

The City Commission of the City of Fernandina Beach, Florida convened in a Special Meeting with waterfront consultant firm, Dix. Hite + Partners on Tuesday, June 20, 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, City Clerk Caroline Best, City Manager Dale L. Martin and City Attorney Tammi Bach. Present from Dix Hite + Partners were Mr. Greg Bryla, Ms. Beth Lemke and Mr. J.T. Griffin.

Mayor Lentz called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Mayor Lentz welcomed Dix. Hite + Partners to give their presentation and explained there would not be public comment until the City Commission Regular Meeting at 6:00 pm.

4.1 PRESENTATION DIX. HITE + PARTNERS: Dix. Hite + Partners Principal Mr. Greg Bryla gave a presentation regarding the waterfront redevelopment. Explaining the process from inception to date, initially the request for proposal from the City Commission asked for a comprehensive and holistic look for the waterfront master plan from a dozen bidders, three were short listed and Dix. Hite + Partners was chosen. Quoting Mayor Lentz who said she made a checklist and everything the Commission wanted was in the proposal however the price point was too high. Mr. Bryla showed slides of the initial RFQ issues and initial scope outlined. Commissioners raised questions about the initial RFQ issues and initial scope which resulted in conducting individual interviews with each Commissioner to discuss further. issues that were raised by the Commission at the individual interviews. Three or more topics mentioned by each Commissioner are included in the current proposal. The notes and discussions are also included in the current proposal. The scope of work runs from Broome to Beech to 8th Street.

Vice Mayor Kreger voiced concern regarding the original RFQ scope going from encompassing the waterfront and railroad tracks to encompassing eight blocks east which is not the waterfront and railroad tracks, it is all of downtown. Mr. Bryla responded his interpretation, based on Commissioner interviews, looking at Front Street westward does not provide a comprehensive look at a comprehensive plan which precludes pedestrian and vehicular activity to the waterfront. Because the RFQ was very broad and the scope of work was not accepted there was concern about a new scope of work; however the scope of work was never accepted because the RFQ was a proposal that was very broad including everything the City wanted. Being costly, the individual Commissioner interviews were scheduled to get a full understanding from each Commissioner of their vision for the waterfront. Through the deductive process to reduce fees the scope was then revised. One of the larger expenses is public workshops which have been reduced by engaging more City staff to do data collection beginning with Police Chief Hurley and his staff doing parking inventory. Vice Mayor Kreger noted a second scope came in at \$165,000 thus this is actually the third scope. Mr. Bryla confirmed and clarified the second scope was an aberration and the original scope that was not decided upon included all of the criteria to satisfy the request for proposal. The current scope is a streamlined scope to reduce costs.

Commissioner Smith commented on the tidal rise and flooding of Front Street and noted it needs to be stopped otherwise it's a waste of money and did not seem to be in the Dix. Hite + Partners scope of services. Stating it's a problem that needs to be corrected before anything else is done. There may be grants to aid in funding for seawall projects noting Miami as an example. Stormwater is a big issue. Mayor Lentz acknowledged there is a stormwater study and plan which was also included in the Dix. Hite + Partners scope taking into consideration stormwater on Front Street. Mr. Bryla acknowledged sea level rise is a widespread issue however it would encompass a much larger area and the focus is on the waterfront park and economic development.

Commissioner Poynter remarked discussion about a seawall or stormwater is a “red herring” and in his opinion spending money to correct stormwater is not the issue. Commissioner Smith disagreed and remarked stormwater and sea level rise are issues that need to be addressed before money is spent to redevelop the waterfront. Vice Mayor Kreger noted the \$1.1 million dollar state funding to address stormwater, Andre Desilet the stormwater engineer has adopted standards and it is being worked on.

Commissioner Miller remarked the overall vision should be long term. The City has the same issue as it did over the last hundred years which is evident from reviewing past Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Miller noted as stewards of the future of this City, it’s important to make changes which will enable future technologies to be incorporated. With private properties abutting City property, owners may not be adverse to changes that would benefit and protect their properties. Vice Mayor Kreger remarked acquiring the private properties would be beneficial.

Mayor Lentz explained the waterfront plan turned into a downtown master plan because the proposed waterfront park would eliminate some parking and would thereby need a comprehensive plan to address parking issues and traffic circulation. Ultimately, the Commission would like a waterfront park. Commissioner Miller remarked wayfinding is critical to accessing the waterfront park.

Vice Mayor Kreger noted the previous parking studies and the fact that there are committees addressing downtown issues and questioned why the City would pay the Dix. Hite + Partners to address parking and stormwater. Commissioner Poynter stating his optimism about Alachua Street being opened and said he did not think it would be prudent to revisit the other approaches to parking and stormwater which have not come to fruition. Hiring professional consultants to execute a waterfront plan is the best approach to getting something accomplished.

