attorney Martin said this must be addressed in a quasi-judicial hearing. He swore-in Kevin Powell. Kevin Powell said there is no additional information. He said it is compatible with the surrounding area and staff recommends approval. Attorney Martin read the ordinance by title. He said the appropriate motion would be to approve the ordinance on second reading. Mayor Roberts entertained a motion. Commissioner Mortimer made a motion to approve Ordinance Number 2023-04 on second reading. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Roberts asked to move on to Ordinance Number 2023-05 procedures for procurement of goods and services. Attorney Martin read the ordinance by title. He said the appropriate motion would be to advance Ordinance Number 2023-05 to second reading as read by title only. Attorney Martin said Mr. Hughes is here to answer any questions. Clerk Crosby said they have worked on this for three or four months. He said it is needed to correct an audit finding and asked for consideration. Commissioner Nugent asked about increasing the threshold for formal bids due to inflation. Attorney Martin said he does not believe the city manager would object. Clerk Crosby said they would support that as well. He asked Mr. Hughes where that would be in the policy. Mr. Hughes said the competitive formal bids. Attorney Martin said it would be section 2-325. He said informal bids are \$5,000 to \$25,000 and formal bids are more than \$25,000. He asked if Commissioner Nugent wants to change \$5,000 to \$40,000. Commissioner Nugent said because the prices are higher it will save time. Clerk Crosby said the motion would be under a.1. to change \$25,000 to \$40,000 and under b.1. and b.2. to change \$25,000 to \$40,000. Attorney Martin asked if they also wished to raise floor in a.1. from \$5,000 to \$10,000. Commissioner Nugent said yes. Attorney Martin said the appropriate motion would be to amend the proposed ordinance to make those changes and then adopt the ordinance on first reading. Mayor Roberts entertained a motion to amend the ordinance. Commissioner Nugent made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Redding. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Roberts entertained a motion to approve the ordinance as changed. Commissioner Redding made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Mortimer. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Roberts asked for the City Clerk report. Clerk Crosby said Sandcastle Pines asked about speaking to individual commissioners about their project. He said after speaking to council they decided it would be better done in a meeting. Clerk Crosby said they have a pending new plan with building and zoning. He said tonight is a good time to ask questions that cannot be asked in a quasi-judicial setting. Robert Williams came forward representing Sandcastle Pines. He said he dropped off a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Williams introduced Jessica Criss President of Sandcastle Foundation and Marty Flynn with Sandcastle Foundation. Marty Flynn said he appreciates the opportunity to speak. He said Sandcastle Foundation is a non-profit organization that specializes in providing affordable housing to communities including small rural communities. Mr. Flynn said they have built 120 communities across 15 states over two decades. He said they are building twenty-two four bedroom and two bathroom homes and they offer ADA and sensory impaired units. Mr. Flynn said their development 73 Ocean had the highest and the second highest platinum scores in the state and Caya Place was a finalist in Affordable Housing Finance Magazine Reader's Choice for its innovation and impact. He said this is workforce housing with federal funding administered by Florida Housing Corporation providing a minimum of ninety percent equity to allow them to charge below market rents. Mr. Flynn said it is deed restricted and affordable for fifty years. He said Royal American is their quality management company with over 30,000 affordable units including Whispering Oaks that was approved by this commission. Mr. Flynn said there are monthly unit inspections and Florida Housing supervises annual inspections and he has their resume if anyone would like to review it. He said the landscaping is done by the management company. Mr. Flynn said there are background and credit checks for all applicants and three independent groups review the applicants for compliance. He reviewed residents of 73 Ocean and not counting disabled and retired people all work in the community where they reside. Mr. Flynn said single family homes tend to attract families that stay longer. He said rents are determined by percentage of median rent and income limits. Mr. Flynn asked for questions. Mr. Williams said he is here to make this work and they will pay the property taxes. Commissioner Nugent asked if the development would be maintained like Hunter's Run in Gainesville. Mr. Flynn said Florida Housing makes sure the property is being properly maintained. Commissioner Nugent said he's seen complexes that look really nice and two years later they look like they were hit with a bomb shell. Mr. Flynn said you have our word and Florida Housing has standards and annual inspections. Mr. Williams said there is an economic interest to make sure the properties are maintained. Commissioner Nugent said he would like to see something built there. It benefits the community and helps the tax base. Mr. Williams said good thought and good comment. He said they looked at the neighboring property and these homes will be larger than the homes in the community. Mr. Williams said the management company will make sure they are landscaped and look nice.

