MINUTES
City of Cocoa
District 3 Town Hall Meeting

August 17, 2021

The District 3 Town Hall Meeting was held on Tuesday, August 17, 2021 at the Lost Lakes Clubhouse, 140 Lost Lakes Dr., in Cocoa, Florida 32922, as publicly noticed.

I. Mayor Blake called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Deputy Mayor Goins provided the invocation and Councilmember Dyal led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

PRESENT:	Michael C. Blake	Mayor
	James Goins	Deputy Mayor
	Rip Dyal	Councilmember
	Lavander Hearn	Councilmember
	Lorraine Koss	Councilmember
	Monica Arsenault	Assistant City Clerk
ABSENT:	Stockton Whitten	City Manager

OTHER STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jack Walsh, Utilities Director; Bryant Smith, Public Works Director; Robert Beach, Chief Technology Officer; Charlene Neuterman, Interim Community Services Director; Samuel Byrd, Deputy Fire Chief; Evander Collier, Police Chief; Jeremy Ondo, Police Lieutenant; and Samantha Senger, Assistant to the City Manager/PR Specialist.

II. Welcome and Introductions of Council & Staff by Councilmember Dyal

III. Department Presentations:

Bryant Smith, Public Works Director, shared the following updates regarding the status of the State Road 524 widening:

- The project is currently in the Project Development and Environment stage, which is essentially an information gathering and very preliminary layout of the actual widening
- The study encompasses SR 524 from Industry Road to Friday Road, just past I-95 and is a $1.7 million-dollar project
- The project will include sidewalks, bike lanes, grass medians, and turn lanes. This will essentially double the current capacity of the roadway
- A future traffic and/or pedestrian signal will be reviewed at Westminster or Lance Blvd upon the build out of the apartments on the south side of SR 524 and the park improvements at Junny Rios Martinez Park
- The PD&E Study is scheduled to be completed by the fall of 2022. Currently, the design, R/W acquisition, and Construction is unfunded. The PD&E study should result is some estimates to properly forecast those numbers. The City is also looking into the possibility to contribute impact fee funding to help with the potential costs related to this expansion.

Mr. Smith mentioned the park improvements which will include new signs and park benches. Additionally, Junny Rios park will be getting a splash pad.

Deputy Fire Chief Byrd provided an update on COVID numbers and vaccinations. He encouraged everyone to take the virus seriously and to take the proper precautions.

He mentioned that there was a local fire fighter from Melbourne that will be laid to rest on Saturday and he is one of the first in the area to contract Covid in the line of duty.

Lastly, a second monoclonal antibody site has been announced to open at Kiwanis Park in Merritt Island. They will have capacity for three hundred patients per day and will be open from 9am to 7pm daily.

A citizen from 3815 Sentry Dr., Cocoa shared concerns regarding flooding on and around his property. In response, Mr. Smith explained that Public Works conducts periodic inspections and will come back out to do another inspection. Staff will also continue to work with FDOT on this.

Mayor Blake stated that he knows and understands this issue as he has been in the storm drains himself but asked everyone for their continued patience as the City works hard to correct the problems. Additionally, with Brightline coming in, they have promised to address these issues as well.

Jeanna Benish, 3814 Parapet Dr., explained that she recently bought her house because of the pond in the backyard. She shared that she enjoys feeding and observing the wildlife such as the birds, turtles and fish, however the pond has been dirty since May and so she emailed the City and spoke with Abby. She mentioned that Abby told her that the City finally had a contract to treat the water but did not have access to the pond. Ms. Benish noted that she would have allowed the City access to the pond from her property but was told that the cleanup would not be started until September.

In response, Mr. Smith noted that Abby has her contact information and they would reach out to Ms. Benish. Additionally, he stated that if they are able to fit the cleanup onto their schedule earlier than September that they would certainly do that.

Tamara Boyd, 3630 Breezy Point Ln., Cocoa, and President of Summer Breeze's HOA, has several issues she would like to address with staff. She mentioned that half of the people who have bought homes here did not know that Brightline was planning to develop nearby. They have never been notified about the train, potential walkways or the installation of a new road. The homeowners are upset because they did not pay for their homes to be smushed between a train and a road.

In response, Mayor Blake explained that the road going in is being put in by Brevard County. Further discussion was held on what is the City's responsibility and what is the County's.

Charlene Neuterman, Interim Community Services Director, added that she would send the development agreements to Ms. Boyd which lays out the HOA's responsibilities.

A citizen asked what the proposed plans are to get in and out of Lost Lakes. In response, Councilmember Dyal explained that he is working to address this issue with a traffic light. He added that he has been in contact with FDOT to try and coordinate another meeting to get citizen input in the future.

The citizen also inquired about having a sign installed to keep large trucks from traveling on Friday Road. In response, Mr. Smith noted that he would look into this.

Additionally, she asked what studies have been done on the traffic lights along SR524. In response, Mr. Smith pointed out that the lights are run by the County's system which manages the timing and phasing of the lights.

She also pointed out that she has concerns about flooding in the area. In response, Mr. Smith stated that they have done a thorough review of the drain and were out there yesterday. They were able to get a good idea of what maintenance needs to be done.

Lastly, she asked Deputy Fire Chief Byrd to explain why it is so important to have house numbers on your house as she is experiencing this issue with people refusing to do so in her neighborhood. In response, Deputy Fire Chief Byrd noted that he would talk to the fire inspector about this problem and see what could be done.

A citizen from Westminster Dr., Cocoa, pointed out a concern regarding the incoming development and if it will tax their water system. In response, Jack Walsh, Utilities Director, explained that he has reviewed the plans and the new development will not cause the system to exceed its water capacity. Further discussion was held on concerns regarding flooding.

Ms. Boyd asked if the City has an agreement with the County for fire and police response. In response, Deputy Fire Chief Byrd shared that the City does have an agreement with the County and are actually in the process of renewing it.

A citizen asked if Brightline will stop in Cocoa. In response, Mayor Blake stated that the City is in competition with the other local cities but we are fighting for the train to stop here. He pointed out that Brightline owns property behind Walmart next to the curve on SR524.

Evander Collier, Police Chief, gave an update on the progress that he is making at the Police Department. They have increased presence in areas with higher crime rates and gave Provost Park as an example. He pointed out that he is all about the community and being transparent with the public.

A citizen asked if the Police Department has any plans on how to handle panhandlers in Cocoa. In response, Chief Collier promised to do a better job of handling this issue and getting them to move on from the City.

Deputy Fire Chief Byrd reminded everyone of the annual 9/11 Stair Climb event on Saturday, September 11th at Cocoa High School at 4pm.

There being no further questions or comments, Councilmember Dyal thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the District 3 Town Hall meeting.

The District 3 Town Hall meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Michael C. Blake, Mayor

ATTEST:

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

CITY OF COCOA FLORIDA SEAL