

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE STUART CITY COMMISSION**  
**JULY 10, 2023**  
**AT 4:00 PM**  
**COMMISSION CHAMBERS**  
**121 SW FLAGLER AVE.**  
**STUART, FLORIDA 34994**

**CITY COMMISSION**

**Mayor Troy McDonald**  
**Vice Mayor Becky Bruner**  
**Commissioner Eula R. Clarke**  
**Commissioner Christopher Collins**  
**Commissioner Campbell Rich**

**ADMINISTRATIVE**

**Interim City Manager, Michael J. Mortell**  
**Interim City Attorney, Paul J. Nicoletti**  
**City Clerk, Mary R. Kindel**

**ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Mayor McDonald, Vice Mayor Bruner, Commissioner Clarke, Commissioner Collins, Commissioner Rich

**INVOCATION**

Pastor Jim Brocious, Stuart Alliance Church said the Invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

1. ARTS MOMENT - KERRY MARRAFFINO, CRYSTAL SOUND BOWL HEALING DEMONSTRATION

Kerry Marraffino provided the audience with soothing sounds of a crystal bowl healing presentation.

**PROCLAMATIONS**

2. 16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL TREASURE COAST WATERWAY CLEANUP WEEK - JULY 15-23, 2023

Tom Whittington, President of Marine Industries Associate of the Treasure Coast and coworker, Calida Scott received the proclamation and announced the statistics of previous cleanups and the registration information for the upcoming cleanup.

3. PARKS AND RECREATION MONTH - JULY 2023

Jessica Tharp, Recreation Programs Supervisor, recieved the proclamation, thanked the

Commission for their support and announced the various services provided to the community.

#### **PRESENTATIONS**

##### **4. SERVICE AWARDS - JULY 2023**

Michael Hazelton	Public Works	20 Years
Richard Serra	Police Department	20 Years (Not Present)
James Billings	Public Works	5 Years (Not Present)

##### **5. 360° VIRTUAL PARKS TOUR**

Jim Chrulski, Community Services Director, introduced the presentation and briefly demonstrated how to find and login to the video on the City's website. Mr. Clem Carrion, CEO of Ask Clem Today The Best 360 Virtual Tour, presented the overview of the parks digital tour and options for using the program. He reported that the City of Stuart is the first and only municipality to create such a program that is available to their residents, and believes Stuart is not only the first in the country, but possibly in the world. Mr. Carrion stated he is available to create similar tours for the Police and Fire Departments for student virtual tours.

##### **6. KIWANIS PARK CHECK PRESENTATION**

The Commission gathered with Kiwanis members for a group photo with a check in the amount of \$200,000.00 that was presented to the City of Stuart. Virginia Hill, President of the Kiwanis Club of Stuart, reported on the future park playground equipment and the status of the park's plans. Thanked all donors and announced they were recently awarded as Club of the Year for the state of Florida.

##### **7. LOSOM AND WATER CONDITIONS UPDATE**

Congressman Brian Mast was introduced and asked to speak pertaining to the railroad bridge and Brightline, therefore, his presentation was added to the agenda. The Congressman provided a brief update that the US Coastguard adopted a fair rule on the opening of the railroad bridge roughly giving two 15-minute windows per hour and reviewed the on-going communications. He announced that a request to further hold open the timeframe for accepting public comment to the US Coastguard has been submitted, because the public has not experienced the impact of the bridge opening as of the dates provided. Congressman Mast read from a presentation slide that demonstrates Brightline's service and plan for a new bridge.

Commissioners discussion with Congressman Mast reviewed funding. Congressman Mast commented that Brightline should not have control over the community.

Ben Hogarth, Community Services Liaison, presented the LOSOM update. The presentation included El Niño and La Niña seasonal outlooks.

#### **COMMENTS BY CITY COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Clarke

- Asked Interim City Manager Mortell to work with staff and commissioners to develop some points of interest to see if we can get out to the Creek and East Stuart Community. Would like to see a community tour or something to get all involved.

