



MINUTES
WORKSHOP CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 18, 2002 AT 7:00 P.M.
CITY HALL, 116 FIRST STREET
NEPTUNE BEACH, FLORIDA

Pursuant to proper notice a Workshop Meeting of the City Council of the City of Neptune Beach was held March 18, 2002 at 7:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 116 First Street, Neptune Beach, Florida.

Attendance:

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Richard A. Brown
Vice Mayor Robert A. Shimp
Councilor James Gilbert
Councilor Ronald A. Patronik
Councilor Harriet Pruette
City Manager Richard A. Linn
City Clerk Lisa Volpe, CMC

Deputy City Clerk Karla Strait, CMC
Assistant to the City Manager Terry Klein
Building Official Dan Arlington
Director of Finance Steve Ramsey

ABSENT:
City Attorney Christopher White

Call to Order/Roll Call The Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENTATION

Water/Sewer Survey

WATER/SEWER SURVEY REPORT – JACKSONVILLE COUNCILMAN JERRY HOLLAND: Mayor Brown explained that Jacksonville City Councilman Jerry Holland had mailed out a survey to Neptune Beach citizens soliciting their opinion on utility services. Councilman Holland was present with those results.

Jacksonville City Councilman Jerry Holland stated his office had mailed the survey to approximately 2,100 households in Neptune Beach for the purpose of finding out if they would be interested in pursuing a study to change utility services. Mr. Holland explained he had notified the respondents that there were some errors on the rate comparison survey. The survey had 4 different options: 1) no change, 2) change in water & sewer only, 3) electric only and, 4) change in both electric, water & sewer. Out of the 2,100 mail outs 185 responses were received and 160 were returned undeliverable. The results were as follows:

1. 27 or 15% not interested in pursuing a study to change
2. 8 or 4% interest in changing only the water & sewer
3. 3 or 2% interest in changing electric only
4. 147 or 79% interest in changing both electric, water & sewer

He presented the surveys to the City Clerk for records and introduced Walt Bussells with JEA.

Walt Bussells JEA, stated that Mr. Holland had informed him of constituent interest in

utility services and rates. Mr. Holland asked him if JEA would consider doing a joint study in order to see if there were different ways to configure utility service that would be mutually beneficial. Mr. Bussells stated it would be a complex undertaking, however he would be willing to gather the facts if asked by the Neptune Beach City Council. He added he was not seeking in any way to intrude in Neptune Beach's affairs and suggested the Council think long and hard about it and not rush into anything.

Councilor Pruette was concerned about customer service response time and inquired as to how many utility customers J.E.A. had. Mr. Bussells responded JEA serviced 750,000 different accounts and were growing 3 to 3 1/2 percent a year.

Vice Mayor Shimp felt the survey was done underhandedly because of the recent problems with the water lines. He felt Mr. Holland should have addressed the council before mailing the survey.

Mayor Brown clarified that Mr. Holland had shared the information regarding the survey with him and he in turn shared it with the Council. Mayor Brown explained although the City may not act on the information at the present time he welcomed the information because he felt it was part of the Council's job to be informed of future options.

PRESENTATION – JACKSONVILLE BEACH MAYOR BOB MARSDEN: Mayor Brown introduced Jacksonville Beach Mayor Bob Marsden to give a presentation. Mayor Marsden read the following letter as stated for the record:

Dear Mayor and City Council Members:

Thank you for providing me with an opportunity to speak tonight. As the Mayor of Jacksonville Beach I can relate to your concerns about the operation and maintenance of your water and sewer systems. These are systems that are crucial for the welfare and control of our Cities.

This letter is to offer our support for your efforts and provide an additional option for you to consider. I understand that you are considering ways the JEA may be of service to you.

I would propose that instead of relinquishing control of your system to JEA or anyone else you consider a second option. This option is to join with the City of Jacksonville Beach and Atlantic Beach to support an engineering study on how all three beach cities can work together to create water and sewer operating efficiencies that will benefit all of our citizens. This is not an idea without precedent as all three beach communities jointly constructed and maintain a treated effluent line to the St. Johns River. I believe this would have the advantage of:

- Allowing Neptune Beach to maintain ownership and operational control over your system and thereby retain control of your own destiny.
- Make all three-beach cities stronger and more efficient.
- Keep the cooperation that is currently at a very high level between all beach cities intact.

