

**MINUTES
CITY OF COCOA
SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING**

January 12, 2023

A Regular meeting of the Sustainability Advisory Meeting was held on January 12, 2023 at City Hall, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL, as publicly noted.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

City Manager Whitten called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

ROLL CALL:

Mike Mervis	Chairperson
Shan Lathem	Vice Chairperson
Dick Bankhead	Board Member
Cynthia Johnson	Board Member
Kimberly Prosser	Board Member
Jennifer Riggs	Board Member
Joy Rutherford	Board Member

PRESENT:

Mike Mervis	Chairperson
Shan Lathem	Vice Chairperson (arrived 6:05pm)
Dick Bankhead	Board Member
Cynthia Johnson	Board Member
Kimberly Prosser	Board Member
Jennifer Riggs	Board Member
Joy Rutherford	Board Member

STAFF PRESENT:

Stockton Whitten, City Manager; Rebecca Bowman, Finance Director; Charlene Neuterman, Community Services Director; Jack Walsh, Utilities Director; Rip Dyal, Board Liaison; Lorraine Koss, Councilmember; and JoAnna Zurinsky, Recording Secretary.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES:

1. AGENDA: Meeting of January 12, 2023
2. MINUTES: Meeting of September 1, 2022
Meeting of December 1, 2022

- * **MOTION by Board member Prosser; SECONDED by Board member Bankhead to approve the minutes of September 1, 2022 and December 1, 2022 as written.**

AYES: Mervis, Bankhead, Johnson, Prosser, Riggs, Rutherford

Motion passed unanimously (6-0).

III. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Chairman Remarks

Chairman Mervis gave a few brief remarks about the importance of the Board and the progress he is hoping they will make over the next few months. He added that if anyone has any questions or suggestions for the Board he is open to discuss them.

He reminded everyone that they are an advisory board and their responsibility is to give clear and focused advice.

2. Sustainability Budget Overview

City Manager Whitten introduced staff. He introduced Ms. Rebecca Bowman, the City's Finance Director, who provided a presentation¹ on the general overview of the City's budget. She shared that she would be providing the Board with information which covers the basic process of what staff looks at every year when they review the budget.

Ms. Bowman pointed out that the numbers they will be looking at are the numbers they have used to prepare for the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) budget. This means that the numbers for FY22 have not been updated yet as staff is working to close the books for that year.

In the presentation, Ms. Bowman provided and reviewed a historical review of the Ad Valorem Tax Base. She also shared a chart which depicted General Fund revenues by source.

Ms. Bowman shared a breakdown of estimated new money in the General Fund as well as estimated expense increases in the General Fund. Further discussion was held on balancing the General Fund and a breakdown of the FY23 final budget was provided by department.

In response to a question posed by Board member Riggs, City Manager Whitten pointed out that the City's Utilities Director, Jack Walsh, recently negotiated the City's Consumptive Use Permit.

¹ Exhibit A: Sustainability Workshop 1/12/23

Additionally, Mr. Walsh explained that he missed the last Sustainability Advisory Board meeting because he was at the St. John's River Water Management District Board meeting in Palatka. He elaborated on what the Consumptive Use Permit is and noted that it was on the Board's agenda that evening. Mr. Walsh shared that he spent about a year and half negotiating with the District, which includes all of the terms and conditions that go with it. The permit was approved at this meeting and it is good for another twenty years until 2042.

Mr. Walsh talked in furtherance about conservation, and shared while the City's consumption has gone down, its number of customers continue to rise. He noted that the City has a long-term permit and we are very sustainable with respect to our water withdrawals.

