

Commission Meeting Minutes
May 21, 2024
5:30 pm

Vice Mayor Redding said before we begin the official meeting of the City of Starke Commission, there will be a time of voluntary prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Those willing to do so are asked to stand and I will lead us in prayer and the pledge. Vice Mayor Redding called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

This was the second regular meeting of the month. Members in attendance included Vice Mayor Andy Redding, Commissioner Janice D. Mortimer, Commissioner Danny Nugent and Commissioner Shannon Smith. Also present were Executive Assistant Cathy Bradley, Zoning & Planning Office Manager Lance Campbell, Deputy Clerk Lisa Heeder, Captain Kevin Mueller, City Manager Drew Mullins, Building and Zoning Official Kevin Powell, Attorney Scott Walker and Code Enforcement Officer Rick Ward. Mayor Scott Roberts was absent.

Vice Mayor Redding asked do we have any agenda changes any additions or deletions. Hearing none, I will entertain a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Mortimer made a motion to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion passed 4-0. Vice Mayor Redding said I want to note that for the record Mayor Roberts is not here tonight and I'm standing in his place.

Vice Mayor Redding entertained a motion to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the consent agenda. It was seconded by Commissioner Nugent. The motion passed 4-0.

Vice Mayor Redding asked for old business. There was none.

Vice Mayor Redding asked for emergency items. There were none.

Vice Mayor Redding said 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 welcome. There was no citizen participation.

Vice Mayor Redding said we're going to move on to the check presentation from the Florida League of Cities to Communities in Schools. Commissioner Smith asked Cindy DeValerio to come up and give a brief overview of the awesome year they had at CIS and the success rate. Mrs. DeValerio said thank you for inviting me. Communities in Schools which is also the Take Stock Program has had a phenomenal year. We have served about 110 students which for the size of our district and our nonprofit in our high school we think is phenomenal we've had 22 graduate that's also a great number that's 100% of all of the seniors that have received items from our hanger which is our

resource room. We've had an after-school club, field trips that are still scheduled and scholarships. We were able to pass out five full two-year scholarships and three partial scholarships. I would like to thank our board for that because we do a lot of fundraising with our staff to incur those funds. The five full scholarships that we gave out are funds that are actually raised through our board and then the scholarships are purchased in Florida prepaid. We've had a very good year we are doing a lot of fundraising in fact if anybody likes Bingo we have Bingo scheduled once a month. Commissioner Smith is always willing to come and help and serve. We also have set our golf tournament in the fall for September the 20th. We look forward to a more successful next year. We're adding two initiatives to our programs for next year which should increase our male mentorship if anybody has spare time. For about an hour a month you could be very instrumental in the positive effect of a student. We are also adding some additional scholarships to encourage our ninth-grade students to participate in the Take Stock P program so we have a lot going on. We have a Summer Employment Program that is getting ready to kick off. Last summer we were actually able to employ 19 high school students in our community. I'd rather have them working than on the streets. Some of them needed to be in summer school and we've got hours around that. We had ten different work site possibilities and that was a very successful program for our local students so we continue to grow and build a strong foundation for Communities in Schools and expand our services to as many students as possible. Are there any questions. Commissioner Mortimer said thank you for the work you do for our youth in this community. How many children do you have in your summer program and what are the ages. We are focusing on our high school students, particularly our older high school students. Work ethic is important. They may be heading off to college but right now we have about 15 students, and we will run a six-week program. That does not mean that everybody will work every day for six weeks, but that would be the window of time that we would offer to them. Many are in sports, many do band camp, many do summer school, many already have summer jobs, some are getting ready to go to college, so we try to work our program around what their needs are. Commissioner Mortimer said fantastic thank you and I can't wait until my two little ones get to that age so it's on my forever calendar. Mrs. DeValerio said I also want to thank our hardworking board. We do all of this with five part-time employees, all ladies that have been a part of the system or are still in our system that just want to contribute to the lives of our students. So, I very graciously say the Dream Team, because they're all here for the right reason, and we're all doing what we need to do to help support our local students. Thank you again. Vice Mayor Redding said thank you for being such a faithful servant to our community and our educational system and the children here. It does not go unnoticed. Commissioner Nugent said on behalf of the Florida League of Cities, and the City of Starke, we would like to donate \$500 to the CIS program for you to use to help children get scholarships. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Redding said moving on to quasi-judicial hearings. Attorney Walker said anyone that anticipates speaking to this item, if you'll stand up and raise your right hand for me, please. Do you swear or affirm, to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The witnesses have all been sworn, and when you come to the podium, if you'll