Vice Mayor Kreger asked the City Commission to consider asking the City Manager to implement the 2009 parking plan. Commissioner Poynter responded there are other components to tie together and the 2009 parking plan excludes critical issues.

City Attorney Tammi Bach explained having spoken with the City Manager throughout this process and up to the point where, Dix. Hite + Partners gave the City a contract for \$11,500 scoping services except for the second “aberration” scope of services was off base from what was in the RFQ. Under the Consultants Competitive Negotiation Act (CCNA), the City cannot pay Dix. Hite + Partners to negotiate a scope of services and then have the Commission approve a contract at the subsequent City Commission meeting. Another issue is the interview matrix needs to be addressed to the public by the Commissioners as to what their comments were during their individual Dix. Hite + Partners interviews. Mr. Bryla commented an index of the notes is behind the matrix detailing every Commissioners individual interview. City Attorney Bach asked the Commissioners to summarize their individual interview comments for the public.

Commissioner Miller began and stated his interview with Dix. Hite + Partners consisted of his concern with sea level rise, biking and bike racks downtown, staying parking neutral and the location of the boat ramp.

Commissioner Poynter noted in his interview with Dix. Hite + Partners he voiced his desire for the development of a comprehensive plan which includes all of downtown; parking, a waterfront park, have the boat ramp moved and the marina relocated to the North. Having a plan and connecting the dots are needed. As for specificity in his interview with the consultants, Commissioner Poynter

reiterated hearing long term concerns from the community who appear frustrated as the Commissions have plans that don't come to fruition.

Commissioner Smith stated the concerns he voiced in his interview with Dix. Hite + Partners was the City can't lose any parking along the river as the first plan removed parking lots A and B and replaced with sod. Commissioner Smith also noted sea level rise and Front Street flooding needs to be addressed. The possibility of using the property on 11th Street, that was thought to be owned by the Nassau County School Board, could potentially be used for parking.

Vice Mayor Kreger explained his first question in his interview with to Dix. Hite + Partners was whether the City was paying their firm for the individual Commissioner interview. Vice Mayor Kreger noted he was unaware of the payment until the day prior to the interview(s). Stating that Mr. Bryla had mistakenly believed the Commission had voted to approve the RFQ, Vice Mayor Kreger clarified this was not the case. The discussion ran the gamut from parking, to downtown, to the waterfront park since they were not formal minutes being taken.

Mayor Lentz stated in her individual interview with Dix. Hite + Partners she discussed the important aspects including a waterfront park, traffic circulation, Front Street, opening Alachua Street, consideration of one way streets, parallel vs. angled parking, the importance of public workshops, waterfront parking, a drop off area, selling off the uplands of the Venturo property the City recently purchased, moving the marina to deep water, paid parking, City resources, reviewing past plans, securing grants and involving the community in the chosen master plan.

Mr. Bryla clarified all of the concerns discussed individually with Commissioners are going to be studied as to whether they are within the scope of the RFQ and no decisions whatsoever have been made. City Attorney Bach expressed her recommendation, after researching and reaching out to land use professionals and other local government attorneys, whether there is a scope to work with and possibly execute at some point or reject the responses for this RFQ and go back out with an RFQ scope of services that is not as broad. City Attorney Bach mentioned that regardless of staff or consultant input ultimately it takes three Commissioners to agree. Commissioner Smith believes the scope of work has changed, and should therefore be rebid.

Commissioner Poynter stated the original scope encompassed everything and was too broad. Clearly it needs to go back out and asking staff to provide some of the research services is not something he is in favor of doing. The scope needs to be narrowed by the Commission. The Venturo property was purchased to move the marina to deeper water in order to offset spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to dredge every few years. Vice Mayor Kreger reiterated staff is well aware of concerns and could give insight into implementation for issues such as traffic, parking and circulation problems. As for the waterfront the Army Corps of Engineer has no permit to move the channel and staff would be helpful in getting that together.

Commissioner Poynter asked for an agreement that goes beyond the waterfront to include parking, traffic circulation, etc. Mayor Lentz noted if a worthwhile park is developed parking will be lost and stated most of the Commissioners agree to this point. Commissioner Smith expressed his disappointment that the marina has not moved forward.

City Manager Martin stated to expand the marina north the channel has to be moved. The channel is right on the attenuator line which is not permissible by statute. Commissioner Smith asked for clarification in writing to explain the issues.

Mayor Lentz offered that Applied Technology Management (ATM) Vice President Rob Semmes from could give a presentation at a Commission meeting to explain what is happening with the waterfront. Mayor Lentz moved to break and adjourn the meeting as the RFQ is an impending action item in the following regular Commission meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the City Commission, the Special Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.

ATTEST:



CAROLINE BEST
City Clerk



ROBIN C. LENTZ
Mayor-Commissioner