

MINUTES

CITY OF COCOA DISTRICT 1 TOWN HALL MEETING

April 17, 2018

The District 1 Town Hall Meeting was held on Tuesday, April 17, 2018 at the Harry T. Moore Center, 307 Blake Ave., Cocoa, Florida, as publicly noticed.

I. OPENING MATTERS:

Councilman Clarence Whipple called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm. He provided the invocation and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present:	Henry U. Parrish III	Mayor (arrived at 6:27pm)
	Jeri Blanco	Deputy Mayor
	Don Boisvert	Councilman
	Clarence Whipple, Jr.	Councilman
	Brenda Warner	Councilwoman
	Matt Fuhrer	Assistant City Manager
	Monica Arsenault	Assistant City Clerk

Absent:	John Titkanich, Jr.	City Manager
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Other staff members present:

Ed Wegerif, Public Works Director; Jack Walsh, Utilities Director; Gene Prince, Fire Chief; Jonathan Lamm, Deputy Fire Chief; Karen Hamilton, Community Services Director; Lora Howell, Interim Finance Director; Tammy Gemmati, Administrative Services Director; Larry Lallo, Economic Development Manager; Samia Singleton, CRA Program Specialist; Mike Cantaloupe, Police Chief; and Samantha Senger, PR Specialist.

II. Discussion Topics

1. Department Presentations

Assistant City Manager Fuhrer introduced all Council members and all staff members present.

Chief Cantaloupe provided a brief update on the Police Department. He summarized the Crime Report from 2017 and stated that the crime rate is the lowest it has been in twenty years. He noted that there were no homicides reported

within the City of Cocoa in 2017 and there was a forty percent decrease in violent crime rates. He also provided a breakdown of the number of calls the Police Department received in 2017.

Chief Cantaloupe expressed that the Police Department could not do what they're doing without the help of the community. He thanked the citizens for reaching out to the Police Department and helping to keep their neighborhoods safe. Additionally, he mentioned that Code Enforcement is now located within the Police Department building which makes it easier for them to work together.

Chief Cantaloupe discussed the Disorderly Conduct ordinance that was enacted to help deter homeless people from panhandling at intersections and in medians.

He announced the creation of a new online program called the Community Camera Registration that allows the Police Department access to residential security cameras. He explained that this program will also allow residents and businesses an opportunity to provide information regarding private security cameras located throughout the city. Furthermore, he mentioned that Community Watch meetings are generally held every week in a different neighborhood and encouraged citizens to come out and attend. Lastly, he noted the various ways (besides the emergency line) to reach out to the Police Department.

Ms. Karen Hamilton provided updates in regards to the Community Services department. She mentioned the Sustainability Advisory Committee that was established in December. She also noted that there are fourteen new businesses that have opened in the District One area including Dollar General and Wawa.

Ms. Hamilton shared information regarding the Diamond Square CRA. She stated that the Diamond Square CRA is funding the new Community Garden that was donated by St. Mark's Church. The Diamond Square CRA also sponsors the Alliance for Neighborhood Restoration program.

She briefly discussed a few of the local housing projects taking place in the community. She stated that the Housing department has funded both housing repairs and demolitions of unsafe structures.

Ms. Tammy Gemmati discussed the upcoming Summer Youth program. She explained that this is a program put on by both the City of Cocoa and CareerSource Brevard. The program provides an opportunity for Cocoa High School students to work as interns at the City for a period of five weeks. These are paid positions and there are eleven spots available. She noted that applications are available now and are due no later than May 3rd.

Chief Gene Prince talked about storm preparedness. He noted the damages and potential damages that could have happened during hurricanes Matthew and Irma. He explained that staff partnered with Brevard County and spent countless hours trying to prepare for the storms. He explained the Fire Department's role in helping to assist with storms.

Chief Prince spoke briefly about fire inspections that the Fire Department conducts in order to enforce and maintain the fire code. This includes inspections of fire alarms, sprinklers, daycare facilities and more.

Furthermore, he mentioned the new fire stations that have been built or in the process of being finished. He stated that the Fire Department's goal is to be able to respond to an emergency call within four minutes. Chief Prince stated that they are in the process of establishing new response routes. He explained that response routes can vary depending on the type of call the Fire Department receives.

Mr. Jack Walsh provided a brief overview of the six divisions that form the Utilities Department. He shared that approximately three billion gallons of water have been pumped out so far this year and approximately seven billion gallons are pumped out annually. He noted the number of work orders that have been processed to date. He also shared the number of valve assessments completed on hydrants to date.

Mr. Walsh announced that citizens should expect to find a notice attached to their water bill in May. This notice is in regards to a missed testing site, however, the water is still safe and there will be information posted on the City's website.

Assistant City Manager Fuhrer announced that April is Water Conservation Month.

Mr. Ed Wegerif gave a brief overview of the Public Works department. He mentioned that the Harry T. Moore Center was a four hundred thousand dollar project that took place in 2017. Additionally, a three hundred thousand dollar baffle box was completed in the downtown area as well. Staff is currently working on the Riverfront Connector on S.R. 520. The Heart of Cocoa Meeting Room on Factory Street is also under construction.

Mr. Wegerif shared that five bids were submitted for the project on Stone Street, however, they all came in over the City's budget and so staff will need to reassess the project and new bids will need to be submitted within the budget. The middle portion of Fiske Boulevard, from Peachtree to Highland Street, will begin construction next fiscal year. It is under design now.

