



**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**

**January 12, 2021**  
**4:30 PM**

---

**ORDER OF**  
**BUSINESS**

1 Call to Order - Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Rob Marlowe at 4:30 p.m. Those in attendance were Deputy Mayor Chopper Davis, Councilman Peter Altman, Councilman Matt Murphy and Councilman Mike Peters. Also in attendance were City Manager Debbie L. Manns, City Clerk Judy Meyers, Fire Chief Chris Fitch, Parks and Recreation Director Kevin Adams, Technology Solutions Director Bryan Weed and Deputy Police Chief Lauren Letona.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

2 Discussion Regarding the 2021 Chasco Fiesta - Page 2

City Manager Manns introduced the item to Council. She stated the purpose of this work session was to conduct a discussion with the Board of Directors for the Chasco Fiesta to discuss the upcoming festival. The committee is anxious for decisions to be made for this year's event. The organizers have asked whether or not the event should go forward in accordance with the footprint that was relied upon in previous years. If the City is not interested in hosting the carnival would the City entertain some sort of revenue subsidy to compensate for the loss revenue generated by the carnival. The question is whether or not it is prudent to hold a large event at this time due to COVID-19. The State of Florida has limited events to 250 people. The CDC has not imposed a limit but rather protocols to follow. Mayor Marlowe began the discussion by stating everything he has seen coming out of the Federal government is that it will be fall before things begin to improve. He suggested holding the festival in October. It would not be safe to hold the event in March. Mayor Marlowe stated with the Hacienda opening the Gloria Swanson Parking Lot would not be feasible for the carnival. Mr. Chuck Grey came forward and stated that they normally start preparing for the event in August. He stated there are a lot of parts to the event. They partnered with Ruth Eckerd Hall for the 2019 event. They will need a letter from the City stating the City will not permit the event so Chasco is not responsible for the pending contracts. Limiting the event to 250 would not allow for any revenue to be made. There are a number of issues that preclude them from doing what they have done.

Mr. Grey stated if the event was moved to the fall it would have to remain in the fall moving forward. He stated they have considered moving the event to Memorial Day weekend. Mr. Grey

stated the carnival generates about \$60k. Ms. Patty Deremer came forward and stated that there are sponsors that have donated that they have held the funds over to this year. There are some smaller events they could do to meet the obligations of their sponsor but in the end the event belongs in Downtown NPR. She stated they could hold the car show in the downtown for Memorial Day weekend. Councilman Murphy stated he would like to see something out there for Chasco. He hopes things will be better later this year. He would like to see some smaller events just to see something happen. Councilman Peters stated that Chasco has a long standing tradition. He would like to see some kind of continuation of the Chasco brand. He likes the ideas of several mini-events. Piecing the events together over a couple of weekends could help to appease the sponsors. He stated the banners could be moved in between venues. Councilman Altman stated the idea of having a few things that are properly planned are a good idea. He is in agreement that spring is when the event should happen. The bigger thing to him is the events are in the City Council budget and there are no events. He stated Ruth Eckerd Hall stated there was a lack of control since there was no fencing for the event. He stated we have reached a point where we need to step up to where the quality is. If we object to the fence Ruth Eckerd Hall won't come back. Deputy Mayor Davis stated he does not want a permanent fence in the park. He would be in favor of a temporary fence during Chasco. He stated we are trying to make decisions about health that cannot be made at this point. He stated it was a great idea to grow Chasco to a year round brand. Mayor Marlowe stated if we owned the fencing some of it could be permanent and some could be temporary. Councilman Murphy stated he would not want to see fencing year round. Councilman Peters stated he likes the openness but there could be certain sections that are up to direct people into the entrance. He stated it would be expensive to do and he would have to see it first. He understands the issue of control. Ms. Deremer stated that they already have a deposit down at Home Depot for fencing from last year's event. Mr. Grey stated they looked at Railroad Square for the carnival and it could work if the power lines were moved. Deputy Mayor Davis asked when Railroad Square would be done and City Manager Manns stated design plans are underway and the project should be completed later this year. Mr. Renedo stated the carnival would be all of Railroad Square plus Missouri and the parking lot of the old GTE building. Councilman Altman asked City Manager Manns for advice on how to use the budgeted funds to improve the quality of events. She stated now is a good time to have the discussion and that public funds cannot simply just be given away. There has to be something tangible. Mayor Marlowe suggested raising the in-kind contribution to cover the entire amount of the City's services. Councilman Altman stated the City should be a partner in some events. Deputy Mayor Davis stated businesses need to take advantage of Chasco. He business was very profitable during the event. Mr. Grey stated having the carnival on Railroad Square would help the businesses. Amy Finotti-Marin came forward and asked for clarification on the Memorial Day event. She does not see how charging an entry fee will work. People like to participate in the event without paying for the carnival or concerts. Councilman Murphy stated he is looking forward to a big event next year. Mayor Marlowe stated it is his favorite event of the year. Councilman Peters stated he likes the idea to ask our downtown businesses to help promote it. Ms. Deremer asked if they could plan the car show for Memorial Day weekend. She stated they would formulate a plan and submit it. City Manager Manns stated we could make it work. Mayor Marlowe stated we should know by August whether or not events can be scheduled for fall.

Mayor Marlowe stated he has received some complaints about speeding on the side streets coming off of Grand and Madison. He would like staff to look at those situations and increase traffic enforcement. He stated there were some racial issues in the downtown over the last few days and he asked the police to look into it. City Manager Manns stated she is looking forward to working with Chasco to find revenue possibilities and that the City was prudent with budgeting last year in anticipation that things would be difficult this year. She stated the City needs to be cautious on how we spend our dollars. She also stated that the City needs to be mindful that there will be other event organizers who may expect to be treated the same as Chasco. She will work hard to ensure fairness. She stated the upcoming budget season will be

difficult.

4 Adjournment

There being no further business to consider, upon proper motion, the meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

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

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

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

Judy Meyers, CMC, City Clerk