Regardless of your decision, the City of Jacksonville Beach remains committed to assisting its neighbors. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Bob Marsden
Mayor

Mayor Marsden introduced Gary Quick, Director of Electric Utilities for Jacksonville Beach. Mr. Quick stated almost all of the rate comparisons on the survey were wrong, one major error on the survey was that Neptune Beach's water & sewer system belonged to Jacksonville Beach Utility Company.

Mr. Quick handed out a listing of different electric company rates for a residential account. JEA's rates were lower than Jacksonville Beach's; however there were other companies that had rates lower than JEA's. Mr. Quick stated that Jacksonville Beach Electric provided Neptune Beach with superior customer service and if Neptune Beach was considering changing electric providers not to base it solely upon the rates.

Councilor Patronik questioned if Jacksonville Beach Electric received the power from Florida Power & Light. Mr. Quick responded Jacksonville Beach along with 13 other municipalities belonged to an organization called the Florida Municipal Power Agency out of Orlando.

PRESENTATION ATLANTIC BEACH – MAYOR MESERVE: Atlantic Beach Mayor Meserve stated the three beach cities currently worked together successfully in a lot of different areas. He felt there were more opportunities for joint venture in things from children's activities to beach clean up's. He agreed with Mayor Marsden regarding a joint effort between the beach cities to find and implement a strategy on projects that would help maintain the beaches independence and insure the continued high quality of life. Mayor Meserve suggested joining together to do a study on cross connecting the water and sewer systems.

City Manager Linn thanked Jacksonville Beach City Manager George Forbes and Atlantic Beach City Manager Jim Hansen publicly for their cooperative sharing of services throughout the past years.

Mayor Brown acknowledged that Jacksonville Beach City Manager George Forbes and Atlantic Beach City Manager Jim Hansen were in the audience.

Public Comments

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Richard Brown, 716 Magnolia Street, stated he did not receive one of the utility surveys. Mr. Brown added that he was happy with the current utility providers and concerned about hidden cost if the providers were changed.

Scott Birdsong, 616 McCollum Circle, had received superior customer from Jacksonville Beach Electric and was willing to pay more for outstanding customer service.

Judy Bost, 115 Walnut Street, expressed disappointment in the city not proceeding with the water & sewer project. She felt it should have been started 20 years ago when it was less expensive. Ms. Bost did not think that JEA would be willing to do repairs for free and charge less for services. Ms. Bost questioned what would happen with the garbage collection, public works employees, cashiers, and customer representatives if the services were sold to JEA. Ms. Bost referred to an article in the paper relating to the recent takeover of United Water by JEA that stated JEA was bogged down with their billing process. She wondered if JEA would be bogged down with taking over a system that was in bad shape and needed to be completely revamped.

Laura Patronik, 1520 Leeward Lane, stated their household did not receive a survey. She liked the idea of three beach cities working together.

Chris Oakey, 620 Camellia Terrace Drive, felt Jacksonville Beach provided excellent services. He received a survey but he did not respond because he did not understand the comparisons.

Lynda Padrta, 1113 First Street, felt there were inconsistencies in the rate comparisons. She also felt Jacksonville Beach provided better response time. Ms. Padrta was concerned about how JEA easements would affect the property owners.

Roy Deese, 1720 Light Lane, thanked Jerry Holland for his good intentions. Mr. Deese stated that Jacksonville Beach Electric provided better service than he had received anywhere.

Mayor Brown acknowledged that Jacksonville Beach Councilman Art Graham was in the audience.

Recess/Reconvene Mayor Brown called a recess at 8:15 p.m. and the meeting reconvened at 8:20.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

IBBC ISH BRANT BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE: City Manager Linn reported the irrigation system and palm trees had been installed in the Third Street medians. The wildflowers were yet to be installed and they were looking into funds for shrubbery. The committee was also working on beautifying the south barricade on First Street.

CITY MANAGERS PUNCH LIST

New Water Line City Manager Linn informed the Council the replacement of the water line on Seventh Street from Florida Boulevard to Bal Harbor was complete. The old line would be decommissioned at 2:00 a.m.

Change in Regular Meeting Date City Manager Linn stated that himself, Director of Finance Steve Ramsey, and the Director of Public Safety Bill Brandt would be in Orlando for the National Hurricane Conference on the date of the regular Council meeting in April. Mr. Linn suggested changing the date of the meeting to the following week. Mr. Linn also suggested holding a special meeting to award the contract for the Water Project.

