

City Council Meeting
February 23, 2021, 9:00 a.m.
City Hall – 201 Paradise Path

Present

Mayor, William A Cathey
Councilman, Bobby Pollock
Councilman, Jerry Smith
Councilwoman, Sharon Call
Councilman, Darrell Key

Also Present

City Administrator, Mario Gisbert
City Clerk, Lindsay Hovind
City Attorney, Nick Beninate

Meeting was Called to order at 9 a.m.

Citizen Comments

Lisa Logan asked about the post office move. Mayor Cathey explained they asked Marty Blood to submit a floor plan showing how much of the building they would need and have not heard back from him. Council did hear that the Post Office will not allow a Go Fund Me for repairs and that they cannot get a loan on a leased property. Mayor Cathey said he is not sure what else the City can do. Rock Freese asked if the St Joe Company had made changes to the Boat Ramp Rd. Mr. Gisbert said they had not heard of any changes. Mr. Freese also asked if some of the boat ramp permit money could be used to put carpet or fire hose along the docks to keep from scratching up boats. Chief Walker said they may have extra hose and will investigate it. Mr. Freese also asked when Council was going to revert to Ordinance 706. What is the time frame to start making people clean up their properties?

Department Reports

Ms. McLeod was not present, but Mr. Gisbert stated that the boat ramp fund has over \$100,000 that can be used for repairs and the pier fund has over \$300,000. Any negatives showing currently will move to positives once FEMA funds are transferred into the correct accounts.

Fire Chief Walker was contacted by a concerned citizen about not having life rings at the boat ramp and along the canal. He has 6 on order. The Fire Department has found 10 streetlights that need to be fixed and Mr. Davis is working with Duke to get all the missing streetlights replaced. With onsite EMS, response times are at 5 minutes which is a great asset since ambulance response times are 20 minutes.

Lieutenant Williams shared there were 152 calls for service, 62 traffic stops, 9,428 miles traveled, 58 citations of those 41 were for warrants, 3 arrests and no traffic accidents.

Ms. Johnson updated Council stating there were 7 new home permits issued and there have been 170 issued since the storm. Mr. Gisbert congratulated Ms. Johnson for becoming a Certified Flood Plain Manger.

Ms. Lyons said there have been 20 RV's removed, 19 demos and 57 boat launch permits issued. She is still issuing citations for people who do not follow the rules. Mayor Cathey asked if we could shutoff services for people how are there illegally. Mr. Beninate will investigate it. After much discussion on the RV issue, it was suggested a workshop be scheduled to get everyone on the same page. Everyone agreed on March 2nd at 4p.m.

Mr. Davis said the Public Works crews have ground over 400 stumps. The dredge crews are working on getting the canal open. It was asked what happens if the dredge breaks down in the middle of the summer. They would have to rent a long reach. Mr. Gisbert said he is working on getting a quote for another dredge and use FEMA funds to pay for it. The utility pole on Oleander is finally going to get straightened. Gena will have something together to go out about the street sign project. First stage of the of the sidewalk project is complete, FDOT is repairing the remainder. Mr. Key asked about the latest on the walkovers. Ms. Johnson explained they failed inspection and they have not heard anything since then. The City can only fail them for code violations not poor workmanship. Mr. Beninate said there are options to explore like withholding final payments or lawsuit. Mayor Cathy suggested to not make any more payments and start the process of having someone make repairs. Mr. Beninate will report back.

Mr. Martin said staff has been busy with day-to-day duties. The did get SCADA installed so he can now get notifications/alarms and get access to the system on his phone. They are also working on manhole repairs and the lift station needs repairs. The saltwater from the storm is rusting away the pipes. Mr. Gisbert is looking into a grant for those repairs.

Dave with Dewberry reported Sunset Park is in the design and finalize site plan stage. They are still waiting on the DEP permit. The 15th St culvert design is in process, FEMA approval is done and are submitting Corp, DEP and DOT permits. Mayor Cathey asked about the landscape contractor and DOT. Dave said the DOT permit was issued and they hope to start April 1st and it should take 2 to 4 months.

Minutes 12/8/20 and 12/18/20 minutes were brought to the table.

Mr. Pollock motioned, and Mr. Key seconded to accept the minutes.

Approve settlement with Thomas E Adams and BBT, LLC

Mr. Beninate stated the insurance company was recommending the settlement for false imprisonment and battery from a 2017 police incident. This will not cost the City anything as it will be all insurance money and it does not admit liability on the part of the City.

Mr. Pollock motioned, and Ms. Call seconded to approve the settlement. Motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance 759 – Rezoning (First reading) was brought to the table.

AN ORDINANCE REZONING FROM HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL TO TOWNHOME DISTRICT THAT CERTAIN PARCEL OF LAND LYING WITHIN THE CITY OF MEXICO BEACH, FLORIDA, CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 0.061 ACRES; LOCATED AT 107 SOUTH 35TH ST WITH PARCEL ID NUMBER 04618-010-000, ALL AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN THE BODY OF THE ORDINANCE; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT; AND PROVIDING THAT THIS ORDINANCE SHALL TAKE EFFECT IMMEDIATELY UPON ITS PASSAGE.

Mr. Key motioned, and Ms. Call seconded to read Ordinance 759 (by title only).

Land Purchase S. 37th St - MG was brought to the table.

Mr. Gisbert explained the State has provided a grant for \$500,000 to purchase property that will supplement the pier. This grant expires June 30, 2021 and will only pay the appraised value price. These 4 properties are all that could be found for sale. Original price was \$485,000 but appraisal came in at \$422,000. When Mr. Gisbert talked to owners, they said bottom line would be \$465,000, which means the City will have to pay \$43,000 out of pocket.

Mr. Key motioned, and Mr. Pollock seconded to purchase properties for asking price. Motion passed unanimously.

Special Master discussion was brought to the table.

Mr. Smith read a letter expressing concern over a letter that was written to the City Administrator. Mr. Smith feels like keeping him as Special Master would be a detriment to the city as he does not act in a professional manner. Mr. Key raised similar concerns over another letter that was sent out by Mr. Bush. Mayor Cathey said that what was in the letter was only one person's opinion and asked if this situation would affect day to day management. Mr. Gisbert stated he felt like the relationships are damaged and it would be difficult to manage. Mr. Beninate suggested finding an attorney who does this type of work for a nominal fee and that fee could be included in the fines that are assessed. He feels using an attorney would have more clout as opposed to using a Special Master.

Mr. Smith motioned, and Ms. Call seconded to remove Mr. Bush as Special Master and to have Mr. Beninate explore options for a replacement. Motion passed unanimously.

City Attorney Report

Mr. Beninate has nothing to report currently.

City Administrator Report

Mr. Gisbert reported he is still waiting to hear from FEMA about the Street Re-surfacing Project. He has submitted preliminary figures to FEMA totaling \$2,463,000 for the Jetty Project and \$8,746,000 for the Pier Project. He has submitted firm figures to FEMA for the Police, Fire and Civic Center project totaling \$12,822,000.

Council Comments

Ms. Key asked if we had heard anything else from Rustic Sands. Mr. Gisbert and Ms. Johnson said they had not.


Mayor Cathey handed out a letter containing Ms. Hovind's resignation from the City Clerk position effective March 12th.

Mr. Pollock motioned, and Mr. Key seconded to accept Ms. Hovind's resignation and to post the job opening immediately. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Key motioned to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Pollock seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

By:



Mayor William A Cathey

Attest:



Tammy Brunson, City Clerk