

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ZONE COMMITTEE (EDZC) MINUTES
THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2023 9:30 A.M.
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

PRESENT: Joseph Cataldo, Chairman; Terry Torres, Vice Chairman; and Member Bob DelVecchio **Also Present:** John Turner, City Attorney and Tammy Bursick, City Clerk

Unexcused Absence: William Watkins

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) October 17, 2023

Mr. DelVecchio made a motion to approve the October 17, 2023 minutes. Mr. Torres seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A) 5-Year Capital Budget Fund 607

Mr. Jason Jeffries, Planning Director, asked that Mrs. Danessa Chambers, Assistant City Engineer, give the update of the street lighting project (item 3-B) first and then they can discuss the budget.

B) Update on Street Lighting Project

Mrs. Danessa Chambers, Assistant City Engineer, reported that the projected cost for the lighting being done by Florida Power and Light (FPL) came in a lot lower than they expected. They had budgeted \$200,000 for the project and it came in between the \$40,000 to \$60,000 range for all three (3) projects. She was looking to get some direction from the Committee on how they would like to proceed with the budget after hearing this good news. The bad news is the scheduling of the lighting will not begin for another year. She said the reason for that is because it has been difficult locating poles because of the hurricane that occurred on the west coast last year. However, this will not affect the price that FPL has quoted to the City for the project.

Mr. Cataldo asked about the poles in Pocahontas Park.

Mr. Matt Mitts, Public Work's Director, explained that they have two (2) options for street lighting poles. He said either they are maintained by FPL or by the City if the City owns them. The poles on 20th Avenue and 21st Street are owned by the City and the City maintains them. He is hoping that FPL will take over the poles and maintain them. If that does not happen then the City will go to their vendors for the street lighting poles and replace the lights at the same time.

Mr. Cataldo asked about the new lights along 14th Avenue. He was told that FPL owns those poles.

Mr. Jeffries continued with going over the budget. He handed out the Five Year Capital Improvement Program for the Historic Downtown Vero Beach Economic Development Zone Trust (attached to the original minutes. He said that this is not the final budget so the Committee has time to think it over before they make any recommendations. He said that the \$115,000 proposed will cover the installation of the lighting and the proposed \$75,000 will cover the costs of the additional lighting improvements around the whole downtown district. The Committee does not have to make any decisions on the locations today, he will come back to them in the future regarding that. He was happy to hear that now they can do the entire lighting project, which includes the design work.

Mr. Cataldo asked about the sidewalk improvements for 2025-2026.

Mr. Jeffries explained that was a project that they had in the fiscal budget approximately two (2) years ago. He said initially it was going to be on 14th Avenue going south. He said since it was a priority at the time they put that number back in the budget. He brought up that there has been a lot of discussion about the downtown master plan. The City has hired Mr. Bob Gibbs, Consultant, to do that work. He is an expert in marketing retailing and will be focusing on the entire City, especially the downtown area. He will make some recommendations on what he sees could be done to make downtown more retail marketable. The current downtown plan was adopted in 1992 and that is what they have been using. He feels it is time to update that plan. He said there have been some other studies and reports that have been done over the years and Mr. Gibbs will review them and then layout the frame work for their next master plan. He said the funds from the Economic Development Zone Trust will help with the implementation on some of the things that he would recommend for the downtown area. He said per Resolution 2015-12 the Downtown Economic Development Zone Trust funds will end, which will probably be renewed. He asked for the Committee's feedback.

Mr. Cataldo expressed that the Committee has always talked about safety, lighting, traffic calming, sidewalks, etc., as being important to them.

Mr. Torres brought up the sidewalk on State Road 60 on the north side going westbound and asked if that would be a Vero Beach project. He thought that the sidewalk could easily be widened.

Mr. Jeffries explained that all the State is going to pay for is repaving. He said anything else the City would have to pick up the costs. He said once they get the master plan completed it will show what streets need the most improvements.

Mr. Cataldo asked if the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) could wait for the master plan to be completed.

Mr. Mitts explained that FDOT has a schedule to do the repaving of the Twin Pairs because of liability reasons. He said anything additional to be done at the time requested by the City would have to be paid by the City. He said that the City has currently hired a consultant to do a Twin Pairs study. He said if anyone is interested in the Twin Pairs study there will be public meetings for the community's feedback. The official request for a lane reduction application that the City may send to FDOT will be done after the study is completed. He said they have until the end of December to get this information to FDOT. He said at last month's Council meeting the Council agreed to move forward with the study.

Mr. Torres said that he would like to see Council approve the lane reduction.

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, explained that even if Council requests a lane reduction it will be up to FDOT to make that decision. He said FDOT has control over the road and the speed limit of the road. He said those things are not a City decision.

Mr. Cataldo commented that he has had meetings with FDOT and feels that it is a City issue. He hoped with the funding that they have that they will focus on curbing and landscaping. The Committee members agreed.

Mrs. Chambers commented after hearing these additional comments by the Committee they might want to consider pushing the \$75,000 back a year since they won't be able to do the sidewalks. This gives them time to get some answers.

Mr. Cataldo questioned the money available in the complete streets project.

Mr. Mitts commented that he has asked FDOT about that and they have been very clear in saying if the City wants to do anything that they will need to pay for it other than for the paving. He commented that removing curbs is very expensive. They would be looking at a six figure dollar amount to get it done.

Mr. Torres asked if they want a motion to remove the \$75,000 and put it into fiscal year 2024/2025.

Mr. Jeffries said they could do that if that is their desire. He said that they may want to leave the money in the budget as it is now because FDOT might start the paving project next summer and in case something came up and they want to use those funds they would be there. The actual construction of the project is scheduled for 2026/2027.

Mr. Torres made a motion to recommend to Council that they move this \$75,000 from fiscal year 2023/2024 to the fiscal year 2024/2025 budget. This would be pushing it back a year in order to get more specific information on the project. Mr. DelVecchio seconded the motion.

Mrs. Chambers commented after hearing the comments made by Mr. Jeffries, the Committee might want to consider keeping the \$75,000 in the current fiscal year and move it to the State Road 60 project so they are covered.

Mr. Torres amended his motion to keep the money that is in the current budget for 2023/2024 and designate it to the State Road 60 project. Mr. DelVecchio seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. OLD BUSINESS

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

6. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:02 a.m.

/tb