

MINUTES
City of Cocoa
Regular Meeting of The City Council
April 8, 2025

A Regular City Council Meeting was held on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, in Cocoa City Hall, in City Council Chambers, located at 65 Stone Street, in Cocoa, Florida, 32922, as publicly noticed.

I. Opening Matters:

Mayor Blake called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Councilmember Hearn provided the invocation, and Deputy Mayor Weeks led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The City Clerk took the roll.

PRESENT:	Michael C. Blake	Mayor
	Patricia Weeks	Deputy Mayor
	Alex Goins	Councilmember
	Lavander Hearn	Councilmember
	Lorraine Koss	Councilmember (via phone)
	Anthony Garganese	City Attorney
	Stockton Whitten	City Manager
	Monica Arsenault	City Clerk

ABSENT:

OTHER STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Abby Morgan, Public Works Director; Rebecca Bowman, Finance Director; Charlene Neuterman, Community Services Director; Jonathan Lamm, Fire Chief; Evander Collier, Police Chief; Jack Walsh, Utilities Director; Samantha Senger, Communications and Economic Development Director; Tammy Gemmati,

Administrative Services Director; Robert Beach, Chief Technology Officer; and Megan Crutcher, Helpdesk Support Tech.

II. Approval of Agenda and Minutes:

1. Agenda: Regular Meeting of April 8, 2025. (2025-183).

* **MOTION by Councilmember Hearn; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Weeks to approve the agenda for the Regular City Council meeting of April 8, 2025 as written.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

2. Minutes: (a) Regular Meeting of February 11, 2025. (2025-184).

3. Minutes: (b) Special Meeting of February 18, 2025. (2025-297).

* **MOTION by Deputy Mayor Weeks; Seconded by Councilmember Goins to approve the minutes for the Regular City Council meeting of February 11, 2025 and the Special City Council meeting of February 18, 2025 as written.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

III. Awards and Presentations:

1. Recognize April 13-19, 2025 as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. (2025-249). (Police Chief)

Councilmember Hearn read the proclamation into the record.

2. Proclamation recognizing the support of Tax-Exempt Municipal Bonds. (2025-325). (Mayor Blake)

Mayor Blake read the proclamation into the record.

3. Proclamation recognizing the month of April as Fair Housing Month. (2025-327). (Deputy Mayor Weeks)

Deputy Mayor Weeks read the proclamation into the record.

4. Employee recognition presentation of Ron Scherfel, Field Service Representative in Field Services/Finance. (2025-336). (Finance Director)

City Manager Whitten invited the staff from the City's Customer Service Department to the front to recognize one of their own, Mr. Ron Scherfel. He asked Ms. Gemmati to share information about a new program staff has been working on.

Ms. Gemmati presented information on the new City Employee Recognition program.

Ms. Bowman presented Mr. Scherfel with a certificate and a challenger coin and shared a compassionate story about how Mr. Scherfel assisted a citizen who was in distress and needed help. She added that he is the first employee to receive a coin and certificate as part of the new program.

IV. Delegations:

Sara Conkling, 1305 S. Lakemont Dr., Cocoa, came to speak on behalf of her Church, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation Center in Cocoa. She talked about undocumented neighbors who deserve strong community connections and some recent deportations that have happened are not right and appear to be targeted towards people who are of color. They are asking the community to call for compassion and strength and to recognize the dignity of every person.

JB Dennis, 3710 Catalina Dr., Brevard County, wished to file a complaint against the Water Department. He would like to see changes made as he has had several unpleasant experiences with the department. He complained that his water keeps getting shut off even though he keeps making payments on the account. Additionally, the City Manager's secretary refused to set up an appointment with him and the City Manager to discuss these issues.

Ted Fore, 1700 Freda Trl., Brevard County, shared that he has come up with a few new ideas. He explained that he did not realize he could apply for a CDBG grant himself, so he will be pursuing that. He would simply like to ask Council to consider helping him in any way that they can because he needs all the help he can get.

