MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE STUART CITY COMMISSION
HELD January 5, 2021
AT 2:00 PM Commission Chambers - Mayor 2021 Goals II
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

2:00 PM ROLL CALL
Present: Mayor Clarke, Commissioner Bruner

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMENTS BY CITY COMMISSIONERS

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

MAYOR CLARKE AND COMMISSIONER BRUNER – 2:00 PM

Mayor Clarke provided an overview of the meeting purpose and requested Commissioner Bruner's ideas for the new year.

Commissioner Bruner's goals included:

- **River: Felt she has been outspoken about the river issues and that the City should wait until June to see what the Army Corp of Engineers will do in**

regard to the river, then make a decision to litigate or not. Felt suing the Army Corp would be very costly and time consuming but would be in favor of it if it needed to be done. She appreciated the work the Army Corp was doing.

- **COVID-19: Stated the challenge was the bottleneck in the system, making it difficult to get the vaccine out. She mentioned the lack of locations, healthcare workers, and commented that the Health Department should help with issues like drive thru locations. She was concerned with the costs and felt as a city, we must provide information to the residents on resources.**

- **East Stuart: Would like to see more unity in East Stuart and feels the residents were not welcome to growth and afraid of gentrification. In favor of a contributing fund or development funds to benefit East Stuart.**

Mayor Clarke and Commissioner Bruner conversed about ideas for unity in the East Stuart community.

- **City Hall Relocation: Supports the new City Hall and briefly discussed the existence of the current property and what it would become, hoping it would benefit all residents of Stuart.**

- **Housing the Homeless: February survey for the homeless, she was conflicted on the homeless issue and felt the City was not able to address it at the City level. She felt we should give information to them because they are the last to be treated. She felt money is a large issue and the homeless community is transit and there are many organizations to help here in Stuart.**

- **Reorganizing City Departments: Received an email to meet with the Treasure Coast Regional Planning about cleaning and fixing up West Stuart. The people of Azul love the City, she would love to see another development. Commissioner Bruner would like to see higher end developments and she likes where the development and planning is going.**

- **Sustainability: In favor of the City's plan and willing to help anyway she can.**

Mayor Clarke asked Commissioner Bruner what her main focus would be if she were Mayor this year and Bruner responded that she would like to see the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) incorporate more trees, bike lanes, sidewalks, and bikes. She felt bike routes would attract visitors to Stuart and are important, as well as the tram. The City Tram, walking, and biking make the town more attractive to visitors.

Commissioner Bruner was excited about the boat ramp coming to Sheppard's Park. Notes she would like to see more youth come to the downtown and would like to see more outdoor activities such as the green market and river walk. She comments on job availability for young people to return to Stuart and stated that Stuart is a melting pot. Expressed concern about the hospital and hopes it never relocates out of the City.

Commissioner Bruner suggested to have a room for the Commissioners in the new City Hall.

2:39 PM Meeting Recess

3:01 PM Resume Meeting

MAYOR CLARKE AND COMMISSIONER MEIER - 3:00 PM

Mayor Clarke provided an overview of the meeting purpose to Commissioner Meier.

Commissioner Meier thanked Mayor Clarke for holding the meeting and felt it was good to spend time speaking with everyone. He mentioned the last year being a challenging one. He was excited to enter a new chapter and projects.

Meier reported on his vision of 2021 and noted the accomplishments of last year during COVID-19, racial injustice, and housing issues. His interests moving forward were to focus on open projects and working toward implementing projects like the straw initiative, housing fund, Gateway Triangle, sustainability program, moving City Hall and preparations. Interested in the future City Hall development partnerships to mutually benefit the residents. He supported the idea of good planning and expansion.

Commissioner Meier's goals included:

- **East Stuart: Felt East Stuart was a great initiative and wanted to ensure past projects were long term.**

- **Litigation for the River: Open to potential litigation as a last resort, but does not feel there is a cause presently. Happy with the progress that has been made and happy with Vice Mayor Matheson's leadership. Noted the large amount of resources being dedicated to the issue behind the scenes and suggested waiting until after the dry season. Felt we should continue advocacy and the path the City is on.**

Mayor Clarke asked for Commissioner Meier's thoughts on COVID-19 in regard to ways to get the community members to help each other.

Meier continued:

- **COVID-19: Noted that advocacy is important and we must realize our limitations and not set unrealistic expectations, we should ask where we would be useful. We need to work with the Health Department, State and Federal Agencies who are doing the work.**

- **Cultural District: Feels it is a great idea, the community has so much history and should be highlighted and East Stuart economics should be addressed. There ways to partner with business and economic groups and bring their attention to Stuart. Important to find out the challenges on the ground for new businesses. Economic vitality and small business are missing in East Stuart. It is important to know our limitations and use the agencies to help and work together with the community.**

- **Unity in the Community: Felt we could be unified without losing sense of identity. He liked distinct areas with their unique identity where everyone is mutually respected and safe while working together. Gathering feedback on how existing police and fire are working and how the community feels about it.**

Mayor Clarke reported that she is working on a cleanup program to include a survey. With her vision of "Preserving our past while embracing our future". Her hope is to identify the barriers within communities and move forward. In addition, her plans include budgeting and planning for the new year and a possible partnership of a Clean Street Program with the Sustainability Program and shine a light on East Stuart.

Commissioner Meier would love to help and mentioned agencies and organizations for possible partnerships.

Mayor Clarke suggested code changes to help with the issues of empty lots and maintaining buildings before they are knocked down with challenges of redevelopment. She wanted to bring attention to these issues and bring them out in the open.

Commissioner Meier agreed with many things discussed and did not want to lose sight of the great initiatives. Wanted to make sure great ideas in the pipeline were being attended to and this was a good year to do so with the anticipated challenges with the budget cycle. Wants to pay attention and advocate for the residents and businesses and see how we could help the most. Keep everything small and local while keeping everyone close this year.

Mayor Clarke asked Commissioner Meier if there was one thing he would like to do great this year.

Commissioner Meier commented that he was grateful that his initiative came to fruition last year with the Sustainability Plan and he will support other initiatives from the board, especially conservative issues.

Mayor Clarke appreciated Commissioner Meier for being Mayor in 2020 and looked forward to his help and advice in the upcoming year. She thanked all the Commissioners and the Staff.

3:46 PM 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