Commissioner Nugent asked if the agreed to changes have been made. Mr. Williams said both issues have been addressed. Commissioner Mortimer thanked them for coming in and allowing questions. She asked what their website is. Mr. Flynn said Keys Affordable Development. He said they form a company for each development when they start renting. Commissioner Mortimer said you've been doing this for two decades. Mr. Williams said the principals and Mr. Flynn is among them have been doing this for decades. Commissioner Mortimer asked how long Sandcastle has been doing this. Mr. Flynn said it is a new non-profit and this is its first development but the principals have done 120. Ms. Criss said they have a development in Macclenny that will break ground before this one. Commissioner Mortimer asked if all of the homes will have four bedrooms. Mr. Williams said all of the homes will have four bedrooms. Commissioner Mortimer said in your site plan that was not approved there was an administration building that had to be taken out. She asked if there will be onsite staff. Mr. Williams said there will be a staff member living in one of the homes. Ms. Criss said they have someone who would qualify for the housing living in the development as the manager. Commissioner Redding asked about renovations and is there a schedule. Mr. Flynn said there is a standard for maintenance and there is a reserve for every unit to do the work. He said Florida Housing puts out programs to keep affordable housing affordable and maintained. Mr. Flynn said he is currently doing renovations for other projects. Commissioner Redding asked other than Whispering Oaks what is the closest community like this. Mr. Williams said Vero Beach but it is twenty five years old. Commissioner Redding asked if there is a parent company or board. He asked who pays the bills. Mr. Williams said it is funded. Ms. Criss said there is no parent company. Mr. Flynn said he works with his partner Mike to handle development. Commissioner Redding asked if they were contractors who work under LLCs. Mr. Flynn said they are developers but they have construction companies that work with them. Commissioner Redding asked what the development company is. Mr. Flynn said Pan Handle Development. Commissioner Smith said there is no parent company so each development has its own LLC so they will form another nonprofit for the next project. Mr. Flynn said there is a priority to fund the nonprofits so there is a different LLC for each company Sandcastle is a principle of. Mayor Roberts asked what a principal means. Mr. Flynn said the principal is an officer of the development company. He said Ms. Criss is a principal and he is a principle of Sandcastle. Mayor Roberts said workforce housing is basically subsidized housing and he has no problem with that because we need housing. He said we all love the theory behind workforce housing. Mayor Roberts said there is one owner so it is basically like an apartment complex. He asked if they rent them for fifty years because that was said at one point. Mr. Flynn said the development is deed restricted as an affordable development for fifty years so the owners cannot charge above a certain rent for fifty years. Mayor Roberts asked if the tenant could eventually purchase it. Mr. Flynn said with subsidized housing the tenant is given a voucher and they can rent from any landlord who is approved by section 8 but its not called section 8

anymore. He said the partnerships they have with Florida Housing are private corporations. Mayor Roberts asked how new the program is that he is talking about. Mr. Flynn said it started in the eighties but it is super mature now. He said there are different standards for what the renter gets but the development here is under Florida Housing which is like a parent company. Mr. Flynn said Florida Housing sets the standards and makes sure the developers are keeping up with the standards. Mayor Roberts asked if they could get something they could read with the criteria they operate under Florida Housing and the requirements. Mr. Williams said he will provide the requirements to them. Mayor Roberts said this is a discussion they needed to have. Mr. Williams said a fifty-year lease is not required. Mayor Roberts asked Mr. Williams to explain the fifty-year requirement. Mr. Williams said the fifty-years is a deed restriction imposed on the property even if the property is sold. He said there will be deed restrictions similar to a home owners association and he will provide those to the commissioners. Attorney Martin said those were submitted with the previous application. Mr. Williams said that is the first piece the second piece is the single family homes that are leased out individually and act like an apartment complex but they are not. Mayor Roberts said he wants to see the ones that are exactly like the one they want to build here. Ms. Criss said when they applied for the funding they could have built apartments. She said the trend to build single family homes is pretty new and they are doing that because they are geared toward families. Mayor Roberts said they could not put an apartment complex there. Mr. Flynn said during the Reagan Administration a tax credit law passed to give IRS dollar for dollar tax credits to help develop affordable housing. He said the states can determine how the tax credits get handed out and that became Florida Housing Finance Corporation. Mr. Flynn said there are three wells that Florida Housing Finance Corporation can use to build affordable housing. He said they set the standards. Mayor Roberts asked where they could find information on the standards. Ms. Criss said the Florida Housing Home Program. Mayor Roberts thanked them for coming. Commissioner Mortimer asked if the funding was through the Department of Economic Opportunity. Mr. Flynn said Florida Housing Finance Corporation is its own entity. Commissioner Mortimer asked about the cost of the project. Ms. Criss said the construction is \$5,400,000 and then there are developer fees and overhead for a total of around \$7,000,000 but she can provide exact numbers. Commissioner Redding asked if it is the Hometown Heroes Housing Program. Ms. Criss said that is a little bit different.