give us your names, please. Are there any ex parte communications that the commissioners have had regarding this matter. Commissioner Nugent said no. Commissioner Smith said no. Commissioner Mortimer said no and Vice Mayor Redding said no. Attorney Walker said this is an ordinance of the City of Starke, Florida, amending the future land use plan map of the City of Starke Comprehensive Plan, as amended, relating to an amendment of 50 or less acres of land, pursuant to an application, S240417A, by the property owner of said acreage, under the amendment procedures established in sections 163.3161 through 163.3248, Florida statutes, as amended; providing for a change in land use classification from medium density, residential (more than 2 and less than or equal to 8 units per acre) to high density residential (more than 8 and less than 20 units per acre) on certain lands within the corporate limits of the City of Starke, Florida; providing severability; repealing all ordinances and conflict; providing an effective date. The appropriate motion is to pass Ordinance Number 2024-12 on its reading by title. Mr. Powell said we're bringing before you tonight a property that is currently zoned single-family R1C which is a medium density occupancy and they are wanting to change the zoning of the property to R2A which is residential high density zoning. This ordinance went before your Planning and Zoning Board. They denied the application based on spot zoning. It is currently zoned R1C. It is a single-family residence with multiple meters attached to the home from previous years being able to rent rooms out. However as time has gone on the meters have been removed and we have not released the meters to go back in here because it is zoned as a single-family residence so they decided that they would bring this to the commission to see about rezoning it to a higher density which would bring you from two to eight units per acre to eight to twenty units per acre or basically allow about four units on that particular property. The applicant is here so if you have any questions they will be able to speak on their situation. Commissioner Nugent asked where the property is. Mr. Powell said it's right here on Cherry Street just across the railroad tracks. Commissioner Smith said when you say spot zoning, that means everything around it is R1C. Mr. Powell said it is R1C. Commissioner Mortimer said so this would create a spot zoning. Mr. Powell said that is what the Planning & Zoning Board looked at and that was their concern. Commissioner Mortimer asked what was the Planning & Zoning Board's vote. Mr. Powell said it was 4-0. Vice Mayor Redding said just to recap, I want to make clear that we do not have any other structures in this area that are consistent with those type of occupancies. Mr. Powell said not that type of zoning. Everything is medium density. Vice Mayor Redding said do we have potential issues there that could turn into life safety events. That is a great concern to me. Commissioner Mortimer said over the years of my time on this board we have worked diligently to try and alleviate those spot zoning issues because down the road they cause us other problems in other areas. A lady from the audience came forward and said I'm the owner of the property. I got it in 2017. The property is from 1930. The property came from Camp Blanding and we didn't touch anything. A gentleman from the audience said the structure is as it was brought in and is still intact. The only thing we need is painting to the outside and these are repairs here. The lady said we have pictures. The gentleman said can I show you these pictures. Vice Mayor Redding said you didn't start with your name. Can we get your name for the record. The gentleman said my name is Danny Salmon. The lady said and I'm Sandra Sfilio. Mr. Salmon said these are the meters that we had when we bought the property. It is a four unit but there are three units that are livable because the other one is not completed. There were people living in the property since we purchased it.