Ms. Marisol Lanza, 436 Satsuma Street, Cocoa, stated she lives in a flood zone and she has made complaints about a sinkhole on her property. In response, Mr. Wegerif asked her to speak with him separately after the meeting.

Assistant City Manager Fuhrer announced that there will be a Back to Summer event held at Provost Park on May 23rd.

Councilman Whipple stated that the City has been applying for grant funding for the establishment of the Leon and Jewel Collins African American Museum. He noted that he had heard that the City has secured fifty thousand dollars in grant funding. Furthermore, Assistant City Manager Fuhrer stated that the City is also trying to have the museum established as a Historical Site which will open the door for additional grant funding in the future.

Mr. Herb Hernandez, Cocoa Housing Authority, spoke briefly about a crime case that was reported to the Cocoa Police Department. He thanked the police for catching and arresting the suspects for illegal activity. Mr. Hernandez also noted a few of the various housing projects going on in Cocoa. He mentioned public housing apartments that are in the process of being revamped and that each apartment will receive seventy thousand dollars in renovations.

The meeting was opened to the public for comments and questions.

Ms. Kathy Hamilton-Brown, 306 Edinburgh Dr., Cocoa, has been a resident in Cocoa for seventeen years. She spoke in regards to Provost Park and the people that have been sleeping and selling drugs in the park. She stated that these people have taken the park away from the children and she would like to know what the City can do to put an end to it. In response, Assistant City Manager Fuhrer mentioned the Drop a Dime program and asked her to reach out to the Police Department. Ms. Hamilton-Brown stated that she has reached out to the Police Department but they do not respond fast enough. Assistant City Manager Fuhrer noted that there are other members in the community that have reached out to the Police Department about this issue as well. He asked Ms. Hamilton-Brown to speak with Chief Cantaloupe following the meeting so he can assist her with a plan to resolve the complaint.

Mr. Lorin Waters, 610 Blake Avenue, Cocoa, asked to speak about the relocation of the Joe Lee Smith Center. In response, Assistant City Manager Fuhrer stated that there is an upcoming meeting that will be held in May in regards to this topic and asked Mr. Waters to attend to share his concerns. Mr. Waters expressed his displeasure regarding the proposed relocation of the Joe Lee Smith Center. He asked that the City consider rebuilding the center where it is and not take history away from Diamond Square.

Ms. Lanza reiterated the same complaint regarding Provost Park. She asked that the City do something to eliminate the issues going on there so that the children may return to the park.

Ms. Connie Harvey, 29 Riverside Dr., Cocoa, talked about Florida being the leading state in drowning cases, especially involving children, in the nation. She mentioned the pool at the Joe Lee Smith Center where children take swimming lessons and asked that staff and Council consider the opportunities they may be taking from the children if they remove the pool.

Ms. Latoya Bell, 580 Chandler St., expressed her displeasure in the potential relocation of the Joe Lee Smith Center. She noted a location she thought may be appropriate.

Councilman Whipple addressed the audience and stated, for the record, that he was not "put" in office, but rather ran for office and won fairly. He spoke of influence and compassion for and in the community. He stated that the relocation of the Joe Lee Smith Center will not be his decision alone, but rather the people's choice. He encouraged the public to attend Council meetings to speak their minds rather than blame him for their misfortunes.

Councilman Whipple thanked everyone for coming.

Councilwoman Warner expressed thanks to everyone for attending. She stated that she feels Councilman Whipple's statement is right, and she encouraged everyone to feel free to reach out to any member of Council as Council represents the entire City and not just one district.

Councilman Boisvert and Deputy Mayor Blanco also thanked everyone for coming out and reiterated that they do not represent only their particular district, but the entire City as a whole.

Mayor Parrish thanked everyone for coming as well. He stated that he grew up in District One, on the other side of the railroad tracks, and attended Poinsett Middle School. He talked about the effects of the economic crash in 2008. He spoke briefly about the new Joe Lee Smith Center and the fact that regardless of everything else, the money has been freed up for a new center. He expressed that things can always be improved.

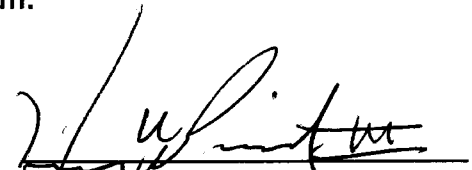
Additionally, he noted that if he wins the State seat Cocoa will have representation for the first time in approximately seventy-five years. He encouraged everyone to take control of their neighborhoods. Mayor Parrish expressed how proud he is of all of the improvements that have taken place over the years in the City.

In conclusion, Mayor Parrish thanked staff for all that they do and he thanked all of the citizens for attending the Town Hall meeting.

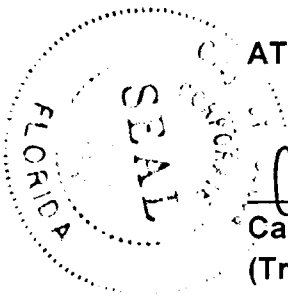
As there were no further questions or discussion to be held the meeting was adjourned.

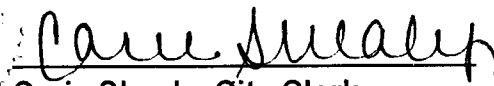
III. **ADJOURNMENT:**

- * **The Town Hall Meeting adjourned at 7:38 pm.**


Henry J. Parrish III, Mayor

ATTEST:





Carie Shealy, City Clerk

(Transcribed by Monica Arsenault, Assistant City Clerk)