



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

July 24, 2017
6:00 PM

ORDER OF
BUSINESS

1 **Call to Order - Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Rob Marlowe at 6:00 pm. Those in attendance were, Deputy Mayor Jeff Starkey, Councilman Bill Phillips, Councilwoman Judy DeBella Thomas and Councilman Chopper Davis.

Also in attendance were City Manager Debbie Manns, City Clerk Judy Meyers, Chief of Police Kim Bogart, Assistant Fire Chief Adam Darling, Economic Development Director Mario Iezzoni, Public Works Director Robert Rivera and Parks and Recreation Director Elaine Smith, Technology Solutions Director Bryan Weed and Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Chris Bornfleth.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2 **Discussion on Special Events - Page 2**

City Manager Manns presented the item to Council. She stated the purpose of this work session was to gather input from residents, businesses and special event organizers regarding events that take place in Sims Park and the downtown area. Without question special events play a very important part in the culture of our city. Our special events define us and impact us. The purpose of the meeting is to examine the sequencing and frequency of events, adverse impacts, if an event is a benefit to the city and does the type of events truly reflect our community values.

Deputy Mayor Starkey thanked everyone in attendance. He stated that we have made positive changes to New Port Richey. Events we hold in Sims Park and downtown define us. Quality of food at events could be better. Can do better with the type of events and quality of events. Personal opinion would like to see smaller, better quality events. Looking for feedback and open discussion.

Councilwoman Phillips want input and what thoughts are. Reinvest your tax dollars. Continue forward momentum. Continue to strive to make each event better each year.

Councilwoman DeBella Thomas thanked everyone for coming out and looked forward to input.

Councilman Davis stated that large events take a toll on the grass and to keep it in mind that the park is there for residents year round.

Mayor Marlowe then opened the floor for public comment. Susan Hogan-McLenna came forward and stated that the biggest problem is not being notified in advance. In past always receive notice a couple of weeks before. Last Chasco did not receive street closure map. Councilman Phillips stated we see the event only when there is an alcohol request. Blessed the park a year ago in January and then stepped away. Park has turned around things downtown. Higher use of the facility. Annual calendar to get paperwork done and how to dovetail in with staff. Can be done well if done in advance. Can lead to miscommunications. Want to be as accommodating as we can but recognize the extra stress to police, fire and parks staff. Might encourage groups to look at having events in other parts of town. Be good stewards in helping with events. Need to have shared information to put it out there. We can only operate if we have good information. Deputy Mayor stated it all comes back to supply and demand. Sims Park is in demand for events. Idea to have wine tasting last Friday of month in front of businesses on Grand. What works with other municipalities to see what works well. Just because you have had your event in the park for years does not mean it should be guaranteed. Don't like to buy tickets for food and then go stand in food lines.

Regan Weiss came forward and asked who decides the venues. In regards to food truck issue get consensus of Council and set guidelines. Councilman Davis stated event organizers set up. City Manager Manns stated it is not out of purview of Council to come up with guidelines. Change the demographics and set the guidelines. Councilwoman DeBella Thomas stated that Council just presented with the alcohol piece. She also stated that the challenge with Christmas activity is that it is a fine line by requiring only Christian holiday or whatever you want to call it kind of music. What plays to the success is by the people who come.

Deb Morris came forward and stated that as a resident she loves to attend the events in Sims and downtown. Love the idea of smaller quality events like the summer concert series. Love the road races and triathlon. Agrees that some events feel carney. Seafest disappointing with no fresh seafood. Advertising could be better.

Steve Schurdell came forward and stated he is a Main Street and Chamber member. One thing to share is the big challenge is funding for the events. Difficult to advertise in today's world with event budget. Most media will not promote for free. Ticket sales hard to attract vendors if they had to pay the equivalent and if rained they would lose money. During the years of decline even had quality events through the down economy. Groups here that have represented their love for the city. Should give some consideration to those who were there to promote the city when they city couldn't. Done with limited or no resources. Sometimes there are economic limitations.