Mayor Roberts said Mr. Mullins is not feeling well. He said at the last meeting there was discussion about putting on the agenda to talk about inviting the sheriff and the county manager in to talk about the fire department and the police department. He entertained the pleasure of the board to move forward. Commissioner Mortimer made a motion to send an invitation to the sheriff and the county manager to bring a presentation on the police department and the fire department. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith but he asked that it be two separate presentations. Commissioner Mortimer agreed. Commissioner Redding

asked that the county manager brings the numbers for four people on the fire department and how retirements will be handled. Commissioner Redding said there are a lot of people in the room who have invested years in the city. Clerk Crosby asked to direct the retirement representatives to participate in the meeting on this. Clerk Crosby asked if Attorney Martin and Attorney Cohen could work together. The commission agreed. Commissioner Nugent said we pay for dispatch and the other cities do not. He said as residents of the county we already pay for that service. Mayor Roberts said he believes that is going to be addressed, but if not, they will ask about it. Commissioner Nugent said the money they pay for dispatch could go to these departments. Clerk Crosby asked Mayor Roberts if he wanted to include when the sheriff and county manager should come. Mayor Roberts asked for a vote and then they will decide when the meeting will be. The motion passed 5-0. Clerk Crosby asked when he should ask them to come. Commissioner Smith said at their earliest convenience. Commissioner Mortimer asked if they want them to come to a regular meeting or a special meeting. Mayor Roberts said either is fine with him. Clerk Crosby suggested May 25, 2023. Commissioner Mortimer said she can't be here on May 25th. Commissioner Smith asked about having a workshop for the first hour of the June 6, 2023 meeting. Chief Johnson said he will be out of town then. Commissioner Smith suggested June 20, 2023. Mayor Roberts asked if everyone is in agreement for June 20th. The commissioners agreed. Clerk Crosby said he will ask the sheriff and county manager if they can be here on the 20th.

Mayor Roberts asked for the Police Chief Report. Chief Johnson said within a week there will be traffic eastbound on the overpass.

Attorney Martin addressed Resolution Number 2023-26 disapproving the site plan and preliminary plat. He said when an application for development is denied a resolution is needed stating the basis for the denial. Attorney Martin read the resolution by title. Mayor Roberts entertained a motion to approve the resolution. Commissioner Smith made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Mortimer. The motion passed 5-0.

Attorney Martin addressed the attorney's fees for the property owner for the Call Street lift station eminent domain petition. He said there are two deceased heirs so the court can appoint an ad litem administrator. Attorney Martin said Adam Lee will do it for \$2,500 in a trust account for fees but would first seek payment from the sale of the property before putting it together. Mayor Roberts asked if Attorney Martin needs a consensus or a vote. Attorney Martin said a consensus. The commissioners agreed to move forward.

Commissioner Nugent said the Northeast Florida League of Cities dinner is in Keystone Heights and starts at 6:00 pm. He said the next meeting will be in Orange Park.

Commissioner Mortimer had nothing further.

Commissioner Redding had nothing further.

Commissioner Smith thanked Commissioner Nugent for putting CIS in for a \$500 grant that they got and will be used for scholarships.

Mayor Roberts said he is proud of the commission for taking on difficult situations.

There being no further business Mayor Roberts asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Mortimer made a motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Redding. The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 pm.