MINUTES (Amended)
City of Cocoa
City Council Priorities Workshop

February 23, 2023

A City Council Workshop was held on Tuesday, February 23, 2023, in Cocoa City Hall, in City Council Chambers, located at 65 Stone Street, in Cocoa, Florida, 32922, as publicly noticed.

I. Opening Matters:

Mayor Blake called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Mayor Blake asked for a consensus to end the meeting at 2pm instead of 4pm. In response, Council agreed to end the meeting at 2pm.

Chief Collier provided the invocation and Chief Lamm led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

The Assistant City Clerk took the roll.

PRESENT:	Michael C. Blake	Mayor
	Lavander Hearn	Deputy Mayor
	Rip Dyal	Councilmember
	Alex Goins	Councilmember
	Lorraine Koss	Councilmember
	Anthony Garganese	City Attorney (arrived at 10:18am)
	Stockton Whitten	City Manager
	Monica Arsenault	Assistant City Clerk
	Carie Shealy	City Clerk (started at 12:30pm)

OTHER STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jack Walsh, Utilities Director; Tammy Gemmati, Administrative Services Director (arrived 10:46am); Charlene Neuterman, Community Services Director; Samantha Senger, Director of Communication & Economic Development; Evander Collier, Chief of Police; Rebecca Bowman, Finance Director; Jonathan Lamm, Fire Chief;

Rob Beach, Chief Technology Officer; Bryant Smith, Public Works Director; and Eric Montgomery, Helpdesk Support Tech.

Councilmember Koss wished to point out that there are several items on the agenda today that are requesting that Council make decisions on multi-million-dollar programs that will impact the City over many years. She read a blurb from the Florida Municipal Officials Manual that says "Workshops are not formal legislative meetings; therefore, no official action can be taken." She asked that Council not be placed in a position to vote on items that they've only had forty-eight hours to review and have not had maximum citizen participation. She added that she has no problem with the projects they have already voted on.[1]

* **MOTION by Councilmember Koss; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Hearn to provide input but save final decisions on the legislative items for a formal Council meeting, for discussion.**

Deputy Mayor Hearn added that while he is in favor of taking more time to review the Master Parks plan, he doesn't want to bind Council to a motion that would not allow them to make decisions on time sensitive items.

* **Councilmember Koss amended her motion to make an exception for items that are time sensitive.**

Mayor Blake explained that should the Council decide to vote on something today, it can always be brought back to Council to be amended in the future if necessary.

Councilmember Goins asked Councilmember Koss if she could be specific as to which items she does not feel comfortable voting on and include that in her motion. He added that these workshops are advertised on social media and he feels that the citizens trust the people they elected to do their job.

Councilmember Koss explained that her main point is that the Florida League of Cities' best practices say that decisions should not be made at workshops. The purpose of the workshops is to allow an informal opportunity for Council to discuss items, however the decisions should be made at a formal Council meeting.

AYES: Hearn, Koss
NAYES: Blake, Dyal, Goins

THE MOTION FAILED (3-2)

[1] Minutes amended by Councilmember Koss at the 4/11/2023 Regular City Council meeting.

City Manager Whitten added that with all due respect to the Florida League of Cities, a lot of their best practices are preempted by the City's policies and procedures. He shared that in the City's Operations and Procedures manual it says that action can be taken at workshops. He pointed out that there is a lot on the agenda today that needs to be discussed.

Ms. Senger talked briefly about the Upstart Cocoa program and pointed out that staff has received a lot of good feedback on the program.

City Manager Whitten talked about the City's 8th Annual Job Fair which takes place today from 10am-1pm at the Dr. Joe Lee Smith Center.

He talked about the Police Department and shared crime statistics as 2022 came to a close. He shared a video and pointed out that crime was reduced by 4.1% in 2022 compared to 2021. Additionally, there were no murders in the City of Cocoa in 2022, however aggravated assaults increased by 18.9% but in the majority of these cases the victim knew the offender. The Police Department is working diligently to improve the quality of life in the City of Cocoa.

Councilmember Koss asked if the majority of the aggravated assault cases were domestic violence related. In response, Chief Collier explained that they are not. He noted that some may be domestic violence related but the majority of the disputes take place between friends, neighbors or other sorts of acquaintances.

II. Workshop Topics:

1. Parks Master Plan & Project Discussion

A presentation[2] was shown and Mr. Smith shared an overview of the Parks Master Plan.

City Manager Whitten added that in most instances, the City's parks are in such a condition that the foundation of the park itself needs to be addressed. Some of these issues include bleachers, lighting, fields, drainage, scoreboards and goal posts.

Mr. Smith reviewed the format of the plan and explained that each year, as part of the budget cycle, staff will be seeking direction from Council on which parks and initiatives they would like to prioritize so staff can budget accordingly.

Carmalt Park was discussed and Mr. Smith referred to the Parks Infrastructure and Master Plan which provides the following recommendations:

[2] Exhibit A: Special City Council Meeting (02/23/2023)

- Additional Seating
- Additional Lighting along the path
- Safety signage for pedestrians and cyclists
- Signage about surrounding ecosystems

Mr. Smith noted that the goal is to attract more leagues to use the parks and gradually host tournaments to bring in more revenue for the parks.

Councilmember Koss talked about park deserts and mentioned that Districts 2 and 4 have this issue. In response, Mr. Smith recommended that the existing parks be taken care of first as a lot are in disrepair and have not been updated since the 1970s.

Councilmember Koss asked if park deserts could at least be included in the Parks Master Plan so that even if new parks cannot be added now, there is a plan in place to add them later. She specifically named Cocoa Hills, Pineridge and College Manor as areas that have high numbers of youth but do not have parks.

City Manager Whitten clarified if she was asking to identify pieces of property for future parks in the plan. In response, Councilmember Koss stated that while that would certainly be a starting point, she was thinking more along the lines of identifying neighborhoods in need.

Councilmember Goins added that lighting and security at parks is a top priority for him.

Deputy Mayor Hearn suggested that Council think about specific parcels of property that may be suitable for a park in the future. He added that he understands that the money may not be available to do the projects right now but this way citizens have an idea of what is coming in the future.

City Manager Whitten explained that the Parks Master Plan can be amended at any time and is as simple as bringing forward an agenda item to Council at a meeting.

Mr. Smith shared an overview and status for Provost Park. He explained that it is at ninety percent design and is anticipated to go out for bid in the next six weeks. The design includes a multi-purpose field, two full-size basketball courts, pickleball courts, restroom building modifications, lighting, fencing, benches and future parking.

Mr. Smith showed a site layout of Provost park and noted that the parking lot and stormwater area on Fiske is a future project. The design was put on hold at 90% and never revisited. Staff suggests providing funding to complete the design and

construction of this in conjunction with the other Provost improvements. This project would provide 46 improved parking spaces with a combination of asphalt and pervious pavers. This would provide approximately 86 total spaces and would be included in the bid.

Mr. Smith asked for Council direction on a color scheme to include in the bid. Council discussed including the color orange and/or the City logo.

Councilmember Goins pointed out that although the issues with parking on the Fiske Blvd. side have been discussed, there are issues on the Varr Avenue side as well. He believes the issue is coming from the stormwater pipe in the ditch which is causing the parking lot to flood. In response, Mr. Smith explained that the issue is on their list to address. He added that the Fiske Blvd. parking lot will be included in the bid package as well.

In regard to the color scheme for the courts, it was agreed that Mr. Smith would work with Ms. Senger to get an idea of which colors would be best and to get a final decision from Council.

Mr. Smith shared an overview and status for Bracco Pond Park. He shared that there will be multi-station static exercise equipment that will be accessible around the walking path. He noted that the stations have already been installed and pads are being installed and should be complete soon.

He gave an update on Junny Rios Martinez Park and shared that it is at 90% design and is anticipated to go out for bid in March. There will be a new splash pad and 44'x32' pavilion.

Additionally, Mr. Smith gave an update on Stradley Park. The design is at 90% completion and is anticipated to go out for bid in March or April. Some renovations including restroom fixtures and stairs are currently underway or completed. The goal is to also reconstruct the football field with related stormwater and irrigation improvements and to renovate the Field House.

Councilmember Koss inquired about Travis Park. In response, Mr. Smith explained that the County has been doing work on Travis Park and have funding to make improvements to the building such as fixtures and flooring.

Councilmember Koss shared that there is an underutilized recreation center at Travis Park. There are plenty of youth in the area who would love to participate in programs and camps there, but the price is too much without some sort of supplementation like what the Dr. Joe Lee Center offers. In response, Mr. Smith shared that the County offers discounts through their application process.

She also asked about potential for dog parks or a community garden. In response, Mr. Smith explained that if those improvements are going to be made than a conversation will have to be held on how they are going to be operated and maintained.

Councilmember Koss asked if the City has an Interlocal Agreement with the County for the parks. In response, Mr. Smith explained that the City has been operating with the County under an expired agreement, however a current Interlocal is being worked on but has been held up on a few items.

* **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Dyal, to approve the Parks Infrastructure and Master Plan.**

Mayor Blake opened the discussion to the public.

Celeste Corrado, Cocoa citizen, asked Council to consider deferring their vote to allow more time for public input. She added that she feels the City may be overlooking some opportunities and with the City constantly growing it is something the City should think about. She talked about greenspace, aesthetics and resources.

Councilmember Goins asked Ms. Corrado if she has reached out to staff to share her ideas and expertise. He does not think it is fair that she is making certain statements but has not reached out to set up a meeting with staff. In response, Ms. Corrado noted that she reached out to someone to get contact information for the Planning and Zoning Department and was told that she is not allowed to contact them directly. Additionally, she applied to be on the Planning & Zoning Board but was not selected.

Councilmember Koss asked if Council could consider allowing the public thirty days for input before Council votes on it.

City Manager Whitten noted that the City is building on the same plan that was presented last year. He reiterated that even if Council votes on the plan today, an item can always be brought forward to Council in the future to make adjustments to it.

Deputy Mayor Hearn asked Council to consider amending the motion to postpone the vote to the next Council meeting on February 28, 2023 to allow the public a few more days to look over the plan.

Gregg Stoll, Cocoa citizen, wished to make a suggestion about adding a conservation park. He provided two properties as examples. He made some suggestions regarding plants at the parks and he talked about flood mitigation at Mud Lake.

AYES: Blake, Dyal, Goins
NAYES: Hearn, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED (3-2)

Jason Estes, from Village Idiot, spoke about on-street and outdoor dining. He shared that their goal is to attract more people to the Village and get more businesses involved. The on-street and outdoor dining has really helped their business and they are willing to pay for the space. Additionally, they have added parking and have spent money to make the area safe and aesthetically pleasing.

Patrick Evangelista, from Pub Americana, spoke about on-street and outdoor dining and noted that he thought this has already been voted on and they were just waiting on further direction on how they were going to move forward. He asked if this is something that is going to be voted on again, what Council's concerns are. He asked Council to consider bringing this item back to a Regular Council meeting if they are thinking of making a motion on it today.

Aleck Greenwood, 630 Brevard Ave., stated that the Council originally agreed to on-street and outdoor dining as a temporary situation. The City does not have the luxury of ample parking and it is an on-going issue. He added that there are many people that do not support this and the Council cannot allow this for one or two businesses and not the entire City.

* **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Dyal, to take a thirty-minute recess.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

2. On-Street Dining

* **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Dyal, to reconvene the Workshop AT 12:49 p.m.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

Ms. Neuterman provided a background of the outdoor dining Resolution that was enacted during Covid. She further provided examples of cities that currently are currently issuing sidewalk café or on-street dining permits. The cities discussed were Mount Dora, Winter Park, Delray Beach, Key West, and Orlando.

Ms. Neuterman explained that staff was asking Council for direction and to consider the following: Discontinue on-street dining, continue with current on street dining, or establish new sidewalk and outdoor dining permit ordinance.

Mayor Blake asked about the insurance requirements for the businesses who have these permits. It was pointed out that the owners absorb the costs of insurance and the insurance requirements would depend on the City. Ms. Neuterman explained Cocoa's requirements.