- Commented on Budget hearing to fund sources to keep project alive, the Guy David Park and 10th St. Center, basketball court.
- Commented on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds decisions, still keep affordable housing at the forefront, hoping we can work on a solution.

Vice Mayor Bruner

- Commented on Lake Okechobee. She would like to write every two (2) weeks or monthly to the Army Corps to let them know about our community as an ongoing letter.

Commissioner Collins

- Commented that he supports the idea. City Manager Mortell noted that Ben Horgath could give a monthly update, and that all Commissioners are welcome to write them, otherwise, a vote from the board would need to be made to direct staff on the action.

**5:40 PM MOTION: Approval to have Ben Hogarth draft a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers.**

**MOVED BY: Becky Bruner**

**SECONDED BY: Christopher Collins**

**Motion approved unanimously.**

Vice Mayor Bruner continued:

- Commented that she recently met with Rob Ranieri, House of Hope, about land and building homes, and that the Commission could contribute funds to the project. Interested in learning who can and cannot be given the funds.

City Manager Mortell provided an explanation and stated we are going to put a matrix together of the applications and present it to the Commission as a ranking and have each commissioner evaluate.

**5:43 PM MOTION: Approve ARPA Fund deadline for application to be determined at the July 24th CCM.**

**MOVED BY: Becky Bruner**

**SECONDED BY: Christopher Collins**

**Motion approved unanimously.**

Vice Mayor Bruner continued:

- Commented she would like a letter thanking Congressman Mast.

Commissioner Clarke continued:

- Announced that longtime resident, Mrs. Anne Shaffer passed away, noted she was active in our community. She would like a certificate in Memorial and asked that it be prepared.

Commissioner Collins continued:

- Commented that his hesitation as a taxpayer's perspective and would like to receive a letter from Congressman Mast that the City will have no financial obligation for the bridge or any other construction related.

Mayor McDonald

- Commented that he hoped all enjoyed the Fourth of July celebration and thanked all who helped and coordinate the local event.
- Received a letter from Taryn Kryzda, Interim Village Manager, sent on behalf of the Village of Indiantown Mayor. There is a \$25K shortfall for transportation, Indiantown is making up \$12,500 and we are being asked to make up the difference for the transportation disadvantage. Requested the City look at adding this to the budget.

#### **COMMENTS BY CITY MANAGER**

City Manager Mortell:

- Stated that he would like to bring an agenda item to the Commission to set a range for consideration of highering the new City Attorney on July 24th, review the Job Description and parameters. Also create a board for the interviewing process, which would include one Commissioner and an intended highering range.

Commissioners continued a conversation and stated the RFQ needs to be realistic for the qualifications/expertise. Confirmed timeframe of end of September 2023 and advertise on July 25th with a closing of August 15th.

Mortell continued:

- Commented on the Fourth of July and thanked Jim Chrulski on the coordination of the well attended First Annual Golf Cart Parade.
- Reported the following last Rivers Coalition Meeting, Commissioner Rich asked if something could be added to our website to report algae blooms, confirmed this has been added to the City's website.
- Commented on his discussion with Commissioner Clarke and her interest in scheduling a meeting or tour of the districts for the Commissioners, stated it could be a non-meeting golf cart ride and use the tram for the tour.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**6:07 PM MOTION:** Approve with Congressman Brian Mast presentation included in this agenda.

**MOVED BY:** Christopher Collins

**SECONDED BY:** Eula Clarke

**Motion approved unanimously.**

### **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC (Non-Agenda Related) (3 Minutes Max.)**

1. Mark Brechbill - Osceola Street; commented on a situation in which someone was banging on his neighbor's door at 1 a.m. and reported that the Police were there within one minute; complimented and congratulated the Police Department for their quick response.
2. Helen McBride - Flamingo Ave.; commented on her support of Commissioner Clarke's idea to tour the neighborhoods.
3. Chief Tumminelli announced he and a Sheriff's Office representative will be attending the 10th Street Civic Center, the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** event to talk about the new open carry gun law.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