Kristen King came forward to speak and stated that have application in for the Upcycle. Parks staff are amazing and events are successful due to them. First Pasco Upcycle was out at Little Everglades and wanted to bring to a downtown area. Looked at Sims Park vs. Railroad Square. Downtown does not have the stage or restrooms like Sims. Spoke to businesses and offered they could put flyers into bags. Try to use local food vendors. Very strategic when they planned their event. Event holder perspective was frustrated with Development Department. They do not

communicate when things change.

Bob Riley with Community Congregation Church came forward and stated that one thing to be conscious of is parking cars and walking families. Activities that result is fantastic and can grow. Large parking lot behind church walk through to Sims Park. Do charge but ask for donation. Families and individuals that come because they love it. Need to appreciate families that come to the events. Councilman Phillips stated he was looking at Google Earth and we have been looking at parking for over a year. Good point that we should consider some barricades for safety. Mr. Riley stated this year at KIAFest where fireworks were closer to church than in the past it amounted to a difficult entry to the food area and children's activity area. Sidewalk was closed. We need to consider what we need to do to make the people happy that come to the events. Deputy Mayor Starkey stated the size of the events are growing. Perhaps talk to the County to partner use transit shuttle buses.

Geoff Kranich came forward to speak and thanked the city for hosting Chasco for last 74 years. Quality of attendees who have attended Chasco over the last few years. Bringing in better acts. Better quality music and performers. Higher end artists. First year had a two day ticketed concert. Limit the number of golf carts this year they used in park. This year, golf cart parking area. Chasco spent \$40,000 to advertise. New renovations to Quality Inn will make it the official Chasco hotel. Not-for-profit organizations are Pasco. Try to use the Quality Inn parking lot and shuttle service. Councilman Phillips over and above it is impactful and it did get to breathe a week after Chasco was over. Put in new sod when the new shade structures were installed. Need to understand what the impact is. People enjoy the venue and we have enhanced it. Mayor Marlowe biggest concern is sod will be destroyed because of the length of the event.

Chuck Grey came forward and stated that what he has noted with transportation is where cars are parked and where people have to walk to at night. Designate parking lots out of the downtown. Common to valet park.

Victoria Barley came forward and stated that share gratitude in leadership over the last three years. Same people volunteering over the years are still volunteering. Thanked Elaine Smith and Chief Bogart and stated their departments are great to work with. Extending City Manager contract was a great thing. City did help RAP River Run for the first two years but have paid their own expenses the last eight years. Over 1,500 people this year. She has been a dedicated city lover and will continue to do so. Direction city is moving is wonderful. Councilman Davis asked about wanting alcohol this year. Ms. Barley stated that survey runners wanted to have a beer after the race which is why they tried to do it this year. Councilman Davis stated don't see events until a month in advance. Better communication between staff and the event organizer. Councilman Phillips stated we are only allowed to sell alcohol at certain times per ordinance and we would have to make a special exception.

Mayor Marlowe stated the sunset series was put on by Parks and Rec and Banned Books concerts were put on by library at the natural amphitheater. Deputy Mayor stated those are the kind of smaller events he is looking for.

Rod Wortham came forward to speak and thanked Council for the invitation. Ground zero for events in Sims Park. Could be guidelines to put into place. Off premise parking and shuttle is the answer. Food trucks or craft tents at off site parking. As a business owner mindset needs to be changed and not look at it from the negative side. Business owners get together and see what the advantage is of the events. All events bring people to our community and we need to let people know what we are looking for. We have to protect the asset of Sims Park. Councilwoman

DeBella Thomas stated they were good points that mindset is so critical. We want upscale events.

Heather Fiorentino came forward and stated that thanked for having this work session. Just opened the park and turned around and had events. Timing of events. There are many parks that residents don't know about. City events at the other parks and then organizers can visualize their events. Shuttle is an excellent idea. Something online which shows parks and amount of people they can hold and parking. Agree with the idea of having an event committee. Some people who have been doing events for over fifty years. Advertise events on billboards along US19. Elderly to get valet parking for events. Need to keep variety of events. Mayor Marlowe stated it would be a good idea for parks staff to map out the parks. Having a list which shows how many spaces are available and amenities. Deputy Mayor Starkey stated he liked the idea of guidelines and a committee similar to PMP would be a good idea.