Councilwoman Koss asked if the cities discussed also had on-street dining. In response, Ms. Neuterman noted that neither Mt. Dora or Winter Park had on-street dining. Delray Beach, Orlando, and Key West do have it. Councilmember Koss further asked how long these cities have been doing it and in response, Ms. Neuterman stated that from research they all seem to come from the Covid-19 era.

Councilmember Koss asked if a new business came in would they acquire the rights to the on-street dining if a business had a permit. In response, Ms. Neuterman stated no, the new business would have to reapply for everything. Currently, only the Village Idiot and Pub Americana have on-street dining in the Village.

Ms. Neuterman added that a part of the ordinance would include side walk cafes because they would have to establish cleanliness guidelines as well as maintenance plans.

Councilmember Koss clarified that this was consideration for two items. City Manager Whitten explained it was only considering the on-street dining.

Councilmember Koss reiterated that this is another item of legislation that should be done at a regular Council meeting.

Deputy Mayor Hearn asked what Council thought of the idea of golf carts that had been brought up at the Cocoa CRA meeting. It was pointed out that the golf cart item would be brought back to the CRA. Deputy Mayor Hearn thought that fees from the on-street dining could supplement the golf cart idea and/or jobs.

Discussion was held on the impact fees that would be collected and where they would be applied to. Ms. Bowman explained that they would go into the general fund. Parking spots were discussed as well.

Councilmember Dyal stated that there are establishments that are not doing this but could. The two establishments doing this are doing very well but there are some that cannot do this. Additionally, when there is a craft fair and a merchant wants to put something out they have to rent a space. He feels it is a complicated situation.

Councilmember Goins advised that when Covid hit there was an open time frame that allowed for businesses to apply for an on-street dining permit. There were only five that applied and none of those were denied. Ossorios does not have immediate on-street parking in front of their business. This ordinance would say that they have to have immediate parking right in front of their business.

Councilmember Dyal further added that during Covid merchants could put markers in front of their store for pick up or drop off. That has ended and there are some that do not believe that is fair.

Councilmember Koss likes the outdoor dining but agrees with Councilmember Dyal on the issue of fairness, as she too as heard from her constituents.

Further discussion was held on this issue and it was advised that an ordinance would have to come back for first and second readings at a City Council meeting.

* **MOTION by Councilmember Goins; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Hearn, to approve #3: Establish a new Sidewalk and Outdoor Dining Permit Ordinance, with no more three (3) parking spaces, angled or parallel.**

Councilmember Koss clarified that this was only for the existing businesses. Staff responded and stated no, it was for anyone but they must have parking spaces directly in front/adjacent to the business.

Councilmember Goins Amended the Motion as follows:

* **MOTION by Councilmember Goins; Seconded by Deputy Mayor Hearn, to approve #3: Establish a new Sidewalk and Outdoor Dining Permit Ordinance,**

with no more three (3) parking spaces, angled or parallel and Parking spaces should be adjacent to the food and beverage businesses.

AYES: Hearn, Goins, Dyal

NAYES: Blake, Koss

The motion carried (3-2)

* **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Dyal, to take a three-minute recess beginning at 1:30 p.m.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

* **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Dyal, to reconvene the Workshop at 1:37 p.m.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

3. Fund Balance

City Manager Whitten explained that each year the Finance team closes the books from the previous fiscal year and this portion of the workshop was in regards to assigned and unassigned fund balance.

Ms. Bowman explained that each year she has to determine what each of the classifications are and that there was about $32 million in total fund balance and they can change categories for certain reasons. She spoke about fund balance in furtherance.

It was pointed out that there was approximately $5.78 million dollars and they looked closely at what these funds should be set aside for. Per the FOM (Finance Operations Manual) the City Manager has the ability to assign this; however, the wanted to bring this forward to City Council to determine what should go into fund balance.

City Manager Whitten reiterated what the FOM states and he is not comfortable doing it that way. He noted that having these funds is not always the case, they have just been fortunate in the last two years to have them.

Ms. Bowman explained in detail how the different funds are derived and what they are used for.

City Manager Whitten added that they always want a liquidity reserve as high as possible and Ms. Bowman does a good job of not spending all of the monies that come into the reserve accounts.

He explained that the following recommendations would be done in the next fiscal year but if they decide to do them sooner a budget amendment would need to be done. Ms. Bowman concurred. This would be in the next fiscal year but if they want to do it sooner a budget amendment would have to be done. Ms. Bowman concurred.

The recommendations for the use of Unassigned Fund Balance are:

- **Road Paving:** Mr. Smith explained the needs of these funds for paving and if approved he would start with $500,000 instead of $300,000 which is the usual budget for paving.
- **Additional Grant Match Fiske/Broadmoor Acres:** Mr. Smith explained this project and the history of bidding and FEMA. This would be beneficial in the event that the City has to cover any cost overruns. Mr. Smith assured Council that they were asking FEMA for more money and if approved, by them this amount could be reduced and reallocated.
- **Fire Pumper Truck:** Chief Lamm explained the reasonings behind this request and in order to meet regulations you have to have a certain number of pumpers. In order to keep up with replacements, one has to be ordered now or they will run the risk of not having a backup apparatus.
- **Police & Fire High School Cadet Program:** City Manager Whitten spoke on behalf of this request and shared that a name for the program has not been thought of, however, the Police Chief spoke with the Cocoa High School principal about this for those students may be interested in a public safety curriculum. There would be five students interested in police and five interested in fire and they would be put through the proper academies. The City would fund the academy as well as provide a monthly living stipend. In turn, they would commit to the police or fire departments for a number of years (which is not yet determined). He believes that this would be a great recruiting tool for those who do not want or cannot go to college.

In response to a question posed by Deputy Mayor Hearn in regards to if the students would have to sign a MOU, the City Manager advised yes but those details have not yet been worked out.

- **Affordable Housing or Down payment Assistance Program:** These funds are set aside for affordable housing or projects that the Housing

Authority is looking into or for other housing initiatives. Firefighter & Police Officer Recruitment program: this is not a repeat of the above, but for new officers and firefighters. Bonus incentives on top of state incentives. New program for the City for recruitment. Handed them a memo from former Comm. Hankins to Chief Cantaloupe that speaks about the difficulty in recruiting and retaining experienced/new officers. This is not a new issue it has always been.

- **Dixon/IRD Project:** Mr. Smith explained this project and that it was the elevation of Indian River Drive as well as water quality enhancements to that area. He mentioned the grant that was received and that it was a 50/50 match. They will be strategic with funding and this amount will allow them to not have to ask for as much in order to match the grant that was received.

- **Museums Capital:** This funding would be used for the City's museums.

* **MOTION by Mayor Blake; Seconded by Councilmember Dyal, to approve staff's recommendation, for discussion.**

Councilmember Koss asked if the FOM can be updated to require spending of these funds to have to be brought before Council. She asked for the change to be brought to a Council meeting.

Councilmember Koss noted that these change yearly and asked if something was being done differently in budgeting or was it a reflection of a change in the economy.

City Manager Whitten agreed and advised that these funds would go up and down as they are projections.

Further discussion was held on roads, emergency vehicles, and the grant timeline that Mr. Smith referred to.

Sam Steele, an employee, felt that all public safety currently has issues with hiring and retaining. Fire Fighters at the City are starting out $3,000-$4,000 less than other cities and counties. Usually it would not be a big deal but as of April there will be four of five more openings and this summer, they would have more. He felt that something needed to be done to even things out even though there is a line item for recruitment.

Celeste Corrado, Cocoa resident, asked if there was a prioritization process on how the City Manager decides how these uses are determined. In response, City Manager Whitten shared that Public Safety comes first as well as core services,

such as police, fire, and roads. If there are capital requests he speaks with the directors. Ms. Corrado further asked about the Dixon/IRD project. In response, Mr. Smith stated that it was in design but the grant proposal was there. Information on this was also on the website and in the FYI Newsletter. Lastly, she asked about the museum and where the money was going to.

Gregg Stoll, Cocoa resident, thanked City Manager and staff for this. He spoke in regards to the Brevard Museum of History and Natural Science and shared that a facility study has been done and progress was being made. He provided a brief synopsis of what was being done. This was a volunteer ran museum. They were open for twenty hours in December and over seven hundred people visited the Museum. He felt it was a great image improver for Cocoa.

Aleck Greenwood, Cocoa resident, appreciated the Cocoa Village parking allocation that was done a year ago and asked if there were any ideas for that. In response, City Manager Whitten advised that this would be discussed in the Assigned Fund Balance discussion. Mr. Greenwood complimented Deputy Mayor Hearn and Councilmember Dyal in regards to the idea of the spaces utilized for restaurants. The idea of involving merchants' input was great and the funding could possibly be used to pay someone to give access to the Village. He recommended an electric car like the electric Model-T that he has coming. He asked them to keep parking in mind as well.

City Manager Whitten briefly mentioned legislative priorities and that he would like Council to give some thought to those listed.

Mayor Blake thanked all for coming and mentioned that there would be a continuation of this workshop in the future.

THE VOTE ON THE MOTION WAS:

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

III. Adjournment:

* **MOTION by Councilmember Dyal; Seconded by Mayor Blake, to adjourn the City Council Priorities Workshop of February 23, 2023.**

AYES: Blake, Hearn, Dyal, Goins, Koss

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5-0)

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Michael C. Blake, Mayor

ATTEST:

Carie Shealy, MMC, City Clerk

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8th Annual COCOA JOB FAIR

Thursday, February 23rd | 10am-1pm

Dr. Joe Lee Smith Community Center

Free and open to the public. No registration is required for job seekers. Just plan to attend with your resume and dress for success. For more info, visit **www.ChooseCocoa.org/jobfair**.

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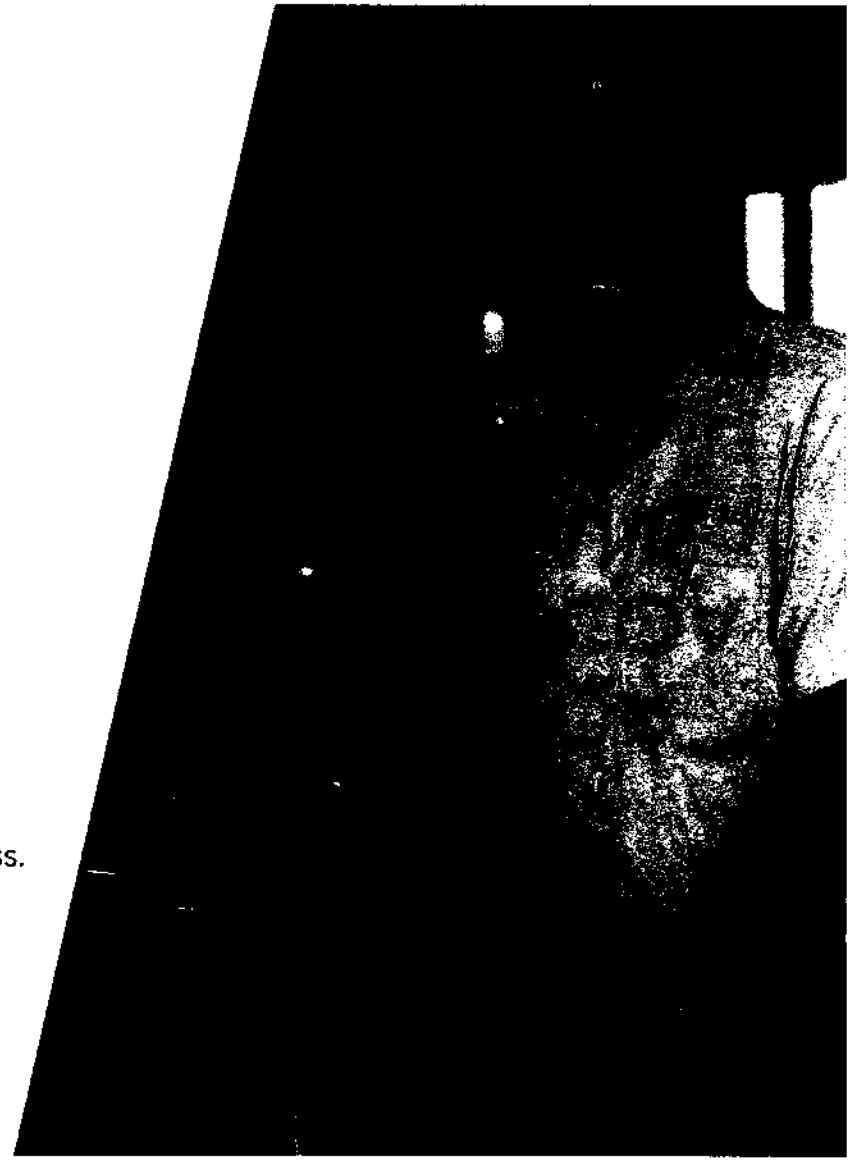

COCOA

FLORIDA

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1. Parks Master Plan Review & Approval with Project Updates
2. Planning and Priorities Plan Review and Approval
3. Rent Ordinance
4. On-street/Outdoor Dining
5. Budget Overview
6. Council Priorities
7. Fund Balance
8. Public Input/Citizen Participation

PARKS MASTERPLAN REVIEW/ APPROVAL

PROJECT UPDATE

COCOA
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OVERVIEW

- 2020 - Parks and Recreation Master Plan: High level and long-term plan for City parks.
- More immediate concerns and needs that were not addressed.
- City staff worked with BCPR and various park end-users to determine more immediate needs and developed the Parks Infrastructure Plan.
- Both plans were combined to showcase the needs of our many parks.

