

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

**June 11, 2024**

**A Regular meeting of the Sustainability Advisory Board Meeting was held on June 11, 2024 at City Hall, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL, as publicly noted.**

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

Vice Chair Lathem called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

Vice Chair Lathem led the Pledge of Allegiance and Board Member Bankhead gave the Invocation.

**ROLL CALL:**

Shan Lathem	Vice Chairperson
Dick Bankhead	Board Member
Cynthia Johnson	Board Member
Kimberly Prosser	Board Member
Jennifer Riggs	Board Member
Joy Rutherford	Board Member

**PRESENT:**

Shannon Lathem	Vice Chairperson
Dick Bankhead	Board Member
Kimberly Prosser	Board Member
Cynthia Johnson	Board Member – <i>(resigned 6/11/2024 at end of mtg.)</i>

**ABSENT:**

Joy Rutherford	Board Member
Jennifer Riggs	Board Member – <i>(resigned 6/11/2024 prior to mtg)</i>

**STAFF PRESENT:**

City Manager Stockton Whitten and Lori Chabot, Recording Secretary, Liaison/Council Member Barringer and Councilwoman Koss were present.

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES:**

- a) AGENDA: Meeting of June 11, 2024
- b) MINUTES: Meeting of April 6, 2023
- c) MINUTES: Meeting of August 10, 2023

- \* **MOTION by Board Member Prosser; SECONDED by Board Member Bankhead to approve the agenda of June 11, 2024, as written, April 6 Minutes as written and August 10, minutes with one amendment on page 3 to add change Eastern to East and add Central after East.**

**AYES: Lathem, Bankhead, Prosser, Johnson**

**Motion passed unanimously (4-0).**

### **III. NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **1. Chairperson Remarks**

Vice Chairperson Lathem lead the meeting. She thanked all for coming. Reminded the group of the last meeting's outcome and is looking forward to hearing from the City on their updates. She would like to see more action items in the future.

#### **2. Environmental Scan and Future Initiatives.**

City Manager began with the assistance of a Powerpoint and discussed the City's objectives and priorities for the coming year. This included Sustainability Action Plan, City's Priority Areas, 2025 Legislative Session/Priorities, the status of the Budget for 2025 and will Provide Action Items for the Board. The Powerpoint<sup>1</sup> is attached to the Agenda.

City Manager Whitten discussed the threats/challenges the City faces with regard to workforce housing. These will become clearer with the finalization of the Governor's budget and how it will affect the City.

Amazon will be opening up in August They have retooled it from a last mile facility to a first mile facility. Roughly in September, it will bring 300 plus jobs. First mile facility has more employees and involves distributing raw materials to other facilities.

Vice Chair Lathem asked if there were any concerns as to how it will affect other local smaller businesses. He replied he doesn't believe this has been looked at specifically.

The Clearlake construction is a calming and sidewalk widening project to pull people off the road onto the sidewalks. Chair Bankhead asked if DOT asked community for input prior to the project. City Manager replied they did, but don't typically take the recommendations. Board Member Prosser asked about the bikes in that area. He replied they would not be encouraging those to ride on the road but to likely use the sidewalks.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sustainability Presentation for June 11, 2024

Representative Posey spearheaded a request to earmark 2.5 million for the Old Joe Lee Smith bldg.

City Manager discussed the City revenue vs. expenditures and where the shortfalls are. He also stated the City was still working to receive reimbursement for the Lee Wenner Park. Board Member Johnson stated she was waiting to hear about the budget with regard to the State Level and also asked about the lagoon and available grants. City Manager replied discussing the budget and funds and where the City stands and their effort to balance it out.

He continued, the City has had some success in recruitment and retention. The Council established a program to encourage Cocoa High Students to work toward a certificate program where the City pays for the academy and the student receives a living stipend. Two recent new firefighters are completing the program.

The City's Police Department close to being fully staffed. There are only a couple open officer positions. Six officers previously left to Palm Bay, four came back. The City is close and the Fire Department is fully staffed with the two newest graduates.

Vice Chair Lathem asked about the JK Septic to Sewer and City Manager replied with an explanation. She also asked if there were any plans to bring sewer to Industrial Park. He replied not as of current but that effort will come back to the Council.

City Manager advised at the request of the Council, the Superintendent of Schools agreed to speak to the Council re: a state of union in Schools. He believes it will be July 23.

He stated, this board could be value added to the current educational problems and graduation rates. Cambridge agreed to a year-round plus Saturday's pilot program at their school. The Proposal is a pilot project to have a classroom in the Aspiration Academy that is year-round and on Saturdays.

The Small business development has a few applicants currently for the Upstart program. This program is in conjunction with FIT. There two spots for the City and 3 for the DSCRA. The program includes training classes and recipients can receive up to \$10,000.

