

The City Commission of the City of Fernandina Beach, Florida met in a Special Meeting on Tuesday, March 21, 2017 at 5:00 pm in the City Commission Chambers. Present were Mayor Robin C. Lentz presiding, Vice Mayor Len Kreger, Commissioners John A. Miller, Roy G. Smith, and Tim Poynter. Also present were Deputy City Clerk Kim Elliott-Briley, City Manager Dale L. Martin and City Attorney Tammi Bach.

Mayor Lentz called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

4. INTRODUCTIONS: City Manager Dale Martin announced the three waterfront development consultants presenting, in no particular order, were selected by the evaluation committee. Each waterfront development consultant will have thirty minutes to give an overview of their firm and philosophy with regard to Fernandina Beach. As part of the 6:00 pm City Commission Regular Meeting, immediately following this Special Meeting, the City Commission will hear the third waterfront development consultant's presentation then, the City Commission will rank the three waterfront development consultants. The waterfront development consultant ranked highest will be awarded the opportunity to enter into negotiations with City Manager Martin and City Attorney Bach and return a proposed contract at a subsequent City Commission meeting.

5.1. DIX.HITE+PARTNERS, INC.: Dix.Hite+Partners, Inc. Professional Landscape Architect and Principal Studio Leader Mr. Greg Bryla provided a presentation and explained Dix.Hite+Partners, Inc. is comprised of a group of individuals who want to help the City of Fernandina Beach complete, define, and implement their vision for the downtown waterfront area. Displaying slides of projects in Daytona Beach and Jacksonville Beach, with similar aspects to Fernandina Beach, Mr. Bryla stated the members of the Dix.Hite team sought public participation and input through visioning sessions, master planning, and first space implementation to create destination streets. Every Dix.Hite project is planned, designed, built, and interfaces with agencies such as Florida Department of Transportation (DOT) at the policy level. Dix.Hite recently implemented a multi-modal document, one of the first ones to look at land use context to influence road design, in downtown Orlando, Florida. This design concept worked so well that Dix.Hite was asked to write the complete Orlando, Florida streets manual which will be published April, 2017. Mr. Bryla explained that Planning Solutions employee Ms. Beth Lemke is part of the Dix.Hite team and is an integral force in obtaining downtown waterfront project funding. Approaching the Fernandina Beach waterfront design project through a process called the six D's; this process shows the project start, where it's going and the deliverables in between. Mr. Bryla noted downtown Fernandina Beach embodies a lot of what people desire. Ms. Beth Lemke has been working on the project on and off since 2009 beginning with the transportation study. She knows the project history well which will benefit the discovery, research, inventory, and analysis research phases. The information gathered in the research phase will be graphically communicated for ease in viewing, especially for the public; it will include surveys, planned diagrams and visual analysis. Mr. Bryla noted public surveys, online surveys and public workshops will bring the citizens together and encourage participation in the waterfront development plan while Dix.Hite provides the expertise and experience to implement the plan. The design phase begins after understanding the dream. Dix.Hite realizes people need two things in public spaces; food/beverage and flexible space. Circulation analysis

is done to determine safe vehicular and pedestrian intersections. Everything goes back to the dream to ensure the publicly vested plan is constructed and removes the subjectivity of competing interests.

Commissioner Poynter reflected that a recurring issue is public participation, including poor attendance at past community meetings and asked Dix.Hite how they would engage public participation. Ms. Beth Lemke explained that in her thirty years of experience there are lots of tools to engage the public, statistically valid surveys can give a good cross section of the communities' wants and desires. Ms. Lemke noted various team members are experienced and have diverse strategies to engage the public.

Commissioner Miller noted Dix.Hite was involved in the SunRail system and asked about the unique issue the railroad poses for Fernandina Beach's waterfront and questioned their experience in dealing with railroads. Kittelson Associates employee Mr. JP Weizner explained Dix.Hite has worked with the SunRail, Brightline and Tri Rail railroad systems and has established relationships with these railroads to help them understand the bigger picture and vision, including safety.

Vice Mayor Kreger commented the project scope is not to reinvent the wheel. A real issue that needs to be addressed is private property on N. Front Street and certain restrictions in the City's Comprehensive Plan. Vice Mayor Kreger noted the City already has a lot of waterfront development information and wants to make certain the waterfront design consultants will not just rewrite what is already known.