PARKS MASTERPLAN FORMAT

I. Executive Summary & Introduction

II. Evaluation of Existing Conditions

III. Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment

IV. Long Range Vision

V. Appendices

COCOA
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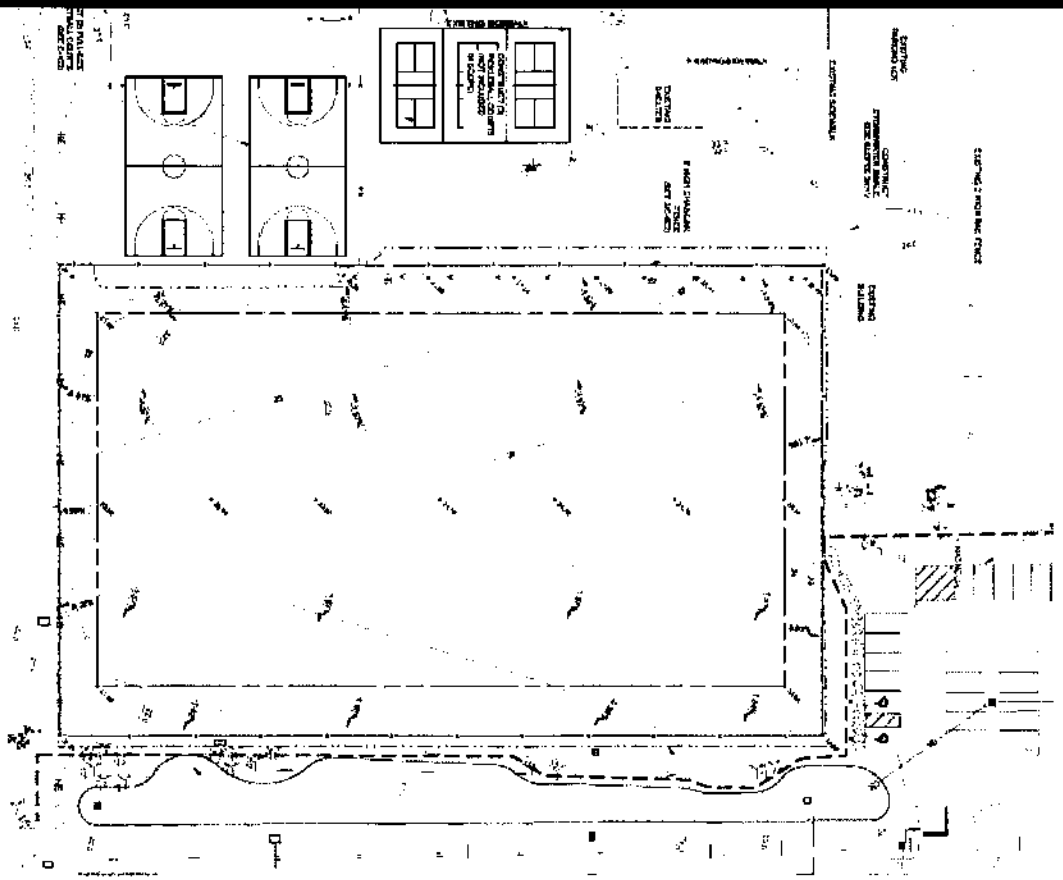
Overview	Multi-purpose field, 2 full-size basketball courts, pickleball courts, restroom building modifications, lighting, fencing, benches, future parking
Status	At 90% design, anticipated to go out for bid in the next 6 weeks
District	1

Note that lighting, fencing, benches, modifications, etc. will be included in the design, but may be omitted pending actual construction bids.

COCOA
FLORIDA



Items to decide:

- Is there a specific color theme/scheme and logo that is preferred on the courts? This color scheme would be copied on the Pickleball Courts (except the logo).
  - Base Color
  - Key
  - Center Logo

COCOA
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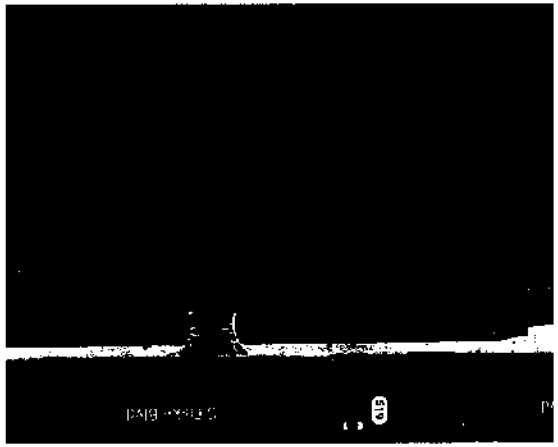
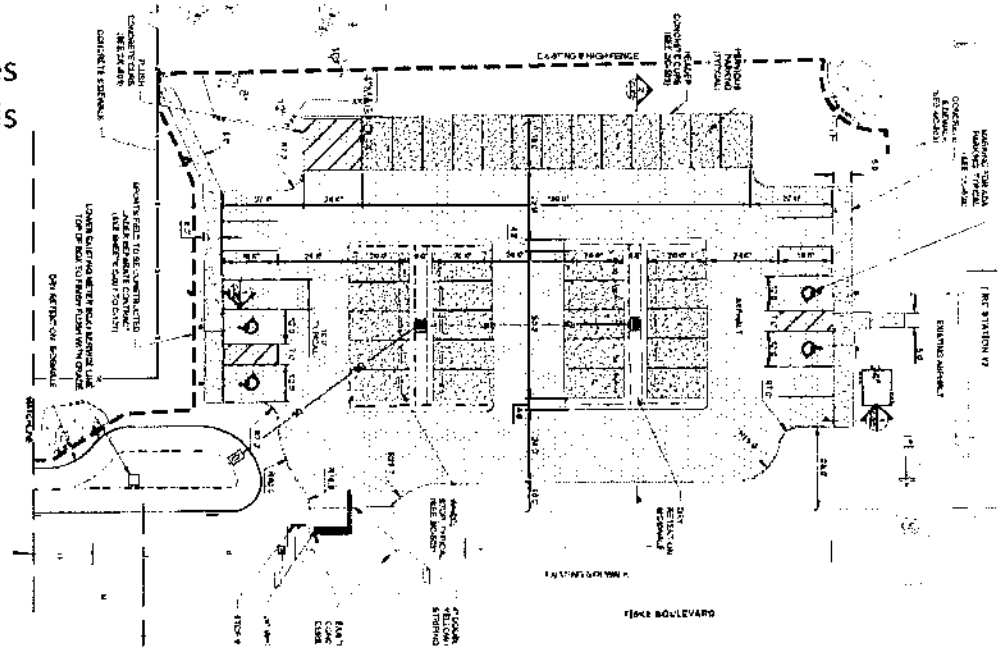
Items to decide:

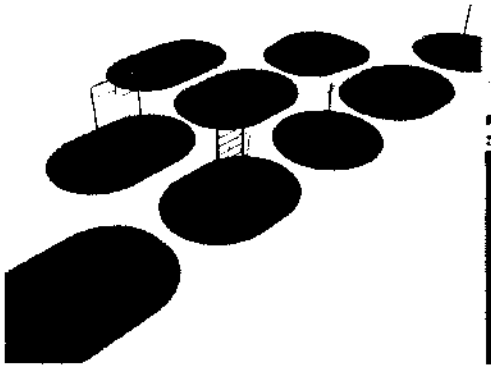
- The parking lot and stormwater area on Fiske is a future project. This design was put on hold at 90% and never revisited. Staff suggests providing funding to complete the design and construction of this in conjunction with the other Provost Improvements.
- This project would provide 46 improved parking spaces with a combination of asphalt and pervious pavers. This would provide approximately 86 total spaces.





COCOA
FLORIDA

Overview	Multi-station static exercise equipment around the walking path at Bracco Pond Park
Status	Stations Installed, pads being installed and should be complete soon
District	2



COCOA
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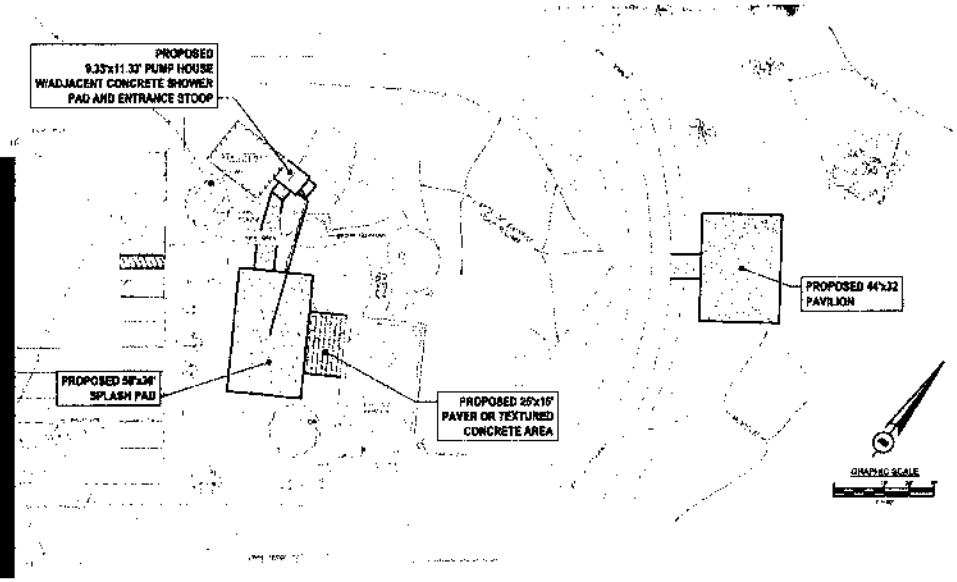
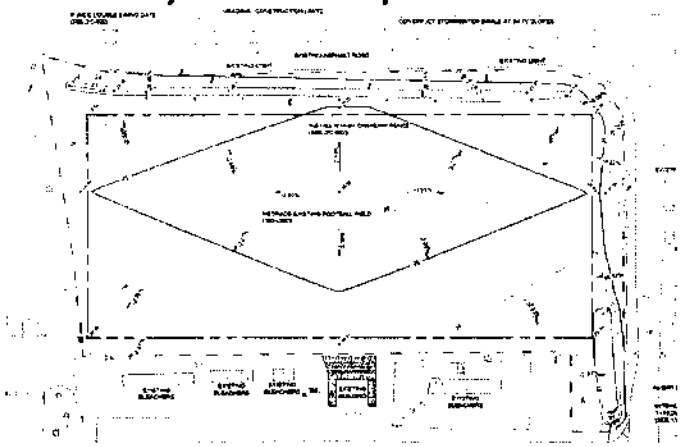
Overview	New splash pad (ADA compliant, pumphouse and equipment) and 44'x32' pavilion
Status	At 90% design, anticipated to go out for bid in March
District	3