Somebody moved in and came to try to put the lights on and that's when the things

changed but we had the property since 2017. We just did what you see last year. We painted the property, that's it. We bought it with people living in it and we just want to try to see if there's a variance or something that we can do about it and keep the property as it was before. Vice Mayor Redding asked if there are any other questions. Commissioner Mortimer asked when you say as it was before, what was it before. Ms. Sfilio said it was used as multifamily. Commissioner Mortimer said they were renting out the rooms. Mr. Salmon said there are kitchens in every room. Commissioner Mortimer said it's a boarding house. Ms. Sfilio said we have separate entrances and plenty of space for parking. Commissioner Mortimer said with the R1C zoning as it is now, you can't use it. Ms. Sfilio said they told us in order for us to connect the meters we have to apply for this. Commissioner Mortimer said okay. Thank you. Commissioner Nugent said you are renting it out to people and it wasn't in compliance with the code. Mr. Salmon said the property is as we bought it so the meters were already on the property and so everyone has their own meter. Vice Mayor Redding asked Mr. Powell if at any time this property was zoned for multifamily. Mr. Powell said no. We don't know when it was done. It's just not conforming. Vice Mayor Redding entertained a motion. Commissioner Mortimer asked if she may ask Attorney Walker a question. Vice Mayor Redding said shouldn't we have a motion and a second and then discussion. Commissioner Mortimer said I don't want discussion. I want to ask a question about how to phrase the motion because our Planning & Zoning Board has recommended denial. How would we phrase a motion to to handle this to make a motion to accept the Planning & Zoning Board's recommendation or make a motion that the ordinance be denied. Attorney Walker said you can make the motion to deny the ordinance and it's based upon the incompatibility with the surroundings. Commissioner Mortimer made a motion that Ordinance Number 2024-12 be denied as it does not conform with the current zoning it would be considered spot zoning. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion passed 4-0.

Attorney Walker said the next item is an ordinance of the City of Starke, Florida, amending the zoning map of the City of Starke Land Development Code, as amended; relating to the rezoning of less than 10 contiguous acres of land, pursuant to an application, Z 23-06 by the property owner of said acreage; providing for rezoning from single family, medium density district R1C to multi-family, medium density residential district R2A of certain lands within the corporate limits of the City of Starke, Florida; repealing all ordinances in conflict; providing for severability; and providing an effective date. The appropriate motion is to deny Ordinance Number 2024-11, you can approve Ordinance Number 2024 -11 or continue it to a date sometime in the future. Mr. Powell said this is the continuation of the same property. This is just the amendment to the zoning map. So, we're at the same point on this one trying to rezone that from the R1C to the R2A high density. This was sent to your Planning & Zoning Board where they voted to deny it and we have a denial resolution. It was based on spot zoning again pending any questions for myself or the applicant. Vice Mayor Redding asked are there and questions from the board. Okay, hearing none. Any statements on behalf of the applicant. Ms. Sfilio if there is any kind of solution for this or can I apply for a variance or an exemption. Vice Mayor Redding said this isn't really the time to discuss that. We have this ordinance in front of us. You would have to revisit with Mr. Powell and his office to see if there are any other possibilities there. Vice Mayor Redding entertained a motion regarding this ordinance. Commissioner Smith made a motion that we deny Ordinance N

umber 2024-11 for the spot zoning issue. It was seconded by Commissioner Mortimer. The motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Mullins said you got my report. If you have any questions come see me.

Vice Mayor Redding asked if anyone has questions for the city manager. Commissioner Nugent asked if he had looked for a new dump truck. Mr. Mullins said I will get with you afterwards.

Vice Mayor Redding asked about Asplundh and are our in house guys still doing work to facilitate that so we can keep those costs down. How's that going. Mr. Mullins said it's going really good.

Vice Mayor Redding said I want to talk to you about ditches. We have hurricane season coming quickly upon us. Stay on top the Pratt Street ditch that is what seems to raise the most eyebrows in my district with flooding.