An unidentified Dix.Hite consultant confirmed that previously developed waterfront plans and analysis have been reviewed by Dix.Hite staff and will not be duplicated in this process. He further explained Dix.Hite did the transportation study in 2009 and has the expertise to see the issues from all sides.

Vice Mayor Kreger acknowledged this is a ten–twenty year project and noted that over ten years ago approximately 1,000 volunteer hours were put into the Waterfront Florida Partnership Program, with new eyes on the project, there were some valid ideas that should not be discredited.

Commissioner Poynter asked about Dix.Hite's knowledge of acquiring project funding. Ms. Lemke noted that in past projects numerous funds and sources have been obtained to offset project costs. Ms. Lemke stated the hardest part is not obtaining funds, it is determining what the City wants their waterfront to look like.

Commissioner Smith mentioned sea level rise and high tides in the downtown waterfront area and questioned if resiliency funding is available to protect this area from rising waters. Ms. Lemke responded there is definitely sea level rise money and just this week the United States Army Corps of Engineers brought \$34 million dollars to a \$50 million project in Daytona Beach, Florida. In discussions with agencies; St. John's River Water Management District, Department of Environmental, etc., they ask about getting the City of Fernandina Beach to do a sea level rise

project. Ms. Lemke noted there is buzz at these agencies about the City doing projects and she believes the money will be available provided the project details align with the perspective agencies resiliency requirements.

In conclusion, Mr. Bryla stated people have an innate connection to nature and the water and Fernandina Beach is a great coastal town but the most prime, contiguous part ends in a parking lot. A universal waterfront design is needed so that it's accessible for any age or ability. As the best team of designers and thought leaders with over twenty five years together, Mr. Bryla believes Dix.Hite is the best team.

5.2. TSW LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE: TSW Landscape Architecture Director of Landscape Architecture Mr. Brian Base stated he spent time in town last week and noted the TSW team has all vacationed in Fernandina Beach. As planners and designers, TSW Landscape Architecture gets things built and gets projects done. People are drawn to water; Fernandina Beach is amazing with deep historic roots, beautiful architecture and surroundings. Fernandina Beach is authentic, the bones are here and it can be made better. From a coastal resiliency aspect; a park and parking lot would plug it up, the connectivity, getting people where they need to go, the town has a well-planned grid to work with that accommodates any mode of transportation. Mr. Base stated first impressions are important and with the railroad track running through the most valuable piece of real estate; it's not safe, limits access to Front Street and limits opportunities to redevelop the waterfront. Taking a comprehensive approach to refresh and renew the waterfront which has been battered over the years is a great opportunity to make something that really works. With an abundance of street activity already, closing the gap to the waterfront would make it better. The waterfront in Charleston, South Carolina although denser, shows the example of people/space and projecting value back into the land. Fernandina Beach has the framework; reconnecting to the waterfront will propel it to the next level. Mr. Base pondered an important question to ask is what is the next level, what is the goal and understanding what is wanted. Mr. Base suggested that leveraging the value of the waterfront and assessing needed improvements will drive value back into downtown. The welcome area coming from the land and the welcome area from the marina should be celebrated and attract tourists and people in the community to be their waterfront park. Mr. Base noted redevelopment happens in a circle and connecting the downtown to the waterfront will drive the value up. In dealing with the one and two way streets, a traffic engineer is part of the TSW team who will assess the traffic patterns in depth and evaluate parking which is always a big issue, noting there are numerous opportunities to develop parking. Getting people engaged with the water and getting people to engage in activities is key. Having a reciprocal relationship with downtown and the water is integral and an economic development component. The TSW team is fully staffed with architects, zoning experts, landscape architects, outreach experts, engineers and is equipped to support the project and assist with access to funding.

Commissioner Poynter inquired as to how TSW would reach out to the Fernandina community. Mr. Base explained the initial TSW outreach approach is a paper survey combined with an online survey to gather citizen's needs and wants as well as a social media campaign, including a website which provides information and working with the City Commission for direction and meeting with key groups.

5.3. GAI CONSULTANTS, INC.:

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:06pm.

ATTEST:

Caroline Best
City Clerk

Robin C. Lentz
Mayor-Commissioner