

**MINUTES
CITY OF COCOA
SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING**

August 28, 2024

A Regular meeting of the Sustainability Advisory Meeting was held on August 28, 2024 at City Hall, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL, as publicly noted.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

City Manager Whitten called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

Vice Chair Shannon Lathem led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Invocation.

ROLL CALL:

Shan Lathem	Vice Chairperson
Dick Bankhead	Board Member
Kimberly Prosser	Board Member
Joy Rutherford	Board Member

PRESENT:

Shan Lathem	Vice Chairperson
Dick Bankhead	Board Member
Kimberly Prosser	Board Member

ABSENT:

Joy Rutherford	Board Member
----------------	--------------

STAFF PRESENT:

City Manager Stockton Whitten and Lori Chabot, Recording Secretary were present. Councilwoman Patricia Weeks was also present.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES:

- a) AGENDA: Meeting of August 28, 2024
- b) MINUTES: Meeting of June 11, 2024

- * **MOTION by Board Member Prosser; SECONDED by Board Member Bankhead to approve the Agenda of August 28, 2024, as written and the June 11, 2024 Minutes as written.**

AYES: Lathem, Bankhead, Prosser

Motion passed unanimously (3-0).

III. NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Remarks

Vice Chairwoman Lathem led the meeting as Acting Chair and thanked all for coming.

City Manager Whitten introduced Councilwoman Patricia Weeks, District 3, who is also the liaison for this board.

He also discussed the need to appoint new board members for the current vacancies. It is a 7-member board with 4 vacancies. Those vacancies were previously appointed by Deputy Mayor Hearn, Councilmember Goins, Councilwoman Koss and the City Manager. Discussion included the unique qualities and an interest for the board.

Board Member Lathem asked how the appointments worked. In response, City Manager Whitten explained that each Councilmember appointed one person from their district. The Mayor also appoints one and the City Manager appoints two.

City Updates

City Manager Whitten shared information presented by Superintendent of Schools, Mark Rendell at the August 27, 2024 City Council Meeting. Superintendent Rendell presented the attached presentation¹ on the State of the Schools. He discussed enrollments, graduation rates and academic achievements, adding several schools in Cocoa have improved from the prior year. He continued, stating schools were opened with a Teachers Contract in Place, with fewer than 100 classroom teacher vacancies, and with a driver for every bus.

Discussion also included the addition of STEM classes for elementary schools, a newly designated Space Academy, new CTE programs on Aqua Science, Space Mechatronics, Aeronautics & Space Engineering and a new Technical College as well as a Fire Academy at Cocoa High.

City Manager Whitten discussed his meeting with the Technical College and the board would like to have him arrange a meeting to hear about the program and how

¹ Exhibit 1 – Superintendent of Schools Presentation

the board could help. City Manager Whitten stated the Fire College was largely inspired by the program the city did where candidates from Cocoa High School were sponsored to attend the college with the intent to work for the City's fire department.

City Manager Whitten provided an update on the Brightline² project through the attached presentation. He began that he as well as the mayor and several other constituents travelled to Washington DC and met with members of the Senate House to advocate for the train station and a grant request of 47 million for the station. He added, he believes the meeting went well and hopes to know something before November. Besides the grant request of 47 million, he discussed the other funds earmarked for the station that has a total cost of 83 million. The station will be similar to the Boca station. The increased cost is partly due to the additional roughly 5 miles of track that will have to be added.

He discussed the Conceptual Plan, the Master Stormwater System / Park plan and how they could leverage natural site characteristics for stormwater treatment and the Mixed Use Development concept to create a connected self-sustaining district offering daily services and diverse housing needs. He discussed who the audience was, i.e., wayward retirees who make up the larger portion, young professionals earning a higher than average income and who desire to be close to a metro area and the emerging scholars / new workforce who want to be close to nightlife and entertainment. He explained the layout of the station, the proximity to the Walmart Supercenter, the locations for mixed use, the wetlands, and parking areas. This is an idea and is not set in stone.

City Manager Whitten provided information on the Visioning meeting that was recently held at the Joe Lee Smith building in the Diamond Square. RVi Planning Consultants ran the meeting, gathered data and provided results. Their presentation was attached to the Agenda. The "Four Corners" is the intersection of Diamond Square and Cocoa CRAs, and is the start of the Visioning. The visioning will continue west down SR520. There are 22 properties within the study area where current use and FLU designations were explored. Potential developers would research the location for highest and best use for the corner.

Board Member Bankhead asked about changing the site. City Manager Whitten explained it would go through a site plan process to be approved.

City Manager Whitten previously provided board members with a copy of HB1365 that was mentioned at the June Sustainability meeting. He prepared a presentation³ which summarized the bill. This outlined the bill's purpose, key provisions and implementation process. For the City to implement a plan or erect a location for the

² Exhibit 2 – Brightline Train Presentation

³ Exhibit 3 – HB 1365 Presentation

homeless, it would include approval from the County, final approval from DCF and include multiple restrictions. It specifically stated a City could not implement a site on its own. Vice Chairwoman Lathem asked if the State earmarked any funding for this, and City Manager replied they did not.

City Manager Whitten shared a plan⁴ with the board that was submitted to Council by JB Dennis depicting his thoughts on how to address the HB 1365. Copies were provided.

Discussion continued among the board regarding the bill and ideas were shared on how to address it. City Manager Whitten stated a Committee is being formed and spearheaded by the Coalition for the Homeless and he would be on that committee. He would keep the board apprised of any movement.

Board Discussion

The board discussed more about the educational opportunities through the technical or trade programs at the new technical school and would like to focus on that and possibly coordinate with Cocoa High. City Manager Whitten stated he would ask the principal to attend the next meeting. The Recording Secretary stated she would work through Doodle to schedule a meeting before the end of the year.

The board also discussed new board members and qualifications. Possibly someone in the education field. City Manager Whitten asked members to think about it and share any suggestions.

IV. NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next scheduled meeting for the Sustainability Advisory Board is TBD in Cocoa City Hall, 65 Stone St, Cocoa, FL 32922.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

The Sustainability Advisory Board meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Shan Lathem, Vice Chairperson

ATTEST:

Lori Chabot, Recording Secretary

⁴ Exhibit 4 – Written Design Tent City