MINUTES

CITY OF COCOA
STATE OF THE CITY MEETING

September 1, 2020

The State of the City Meeting was held on Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at the Cocoa Civic Center, 430 Delannoy Ave., Cocoa, Florida, as publicly noticed.

I. OPENING MATTERS:

Mayor Williams called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Present:	Jake Williams, Jr.	Mayor
	Alex Goins	Deputy Mayor
	Lorraine Koss	Councilmember
	Brenda Warner	Councilmember
	Matthew Fuhrer	Interim City Manager
	Anthony Garganese	City Attorney
	Monica Arsenault	Assistant City Clerk
Absent:	Don Boisvert	Councilmember

Other staff members present:

Bryant Smith, Public Works Director; Jack Walsh, Utilities Director; Nancy Bunt, Community Services Director; Rebecca Bowman, Finance Director; Samuel Byrd, Deputy Fire Chief; Tammy Gemmati, Administrative Services Director; Samantha Senger, Assistant to the City Manager/PR Specialist; Rachel Horst, Digital Communications Coordinator; Gail Bantugan, Leisure Services Manager; and John Hankins, Deputy Chief of Police.

II. Meeting Topics

1. State of the City Video

A video was shown which provided an update on current or completed projects in the City as well as events such as the Citizen's Academy.

Mayor Williams invited each member of Council to share any updates on things they've been doing in the City.

Councilmember Koss discussed the importance of storm preparedness. She also spoke about the Citizen's Academy and shared that she felt that it is one of

the biggest accomplishments that has taken place while she has been on Council as it empowers citizens to participate and provides them a voice at the local level.

Mayor Williams took a moment to introduce the new incoming City Manager, Mr. Stockton Whitten.

Deputy Mayor Goins noted that the video that was shown tonight made him emotional as it is sometimes hard to realize all of the things that have come to fruition in the City. He shared brief information about some of the projects and developments going on within the City and he thanked Council for all they've done to support the City.

Additionally, he discussed some of the Police Department programs and pointed out the recent approval of mobile vendors in the City.

Lastly, Deputy Mayor Goins talked about changing the image of Cocoa and continuing to move the City in the right direction.

Councilmember Warner discussed the importance of volunteers and encouraged citizens to volunteer if they can. She also wanted to take the opportunity to announce that after the election she would be moving to Georgia to support and be with her daughter.

She discussed what some of her greatest accomplishments were while serving the City and added that Council is always looking towards the future and what is best for the City.

Mayor Williams opened the forum to the public for questions and comments.

A Manor Drive resident talked about a murder case and asked what the City's plans are to ensure that their neighborhood is safe for them and their children.

A different resident added that they would like to know what plans are for the City as a whole as this is not just an issue on one street. In response, Interim City Manager Fuhrer explained that the Police Department is committed to addressing these issues. Additionally, this case in particular involves legal and civil matters that he is not at liberty to share publicly at this time but he would have his secretary reach out tomorrow to coordinate a meeting to discuss the matter further.

Mr. Herb Hernandez, Cocoa Housing Authority, commended the Police Department regarding a murder that happened on a Friday and an arrest was made the following Monday.

Reverend Dennis talked about Fern and Provost Park and the importance of having proactive police.

Ms. Marlene Weiss shared her issues with the Police Department and referenced incidents where she had called the Police but felt that every time she called she was only bothering them. Additionally, Ms. Weiss raised an issue she was having with having the water turned on at the community garden.

Ms. Theresa Clifton, Brevard Humane Society, pointed out that they have received a twenty thousand dollar grant for free spay and neuter procedures for cats and free rabies shots. They are also offering dog training courses. She added that the Humane Society has seen a phenomenal increase in adoptions since the Coronavirus outbreak began.

Ms. Clifton additionally thanked Council for enforcing a mandatory mask wearing rule.

A Rockledge resident who works for the PACE program explained that her job takes her all over the County. She shared that she has been handing out masks and information about COVID-19 and has seen some things taking place in the City of Cocoa. She mentioned that she is concerned about the cleanliness of the City and the police officers that sit and hide in their cars and don't get out and walk from time to time. She explained that she needs help in getting the community cleaned up.

A resident asked a question about Spectrum burying lines on people's private property without permission. In response, Interim City Manager Fuhrer mentioned the City's franchise agreement with Spectrum but offered to meet with the property owners individually to review their cases.

Additional citizens raised concerns about Spectrum burying lines on their properties and Councilmembers Koss and Warner raised concerns as well. Councilmember Koss has seen flags in the City's easements and Councilmember Warner mentioned impacts around the City and noted that this was a larger issue. In response, Interim City Manager Fuhrer stated that he would look further into the issue and he would reach out to Spectrum on behalf of the neighborhood.

Mr. George Brown discussed the importance of not defunding the police as the officers need more education as things are always changing and evolving.

Mr. Brown asked what the plans are for the new Joe Lee Smith Center. In response, Interim City Manager Fuhrer shared that there will be senior, youth and recreational activities held there. Additionally, Mr. Brown inquired about parking at

the center. Interim City Manager Fuhrer explained that the building was designed to accommodate day to day activities but special events will have to plan for off-site parking. He pointed out that there is an overhang drop-off area however so that buses can drop people off. The grand opening is scheduled for October 17th.

Ms. Samantha Senger read an e-comment from Diana Robinson. Ms. Robinson inquired if live information is shared, and how to access this information, when helicopters are flying over neighborhoods. In response, Deputy Chief Hankins explained that helicopters are operated by the Brevard County Sherriff's Office and if they are over your house and you are concerned you can call the non-emergency line.

Mayor Williams stated that COVID-19 has not stopped things from happening in the City. He added that Council is doing what they were elected to do and they want what is best for the City. He mentioned that they are working on eliminating blight and reducing crime as well as promoting and taking advantage of the City's amenities. He also discussed the importance of re-branding the City and changing its image.

Lastly, Mayor Williams thanked everyone for coming.

III. **ADJOURNMENT:**

* **The State of the City Meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.**

Jake Williams, Jr., Mayor

ATTEST:

Carie Shealy, City Clerk
(Transcribed by Monica Arsenault, Assistant City Clerk)

CITY OF COCOA CORPORATE SEAL FLORIDA