COCOA
FLORIDA

Overview	Reconstruct football field with related stormwater and irrigation improvements and renovate Field House.
Status	At 90% design, anticipated to go out for bid in March/April, Some renovations including restroom fixtures and stairs are currently underway or completed
District	4



APPROVAL NEEDED

PARKS INFRASTRUCTURE AND MASTER PLAN

COCOA
FLORIDA

PLANNING & PRIORITIES

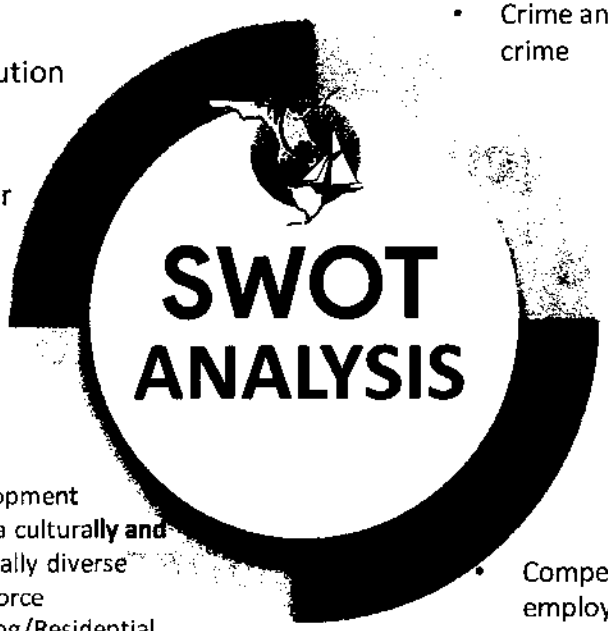
2023

COCOA
FLORIDA

2022 SWOT ANALYSIS - APPROVED

STRENGTHS

- Regional Water Utility
- Cocoa Village
- Employee Knowledge
- Location
- Financial Status
- Culturally Diverse
- Abundance of Churches/Non-profits
- Educational Hub
- Tree City USA
- Center for Distribution Centers
- Dr. Joe Lee Smith Community Center
- Diamond Square Community



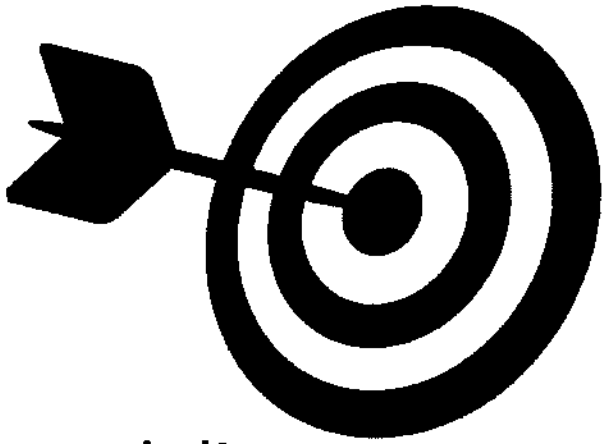
- Cocoa's Image/Reputation
- Irregular City Boundaries
- Crime and the perception of crime
- Limited funding for improvements
- Limited control over our parks
- Affordable business space for entrepreneurs
- Incentives for City employees living in the City
- Representative of the population
- Sustainability

- Cocoa Village
- Use of City Facilities & Amenities
- Annexations
- Expansion of Water/Wastewater Utilities
- Industrial Areas
- Brightline Station
- Cocoa's Image/Reputation
- Tradeschools and partnership with STEM and CTE programs
- Diamond Square Community
- Eco tourism
- Grant Eligibility
- More connected pathways
- Low-impact development
- Have a culturally and ethnically diverse workforce
- Building/Residential development
- Vacant commercial property
- Citizen participation/engagement

THREATS

- Competition for municipal employees
- Cocoa's Image/Reputation
- Lack of service and healthcare businesses
- Health of the Lagoon
- Lack of attainable workforce housing
- Homelessness
- Climate change (Storm surge, heat events, sea level rise)
- Unmanaged growth
- Lack of civic engagement

MISSION - APPROVED



The mission of Cocoa's government is

"To enrich the quality of life for our unique and diverse community by delivering Professional, Responsive, Innovative, Dedicated and Exceptional public services!"

Serving our community with P.R.I.D.E.

VISION - APPROVED

We envision Cocoa as a safe, vibrant, and diverse city that values its rich history and environmental resources, while promoting an engaged and inclusive community with ample employment, housing, recreational, and social opportunities for all.

CORE VALUES - APPROVED

Integrity
Conducting ourselves in a moral, ethical, and honest manner.

Accountability
Citizens, Staff and City Council taking ownership and responsibility to promote public trust.

Community Engagement
Encouraging community participation, inclusivity and awareness so that all residents feel they have an opportunity to participate in their city government.

Professionalism
Serving the community competently and efficiently with character and a positive attitude.

Excellence
Providing responsive and exceptional customer service.

Respect
Treating the public and one another with dignity, consideration and compassion.

COCOA
FLORIDA

In order to produce an enhanced quality of life for our residents, business owners, and visitors where Cocoa achieves its vision for a safe, vibrant, and diverse city that values its rich history and environmental resources, while promoting an engaged and inclusive community with ample employment, housing, recreational, and social opportunities for all, the city must focus on these priority areas:

PUBLIC SAFETY & COMMUNITY STANDARDS

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

PUBLIC SAFETY & COMMUNITY STANDARDS

Provide effective and efficient public safety services that remains pro-active and allows for enhanced community relations and preparedness.

- Implement pro-active, community-based solutions to build strong community relations.
- Proactively and consistently respond to shifting crime trends and emerging social problems.
- Attract and retain a skilled community-oriented and diverse sworn and civilian workforce.
- Ensure training and readiness of Public Safety employees.
- Enhance community disaster preparedness initiatives.
- Enhance community standard efforts while continuing to strive for voluntary compliance.

INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Ensure safe and efficient public infrastructure that drives growth and development in an environmentally responsible manner.

- Ensure the delivery of safe, clean drinking water to all utility customers.
- Enhance the City's transportation networks. (Train, Bicycle, Walk, Drive, Public Transit, Multi-modal Brightline Station)
- Invest in environmental stewardship.
- Support a safe, accessible, well-maintained network of parks, facilities and greenspace.
- Continually invest in parking solutions for Cocoa Village.

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Enhance efforts to make the City of Cocoa a thriving and competitive economic driver along the Space Coast.

- Enable growth through enhanced and modernized infrastructure.
- Maintain and attract new industry, jobs and investment through targeted marketing efforts, data collection and maintenance.
- Support education, training and job readiness programs.
- Improve residential development and rehabilitation programs to ensure a diversity of housing options.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Engage residents, business owners and visitors to participate in and be informed about their community.

- Continue to find new ways to communicate and reach the entire community with the latest news and information.
- Engage residents in volunteer boards and committees through community outreach programs.
- Ensure branding standards are maintained.
- Encourage a diverse array of special events at city facilities that attract a diverse audience.

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Drive efficiency with impact focused workflow and attraction and development of a qualified workforce.

- Enhance efforts to attract, develop and support a qualified and capable workforce reflective of the community.
- Leverage the latest technology to deliver efficient and effective public services to the community.
- Improve organization efficiency and effectiveness by analyzing workflow processes.
- Maintain the City's long-term fiscal sustainability.

APPROVAL NEEDED

PLANNING & PRIORITIES

COCOA
FLORIDA

RENT CONTROL/STABILIZATION

PROPOSED ORDINANCE DISCUSSION

COCOA
FLORIDA

60-Day Rent Control/Stabilization Ordinance Discussion

- There are currently no statutory limits on the amount a landlord can charge for or increase rent.
- A 60 day notice is required before the end of an annual lease to increase rent.
- A 15 day notice is required before the end of a month-to-month lease to increase rent.
- Landlords are also not required to offer lease renewals for their tenants.
- Per Florida Statutes rent controls are not allowed except in **declared housing emergencies** as approved by the voters on annual basis.

60-Day Rent Control/Stabilization Ordinance Discussion

- There are several County/Cities that have attempted to or have enacted Ordinances.

  - **Orange County** – Ordinance limiting rent increase, placed on the ballot in 2022 and passed. Currently now implemented as it is being challenge in the Courts.

    "Shall the Orange County Rent Stabilization Ordinance, which limits rent increases for certain residential rental units in multifamily structures to the average annual increase in the Consumer Price Index, and requires the County to create a process for landlords to request an exception to the limitation on the rent increase based on an opportunity to receive a fair and reasonable return on investment, be approved for a period of one year?"

60-Day Rent Control/Stabilization Ordinance Discussion

- **Tampa** – Council voted to draft an Ordinance declaring a housing crisis and present the measure to voters. Council then voted at the next meeting not to move forward with the Ordinance.

- **Miami-Dade County** - Passed an Ordinance in May 2022. Requires a 60-day notice for any increases more than five percent.

ON-STREET DINING
UPDATE

COCOA
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On-Street Dining Discussion

- **City of Cocoa Sidewalk Café Ordinance**
  - $25 fee (renewed annually)
  - Only permitted as an accessory use for food/beverage sales establishment
  - Tables and chairs can only be in front of the permitted establishment
  - Cannot interfere with pedestrian traffic along sidewalk

- **Temporary Covid Outdoor Dining Resolution**
  - Enacted due to Covid-19 indoor dining restrictions
  - Included sidewalk and public parking spaces
  - Two businesses were granted the use of parking spaces for expanded dining
    - Village Idiot Pub
    - Pub Americana
  - Extended multiple times by Council and directed Staff to make a permanent Ordinance in December 2022

COCOA
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On-Street Dining Discussion - continued

- Examples of Cities issuing Sidewalk Café or On-Street Dining Permits
  - **City of Mount Dora**
    - $100 fee (on-time)
    - Must be eating/drinking establishment – site plan with # of seats
    - Not allowed during special events without City/Event Organizer authorization
    - No On-Street Dining permits
  - **City of Winter Park**
    - $50 annual fee
    - Café seat fees – paid annually
      - 1-4 seats: $80
      - 5-8 seats: $100
      - 9-12 seats: $120
      - 13-16 seats: $140
      - 17+ seats: $160
    - Additional transportation impact fees may be required depending on roadway
    - Eating/drinking establishments only – site plan with # of seats

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On-Street Dining Discussion - continued

- **City of Delray Beach**
  - $150 fee (one-time)
  - $4.75 per square feet of City ROW/public parking
  - Additional FDOT ROW fees apply to specific roadways ($5-$10 per sq. foot)
  - Subject to limitations in each specific district
- **City of Key West**
  - One-time application of $100
  - Café seat fees $592.20 annually
  - Requests to change layout of seats - $50
  - Site plan detailing # of seats added

COCOA FLORIDA

On-Street Dining Discussion - continued

- **City of Orlando**
  - Existing eating/drinking establishment
  - Seats/tables must be removed at the close of each business day
  - Must have separate contract with pressure washing company and provide service record to City as requested
  - Café fees
    - $500 for 1-5 tables or up to 200 square feet
    - $750 for 6+ tables or over 201 square feet
  - Separate sewer and transportation impact fees
    - $182 per seat in a covered area
    - $91 per seat in an uncovered area