8. APPROVAL OF 06/23/2023 SCM MINUTES AND 06/26/2023 CCM MINUTES (RC)

9. AMENDMENT TO AGENCY COST SHARE AGREEMENT – IRL COUNCIL (RC):

RESOLUTION No. 51-2023; A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING AN AMENDMENT TO THE EXISTING COST-SHARE AGREEMENT FOR THE SE ILLINOIS AVENUE LIVING SHORELINE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT WITH THE INDIAN RIVER LAGOON (IRL) COUNCIL; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

### **END OF CONSENT CALENDAR**

**6:10 PM MOTION:** Approve.

**MOVED BY:** Eula Clarke

**SECONDED BY:** Becky Bruner

**Motion approved unanimously.**

### **COMMISSION ACTION**

10. ADOPTING THE CITY OF STUART STRATEGIC PLAN (RC):

RESOLUTION No. 31-2023; A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CITY OF STUART; INSTRUCTING THE CITY MANAGER TO IMPLEMENT PLAN

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES INTO THE EXECUTION OF MUNICIPAL BUSINESS; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

City Manager Mortell reported on the Strategic Plan, strategies, and how the Commission and parties feedback was cataloged. Staff is seeking from the Commission, comments and review so they can return to the Commission with a final draft. City Manager reviewed the highlights in the Chapters and he is looking to the Commission for relevant feedback.

Commission discussion included:

Commissioner Collins commented that he feels we do not have to compete with other Cities/County. He questioned the 4.1 0.1 plan to approve population projections; Is it coming from the consultant or the state? Confirmed current population at 19,100.

City Manager Mortell commented that the development was projected at a 24,000 population buildout and the plan noted that not building is going to surpass the max buildout projection.

Commissioner Rich thanked Jim Chruski and Ben Hogart for working with Jim Karas. Pointed out an item mentioned the most, the moving of City Hall.

Mortell noted that the Commission had already approved the moving of City Hall. The City already approved the Stuart Mews Development group to redevelop the Wells Fargo site.

Mortell stated he will sit down with Stuart Mews and discuss the future direction. Agreed that a decision on what to do with the current City Hall is important before moving forward with the decision to move. Further, plans for the current City Hall are to be added.

Commissioner Rich stated that the fees at the current site is just as important to include in the Plan as the move to the new site.

City Manager commented that this site would require a referendum to the fact and he has no plans to move any other department as of now. Noted one of the tenants may be leaving as early as next year. The bank renewed their 5 year option, which is at the end of 2024. If the bank does not renew in 2024-2025, a large amount of revenue will be lost to the City. It is most important to have a significant design internally before presenting it to the public. He commented on adopting a Strategic Plan that leads to continuing or not continuing to move. Talked about a workshop, then perhaps a community charrette. Commission input to put together a significant design so there is somewhere to start, then it could be adjusted.

Discussion continued with Brightline and determining if the Commission wanted to move forward on a possible Brightline Station.

City Manager stated that it has not been discussed recently, in 2018, the City we passed a Resolution and had several different workshops. If it is the Commissions direction to encourage a station in our City, we will work with Brightline to start siting a station.

City Attorney Nicoletti commented on his past involvement and that they had communicated about the station - noted that Stuart had not made a decision.

Commissioner Clarke commented on a charrette, referendum, the building next door, about needing to be specific about the plans for City Hall. Asked City Attorney Nicoletti to pull some of the plans from the past.

Vice Chair Bruner stated about two (2) years ago, there was engagement on Facebook with the public and the majority wanted the station.

City Manager Mortell commented that a survey was done. He read from the settlement agreement for the record. The FRA grant can only be applied for by Martin County of the City of Stuart.

Mayor McDonald commented on Page 7, The Vision, he felt it should include the mention of St. Lucie River.


NO VOTE - Staff will bring this Resolution (#31-2023) back before the Commission to include information discussed.

#### **DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

7:12 PM

  
Mary R. Kindel, City Clerk

  
Troy McDonald, Mayor

Minutes to be approved at the Regular Commission  
Meeting this 24th day of July, 2023.