Lastly, Ms. Bowman shared the FY23-FY26 General Fund CIP requests that were submitted in FY22. They are as follows:

- 2023 - \$2,247,921 (Police Vehicles, Police and Fire P25 Radio Replacement, SWAT Vehicle, Street Paving, Fleet Service Vehicle, City Hall Carpet, Dump Truck, Fleet Faster, and Porcher House Rehab)
- 2024 - \$1,837,737 (Police Vehicles, Police and Fire Radio P25 Replacement, Traffic Surveillance Pole, and Annual Street Paving)
- 2025 - \$1,768,260 (Police Vehicles, Police and Fire Radio P25 Replacement, Fire Utility Truck, Annual Street Paving, and Indian River Drive (IRD) Stabilization)
- 2026 - \$2,245,557 (Police Vehicles, Police and Fire P25 Radio Replacement, Annual Street Paving, Dixon and IRD Roadway Resiliency Project/Grant)

Ms. Bowman pointed out that the bottom line is that staff is always trying to figure out how to balance the budget, and there are needs that exceed what the City's revenue sources are. In response, Chairman Mervis pointed out that as the Board considers recommendations and implementations of the Plan, they must be mindful of the limited resources that are available from the City, however that is not to say that there are not grants and other avenues that can be pursued for additional funding.

3. Updates of Sustainability Plan w/Departmental Items

City Manager Whitten asked everyone to refer to the Sustainability Draft Plan² in front of them and added that both Mr. Walsh and Ms. Neuterman are in attendance to review their sections and to answer any questions.

Mr. Walsh reviewed the blue sections in the plan related to Utilities. He explained each item and what staff is doing to address them. He discussed the City's Annual

² Sustainability Draft Plan – Version 2

Water Quality Report and pointed out that further information can be found online on the City's website.

Mr. Walsh talked about hurricane preparedness and what the City does to push out tips and checklists for citizens to help them get prepared.

Additionally, he talked about customer rebates and shared that Cocoa issued 26 toilet rebates and 34 rain barrel rebates under its current program for 2022.

Ms. Neuterman reviewed the orange sections in the plan related to Community Services and explained what each item is and provided a status update.

While discussing energy efficiency for incoming development projects, Chairman Mervis asked if the City offers any "bonus points" for developers who offer energy efficiencies, upgrades or innovative approaches to their projects. In response, Ms. Neuterman shared that the City does not offer "bonus points", however the City will waive any permit fees for solar installations.

Board member Johnson asked if CDBG, HOME or SHIP reimburses the City when fees are waived since staff is still putting in the time and work to review plans. In response, Ms. Neuterman explained that the City does not get reimbursed by CDBG, HOME or SHIP for waiving building permit fees. She clarified that the City charges a plan review fee which is included in all building permits so that is still collected upfront.

Board member Bankhead pointed out that some states have laws or restrictions on what can or cannot be imposed on developers. He asked Ms. Neuterman if she is aware of any restrictions like that in Florida. In response, Ms. Neuterman explained that she does not believe there are any limitations, however the City provides recommendations to follow best practices for sustainability measures for energy efficiencies.

Ms. Neuterman discussed affordable housing and pointed out that the City has an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee that meets triennially and is due to reconvene in 2023. Additionally, the City partners with Space Coast Habitat to build affordable housing units in Cocoa.

The City is also part of the Housing Consortium with Brevard County, Titusville, Melbourne and Palm Bay. Ms. Neuterman pointed out that they meet regularly to address affordable housing and collaborate to create affordable housing in each community.

Ms. Neuterman discussed the National Register of Historic Places and the National Historic Landmark program. She shared that the City keeps an inventory of City-owned facilities that are listed on the National Registry and Brevard County keeps a list of all facilities on the National Registry. She mentioned that private properties

must have the owner of the property submit grants related to National Registry/Landmark designations. She notated several City structures that are on the National Registry such as the Cocoa Village Playhouse, the Porcher House and St. Mark's.

Ms. Neuterman disclosed that the City currently has a grant that was received through the State of Florida to do some historical information gathering for the Leon and Jewel Collins Museum and the City has been working to update that. Staff is also working on another grant which will have a timeline of historical documents plus video and audio interviews from a lot of the residents and their families to talk about the historical significance of the Diamond Square community as well as the African-American community in Cocoa.