COCOA FLORIDA

On-Street Dining Discussion - continued

Council Consideration

I. **Discontinue On-Street Dining**

II. **Continue with Current On-Street Dining**

III. **Establish new Sidewalk and Outdoor Dining Permit Ordinance**

- Charge annual fee of $50
- Charge $5 per square foot fee up to 200 sq. Ft. (up to $1,000) and $7 over 200 sq. Ft. (At least $1,400)
- Limit no more than 2 parallel or 2 angled parking spaces per establishment
  - Must be directly in front of the establishment applying for permit
- Only establishments with primary service as food/beverage sales
  - Must have appropriate licenses

COCOA FLORIDA

On-Street Dining Discussion - continued

- **Council Consideration**

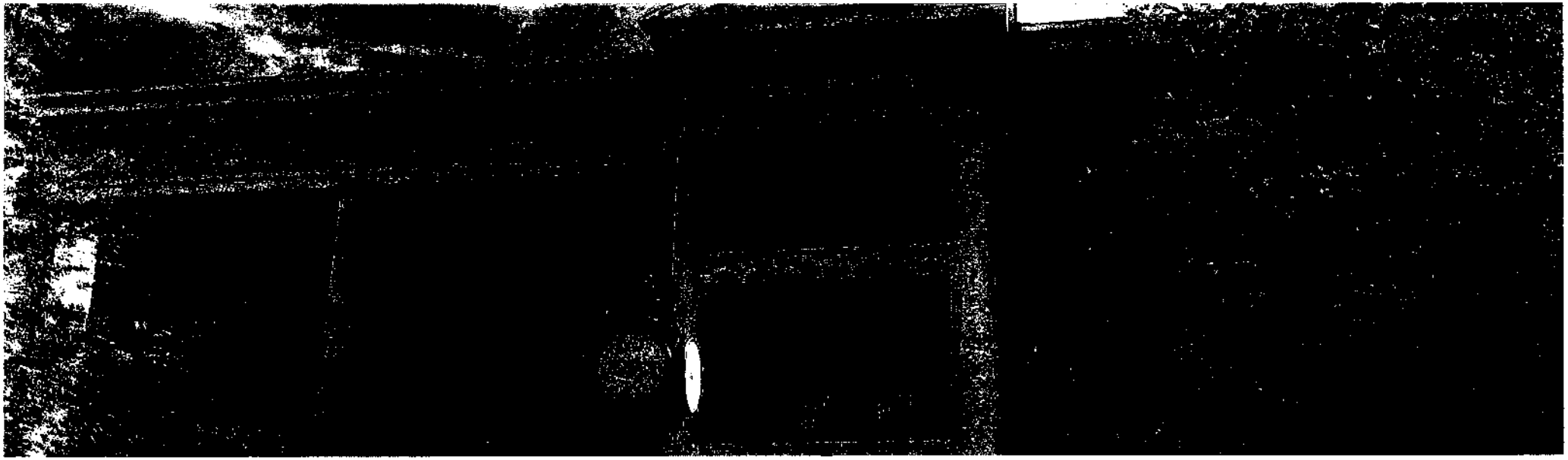
III. Establish new Sidewalk and Outdoor Dining Permit Ordinance

- Require pressure washing of public sidewalk/parking space once a month by the owner of the establishment
- Require site plan with seating arrangements – protective barriers if using parking spaces
- Require hold harmless affidavit
- All existing establishments must reapply under the new Ordinance and pay the appropriate fees – no businesses will be grandfathered in the program

COCOA FLORIDA

FY 2023/24 Budget Preparation

OVERVIEW



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New Money (Estimates)

FY24 Budget	
Property Tax Increase 3% (Current Millage Rate)	$253,000
Fire Assessment 3%	$94,000
Utility/Stormwater Indirect Cost Allocations 5%	$400,000
*Utility Return on Investment (ROI) 3%	$211,000
Total Estimated Increase in Revenue:	$958,000

*ROI is expected to decrease in FY25

COCOA FLORIDA

Increase in Expenses (Estimates)

FY24 Budget	
General Fund Salaries 3%	**$678,000**
General Fund Medical Insurance 13%	$474,000
General Fund Electric/Utilities 9%	$73,000
Total Estimated Expenses	$1,225,000
Total Estimated Shortfall:	**($267,000)**

FY24 Debt Service Expenses will be $340,000 less, due to Debt Payoff in FY22/FY23

COCOA FLORIDA

General Fund Deferred Capital (FY23)

Vehicles/Van (10)	$475,000
Building Renovations (Kitchen, Bathroom and Lockers)	$84,000
Carport Enclosure Evidence Yard	$108,000
Total Deferred Capital (PD)	**$667,000**
Public Works Department	
Building Rehab (Porcher House, City Hall Carpet, Old Fire Station 3, Civic Center and Fleet Control Access System)	$519,000
Above Ground Fuel Storage Tank at PD	$130,000
Total Deferred Capital (PW)	**$649,000**

COCOA FLORIDA

BUDGET
FUND BALANCE

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General Fund – Unassigned Fund Balance

Fund Balance	
Preliminary Unassigned Fund Balance – Year End FY22 (as of 2/23/23)	**$16,043,672**
Liquidity Reserve	**($8,303,672)**
Prior Year Committed	**($3,800,000)**
Recommendation of Unassigned Fund Balance Use:	
Road Paving	**($500,000)**
Additional Grant Match Fiske/Broadmoor Acres	($1,100,000)
Fire Pumper Truck	**($850,000)**
Police + Fire High School Cadet Program	($300,000)

COCOA FLORIDA

General Fund – Unassigned Fund Balance

Fund Balance	
Affordable Housing or Downpayment Assistance Program	($400,000)
Firefighter and Police Officer Recruitment Program	($300,000)
Dixon/IRD Project	($250,000)
Museums Capital	($240,000)

COCOA FLORIDA

General Fund – Assigned Fund Balance (AFB)

Park Projects	Budget	Encumbered/Expenditures	Remaining Balance
Provost Park	$900,000	($144,169)	$755,831
Junny Rios Park	$710,000	($95,859)	$614,141
Stradley Park	$575,000	($60,067)	$514,933
Park Improvements	$75,000	($13,311)	$61,689
Subtotal:	$2,260,000	($313,406)	$1,946,594

COCOA FLORIDA

General Fund – Assigned Fund Balance (AFB)

Projects	Budget	Encumbered/Expenditures	Remaining Balance
ERP	$1,500,000	-	$1,500,000
Housing	$750,000	-	$750,000
Village Parking	$700,000	($458,621)	$241,379
Fiske Blvd Grant Match	$560,000	-	$560,000
Economic Incentives	$500,000	-	$500,000
Fuel Tank (GF Portion)	$310,500	($283,849)	$26,651
Sustainability	$37,500	-	$37,500
Subtotal:	**$4,358,000**	**($742,470)**	**$3,615,530**

COCOA FLORIDA

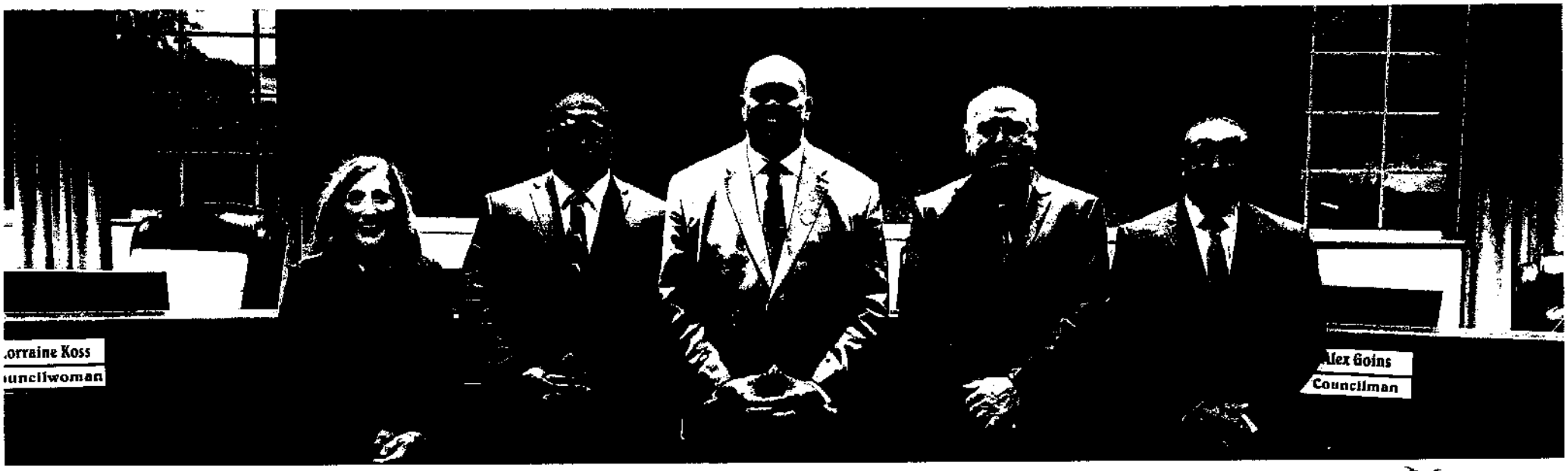
General Fund – Completed Projects/Unassigned Funds

Completed/Unassigned	Budget	Expenditures	Balance
Brevard Museum	$70,000	($25,785)	$44,215
Donation (School)	$100,000	($85,000)	$15,000
Brevard Museum Alarm	$35,000	($28,929)	$6,071
Paving	$600,000	($471,777)	$128,223
Police Headquarters	$559,000	($546,514)	$12,486
Pumper Truck (SLFRF)	$634,500	-	$634,500
Bracco Pond	$82,500	($43,109)	$39,391
Carl Anderson Park	$82,500	($12,781)	$69,719
Gilmore Park	$82,500	($10,431)	$72,069
Subtotal:	**$2,246,000**	**($1,224,326)**	**$1,021,674**

Total FY21 Assigned Fund Balance Budget $8,864,000

COCOA FLORIDA

COUNCIL PRIORITIES
2023/24



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Legislative Priorities

1. Funding for All Phases of State Road 524 & State Road 501 Safety & Capacity Projects
2. Additional State Funding for the SHIP Program for Affordable Housing Initiatives
3. Supporting additional funding for the conversion of the former Dr. Joe L. Smith Community Center
4. Additional funding for Sustainability and Resiliency Projects/Initiatives
5. Funding for the redesign and construction of Day Slips at Lee Wenner Park
6. Funding for infrastructure improvements to facilitate the siting of a Brightline Station in Cocoa
7. Protection of Local Home Rule
8. Continued funding of Bonus and Incentive Pay for First Responders

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COCOA
FLORIDA

GENERAL FUND

- Old Dr. Joe Lee Smith Community Center – State Funding
- Museums
- Homeless Initiatives
- Additional Street Paving
- J & K Septic to Sewer Conversion
- Capital Improvements within Parks
- Operating and Maintaining City Parks
- Subsidized Bus Routes/Bus Shelters
- Trailheads at Cocoa Conservation Area
- Enhanced Law Enforcement
- Facilitation of a Brightline Train Station in Cocoa
- Facilitation of Attainable Workforce Housing
- Municipal Swimming Pool in North/Central Area
- New Park Locations
- Additional Funding for Upstart Cocoa
- Recruitment and retention efforts
- Review and rewrite of the landscape ordinance
- Review of site plan/subdivision section of the code
- Reconciliation of land use and zoning code conflicts

Highlighted Items – Funded in FY23 Budget

COCOA CRA

- Fishing Pier
- Civic Center Renovations
- Cocoa Village Parking
- Capital Improvements within Parks
  - On Street
  - Parking Lots
  - Lee Wenner - RFP
- Mooring Field
- Harrison Street Streetscape
- Enhanced Law Enforcement
- Golf Cart Community

Diamond Square CRA

- Old Dr. Joe Lee Smith Community Center – State Funding
- Extension of the CRA expiration date
- Development of the Michael C. Blake Subdivision
- More programs and services within the Dr. Joe Lee Smith Community Center

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Councilmember Goins (District 1)