Consensus: **TO MOVE THE DATE OF THE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING TO APRIL 8, 2002.**

Consensus: **TO HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR THE WATER PROJECT ON THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2002, AT 6:00 P.M.**

Jarboe Park JARBOE PARK IMPROVEMENTS: City Manager Linn reported the Jarboe Park Improvement Project was almost complete. He was waiting on the bridge. The handicap swings were in and would soon be installed. The J's were still missing on the park sign and he made several calls and was working on replacing them.

Flood Marking FLOOD ZONE MARKINGS ON FIRST STREET: City Manager Linn stated he was waiting on the paper to come in so a stencil could be made to do the "Flood Zone" markings on the pavement on First Street.

Kings Road Bridge KINGS ROAD BRIDGE: City Manager Linn stated he was working with Jacksonville Beach on an alternative ingress & egress in order to install the bridge. Director of Public Works John Galen was working on the timing and permits.

Vice Mayor Shimp asked City Manager Linn if the timer could be changed on the irrigation system in the Third Street medians to the evening hours when there was less traffic.

Councilor Gilbert asked if there would be a chance of getting some trees planted on Florida Boulevard at the entrance to Neptune Beach. Mr. Linn responded when the Mayport Flyover was complete that JTA would be installing some landscaping and landscaping was also planned along with the bike path. Mr. Linn stated he would work on getting landscaping for the west side of Florida Boulevard.

Councilor Gilbert mentioned there was still a big pothole in the middle of the intersection at Florida Boulevard and Penman Road.

Mr. Linn stated Councilor Pruette and Councilor Patronik would have to recuse themselves from voting on the Resolution in support of the JFK because they worked for the federal government. Councilor Pruette stated for the record that although she could not vote she supported the resolution.

PROPOSED ORDINANCES/NONE

CONTRACT/AGREEMENTS/NONE

ISSUE DEVELOPMENT

Senior Center

UPDATE REPORT ON NEW SENIOR CENTER: Director of the Senior Center Leslie Lyne informed the Council the Senior Center that was created with the CDBG Grant was an absolute hit. The center was available not only to Neptune Beach seniors but to Jacksonville Beach and Atlantic Beach seniors as well. The center opened for activities on January 7, 2002. The age limit was 55 and above. She had 380 seniors visit the center during the month of February. There were many different activities available to the seniors.

The Council and City Manager Linn thanked Leslie Lyne for her enthusiasm and doing an excellent job in getting the senior center up and running.

Resolution
No. 2002-02

RESOLUTION NO. 2002-02 – SUPPORT OF JFK: A RESOLUTION URGING THE NORTHEAST FLORIDA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT THE UPCOMING MAJOR OVERHAUL OF THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER USS JOHN F. KENNEDY BE PERFORMED AT ITS HOME PORT OF NAVAL STATION MAYPORT IN JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA; DIRECTING THE COUNCIL SECRETARY TO FORWARD COPIES OF THIS ADOPTED RESOLUTION TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NORTHEAST FLORIDA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION AND TO THE U. S. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE AND SECRETARY OF THE NAVY; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Consensus: **TO FORWARD RESOLUTION NO. 2002-02 TO THE APRIL REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING.**

Watersedge Drive

WATERSEDGE DRIVE DRAINAGE PROBLEM: Vice Mayor Shimp stated several emails had been distributed, but the Watersedge Drive drainage problem had still not been corrected. Vice Mayor Shimp felt it was time to file an official complaint against JEA with the Code Enforcement Board.

City Manager Linn commented he had met with representatives from JEA out on the property. He thought they would have had the work completely by now. City Attorney

White was researching how the city could force JEA to correct the drainage problem since JEA was a government agency. Mr. Linn felt the city was morally obligated to help resolve the problem but legally the homeowners were responsible.

A discussion ensued regarding different ways to resolve the problem.

Consensus: **FOR THE CITY COUNCIL AS A BODY TO FILE AN OFFICIAL COMPLAINT AGAINST JEA WITH THE CITY CODE ENFORCEMENT BOARD.**

Councilor Pruette stated that she wanted to wait to hear from the City Attorney before moving forward on the issue.

Public Comments

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY / NONE

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Richard A. Brown, Mayor

Attest:

Lisa Volpe, CMC, City Clerk

Approved: _____