Bobby Britford, Vice President of the Central Brevard Bengals program, thanked the City of Cocoa for their assistance and support of their new program. They are located near the edge of Provost Park and their program supports children and families. He is here tonight to ask Council to continue their support of the community's children.

V. Consent Agenda:

1. To Approve Task Order 2023-31 Amendment 1 with Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc. (Jacobs) for the engineering services for the design and permitting of the above grade wellhead facilities for the Dyal New Well 17 project (WS20DW). (2025-219). (Utilities Director)
 2. Approve a Budget Transfer for FY25, BAF # 25-052-T, by Transferring Funds from 421-4020-536.52-09 (Chemicals) to 421-4020-536.46-00 (Repairs and Maintenance) to keep Accounts solvent due to Unexpected Repairs to High Service Pumps. Authorize a change order of \$60,000 to the existing purchase order to Stewart Electric Motor Works, Inc piggybacking Brevard County contract 22-23-154-AG for a total amount of \$105,000. (2025-264). (Utilities Director)
 3. Announcement of Councilmember Hearn and Councilmember Goins to Attend the Florida League of Cities Legislative Action Days from March 23- March 26, 2025. (2025-272). (Administrative Services Director)
- * **MOTION by Councilmember Hearn; Seconded by Councilmember Goins to approve the Consent agenda.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

VI. Public Hearings:

VII. Council Business:

1. Request Council authorization for the City Manager to engage the Brevard County Manager and Brevard County Board of County Commissioners to extend the sunset date of the Diamond Square Community Redevelopment Agency to 2041. Request Council authorization for the City Manager to engage the Brevard County Manager and Brevard County Board of County Commissioners to remove the cap of \$150,000 in County Tax Increment Funds (TIF) imposed on the Diamond Square Community Redevelopment Agency through an Interlocal Agreement that was approved in 2020. (2025-215). (Community Services Director)

Ms. Neuterman provided the history of the Interlocal Agreement from 2019. She explained that at their last Diamond Square CRA meeting, the board requested that city staff bring forward to Council a request to authorize the City Manager to engage the Brevard County Manager and Brevard County Board of County Commissioners to extend the sunset date of the Diamond Square Community Redevelopment Agency to 2041. They would also like to request Council's authorization for the City Manager to engage the Brevard County Manager and

Brevard County Board of County Commissioners to remove the cap of \$150,000 in County Tax Increment Funds (TIF) imposed on the Diamond Square Community Redevelopment Agency.

- * **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Goins to approve the item, for discussion.**

Both Councilmember Goins and Deputy Mayor Weeks shared sentiments about the CRAs and encouraged the public to reach out to their local representatives to share the importance of the CRAs and garner support to extend the sunset date.

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

2. Request City Council approval of changes to the Agenda Due Dates and Publishing Dates and Direct the City Attorney and City Manager to prepare for the Council's consideration changes to the City Council's Rules of Procedure. (2025-338). (City Manager)

Mayor Blake shared that as long as he's been on Council, since about 1998, he has received his agendas on Fridays. He understands that their Rules of Procedure states that Council should receive their agendas by Wednesday evenings, however historically that has never happened and he understands that is one of the things that is going to be addressed.

City Manager Whitten provided an explanation of the agenda process and stated that he would realistically like to have agendas to Council by the close of business on Thursdays and posted online by Fridays at noon.

- * **MOTION by Councilmember Koss; Seconded by Councilmember Goins to direct the City Attorney and City Manager to prepare changes to the City Council's Rules of Procedure for Council's consideration; and to update agenda posting days as follows, with discussion:**

- 1) **Agendas posted to City Council by close of business on Thursdays, prior to a City Council meeting.**
- 2) **Agendas posted to the public on Fridays by noon, prior to a City Council meeting.**

Councilmember Koss shared that she is content with Council receiving the agenda a day earlier, however she is concerned that staff is only giving the public a few extra hours to view it. She has received complaints in the past from constituents who felt they did not have enough time to view the agenda.