- Cameras/lights/security at bathrooms
  - Gilmore park to get prepared for bathroom installation
- Churchill/Thomas/Highland/Rosa L/Edinburgh paving
- **Increase Upstart Cocoa to 4-6 businesses**
- Virginia Park – selective paving based on street assessment
- **Stripe pedestrian crossing Fern and Prospect Gilmore Park crossing**
- Solar LED lighting around Thomas Cole Stormwater pond
- **Extend 6' metal fencing in front of Gilmore Park**
- Install sewer and water service lines for Blake subdivision to lower costs to future homeowners
- Connect storm connections on Barbara Jenkins and surrounding area that will allow storm to flow to Cole Stormwater Pond to aid Bernard Street pond
- Funding to support selected non-profits for the old Dr. Joe Lee Smith Community Center moving forward
- Funding for the purchase of the Verizon property on Railroad Avenue for future storm water pond
- Expeditated Code Lien process

Highlighted items – Funded in FY23 Budget

Councilmember Hearn (District 2)

- Entryway at Fiske
- Park/pool – connect parks
- Street calming – Broadmoor Acres
- Review Code Requirements – Affordable Housing
- Expand City-wide beautification grants to $15k
- **N Indian Cir flooding – ditch was filled in**

Councilmember Dyal (District 3)

- SR524 Publix to Walmart lighting
- Cross/sidewalks to I-95
- Cocoa Conservation Area temporary entrance (neighborhood petition)
- Push SCTPO to move up funding for SR524
- More officers/fire as development continues

Councilmember Koss (District 4)

- Pine Ridge – park desert, sidewalks @Harvard, Pineda
- Cocoa Conservation Area trailhead
- **Johnny Johnson Nature Trail**
- Pool/park
- Electric vehicles/charging stations
- No plastic @ City events (KBB Litter Quitter program) – *Not supported by Council*
- Connect spending to strategic issues
- Clearlake Walking Path
- Establishing Clearlake/Dixon/Michigan Area as a Neighborhood Strategy Area

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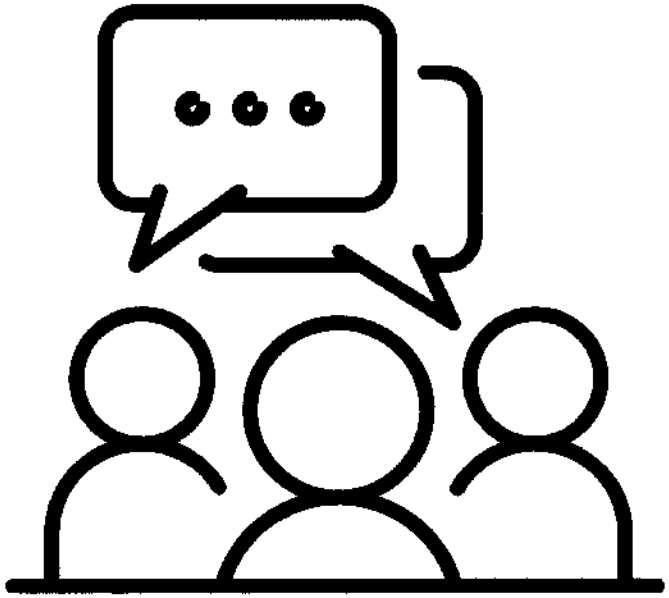

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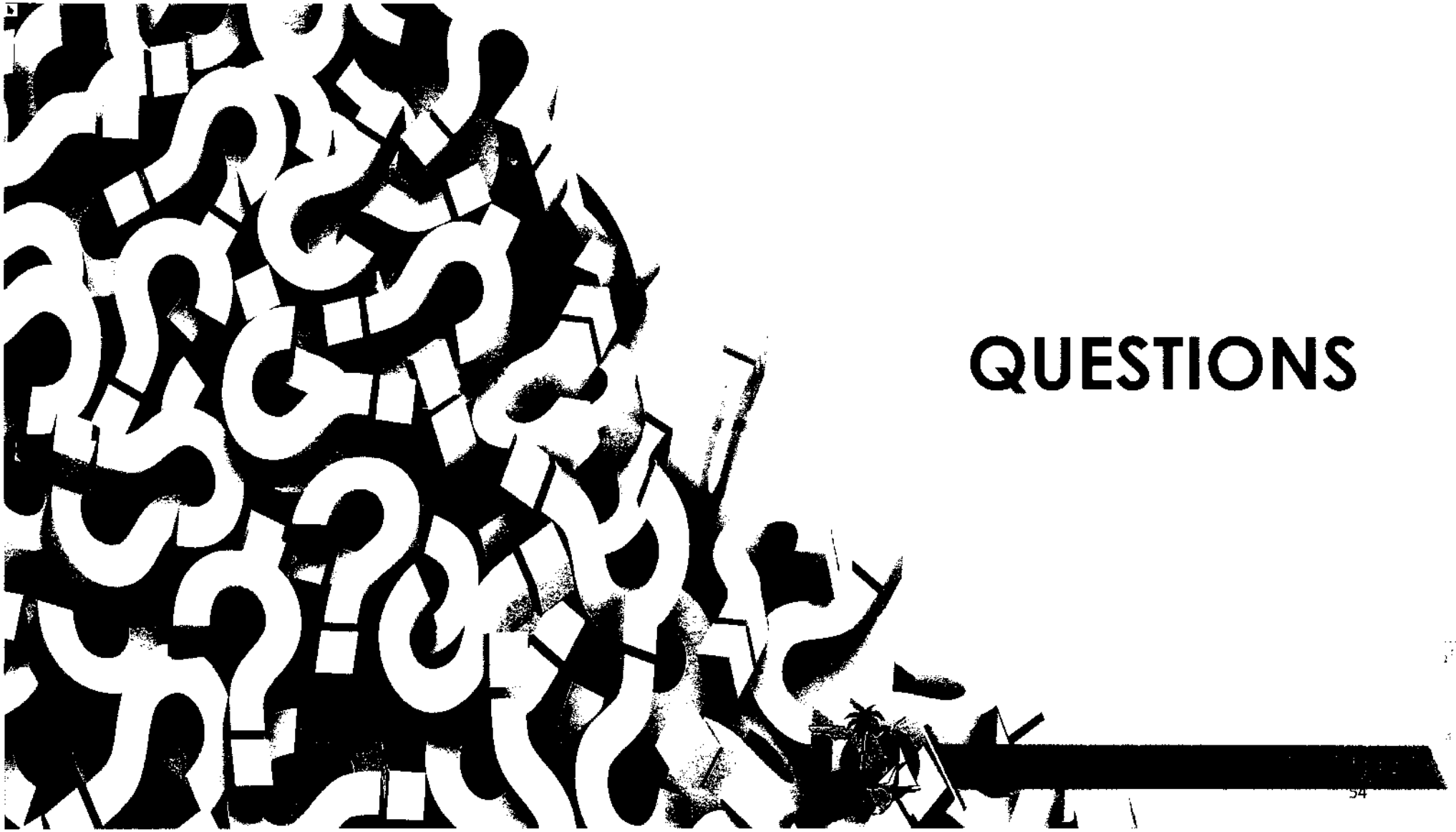

QUESTIONS

From:	Kristin Lortie
To:	Carie Shealy
Cc:	Stockton Whitten; Directors; Carie Shealy; Anthony Gargarese (OrlandoLaw); City Council
Subject:	Ecomment: 2/23 Workshop - Resident Input - City of Cocoa Budget Workshop
Date:	Wednesday, February 22, 2023 5:33:34 PM
Attachments:	2021.10.12 - Pitch for the Parks - Resident"s Proposal to the City of Cocoa.pdf 2022 City of Cocoa - Citizen Suggestions and Priorities.pdf

EXTERNAL MESSAGE - USE CAUTION WITH LINKS AND ATTACHMENTS!

I request this eComment to be included in the meeting minutes for the 2/23 Council Workshop

Mayor Blake, Council Members and City Manager Whitten,

I'm sending an email to you with my resident input and comments prior to tomorrow's 6-hour workshop, and after following the City of Cocoa actions for the past 18 months since the 2021 millage increase and citizen-protested city parks spending. This email is being forwarded to you prior to the workshop deliberations occurring on 2/23.

In summary, **I object to any voting decisions being made during the 2/23 workshop,** ***with the exception of actions that invite a 30-day citizen participation public comment window prior to any final voting on the matter, and that include at least one city-initiated 2-way communication community engagement event.*** **This includes the Parks Plan, Strategic Plan, and Rent Ordinance, along with any other decisions that Council may consider voting on during the 2/23 workshop. Residents have not had adequate opportunity to review the documentation that was posted just 48-hours prior to the meeting, and are not available to provide adequate input due to schedule conflicts. Residents should not be required to scramble to participate prior to important city matters being decided by city council members.**

Agenda Item 1. Parks Master Plan & Project Discussion - this plan does not include any public input since its origination in 2020-21. The limited public input that was gathered during Covid was problematic, and which is disclosed in the original draft. Attached is my 2021 Parks Presentation (my presentation to council was cut off by Mayor Blake after requesting just 2 additional minutes in advance of the meeting), and where I made specific suggestions as to how the city could go about creating meaningful public engagement to determine the future of Cocoa Parks.

Since the city has declined citizen input on community parks, and has declined to host resident community meetings on the future of City of Cocoa Parks, **I will feel free to notify funding authorities that the City of Cocoa has refused the residents of Cocoa any meaningful engagement in the final version of the parks plan. I will encourage Cocoa funding authorities to decline Cocoa requests, with a specific suggestion that they inform the City of Cocoa to engage with the residents of Cocoa prior to submitting future grant funding requests.**

Council Members, please oppose approval of the proposed parks plan at the 2/23 workshop, and suggest a 30-day public comment period and host a community meeting

to discuss parks.

Agenda Item 2. Strategic Plan Review & Approval. This 10-page proposed powerpoint brochure for the City of Cocoa (pp. 13-23 in the presentation), and stated publicly by Mr. Whitten to have been compiled by City Manager Whitten and Ms. Senger in 2022, makes a mockery of our former 5-year Strategic plan, and the efforts of all those that input into it. Once again, citizens should feel emboldened to alert funding authorities that the plan is not a plan, and no funding should be provided to Cocoa that requires that we have a strategic plan.

Council Members, please oppose approval of the proposed 10-page brochure, and suggest a 30-day public comment period and host a community meeting to discuss parks.

Agenda Item 3. Rent Ordinance

Council Members, please oppose approval of the proposed rent ordinance at the workshop, and suggest a 30-day public comment period to solicit public opinion.

Closing Comments

Per city policy, city workshops are for **discussion** purposes, and are taking place at a time when many Cocoa residents have obligations including work (that helps pay property taxes). While City Manager Whitten declined to respond to my inquiry last week on whether the meeting will be recorded, upon my second request to the city, Clerk Shealy stated she thought the recording would be the same as last year. FYI there were viewers that were not able to hear well due to microphones not being on. Please consider microphones being on during council deliberations so that remote viewers can hear the deliberations.

Attached are the following for your review and consideration:

- Cocoa resident suggestions, presented at 2022 Budget Workshop that were Not Included in Council Deliberations and Meeting Minutes, and still relevant in 2023
- Kristin Lortie's 2021 "Pitch for the Parks" Presentation on creating Meaningful Public Engagement with the Citizens of Cocoa, and which the presentation was cut off at the 3-minute mark by Mayor Blake despite my prior request for 2-additional minutes.

I continue to call on the city to complete the City Manager 2021 and 2022 performance evaluations in accordance with the city's contract with City Manager Whitten, and will continue to raise local awareness of this dereliction of task and duty. The ongoing public silence around this negligence demonstrates a poor leadership example for the employees, residents and taxpayers of Cocoa, and should be immediately corrected.

Please consider soliciting input and meaningful public engagement with the residents of Cocoa prior to voting on decisions that affect us all. I request confirmation from Clerk Shealy that the city has received my emailed statement with (2) attachments.

