MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE STUART CITY COMMISSION
HELD January 5, 2021
AT 9:15 AM Commission Chambers - Mayor 2021 Goals I
121 SW FLAGLER AVE.
STUART, FLORIDA 34994

CITY COMMISSION
Mayor Eula R. Clarke
Vice Mayor Merritt Matheson
Commissioner Becky Bruner
Commissioner Troy McDonald
Commissioner Mike Meier

ADMINISTRATIVE
City Manager, David Dyess
City Attorney, Michael J. Mortell
City Clerk, Mary R. Kindel

THIS MEETING WAS AVAILABLE LIVE VIA ZOOM:
Zoom links and ID information can be found at www.cityofstuart.us/meetings

9:24 AM ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Clarke, Vice Mayor Matheson

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMENTS BY CITY COMMISSIONERS

1. 2021 MAYOR'S GOALS; INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS BETWEEN THE MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS TO DISCUSS GOALS.

9:24 AM MAYOR CLARKE AND VICE MAYOR MATHESON - 9:15 AM

Mayor Clarke thanked the Commission and citizens for selecting her as Mayor and provided her contact information, announcing that she is always available for meetings with the public.

Clarke announced issues to address, plans, and upcoming 2021 goals:

- **East Stuart**
- **Upcoming COVID-19 Vaccine**
- **Economic Revitalization in East Stuart**
- **St. Lucie River**
- **Relocation of the New City Hall**
- **Homelessness in the Community**
- **Attainable Housing**
- **Future Budget Planning**

Vice Mayor Matheson commented that he and the Mayor have similar goals, but the budget and quality of life are strong factors for him.

Matheson's goals include:

- **COVID-19: Continue to promote precautions for prevention, following CDC Guidelines, and work with the Health Department to help facilitate the vaccine rollout.**
- **Non-Profits & Local Business: Continue to support and encourage the Shop Local Campaign, support local businesses, would support an in-person job fair accessible to everyone, and assist in gathering non-profit agencies for those who may have lost their jobs dues to the pandemic.**
- **Environmental (General and River): Supports the planting of shade trees, the straw ban, goal towards zero waste at City events, continue with baffle boxes and bio-swales projects, continue to work with developers for smart growth.**
- **City Hall Relocation: The relocation of City Hall to the Wells Fargo Building. Open to future discussions and work concerning the current property. Wants a long-term lease and improvements with the surrounding property.**
- **Capital Projects and Infrastructure: Continue with the progress at the 10th Street Community Center and the development of Sailfish Ballfields.**
- **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): Serving on and working with the MPO for improvements on MLK and Palm City Road for complete streets, promoting sidewalk connectivity, and working towards an improved Marty Transportation System including stop locations.**
- **Improving Communication: Improving relationship and communication with Martin County, especially in relation to the St. Lucie River and Impact fees.**

Mayor Clarke agreed with the idea of improving the relationship with the County in relation to the River. A brief discussion took place on their thoughts of collaborating with other counties or if the City should hire an attorney to file against the Army Corps of Engineers.

Vice Mayor Matheson continued:

- **LOSOM: Process is on-going and he would like to see the Stuart Commission become more involved, meet with elected officials from Martin County to make our voices stronger, including Port St. Lucie.**

- **Funding: Supports a sinking fund or environmental protection fund on the river as well as affordable housing. In favor of having a structured account for improved infrastructure projects.**
- **Interests: Noted interest in defining a future for the Northpoint property and becoming more engaged with the St. John's Water Management District, including open discussions to eliminate flows into the St. Lucie Estuary.**

Mayor Clarke suggested working with the League of Cities to bring a statement to the St. John's and South Florida Water Management Districts.

- **Local Water Quality Projects: Continue promoting and creating quality water projects, upcoming Shepard's Park Projects, continue the education that teaches residents how to improve water quality at home.**

Mayor Clarke commented that she had attended an Ocean Research & Conservation Association (ORCA) lecture that discussed doing a study on various areas of the river with hopes of bringing the study to Stuart.

Mayor Clarke asked Vice Mayor Matheson for the one thing he would do if he were Mayor this year. Matheson stated he would continue to work on an alternative water supply and sustainability, but if he had one thing, it would be to keep and improve the quality of life of the residents of Stuart, and felt that was based on the City of Stuart employees.

Mayor Clarke was glad Commissioner Matheson ended on that note, and agreed the employees are the essential part of the City.

10:08 AM Recess

10:14 AM Resume Meeting

Present: Mayor Clarke, Commissioner McDonald

10:14 AM MAYOR CLARKE AND COMMISSIONER MCDONALD - 10:00 AM

Mayor Clarke opened the meeting with Commissioner McDonald and provided a brief overview of the purpose of the meeting to discuss ideas for the new year.

Commissioner McDonald suggested reviewing the Mayor's goals this year.

Mayor Clarke noted her concerns on COVID-19 and asked Commissioner McDonald his ideas on communication and distribution of the vaccine to the citizens.

McDonald suggested an education campaign through Facebook that encouraged and promoted mask wearing. He felt it was a big issue that should be handled at the County level. He mentioned the vaccine distribution with the Health Department has

run into problems and commented on suggestions to assist the elderly and residents.
Commissioner McDonald's goals include:

- **Affordable Housing: Commented the City was the heart of Martin County because it provides a vast majority of the business and has been sustainable because of the economic activity. Affordable and attainable housing was expensive because of the various cost associated with the high housing prices. He suggested balancing development with lowering regulatory fees, housing costs, and impact fees.**

- **Local Business: Would like to have funds in the next budget for the Shop Local Program and promote it through advertising.**

- **East Stuart: To bring minority businesses back to East Stuart. Commissioner McDonald has Partnered NAACP and Business Accelerated Program (BAP) to educate, assist, and promote minority businesses, felt the challenge in East Stuart was the elders resisting gentrification. Encourage home ownership through programs like Habitat for Humanity and focus on single family ownership along with keeping the regulatory costs down. The TIFF money from the rental properties coming in will be substantial for East Stuart. Feels the community needs to become more diverse while maintaining its historic nature.**

- **Homelessness: Working with Police Dept. about homeless citizens in Memorial Park and planning to come up with assistance. The eviction moratorium will provide more homelessness and we need to keep watch for this issue.**

- **Budget: Supported a sinking fund but not in favor of restrictions. Noted that during the recession, the City survived on the reserves and saving money was a good idea. Stated we must save for the future but understand plans change and adjustment may need to be made.**

- **River: Not in support of suing the Army Corp of Engineers. He supported Vice Mayor Matheson building a rapport but feels it is not financially responsible to sue and wants to continue to advocate and comment, when possible at the state and legislative level. In support of continuing storm water projects.**

Mayor Clarke asked Commissioner McDonald what one thing he would do if he were Mayor this year. McDonald stated it would be promotion of small business.

They briefly discussed the relocation of City Hall and the upcoming challenges with cost, timing, and redevelopment of the rest of the property. McDonald commented that we should be working on a timeline to meet our goal.

Mayor Clarke encouraged Commissioner McDonald to continue working on his projects with small businesses and business development in East Stuart. She felt it would help her signature project of putting East Stuart back on the map.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

11:00 AM ADJOURNMENT

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Mary R. Kindel, City Clerk **Eula R. Clarke, Mayor**

Minutes to be approved at the Regular Commission Meeting this 25th day of January, 2021.

KJL/MK