



**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION**  
**CITY OF NEW PORT RICHEY**  
NEW PORT RICHEY CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
5919 MAIN STREET, NEW PORT RICHEY, FLORIDA  
February 19, 2019  
5:00 PM

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**ORDER OF  
BUSINESS**

1 Call to Order - Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Rob Marlowe at 5:00 pm. Those in attendance were, Deputy Mayor Jeff Starkey, Councilman Chopper Davis, Councilman Peter Altman and Councilman Matt Murphy.

Also in attendance were City Manager Debbie Manns, City Attorney Timothy Driscoll, City Clerk Judy Meyers, Development Director George Romagnoli, Technology Solutions Director Bryan Weed and Lt. Lauren Letona.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

2 Highway Commercial Ordinance Discussion - Page 2

City Manager Manns introduced the item to Council. She stated the purpose of the work session was to discuss the proposed Highway Commercial Ordinance with the affected property owners. City Manager Manns stated the proposed ordinance was presented on January 5, 2019. At that meeting there were a number of owners in attendance. Concerns were raised over the transient provisions. Since that time, staff has met several times with the different owners. Staff still feels very strongly that regulations need to be put in place. The original proposal included 20% rooms were to be used for transient use. After discussion, the percentage was increased to 25%. The ordinance in short provides for the hotels as a conditional use but not permitted use. Motels are phased out. Cannot exceed 28 days in a 60 day period. That provision remains but other exemptions have been incorporated. Deputy Mayor Starkey asked about occupants providing proof of residency. City Attorney Driscoll stated that the hotelier can have individual stays exempted from that count. There would have to provide the evidence. Deputy Mayor Starkey stated his two biggest concerns are the occupants going from hotel to hotel to work around the transient provision. His other concern is anyone can say they are looking for a home. City Attorney Driscoll stated that having the exemptions in there will give ammunition that hoteliers need to defend. Deputy Mayor Starkey asked about the three years provision but City Attorney Driscoll stated this gives the owners time to change their business model.

Councilman Murphy stated that this will be an ongoing process. It is a start and we can go from here.

Councilman Altman stated we have so many things pending to make our city look good but he doesn't want to devote staff time for things to occur. He stated we have our CRA Plan and this is a great example of blight. He stated how do we get owners to redevelop them into something we want and how do we incentivize them. We offer incentives in the downtown for higher rent.

Councilman Davis stated that home ownership and rentals are changing. Air BNB is going to continue to grow. He encouraged owners to change their model.

Mayor Marlowe stated he understands the three years to get the owners to change their model but when he sees pictures, Code should be out there and shutting these places down. Some of them do not even come close to a human standard of living. What we are seeing out of the hotels right now is grossly unacceptable.

City Manager Manns stated in all fairness to the owners, both photos were from the Travel Inn. Operation Clean Sheets was instituted last year and happens about every quarter. It is not just enough for us to inspect much more is warranted to protect the property values of the members of our community.

Mayor Marlowe stated that motels would be a non-conforming use and asked the City Attorney to explain what that is. Mr. Driscoll stated that if the motel closes down for more than a year it would not be allowed to reopen for that use. Mayor Marlowe stated grant funds are available to make a non-conforming use a conforming one. Mayor Marlowe stated a study done a few years ago showed a need for more apartments. Properties along US19 could be changed to a mixed use property. Mr. Iezzoni came forward and stated there is a commercial real estate grant program. If it goes above and beyond grant provisions, can enter into a development agreement.

City Manager Manns stated the last time a sizable investment in capital was made on US19 was 2004. Mr. Iezzoni stated the challenges along the US19 corridor affect the other areas.

Mayor Marlowe stated if we adopt this ordinance we are being more than fair on letting them make adjustments to their model and make them aware of assistance.

Councilman Altman stated that when we talk about the transient nature is it possible to indicate or know if they have been outside of the county. City Attorney Driscoll stated the ordinance provides for the burden to be on the hotelier. They must provide evidence that they fall into one of the categories.

Deputy Mayor stated that the calls for service to the 7 hotels 1,198 in 2017 and 1,072 in 2018. Total calls for service and premise checks were 3,535.

Mr. Patel from the Travel Inn came forward and stated he is planning to sell it. Convert to a mini-storage. He asked for the mowing of the right-of-way provisions in writing. He stated he

needs help with proving the burden of residency. He stated that in order to make his mortgage payment he needs to rent at least 7 rooms to be occupied. Deputy Mayor Starkey stated that he just made the City's case that without extended stay people staying there on a regular basis he couldn't stay in business. In his opinion he is not operating as a motel but an extended stay residence.

Councilman Altman stated the City should get appraisals to see what these properties are worth. If the income stream is where the value is and it's not in the value of the property the argument could be made that the property has not been maintained and has shifted use from the old days when US19 was a corridor from Weeki Wachee to St. Petersburg.

Deputy Mayor stated that he has seen properties getting snatched up by investors due to the changes we have made from the core.

City Manager Manns stated that she would be happy to speak to Mr. Patel but she is not interested in a grandfather clause.

Councilman Davis also stated to discuss the grant programs with the owners as well.

3 Adjournment

There being no further business to consider, upon proper motion, the meeting adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

\_\_\_\_\_ (signed)

Initialed: \_\_\_\_\_

Judy Meyers, CMC, City Clerk