Regards,

Kristin Lortie, ***Cocoa Resident Concerned about Premature, Hasty and Non-Inclusive Decision-making***
Occurring at the 2023 City of Cocoa Budget & Priorities Workshops

CITIZEN PROPOSAL TO CITY OF COCOA

CITY OF COCOA PARKS AND RECREATION DRAFT MASTER PLAN

MOVING FROM DRAFT MASTER PLAN TO A CITY OF COCOA PARKS SYSTEM

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

BY KRISTIN LORTIE, COCOA RESIDENT

OCTOBER 12, 2021

From the City of Cocoa Strategic Plan:
We envision Cocoa as a community where All residents have the opportunity to participate in community decisions.

City of Cocoa Core Value - Leadership:
Encouraging community participation, inclusivity and awareness and exhibiting actions that serve as persuasive examples for others to follow.

PROBLEM → **PROPOSAL** → **PRIDE**

WHY DO I CARE ABOUT CITY PLANNING & SPENDING?

- **BACKGROUND IN MASTER PLANNING ASSISTANCE FOR STATE GOVT.**
  - UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS OF SOLID PLANNING EFFORTS
- **COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING EFFORTS LEAD TO SUPPORTABLE GRANT APPLICATIONS**
  - THERE ARE 14 GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES LISTED IN THE MASTER PLAN
- **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION LEADS TO COMMUNITY RESULTS**
  - *"Cocoa envisions a community where all residents have the opportunity to participate in community decisions."*

COLORADO
Department of Education

Division of Capital Construction

PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES MASTER PLAN GUIDELINES
BEST DIVISION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION

A master plan is produced through a team effort involving school administration, staff, students, community members, and professional consultants with disciplines in education, planning, programming, architecture, engineering, construction, facility management, and facility operations, and technology. The master plan research process should utilize information and resources available locally, nationally, and internationally. The following is a minimum outline of a facility master plan.

STEP #1: WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

- **CURRENT DRAFT PARKS MASTER PLAN STATUS IS UNKNOWN**
- **LESS THAN 1% COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE 2020 SURVEY:**
  - ONLY 152 SURVEY RESPONDENTS (18,639 POPULATION OF COCOA)
  - ALL RESIDENTS WERE NOT NOTIFIED ABOUT PARKS SURVEY
  - NO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP (53 COMMENTS ON SOCIAL PINPOINT/ALTERNATIVE ONLINE OPTION)
- **NO PARKS PRESENTATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL HAS BEEN GIVEN**
  - KOSS' MOTION FOR COUNCIL PRESENTATION WAS NOT SECONDED AT MAY 11TH 2021 COUNCIL MEETING
- **LUXURY ITEM PARKS SPENDING - $2.33M ALLOCATED FOR PARKS IN 2021**
  - **$710K JUNNY RIOS PARK SPENDING** WAS APPROVED FOR ITEMS <u>NOT IN MASTER PLAN</u>
  - JUNNY RIOS **PRIORITY ITEMS** IN MASTER PLAN **LEFT UNADDRESSED**
  - MASTER PLAN <u>RECOMMENDATION</u> FOR JUNNY RIOS MARTINEZ → ✓ Possible trail connection along SW edge of site to Cocoa Conservation Area
  - CITY HAS RECEIVED CITIZEN PUSHBACK ON 2021 LUXURY ITEM SPENDING DECISIONS

DISREGARD FOR PLANNING EFFORTS MAKES THE CITY OF COCOA
<u>A LESS ATTRACTIVE CANDIDATE FOR FUTURE GRANT FUNDING</u>

STEP #2 : WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?
DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

Dear Cocoa Resident,

The City of Cocoa began a Parks planning process in 2020 that we are writing to notify you about and to request your input and participation. Our vision at the City of Cocoa is a community where all residents have the opportunity to participate in community decisions.

You can help the City of Cocoa create the future of Cocoa parks!

We have reviewed our initial 2020 public survey responses, and determined that an expanded outreach is beneficial in order for the city to ensure we have received representative input and participation for our current and future parks priorities.

The following are opportunities for residents to engage with us on the planning effort for our parks:

- Go to www.cocoafl.gov to fill out our online Parks Survey – available until December 10, 2021;
- Send in your completed survey form no later than December 10, 2021;
- Go to www.cocoafl.gov to review our current DRAFT Master Plan;
- Go to www.cocoafl.gov to provide input on our current DRAFT Master Plan – available until available until December 10, 2021;
- Please plan to attend our Public Participation Workshop at 10:00 a.m. on December 4, 2021 at Cocoa High School Gymnasium.

With the additional survey information and the public participation workshop, the planning team will create our final DRAFT master plan, which will be presented to the city council in January 2022.

Please plan to participate in the above opportunities, and to attend this informative presentation of the team's findings.

Join the City of Cocoa in creating the future of Cocoa Parks and Recreation!

STEP #2 **SOLUTION**: PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS: REQUESTED ACTIONS

1) **SCHEDULE THE 2020 PLANNED PUBLIC WORKSHOP**

   A. 2020 PUBLIC WORKSHOP WAS DISRUPTED BY COVID (SOCIAL MEDIA ALTERNATE INEFFECTIVE)

   B. ENSURE THE WORKSHOP IS WIDELY POSTED & PUBLICIZED

2) **SEND THE 2020 PARKS SURVEY TO ALL RESIDENTS TO REQUEST PARTICIPATION**

3) **POST THE CURRENT DRAFT MASTER PLAN ONLINE & REQUEST RESIDENT FEEDBACK**

4) **HOST A PUBLIC PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL MEMBERS TO REVIEW THE REVISED PLAN**

COCOA
FLORIDA

The City of Cocoa envisions a city where:

- *All residents have the opportunity to participate in community decisions.*
- *A healthy ecological environment is promoted.*
- *A safe community is maintained.*

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO THE CITY OF ADOPTING THIS PROPOSAL?

- ✓ THE CITY WILL BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO QUALIFY FOR FUTURE GRANT FUNDING
- ✓ PRIORITY: CITY NEEDS A COMPREHENSIVE PARKS PROGRAM
  - ➢ UNDERSTANDING WHERE WE ARE AT & WHAT IS NEEDED IS THE BEGINNING OF SOMETHING GREAT
  - ➢ WE'VE SPENT SIGNIFICANT FUNDS, LET'S REALIZE THE VALUE FROM OUR TAX DOLLARS
- ✓ SHARED VISION RESULTS IN COMMUNITY BUY-IN FOR SELECTED PROJECTS
  - ➢ GREATER COMMUNITY CARE FOR MAINTAINING THE IMPROVEMENTS
  - ➢ GETS CITY AND RESIDENTS ON THE SAME PAGE WITH PARK PRIORITIES AND VISION
  - ➢ GETS RESIDENTS INVOLVED IN A CONSTRUCTIVE WAY LEADING TO EVERYONE'S BENEFIT

RESIDENTS SEE THAT OUR OPINIONS AND EXPERIENCE MATTER IN OUR CITY!

COCOA FLORIDA

LEADERSHIP ALIGNING WITH MISSION

Mission Statement

The mission of Cocoa's government is "To enrich the quality of life for our unique and diverse community by delivering Professional, Responsive, Innovative, Dedicated and Exceptional public services!"

*We envision Cocoa as a community where **all residents have the opportunity to participate in community decisions.***

Encouraging community participation, inclusivity and awareness** and **exhibiting actions that serve as persuasive examples for others to follow.

PROBLEM ➡ **PROPOSAL** ➡ **PRIDE**

Let's work together to create a state of the art City of Cocoa Parks Program that all residents can be proud of!

Kristin Lortie Statement to City of Cocoa Council

March 8, 2022

My statement tonight is about the city Goal Setting and Priorities Workshop next Tuesday March 15th from 10-4. I support citizen participation in the upcoming city planning, priorities and goal setting events.

In the 2016-2021 strategic plan, the city included objectives under fiscal responsibility Goal #2 that expressly include public participation. To help the city meeting its goal of promoting greater transparency in budgeting and financial matters, Objective 2.1 is to ***"encourage stakeholders to participate in budget workshops and meetings."***

Encouraging citizens to participate in next week's workshop directly contributes to the city's objectives to engage stakeholders. While I have reached out to the city directly on this, and to encourage citizen input to be clarified, the city Facebook page and website announcement does not currently include any invitation or welcome to the public, or the agenda for the event. The Facebook and website announcements should be updated to welcome public participation.

Regarding the city's priorities in the 2016 plan, when I reviewed the strategic plan recently, I was surprised by 2 items. The first was to notice that the eight (8) 2016 priorities had been selected by city staff, and not the citizens of Cocoa. The second surprise was that the priority of civic engagement was ranked 8th out of the 8 priorities selected. Should civic engagement with Cocoa residents be ranked higher than 8th as a priority for the city? Should citizens be involved in setting these priorities on behalf of Cocoa? I think so.

The city council Code of Conduct states the following that each Council Member agreed to:

"I will seek to provide appropriate leadership that nurtures and motivates the citizens of Cocoa to be stakeholders in the affairs and achievements of the City."

I support each of you in fulfilling the promise of this code of conduct.

Due to the uncertainty of next week's event agenda, I am presenting citizen priorities early. Tonight, I am presenting a priorities document compiled from our February 20th "Team Cocoa" Cocoa Cares event to council, along with a separate list of citizen suggestions. I request this statement and these documents to be included in the March 8th meeting minutes.

The citizen priorities compiled by Cocoa Cares will be posted in the Cocoa Cares Citizens Public Facebook Group. I look forward to attending the workshop next week, and to helping the city fulfill its vision of "***Cocoa as a community where all residents have the opportunity to participate in community decisions."***

Kristin Lortie, 5524 Brilliance Circle, Cocoa, FL

Moderator, Cocoa Cares Citizens Facebook Group

2022 Cocoa Cares "Team Cocoa" Citizen Priorities
March 8, 2022

Introduction: Local residents look forward to participating in the 2022 City of Cocoa Goals Setting and Priorities events, and as a part of the updating of the 2022-27 Strategic Planning effort. The priorities below are submitted to include citizen voices to the upcoming Goal Setting and Priorities event on March 15th, 2022. Citizens are looking forward to attending the 3/15 workshop, and are uncertain what the meeting format will be for public engagement. City website and Facebook announcements do not include the agenda or the type of citizen participation at the event.

Due to the citizen participation uncertainty, we are submitting our initial priorities early, and prior to the 3/15 workshop.

"Team Cocoa" Citizen Priorities: While the following priorities do not reflect the views of every Cocoan, these priorities are represented by Cocoa citizen participants, and reflect the priorities of the citizens that attended the February 20th "Team Cocoa" priorities event at the Cocoa library, as well as follow up comments and feedback submitted through the Cocoa Cares email list.

History: Throughout 2021, numerous residents made public comments after city spending decisions were made in April, and were unable to influence requested changes. This year, citizens are engaging early during priorities setting, and before spending decisions are made. Citizens support the city's vision of "***Cocoa as a community where all residents have the opportunity to participate in community decisions.***"

Citizens also support the following Fiscal Sustainability Objectives listed in the Strategic Plan:

Fiscal Sustainability Goal #2:
Goal #2: *Promote greater transparency in budgeting and financial matters.*
Objective 2.1: *Encourage stakeholders to participate in budget workshops and meetings.*
Objective 2.2: *Educate community stakeholders*

Here are the priorities recommended by "Team Cocoa":

1. **Prioritize Positive Citizen Engagement:**
   - Solicit citizen input into city spending; spending follows planning and has citizen support'
     - Actively involve citizens in planning and spending decisions;
   - Citizen-centered approach from city staff, council members & mayor;
   - Create stronger bridges to citizen participation with city government;
     - Informal #Team Cocoa Community meetings that include citizen dialogue;
     - Monthly public engagements with council members, mayor and city manager;
     - City and council members request citizen input, and prior to making city decisions;
     - Set & track measurable engagement targets for increasing citizen participation and engagement
   - Communication and respect from all city staff & council;
     - Implement staff feedback survey system;
     - Respond respectfully to all citizen reach-outs;
     - Accept citizen overtures to talk about concerns, and initiate reach-outs;
   - Reduce divisiveness between districts and within districts, encourage cross-district collaboration.