Furthermore, she talked about the Resiliency Plan and converting key facilities to "solar with storage" and acquiring funding from FEMA. She explained that at this time there is no funding from FEMA related to solar conversion of key facilities because FEMA is currently focused on wind/water mitigation.

Ms. Neuterman reiterated that the City currently waives all solar permit fees for installation of photovoltaic panels, per Resolution 2019-032. She also pointed out that the City publishes the Solar Co-Op link and homeowners can go there to learn about local vendors offering solar construction.

Ms. Neuterman talked about SCAT and an item in the plan requesting that the City work with the County and other municipalities to strongly encourage conversion to alternate fuel source buses as SCAT cycles through its inventory. Ms. Neuterman explained that SCAT is a County agency and the City has limited lobbying abilities to require SCAT to transition to alternative fuel buses.

Vice Chairperson Lathem inquired if the City uses recycled automotive parts to repair its fleet. In response, Ms. Neuterman stated that she did not believe so but was not sure. Additionally, Ms. Bowman explained that the Fleet Department is very conscientious about costs due to budget restraints and tries to reuse what they can in-house to keep cost down.

Additionally, she talked about LIME bikes and shared that there was research conducted in 2019 regarding the bikes in other cities and the main challenges were that the bikes were left unattended, dropped on sidewalks and not maintained. Many cities have eliminated the use of LIME bikes and have gone to electric scooter rentals. With the cost of electric bikes going down, many residents are purchasing them for use locally. Ms. Neuterman pointed out that the City purchased several electric bikes for the Police Department to use for patrolling.

Composting was discussed and Ms. Neuterman noted that a link could be added to the City's website directing interested individuals to UF/IFAS Extension for more

information. She mentioned that Community Services has not received any requests related to composting at this time.

4. Setting Priorities

Chairperson Mervis stated that the Board would begin to discuss priorities at the next meeting as well as discuss the yellow portions of the Sustainability Plan assigned to the Public Works Department.

5. Establishing Regular Quarterly Meeting Dates

- * **MOTION by Board member Johnson; SECONDED by Board member Riggs to set a meeting for the first Thursday of every month and one or two weeks prior to the meeting it can be determined if a quorum can be established.**

Further discussion was held on the motion. Vice Chairperson Lathem explained that she has some travel plans coming up and she is not always aware of when that will be until the last minute. She shared that most of her travels begin on a Thursday and asked if they could amend the motion to set meeting days on Tuesdays or Wednesdays.

Board member Prosser also expressed that she works in emergency management and will not always be able to commit to the first Thursday of each month. She shared that if the next meeting is scheduled on the first Thursday in February she would not be able to make that meeting due to a work conflict.

Further discussion was held on setting dates and flexibilities.

AYES: Johnson, Riggs

NAYES: Mervis, Bankhead, Prosser, Rutherford

Motion failed (2-4).

Board member Riggs expressed that for a period of time she feels that meetings should be held monthly while the Board makes its way through the plan, that way momentum is not lost between meetings.

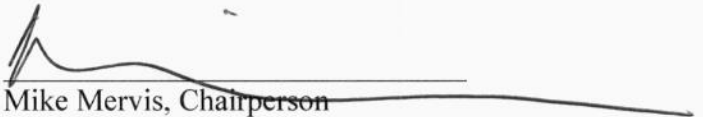
Chairman Mervis suggested that at this time the next meeting be scheduled on Thursday, February 2, 2023. In response, Vice Chairperson Lathem shared that she would not be able to make that meeting. Additionally, City Manager Whitten stated that he would need to check with the Public Works Director, Bryant Smith, to see if he is available to come speak to the Board that evening regarding his sections in the plan.

IV. NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next scheduled meeting for the Sustainability Advisory Board will be held on February 2, 2023 at 6pm in Cocoa City Hall, 65 Stone St, Cocoa, FL 32922.

V. **ADJOURNMENT:**

- * **The Sustainability Advisory Board meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM.**


Mike Mervis, Chairperson

ATTEST:


Monica Arsenault, Assistant City Clerk