Vice Mayor Redding asked for the law enforcement report. Captain Mueller said I'm here for you all if you have any questions. We did get some some signage out there to the lake. They are out at RJE with the playground equipment that came in. We've increased patrols. I went by and took a look at it myself and it looks great. Commissioner Nugent asked about getting deputies to watch the traffic on Wilson Road right behind hospital. Captain Mueller said yes. Commissioner Smith said we've tried to address the issue with the semi trucks parking on 16 and staying there overnight. It's cut down. There's really just one truck now that's been there. Captain Mueller said there's not any designated parking on the side of the road. Commissioner Smith said if you could swing by and check that out every once in a while that would be appreciated. Captain Mueller said yes, sir. Commissioner Mortimer said I was ill at the last meeting. Would you make sure I get a copy of it just for my records. You can give it to Cathy and she'll put it in my box. Captain Mueller said I can share everything via email before the meeting. Commissioner Mortimer said that would be good, yes. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Redding asked for the City Attorney report. Attorney Walker had nothing to report.

Commissioner Nugent said I want to say thank you to everybody for all the hard work you're doing.

Commissioner Smith said I know it is a state road but at some point we're going to need a sign that says stop here for the folks coming on the little side road and coming down the overpass. Everybody's pulling up past the line. Captain Mueller said we will work with DOT. I'll work on that personally to see if the state will allow us if we can or even if we have to beg forgiveness later, put something there. Commissioner Smith said maybe do a red line or I don't know what the codes are but you got a white line and it kind of just blends in with the crosswalk if you put maybe a colored line or something maybe it

catches people's eye or just stop there I don't know. Captain Mueller said I will say just so I don't make false promises or anything that being a state road it is going to have to be approved.

Commissioner Mortimer said I want to share that the Concerned Citizens will have a summer camp starting June 3 through June 28. It's going to be Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. The school board is going to provide breakfast and lunch. It is catering to kindergarten through 14 years of age. There is going to be a computer lab, a reading lab and a math lab. Meridian is going to partner with them to provide some services. They are going to have some sporting activities. Applications can be picked up here at city hall or out at the workforce office, and Meridian has applications. Because we were blessed enough to have contributions, we got about enough sponsorships, thanks to the sheriff's office, who contributed enough to pay for all of the registration fees for up to 30 kids. The maximum that they can house is 40 kids. So, if you know somebody that has children or has a child that wants to keep them busy and keep that learning environment going June 3rd through the 28th, and the deadline to register is this Friday. Commissioner Smith asked if there is anything on Facebook that we can share. Commissioner Mortimer said Meridian has it on their website and Workforce has it on theirs. There is also an opportunity for some employment for some young people that want to earn a few dollars. So, if you'll help get the word out we would appreciate it. This is the first summer camp that that they've been able to have since COVID. So, it's going to be exciting.

Vice Mayor Redding said all good things from my end. Since Chief Clemens is here, I do want to bring out that our staff worked diligently on the SAFER grant. Mrs. Heeder, Mr. Mullins, especially Chief Clemons they kept their noses to the grindstone and that gives us the potential for 100% funding for up to three years if we're awarded that grant. We had to make some very tough decisions, some tough cuts last budget cycle. This gives us the opportunity to bolster the numbers back up for the fire department.

Vice Mayor Redding said we have Memorial Day coming up next Monday. Mr. Hunter, do we have festivities planned. Mr. Hunter said 10:00 at the Memorial Park on Monday morning. Vice Mayor Redding said let's not forget those that have given their lives for our freedom and the niceties that we enjoy as Americans. That's all I have.

Commissioner Nugent said can you see about getting the power turned back onto the flagpole. It is supposed to be on.

Commissioner Smith said it is budget season and we haven't even started. Vice Mayor Redding said for the next meeting, can you have a schedule for us. Mr. Mullins said we'll have the schedule.

Vice Mayor Redding entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Mortimer made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion passed 4-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 6:10 pm.