2. **Fiscal Responsibility to Avoid Unsupported Capital Expenses and Reduce Millage Increases**
   - 2021 Parks Spending and Millage Increase was contested by many citizens;
   - Additional steps need to be taken to spend funding in alignment with community support, city planning efforts and to avoid unnecessary millage increases;
   - Spend funds in accordance with community planning efforts, assess expenditures in light of support;

- Complete community planning efforts (5-year strategic plan, Parks plan), and follow through with existing plans - Cocoa Conservation Area, Sustainability Advisory Plan, Resiliency Plan, etc.

3. **Reduce Impacts of New Development to Protect Environment & Resident Health:**
   - Create a Low Impact Development Ordinance;
   - Tree Preservation & Planting (Set Tree Growth Award Goals, Bracco Park Tree Planting, Urban Mgt Plan, Urban Tree Canopy, Update tree ordinance/end clear-cutting);
   - Restore Indian River Lagoon - actions that reduce pollutants into the lagoon;
   - Assess and mitigate pollutants/negative impacts from development (air quality, trash, noise, traffic).

4. **Enhance Recreational Spaces to Improve Resident Health:**
   - Finish 2021 Cocoa Parks Draft Plan with citizen participation;
   - Implement 2003 Cocoa Conservation Area Mgt Plan (enhance passive access and ecology);
   - Bracco Park Tree Planting & Ecological Enhancements (End Herbicide use, Allow vegetation growth at pond edges, add Beemats where helpful to reduce nutrient-loading for local ponds);
   - Add new parks infrastructure only after requesting citizen input and receiving public support

5. **Managed Development Growth and Community Awareness of Growth:**
   - Managed Growth that protects community health and well-being
   - Demonstrate that Cocoa is encouraging businesses that enhance quality of life for all residents
   - Add Business Incubator program/affordable rental space to encourage new businesses
   - Host early alerts and community meetings re: local development projects and local impacts

6. **Rehome the Homeless:**
   - Regular community stakeholder meetings to discuss and implement solutions;
   - Set and monitor measurable goals to quantify issues;
   - Ensure adequate strategically placed attainable housing to meet local need;
   - Determine additional strategies to reduce poverty and the effects of poverty.

7. **Crime Prevention including Community Involvement:**
   - Set measurable goals to add visibility to crime statistics and reduce gun violence;
   - Hold regular stakeholder community meetings;

8. **Generate Pride in Our Community**
   - Focus on activities that generate community pride;
     - Some Cocoa attractions are off the beaten path, help new residents to locate them;
   - Have a task force for "honor and visit programs" in each area, featuring enjoyable/useful events and places: ie Local Parks, Cocoa Conservation Area, Museum, Local Businesses;
   - Packet for new residents of Cocoa with local info, parks, museum locations, city council/events

Residents of Cocoa look forward to attending the City Goal Setting and Priorities event on 3/15, and to citizen participation in setting the 2022 priorities for the city.

Feedback and comments on this document can be sent to Kristin Lortie at cocoacarescitizens@gmail.com

ADDING BRIDGES TO EXPAND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT
2022 CITIZEN SUGGESTIONS TO THE CITY OF COCOA
MARCH 8, 2022

History of this citizen suggestion list: This list of suggestions was initially compiled by Cocoa Cares Citizens Group moderator Kristin Lortie. It was then submitted to the Cocoa Cares email list for review and comment. After requesting comments, it was reviewed and edited by members of the Cocoa Cares Citizens Group. While some items mirror items on the citizens priorities list, this list contains additional specific suggestions citizens believe would improve citizen connection and access to the city. The following citizen suggestions are presented for consideration to the City of Cocoa:

1) Conduct Frequent (and Varied) Citizen Surveys, and available in multiple city (posting) locations
- The News You Can Use monthly newsletter offered a helpful beginning to conducting citizen surveys, and contains (only) one yes/no question about the brightline station;
  - Suggest to enhance the monthly newsletter survey, and to include open ended questions;
  - Ask citizens what matters to us, and what our suggestions are for improving the city;
- City website could include a link to an "Easy citizen feedback survey" on the front page of website;
- City sending out an annual survey at the beginning of the year could provide early priorities feedback.
- Create participation attendance and create goals for all engagement activities to track engagement over time.

2) City Staff Feedback: Add a Customer/Stakeholder "Engagement/Survey Feedback" to city emails.
- Implement an engagement survey for all email correspondence with city staff, with a link to provide citizen feedback on the user experience;
- Many agencies and companies include this to solicit stakeholder feedback:
  - Example from SJRWMD: *"We value your opinion. Please take a few minutes to share your comments on the service you received from the District by clicking this link"*

3) Begin a Monthly Citizen Engagement Event, Hosted by each Cocoa Elected Leader and City Manager
- Each council member, mayor, and city manager - host a public engagement event open to all residents;
- Events can be as simple as a talk at a park pavilion, walk in the park, zoom call, or a meet for coffee;
- This effort shows citizens that you want to engage with us to talk about what matters to Cocoans!

4) Obtain public support from citizens before approving community spending decisions (ex. City Parks)
- Implement a policy to request community input, and prior to voting on community spending decisions;
- This may include a threshold of dollars involved (ie $50K, $75K, etc.) to require community support.

5) Provide consistent and user-friendly access to public information
- Some requests are provided timely, and some requests citizens are having recurring issues:
  - Provide timely responses to citizen requests for public information;
  - City manager should not be required to monitor the release of public information:
    - *This poses a bottleneck to information release, and is not in accordance with city policy.*

6) Enhance Quarterly FYI newsletter content to provide additional information of interest, such as:
- Add additional info on District Town Halls to let residents know why town halls matter & who participates;
- Focus on Town Hall council member of the quarter, with ½ page dedicated to what they are working on;
- Add links/website address in FYI to surveys requesting specific information;
- Add info in FYI on Engagement Opportunities with Mayor, Council members and City Manager.

7) More welcoming environment at city meetings:
- Mayor allow additional time when speaker isn't quite finished, to avoid citizen feeling abruptly cut off:
  - 30 seconds as needed to complete a citizen comment, 1-2 minutes added with council support;
- Council members and city staff greet attendees before every meeting, and also after the meeting;
- City Manager provide a city manager report during the meeting with relevant updates on citizen concerns.
  - Ex. Parks planning, Parks updates, SAB restructuring, Strategic planning.

Follow up comments regarding this list can be emailed to Kristin Lortie at cocoacarescitizens@gmail.com.
Special thanks to Tara Gabor and Judy McCluney for editorial review and comment.

Ron Chicone, Jr.
100 S Singleton Ave
Titusville, FL 32796

March 6, 2022

Cocoa City Council
65 Stone St
Cocoa, FL 32922

Dear Mayor Blake, Council Members, and City Manager Whitten,

My name is Ronald Chicone, Jr. and I'm writing to ask that you take action to implement the 2003 Cocoa Conservation Area Management Plan. I am a resident of Brevard County who works in Cocoa and enjoys visiting the Cocoa Conservation Area (CCA). The city has done a great job in attaining and setting aside this amazing example of wild Florida for the enjoyment of the public. My hope is that the City will continue to improve and manage this property in accordance with the goals of the 2003 CCA Management Plan.

The CCA Management plan (City of Cocoa Project No. PZ-03-007) was completed as part of an agreement with the Florida Communities Trust (FCT), and it states that:

> *"...the main purpose of the CCA is to preserve natural open space in the developed and urban portion of the northwestern area of the City of Cocoa. The acquisition, restoration, and management of this project site as a public park oriented toward conservation, education, and passive recreation will improve the quality of life of Cocoa residents, provide a diverse range of land uses, and satisfy the goals and policies of the City of Cocoa.*
>
> *The CCA will be managed only for conservation, protection and enhancement of natural resources and for public outdoor recreation that is compatible with the conservation, protection, and enhancement of the project site, and consistent with statements made in the original FCT application."*

I believe that in 2021, the City of Cocoa allocated $2.33M in Parks spending, but the CCA received no funding to complete the planned improvements and habitat restoration required in the CCA Management Plan. As far as I know, there are currently no plans for establishing trailheads along Hwy 524 and Cox Road, or for removing invasive species and managing for fire, all of which are goals stated in the plan.

I would request is that as the council sets funding priorities for 2022, this important amenity for the local community will be considered and included in the City's priorities and budgeting. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing the Council's decision-making on maintaining, protecting, and improving the Cocoa Conservation Area in accordance with the 2003 CCA Management Plan.

Sincerely,

Ron Chicone, Jr.

SIERRA CLUB

Turtle Coast Group

Subject: Cocoa Cares support for improving and maintaining the Cocoa Conservation Area.

Dear Mayor Blake, City of Cocoa Council Members, and City Manager Whitten:

The Turtle Coast Sierra Club endorses and supports the efforts of Cocoa Cares citizen group in advocating for maintenance and improvements to the Cocoa Conservation Area. The actions we support are listed below.

Recommendations for Near-Term Improvements, in accordance with the 2003 CCA Mgt. Plan:

1. Implement a prescribed fire burn plan, as per CCA Mgt. Plan, for fire safety;
2. Continue trail planning and construction, in tandem with fire control plan and stormwater projects, and to follow a logical pattern and be designed to minimize trail conflict between different types of users;
3. Control and manage invasive vegetation, and as required annually, every first quarter;
4. Add interpretive trail signage (per plan, minimum of 10);
5. Add a planned trailhead access point and entry trail at SR524;
6. Add boardwalks at wetland areas - SR524 Connection, interior area of CCA;
7. Promote educational programming and outreach.
   - 24 programs/year are included in the Mgt. plan, and which references collaboration with local colleges, schools, Brevard Museum of History and Natural Science, Native Plant Society, Brevard Zoo, Audubon Society, etc., to ensure the public is informed about the importance of open space conservation and habitat connection.

These actions directly support the Project Purpose identified in the Cocoa Conservation Area Management Plan quoted below:

"The main purpose of the Cocoa Conservation Area (CCA) is to preserve natural open space in the developed and urban portion of the northwestern area of the City of Cocoa. The acquisition, restoration, and management of this project site as a public park oriented toward conservation, education, and passive recreation will improve the quality of life of Cocoa residents, provide a diverse range of land uses, and satisfy the goals and policies of the City of Cocoa."

The controlled burn / fire management actions are needed to enhance the wildlife and plant habitat. These actions are also necessary to reduce fire risks to surrounding businesses and neighborhoods.

Trail construction, adding a trailhead at SR524 and adding interpretive signage will promote greater public use of the conservation area, and will benefit existing residents, as well as the many new residents that are soon to reside along the SR524 corridor due to new development. Trails

construction can also be integrated into the fire and storm water management. Funding for trail improvements (recreational trails, trailheads, boardwalks, etc.) is made available through at least 2 programs from the FDEP (FRDAP Program, Recreational Trails Program). Additional information is available at the links below:

https://floridadep.gov/lands/land-and-recreation-grants/content/frdap-assistance
https://floridadep.gov/lands/land-and-recreation-grants/content/rtp-assistance

Due to current and expanded use of the area, additional controls may be required to prevent ATV and motorized vehicle usage, which adversely affect impacts conservation efforts. This may include installation of additional physical barriers to prevent motorized access, and enhanced monitoring.

Controlling and management of invasive plants is critical to maintaining native habitat. Known ecological impacts of invasive plants include reduction of biodiversity; loss of and encroachment upon endangered and threatened species; and loss of habitat for native insects, birds, and other wildlife.

Cocoa Conservation Area is a unique asset in the City of Cocoa. Turtle Coast Sierra Club supports the efforts of Cocoa Cares in advocating for improving and maintaining the Cocoa Conservation Area.

Thank you for considering the support and advocacy of the Turtle Coast Sierra Club for the maintenance, preservation and enhancement of the Cocoa Conservation Area.

Yours truly,

Bill DeBusk
Chair, Turtle Coast Group
Sierra Club