Lee Wenner parking improvements are close and will be an 18-month construction project. The new configuration will add 70 spots.

The City of Cocoa has been on front line of affordable housing taking advantage of the ability to put affordable housing in a non-residential zoning area. Now the City has homes in Michael C Blake subdivision where a national builder is wanting to present an unsolicited proposal to build big bang building, i.e., 5 at a time. We are hoping to get that started soon. The City also has a new project called Allegra on Cox and 524. This development has some homes set aside for police and fire and some for affordable housing. There is also the possible for donation of land that could be for an easement for City.

He discussed the Consent Decree area and stated that Bell South site will sell their property to the City and hope to be closing in the next month. With that, it would be for more affordable housing.

The Brightline Intermodal Station will be transformative for the Cocoa stated City Manager Whitten. The station will cost 75 million dollars. This is the same model as the Boca station. Funds for the station will come from multiple areas. Another federal earmark from Rep. Posey is for 4 million dollars. We are an applicant with the TPO for possibly a 49 million-dollar grant. Brightline has 40 plus acres in the area of the station, and the City, roughly the same. After building the station, Brightline will likely build a hotel, mixed use, and some commercial. The City's property could be used for mixed use development as well. Brightline has been successful in getting their grants.

City Manager will send a summary of House Bill 1365 to board. This bill is in regard to the homeless and how cities are to address this. The bill prohibits sleeping or congregating but the County and City have to provide a shelter. This will become difficult. Where to put a shelter? This could be another opportunity for board to be value added.

With the Lee Wenner park reconstruction, it will add 70 spaces. There is also an opportunity for the City to redistribute other parking areas and create 60 plus places.

The City has a Visioning Project of Cocoa Central. The area of 520 and US 1. The is the entrance to Cocoa. Future land use maps are inconsistency. The City has engaged RVI engineers to see that project through. Next Monday at Joe Lee Center at 7:00 PM there will be a meeting inviting Citizens to come and give their input as to what they would like to see there. Board Member Bankhead asked what would you put there? The Board and City Manager discussed options for this Gateway to Cocoa.

Next year, 2025, the City will have a Comp Plan update. This will be a large undertaking with the use of consultants. There will also be updates to DSCRA and Cocoa CRA plans. Also using consultants for those updates.

The City is in negotiations with the builder, 360 for the hotel on Brevard Ave. They have mentioned possibly a Marriott brand.

The Redevelopment of 430 Brevard, the old Bank of America/Barnett Bank will likely be a mixed use residential. The property is owned by The Framework Group who currently have other projects in the Brevard area.

The 5- acre site at 915 Brevard is waiting to go to RFP. The City has to be conscientious of the timing and building several properties at once in the village.

City Manager Whitten mentioned an additional action Item for the Board. A Neighborhood Strategy Area for the areas of Clearlake north of 520, as there currently is no support for families living there. With the notion of building from bottom up for kids and families.

There could be opportunity to bring in federal assistance. Board Member Bankhead asked about boundaries and discussion continued with regard to that.

City Manager Whitten stated he would send the Board the date of the Superintendent's visit. He also advised there will be a Sustainability Panel Board on July 23 at Florida Tech. They will invite two people from each agency to participate. Those available please contact City Manager and he will take the first two.

There are two new subdivisions, one is north of 528 and east I95- Lakes at Cocoa Grove – 350 homes sites, and sell at \$500,000 per home. The builder is Mountain Cove. Board Member Johnson asked about tree removal and replacement for home builders. City Manager Whitten explained the landscape requirements. He also added, 375 units at Windward Preserve and selling for less money. The builder is Taylor Morris.

Vice Chair Latham shared her appreciation for his presentation and all the information. She asked about the homeless and where we were. He replied, there are a lot of agencies that provide many types of services that have been here a long time. He has heard Cocoa has 1/3 of the services for homeless in the County. The issue is, there is no shelter.

Board Member Johnson asked about the request from prior Board Member Riggs. City Manager Whitten stated he will reply accordingly. She also asked about Septic to Sewer and if there was any consideration to going further North on Indian River Drive. Board Member Prosser replied a person at County Emergency Mgmt can respond to that and save City Staff time. She also asked about scheduling a meeting in advance or having a regular meeting, adding if needed it could be cancelled. She then submitted her letter of resignation citing lack of activity.

Vice Chair Latham asked about the Board moving forward and Board Member Prosser replied she would like to hear the Superintendent first. She also thanked her for her time served and comments.

3. Board Discussion

**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 7:55 PM.**

---

Shannon Lathem, Vice Chairperson

**ATTEST:**

---

Lori Chabot, Recording Secretary