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

3. Consider approval of the creation of a city-wide beautification grant, modeled after the Diamond Square program, to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the City's community. (2025-339). (Councilman Hearn)

Councilmember Hearn shared that this was brought up previously at a workshop, and while Council seemed to agree, a motion was never made. He would like Council to consider making it official by making a motion.

He added that there are some stipulations he would like to include in the program. He would like each grant to be \$500 and allocated to homeowners that own homes that were built prior to 2000 so the funds can go to homes who really need the help.

Overtime, he would like to increase eligibility of the program to include homes that were constructed after the year 2000 so that as homes age they can have the opportunity to apply for the grant.

Deputy Mayor Weeks advised that \$500 will not cover that much. She also shared that he may want to reconsider changing the age of the homes to any homes built prior to 1980.

- * **MOTION by Councilmember Hearn; Seconded by Councilmember Goins to authorize the City Manager to implement the program, allocating \$15,000 dollars total to the program, divided into two parts, \$10,000 dollars for paint and \$5,000 dollars for plants and shrubbery, with discussion.**

It was pointed out that the Diamond Square CRA already has a beautification grant program and that they should be excluded from this program. In response, Councilmember Hearn agreed that is a good point and would like to exclude that area from this program since they already have their own.

Councilmember Goins suggested that they try this as a 1-year pilot program.

City Manager Whitten advised that Council has one more budget workshop in July where this can be discussed further based on how the budget looks and if funding can be found.

Councilmember Hearn wished to amend his motion to include these suggestions.

- * **MOTION AMENDED by Councilmember Hearn; Seconded by Councilmember Goins to authorize the City Manager to find funding for a one-year pilot program, allocating \$15,000 dollars total to the program, divided into two parts, \$10,000 dollars for paint and \$5,000 dollars for plants and shrubbery, to be brought back for further discussion at Council's July Budget Workshop.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

NAYES: Blake

THE MOTION CARRIED (4-1)

4. Consider the approval of implementing traffic calming measures, including flashing stop signs, pedestrian signs, and reflectors, in areas of concern such as Park Dr. & N. Carolina Ave., N. Georgia Ave. & Bristol Dr., as well as the curve on Bristol Drive. (2025-40). (Councilman Hearn)

Councilmember Hearn shared that this is a safety issue that he sees every day and it needs to be addressed before someone gets seriously injured. He understands there is a cost associated with the safety measures he is requesting but they shouldn't be too expensive to install. He asked Council for their support.

Ms. Jackie Isom, 1050 Bristol Dr., Cocoa, shared that cars are speeding through her neighborhood consistently and she has come to Council to express her concerns numerous times. She implored Council to do something about this.

James Carrier, 1208 Cambridge Dr., Cocoa, reiterated Ms. Isom's comments and shared that he has personally witnessed speeders on a daily basis in this area. There are a lot of children in the area and there aren't many sidewalks. He was already in a hit in a car accident last year and is worried that one of these speeders will hit a child.

Councilmember Koss agreed with Mr. Carrier and would like to see traffic calming measures installed to protect the safety of citizens.

Councilmember Goins added that he would also like to see traffic calming measures installed along Varr Avenue, Holmes Street and Counts Street. He has received many complaints from citizens who live in those neighborhoods.

Deputy Mayor Weeks shared that there are two intersections at Talbot Boulevard and Mycroft Drive. She is concerned because speeders are blowing the intersections.

Councilmember Koss added that she would like to see traffic calming measures in the Pine Ridge neighborhood along Pineda Street and also on Westchester Drive.

- * **MOTION by Councilmember Hearn; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Weeks to authorize staff to examine the most appropriate traffic calming measures at the following locations:**

- Park Drive
- N. Carolina Avenue
- N. Georgia Avenue & Bristol Drive, including the curve along Bristol Drive
- Varr Avenue
- Holmes Street
- Counts Street
- 2 intersections along Talbot Boulevard and Mycroft Drive
- Pine Ridge neighborhood along Pineda Street
- Westchester Drive

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

VIII. City Business:

1. Accept the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for Fiscal Year 2024. (2025-322). (Finance Director)

Ms. Bowman introduced Mr. Joel Knopp, who is a partner with Forvis Mazars. Mr. Knopp gave a presentation on the City's ACFR.

