



City of Corpus Christi

1201 Leopard Street
Corpus Christi, TX 78401
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Meeting Minutes

City Council Workshop Session

Tuesday, December 3, 2019

9:00 AM

City Council Chambers

JOINT CITY COUNCIL AND NUECES COUNTY WORKSHOP

A. Mayor Joe McComb to call the meeting to order.

Mayor McComb called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

B. City Secretary Rebecca L. Huerta to call the roll of the required Charter Officers.

City Secretary Rebecca Huerta called the roll and verified that a quorum of the City Council and the required Charter Officers were present to conduct the meeting.

Charter Officers:

City Manager Peter Zanoni, City Attorney Miles K. Risley, and City Secretary Rebecca L. Huerta.

C. BRIEFINGS TO CITY COUNCIL:

1. Joint City Council and Nueces County Workshop on North Beach Projects

Mayor McComb referred to Item 1.

City Manager Peter Zanoni provided an introduction to the items that were to be discussed and welcomed Nueces County Commissioners.

Assistant City Manager Mark Van Vleck presented information on the following topics: comprehensive coastal engineering project; drainage mitigation; raise streets; canal and jetties; breakwater and islands; and permitting requirements.

Director of Planning and ESI Daniel McGinn presented information on the following topics: eco park location map, previous plans, and project timeline; and community design workshop concepts.

Development Services' Policy Administrator Yvette Dodd-Wallace presented information on the following topics: velocity zone; base flood elevations; development requirements; 44 Code of Federal Regulations 60.3 (e)(6); Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) concerns; and the Whitecap Seawall example.

Business Liaison Arlene Medrano presented information on the following

topics: updates on property values relating to condominiums; update on property values; and changes to base value and increment.

President and Chief Executive Officer of the Corpus Christi Regional Economic Development Corporation (CCREDC) Iain Vasey presented information on economic impact.

County commissioners, city council members and city staff discussed the following topics related to North Beach: funding a canal; development commitments; FEMA's concerns; design changes to the canal; cooperation between Nueces County and the City of Corpus Christi; canals as a means to address drainage; community support for a canal; making North Beach a priority; performing due diligence regarding the canal project; Jeff Blackard's development history; miscommunication; actions seeming to not reflect the stated commitment to the canal project; the amount of time this project has been under consideration; Nueces County's efforts to date supporting the project; the importance of moving the canal project ahead at a faster pace; disappointment with City staff's presentation and recommendation; the link between infrastructure development and economic development; concern about the community; that North Beach has a drainage issue; Nueces County foregoing ad valorem taxes to incentivize development on North Beach; that infrastructure improvements are needed to address flooding; seawalls; bulkheads; barrier islands; breakwaters; the detrimental effect that potential increases in sea level will have on North Beach; tidal fluctuations; why invest in an eco park; ownership of submerged land; Community Development Block Grant funds available through the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for drainage related to the canal project; the City pushing developers aside; the feasibility of a navigable canal for drainage; reasons to say yes to developing a navigable canal versus the reasons to say no; a coastal project versus a drainage project; the urgency, intent and will to undertake the canal project; if Capital Market Research, referenced by Mr. Vasey, submitted a report; the purpose of the canal; a similar project on Staten Island New York; City staff providing written comments to the Texas General Land Office (GLO) regarding monies available for coastal projects; wanting to have been provided both sides, pros and cons, of the canal project at this workshop; a multi-layered approach to developing North Beach; that Packery Channel has worked well; protections in velocity zones in the City.

In response to a council member's questions, Mr. Vasey discussed the following topics: the CCREDC's contracted economic development study presented by Mr. Vasey today; economic development guarantees; and if the canal will add value to surrounding properties.

In response to questions from a council member, Chip Urban, Urban Engineering, discussed the following topics: the extent to which the canal will address drainage issues; if the canal alone will solve the drainage issues on North Beach; and tidal flooding.

The council member discussed the negative nature of staff's presentation today.

In response to a council member's questions, Jeff Blackard, Blackard Global, discussed the following topics: the flow of water in the canal; soil conditions under the old railroad tracks; the location of the opening of the canal to the

beach; de-silting of the canal; certainty of developers developing North Beach; developers who are ready now; and discussions Mr. Blackard has had with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and the GLO.

County commissioners, city council and City staff discussed the following topics: project financing and related timeline; safety concerns; managing risks to taxpayers related to the canal project; what-if scenario if nothing is done; utilizing a canal or a drainage ditch; elevating the peninsula; elevating streets on North Beach; engineering shortcomings related to the forces of nature; previous discussions about freeboard and velocity zones; freeboard requirements in place now on North Beach; steps stipulated by FEMA related to in-fill; various sources of fill dirt potentially available from ongoing projects in the community; state law requirements regarding mitigation of runoff created by new development; staff seeking solutions to make this project happen; staff finding and presenting to Council solutions that can make this project happen; that the canal can be much more than drainage; Council's support for North Beach and related projects; that the cost of the canal project is not definitively known; that changes to the design and location of the canal result in changes in cost; North Beach's potential; that hard costs are needed to present to the taxpayers; issues that need to be worked through; the history of meetings on this canal project; incentives for the Frazier Hotel; Type A and B projects on North Beach; when and if 100% of the unknowns related to the canal will be resolved; that funding options were not discussed during this workshop; a comprehensive North Beach drainage discussion and plan; history of drainage solutions proposed for North Beach; the importance of addressing the drainage problem on North Beach; identifying the goal and obstacles; the developer's timeline; competing City issues; if a decision on the canal and its associated cost can be identified within the developer's timeline; leadership and identifying priorities; the City and Nueces County working cooperatively; that the developer's deadline is a problem; and what the Council needs to know before moving forward with the canal project.

In response to questions from a council member, James Shiner, Engineer, discussed the following topics: the negative consequences, related to movement of sand on the beach, if the opening of the canal, to the beach, is positioned in the middle of the beach; water quality in the canal; wave energy in the canal; eliminating breakwaters in relation to the ease of permitting for the canal project; and solving unknowns via the application of engineering.

County commissioners, city council members and City staff discussed the following additional topics: establishing a floor and ceiling related to the cost of the canal project; a county-wide drainage plan; potential funding sources (including multi-jurisdictional funding) of breakwaters and seawalls; the range of investment related to wastewater that may be required of the City to satisfy an agreed settlement between the City and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency; the potential for increases to taxpayers and in utility rates related to the canal project; property tax revenue caps recently imposed by state statute; that new growth is not subject to those property tax revenue caps; and information related to a previous meeting between the Mayor and Jeff Blackard.

City Manager Zanoni and Mr. Blackard discussed various aspects of the recent proposal between the City and Mr. Blackard, including what the City and Mr. Blackard would and would not have to pay for related to the proposed canal on North Beach.

D. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.