MINUTES
CITY OF COCOA
DISTRICT 4 TOWN HALL MEETING

OCTOBER 18, 2022

A District 4 Town Hall Meeting was held on Tuesday, October 18, 2022, at the Florida Solar Energy Center, located at 1679 Clearlake Rd., in Cocoa, Florida, 32922, as publicly noticed.

I. Opening Matters:

Councilmember Koss called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Suzie DeBusk provided the invocation and Councilmember Koss led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

PRESENT:	Lavander Hearn	Deputy Mayor
	Lorraine Koss	Councilmember
	Stockton Whitten	City Manager
	Monica Arsenault	Assistant City Clerk

OTHER STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jack Walsh, Utilities Director; Samantha Senger, Asst. to the CM/PIO; Bryant Smith, Public Works Director/Interim Economic Growth and Development Director; Jonathan Lamm, Fire Chief; and Anthony Marchica, Police Commander.

II. Welcome/Introductions by Councilmember Koss

III. Department Updates:

Sherri Shields, Florida Solar Energy Center, provided information on the Solar Center and showed a video. She noted that all of their research is posted on their website as well as educational courses.

Councilmember Koss provided a map of Council districts and pointed out the enclave areas.

Additionally, she shared a video update on Brightline.

Gregg Stoll gave an update on behalf of SCTPO regarding Brightline. He shared that the Brevard Museum will have a train exhibit open to the public every Saturday in December from noon to four and it will be a lot of fun for kids and families.

Mr. Stoll discussed a station location study that was done and the "Cocoa curve" was the top recommended site. He provided further updates on the Clearlake widening.

Councilmember Koss reviewed incoming business statistics.

Bryant Smith, Interim Growth and Economic Development Director/Public Works Director, gave an update on active housing projects. It was pointed out that all of these housing projects will help to increase Cocoa's tax and economic bases and staff is trying to be thoughtful as these projects are planned out. Mr. Smith added that these projects can take two to three years to come to full capacity.

Additionally, Mr. Smith talked about Clearlake transportation projects and noted that some of these projects will begin next summer. Enhanced sidewalks will be installed, and the speed limit will also be lowered to 35 mph. He also touched on the Clearlake curve project and pointed out that the greatest issue is funding for right of way access.

Mr. Smith talked about stormwater projects and public works projects. He mentioned the improvements at Stradley Park and Travis Park.

He shared the schedule for the FY23 roadway resurfacing which includes sidewalk and curbing repairs and striping where it is necessary.

A video on Eastern Florida State College was shown regarding their ten-year investment of $87 million dollars.

Jonathan Lamm, Fire Chief, provided a brief update on the Cocoa Fire Department. He gave statistics on call numbers and mentioned the increase in population which will cause their call numbers to rise.

He talked about incoming businesses and the number of fire inspections conducted.

Anthony Marchica, Police Commander, gave an update on the Police Department and provided District 4 call numbers in 2022 compared to 2021. He also provided arrest numbers which are down nine percent in District 4 and down six percent City wide.

Commander Marchica discussed the school resource officer program. He explained that the officers are doing a lot of things with the kids such as having lunch with them or working with churches or local businesses, such as Walmart, to have bikes donated to the kids so they can get to school safely. He also mentioned the Shop with a Cop event.

Samantha Senger, PIO and Assistant to the City Manager, shared ways for the community to get involved and how to stay connected and engaged with the City. She pointed out that the City also hosts a Citizen's Academy program if anyone is interested.

IV. Questions/Citizen Input:

Cindy Johnson asked if the water system is ready to handle all of the incoming housing. In response, Mr. Walsh replied affirmatively and provided a brief explanation.

Greg Pierce asked about restriping from the curve at Michigan Avenue to Range Rd. because all of the paint has worn off. In response, Mr. Smith stated that it would be looked into.

Janice Smith inquired about the clear cutting that was done for the Riverwalk Subdivision project.

Norm Gormsen asked about zone changes on Dixon Blvd. regarding higher density.

Cindy Johnson asked about wastewater being dumped in the river. In response, Councilmember Koss spoke to some of her earlier points and Mr. Walsh clarified that the City did not dump into the river but added that the City has a permit to discharge and the City meets all criteria for discharging.

Discussion was held about the safety of the lagoon and whether it is safe to swim in. Mr. Smith explained that DEP tests the water and will post any notices as necessary.

A question was posed about Riverwalk Subdivision being connected to sewer and it was noted that it will be.

A question was posed about floating wetlands in the river. In response, Mr. Smith noted that it has been tried, however there is an issue with manatees eating them.

A question was posed about how the City will tackle the issue of rent capping. In response, Mr. Whitten shared that the Council has directed staff to put together an ordinance to bring back before the Council next month.

V. Adjournment:

Councilmember Koss thanked everyone for coming and sharing their input.

The Town Hall meeting adjourned at 7:32pm.

Michael Blake, Mayor

ATTEST:

Carie Shealy, MMC, City Clerk
(Transcribed by M. Arsenault, Asst. City Clerk)