- * **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Weeks to accept the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for FY2024.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

2. The applicant (James Carrier) is requesting a reduction of the current Code Enforcement Lien of \$500,910 for the property located at 1208 Cambridge Dr., be reduced to City Cost of \$2,274.72. (2025-286). (Community Services Director) Ms. Neuterman provided a brief history of the property and shared the outcome of the Code Enforcement Board meeting where this case was initially presented.

Councilmember Goins asked how staff reached out to the property owner to provide notice over the course of fourteen years.

In response, Mr. Tom Wilkinson, Code Enforcement Manager, shared that prior to his employment, two letters were sent to the property owner and according to the file, phone conversations were held as well.

It was clarified that a notice was sent via certified mail back in 2009 and again in 2019.

Mr. James Carrier, homeowner of 1208 Cambridge Dr., Cocoa, provided a history of his property. He shared that this started back in 2008 when he attempted to close in his carport. He submitted drawings for a permit but was ultimately denied. He was then told a running lien was placed against his property running at \$100 a day, for thirty days. He explained that he did not realize the lien was still running all these years later because he was never contacted until Mr. Wilkinson reached out to him.

He shared that he is an army veteran and always pays his property taxes on time. He would like Council to consider his request for a lien reduction.

- * **MOTION by Councilmember Koss; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Weeks to approve the Code Board's recommendation to reduce the lien to \$1,333.33.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Weeks, Hearn, Koss

NAYES: Blake, Goins

THE MOTION CARRIED (3-2)

3. The applicant (EquiFrist Properties LLC) is requesting a reduction of the current Code Enforcement Lien of \$281,720 for the property located at 1112 Myrtle Lane, be reduced to \$5,000. (2025-287). (Community Services Director)

Ms. Neuterman provided a brief history of the property and shared the outcome of the Code Enforcement Board meeting where this case was initially presented.

- * **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Goins to approve staff's recommendation of \$5,000 dollars.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Koss

NAYES: Hearn

THE MOTION CARRIED (4-1)

4. The applicant (SAI Property Investment Inc.) is requesting a reduction of the current Code Enforcement Lien of \$27,450. for the property located at 1203 Alamanda Lane, be reduced to \$1,000. (2025-289). (Community Services Director)

Ms. Neuterman provided a brief history of the property and shared the outcome of the Code Enforcement Board meeting where this case was initially presented.

Representatives of SAI Property Investments spoke about the history of the property and shared that SAI Property Investments bought the property a few years ago while it was vacant. The owner did not realize that a tax receipt was still required for a rental home that was vacant. He shared that evidence was provided to staff to show that the property has sat vacant for a length of time.

- * **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Goins to approve a lien reduction in the amount of \$7,000.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED (5-0)

5. The applicant (Nicholas Critelli) is requesting a reduction of the current Code Enforcement Lien of \$110,310 for the property located at 1043 Olive Street, be reduced to the City's Cost of \$2,130.53. (2025-290). (Community Services Director)

Ms. Neuterman provided a brief history of the property and shared the outcome of the Code Enforcement Board meeting where this case was initially presented.

Nicholas Critelli, the property owner, talked about his property and how he came into compliance.

- * **MOTION by Deputy Mayor Weeks; Seconded by Mayor Blake to approve a code lien reduction in the amount of \$1,080.50.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

6. The applicant (Glendy Barrios) is requesting a reduction of the current Code Enforcement Lien of \$97,030 for the property located at 1049 Olive Street, be reduced to \$3,000. (2025-291). (Community Services Director)

Ms. Neuterman provided a brief history of the property and shared the outcome of the Code Enforcement Board meeting where this case was initially presented.