Dan Dede came forward to speak good ideas of what the city is doing. Renovations to Sims Park. Do good job moving city forward. He stated Mr. Rivera came to his home to discuss his traffic concerns. The new stop signs has slowed down traffic considerably. Pennsylvania has become a speed zone. Suggested putting an all stop sign at Pennsylvania and Adams. To help businesses downtown move the car show to downtown. Suggested an officer along Pennsylvania during events to keep people from climbing over his fence. Carnival does not bring people to the downtown area and does not have an overall benefit to the city.

Rex Phelps came forward to state that good ideas all the way around. Like the idea of guidelines for events in Sims Park. The issue is that the residents are here all year and people who come to the events are here for a short time. Parking and speed are big issues. The carnival is a hot mess. Hard to negotiate when there is a carnival. As you make the decisions on what you want city to become and do and take into account who you want to bring into the city. Businesses want people who's debit cards clear. Make level of event quality so vendors will want to come.

Lia Gallegos came forward to speak and stated that everything heard has been great. See difference between events raising money and what image trying to build. Smaller more intimate events build energy and excitement. Safety Harbor has someone dedicated to building events for the city. City of Dunedin has their policies and procedures manual online. Already planning events in Railroad Square for 2018 to help establish image for downtown.

Councilman Phillips stated he appreciated the input and exactly what we were looking for. Have some follow up questions with the City Manager. Better understand goals and objectives for events. Should have some small planning meetings. Don't need Council personalities to the meetings. How we make the bridge between drawing people and telling the story. How to convey what we are and what we are looking for. Appreciate hearing what concerns are as we are in budget season.

Councilwoman DeBella Thomas stated she appreciated all the comments. We need to realize there is an ebb and flow in activities within the city. Excited about smaller sidewalk activities like shop and strolls. At the time when we were doing car shows the merchants did not want the show there as the exhibitors brought their own food. Maybe need to be revisited as there are new merchants in the downtown. Cities have their own personality and borrowing from other cities is a great thing. Being a Main Street city we can borrow from that group so we can make a vital and walkable downtown. Businesses have an interest in what is going on. We concentrate on Sims Park as it is a spectacular venue. Look on city website or Facebook for park videos. Encouraged and excited what we can do collectively. We all need to be pulling the boat in the same direction.

Throw into the mix love to explore the options we have with the video screens. We are not maximizing their use. Explore better way for them to be used.

Councilman Davis stated need to mesh image and fundraising together. We want our events to grow and increase image of the city.

Deputy Mayor Starkey stated it was great getting different perspectives. We have to continue to work together to redefine our image in a positive fashion. As a Councilmember and resident concerned with image for our city. Continue to be careful.

Mayor Marlowe stated he liked the suggestions to have smaller events and moving them downtown. New opportunity for those events since the drake elms are gone. Amazing how much sidewalks have opened with the palms. Avoid past mistakes from the past. Putting tents along the middle of Grand pushes the crowds onto the sidewalks and businesses. Understand Mr. Dede's concerns on the carnival. The growth of the apartment complex will have impact. In defense of Chasco it was his understanding last number of years the cost of the carnival has covered the costs for the event. There will have to be adjustments. Keep an open mind and work with Chasco. There are changes in the demographics of people coming down. Next year will be even better, Need to revisit how we fund Main Street. Take pressure off so they can focus on smaller better events. Video screens are amazing and if have one closer to US19 that would be good to advertise upcoming events.

Councilwoman DeBella Thomas stated she thought that we were looking at putting a sign at the entryway. City Manager Manns stated that is on the list.

3 Adjournment

There being no further business to consider, upon proper motion, the meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm

Approved: _____ (date)

_____ (signed)

Initialed: _____

Judy Meyers, City Clerk