- * **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Goins to approve a code lien reduction in the amount of \$2,674.25.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Goins, Hearn, Koss

NAYES: Weeks

THE MOTION CARRIED (4-1)

7. The applicant (Johnny & Lillie Dennis) is requesting a reduction of the current Code Enforcement Lien of \$9,400. for the property located at 1235 Homes Street, be reduced to \$2,500. (2025-292). (Community Services Director)

Ms. Neuterman provided a brief history of the property and shared the outcome of the Code Enforcement Board meeting where this case was initially presented. She shared that the property owners were in the audience to answer any questions.

- * **MOTION by Deputy Mayor Weeks; Seconded by Councilmember Hearn to approve a lien reduction in the amount of \$0.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED (5-0)

8. The applicant (James Yoder) is requesting a reduction of the current Code Enforcement Lien of \$117,550. for the property located at 312 Belmont Drive, be

reduced to City Cost in the amount of \$2,587.16 (2025-293). (Community Services Director)

Ms. Neuterman provided a brief history of the property and shared the outcome of the Code Enforcement Board meeting where this case was initially presented.

- * **MOTION by Deputy Mayor Weeks; Seconded by Mayor Blake to approve a lien reduction in the amount of \$100.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

9. The applicant (Realty Gems KC LLC.) is requesting a reduction of the current Code Enforcement Lien of \$14,330 for the property located at 3645 Longbow Road, be reduced to the amount of zero. (2025-294). (Community Services Director)

Ms. Neuterman provided a brief history of the property and shared the outcome of the Code Enforcement Board meeting where this case was initially presented. She pointed out that the property owner is here to answer any questions.

Kevin Martinez, the new property owner, bought the property in November of 2023. This was intended to be an investment property and it was his first investment property. He had no experience with title searches and bought the property as-is. He fixed the property as fast as he could to bring it into compliance and he intends to sell the property to a new family who wish to make Cocoa their home.

- * **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Goins to approve a lien reduction in the amount of \$1,546.68.**

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED (5-0)

IX. Informational Agenda:

1. Informational Only - The City of Cocoa's Open Board Vacancies. (2025-298). (City Clerk)
2. Bi-Weekly Report for March 13, 2025 - April 3, 2025. (2025-300). (City Manager)

X. Reports:

Chief Collier shared that tomorrow, April 9th from 11am-1pm at the Police Department, there will be an awards luncheon for police staff and civilian volunteers if Council would like to attend.

Ms. Senger shared information about the Trash Bash last Saturday and Cocoa came in 1st place.

City Manager Whitten shared that the City is currently accepting applications for the Cocoa Youth Internship program that takes place every summer. The deadline to apply is April 25th and will begin in June and will run for several weeks into July.

Mayor Blake shared photos from the Florida League of Cities conference he attended in Tallahassee at the end of March. He also shared a video that he premiered in for the Florida League of Cities.

Councilmember Goins talked about McNair Middle School and shared that a meeting was held last night to discuss the school. The student population has gone down but he is hopeful that with all the new development it will pick back up.

Additionally, he talked about the Florida League of Cities Legislative conference that he attended with Mayor Blake and expressed that it was a great and productive conference.

Deputy Mayor Weeks shared pictures of a unique paver design that her church did that she would like to see mimicked at the Cocoa Conservation Area. The grass is able to grow in between the pavers because of the design but it's smooth enough that a wheelchair could easily navigate it.

Additionally, Deputy Mayor Weeks shared several photos from events she recently attended, including a book reading event at Saturn Elementary, a Police Walk through Cocoa Village and an event Governor Ron DeSantis attended to speak about Florida's water resources.

Lastly, she reminded everyone that her District 3 Town Hall meeting will be held at the Cocoa Library from 6-7:30pm on April 24th.

XI. Adjournment:

- * **MOTION by Deputy Mayor Weeks; Seconded by Councilmember Hearn to adjourn the Regular meeting of April 8, 2025.**

AYES: Blake, Weeks, Goins, Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

The meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.



Michael C. Blake, Mayor

ATTEST:



Monica Arsenault, CMC, City Clerk



