

MAYOR/COMMISSION WORK SESSION

January 20, 2009

Commission Chambers – 10:06 a.m.

Present: Commissioners Douglas, Mitchell, Moss, Muoio, Robinson Jr., Deputy City Administrator Miller, City Attorney McKenna and City Kauthen; Absent: Mayor Frankel.

- 1. City Center Update – Commissioner Moss inquired [a] into the status of the City Center cafe; and [b] if a drive thru had been created for those members of the public wishing to pay their utility bills at the new City Hall. Deputy City Administrator Miller [a] stated that the City Center project will be completed on March 18, 2009; [b] stated that the departments will be moved in phases into the new building commencing on March 19, 2009; [c] stated that the new City Hall will be closed to the public on March 20 and 23, 2009; [d] suggested that the March 23, 2009 City Commission Meeting be cancelled; [e] stated that on January 22, 2009 there will be a directors and supervisors meeting to discuss the move; [f] stated that an emergency evacuation procedure has been put together for the new building; [g] updated the Commissioner on the City Center cafe; [h] stated Redevelopment Manager Briesemeister would speak to the Commissioners individually to discuss the City Center cafe; [i] stated she would continue to look for a solution to the utility payment drive thru issue; and [j] stated that the Mayor’s communication team is working on an official opening celebration for April, 2009. Commissioner Douglas iterated the importance of making sure citizens are not affected by the cancellation of the March 23, 2009 City Commission meeting. It was the consensus of the Commission to cancel the March 23, 2009 City Commission meeting.**

2.	<p><u>Sodded Swales and 75% Front Yard</u> – Commissioner Douglas [a] spoke of an ordinance that requires 75% of front yards to be sodded; [b] suggested that the ordinance be revisited; [c] stated that sod is not environmentally friendly; and [d] expressed her opinion that people with zero landscaping should not be in violation of the code. Planning Director Wu [a] spoke of a pilot program in Flamingo Park which looked at having alternatives to sod in the swales; [b] stated that the pilot program was unsuccessful due to the upkeep requirements; [c] stated that the current ordinance allows for plants and flowers to be planted in swales as well as sod; [d] stated that the City coordinates with support groups to assist those who need help with bringing their homes up to code; and [e] stated that a follow-up report could be compiled to see if a more environmentally sensitive approach could be considered for the swales. Commissioner Robinson [a] expressed his concern over the economic burden landscaping front yards could cause some residents; and [b] stated he and the Mayor are looking for federal grants to help residents. Commissioner Mitchell iterated the importance of having a consistent streetscape. Commissioner Moss suggested that Mr. Olney who headed the pilot swales program be invited to the next Mayor/Commission Worksession to discuss the issue. It was the consensus of the Commission [a] for Planning Director Wu to look into alternatives to planting sod in the swales to encompass more environmentally friendly flowers and plants; and [b] to invite Mr. Olney to the next Mayor/Commission Work Session.</p>
6.	<p><u>Other</u> – County Commissioner Koons gave an update on future interlocal agreements between the County and the City.</p>
3.	<p><u>Florida TaxWatch Report</u> – Commissioner Mitchell [a] spoke of the findings of the Florida TaxWatch report; [b] gave an overview of the function of Florida TaxWatch; [c] stated that she spoke to the Chamber of Commerce to see if they would be agreeable to invite Florida TaxWatch to review and make</p>

	<p>recommendations of the City; [d] stated that she would like staff to compile a list of the non-essential services that the City offers; [e] spoke of the Florida TaxWatch recommendations which could benefit the City, such as: [1] finding opportunities to collect legally owed money; [2] renegotiating non-service client contracts; and [3] offer a tax amnesty program; [f] spoke about pay cuts for upper management and for the Commissioners, [g] spoke of streamlining departments further; [h] spoke of delaying any new programs and initiatives; and [i] stated that she would like for TechSolve, who are conducting the lean government study to provide the Commissioners with a copy of their presentation a few days in advance. Commissioner Moss [a] spoke of having the tax collector come in to speak about a tax amnesty program; [b] suggested having more fee based services; and [c] stated he would like to see the results of the lean government study before cutting any programs. Commissioner Robinson stated he would like to see the City providing an amnesty program for unpaid liens. Commissioner Muoio suggested having a discussion at the next Mayor/Commission Worksession to discuss the criteria to determine the essential and non-essential programs in the City. Finance Director Sherman stated that representatives from TechSolve will be meeting with the Commissioners on February 2, 2009.</p>
6.	<p><u>Other - Continued</u> – Commissioner Mitchell [a] expressed her opinion that the City needs to look into finding ways of building Fire Station Seven at a lesser cost; and [b] stated she would like the issue to be put on the agenda for the next Mayor/Commission Worksession. Deputy City Administrator Miller stated that staff would present the financial options and cost of the Fire Station at the next Mayor/Commission Worksession.</p>

4.	<p><u>Funding of South Dixie Revitalization Plan (Similar to the Broadway Revitalization Plan)</u> – Commissioner Moss [a] stated he would like the Planning Department to look into doing a charrette for South Dixie Highway; [b] stated that a comprehensive plan is needed for South Dixie Highway in order to revitalize the businesses in the area; [c] stated he would like the City to help with the revitalization of the south end of the city; [d] suggested having a workshop similar to the Broadway Re-Investment Coalition (BRIC) workshop to identify money sources; and [e] suggested having the City fund BRIC for the south end. Deputy City Administrator Miller stated that [a] the CDBG grant fund money is currently earmarked for other projects, but in the future could be used for the south end; and [b] a master plan would be beneficial for the area. Commissioner Robinson stated that [a] he liked the idea of revitalizing the south end; and [b] the Coleman Park area still needs revitalization. Commissioner Muoio suggested [a] BRIC meet with the south end neighborhood and business associations to see if they can help them; and [b] having a marketing and events coordinator for the south end. Commissioner Mitchell suggested seeing if the owners in the south end would be willing to assess themselves to fund street improvements. It was the consensus of the Commission to [a] have a workshop to start developing a scope plan for the area; and [b] invite the organizations that BRIC had at their workshop to come to another workshop focusing on the south end.</p>
5.	<p><u>Code Enforcement Fines with Pending Permits</u> – Commissioner Douglas [a] stated that people are being cited for code violations while they are waiting for permits to be issued; [b] expressed her opinion that the City should not issue code citations for projects which are permit pending; [c] expressed her opinion that the Special Magistrate process is punitive and can be intimidating; [d] stated that in the past, property owners were not properly noticed of their violations; and [e] stated that</p>

	<p>there are liens that have been issued which the City will never be able to collect. Code Compliance Manager Hiteshew stated that the City tries to work with the property owners who are in the process of applying for permits. City Attorney McKenna [a] suggested Code Compliance Manager Hiteshew look at the last three or four months of violations and see how many of them involved permit applications; [b] suggested reviewing the policy if a high number of fines are found to be placed on properties which are awaiting permits; and [c] stated that she is going to bring forward a comprehensive program to get property owners to give the City appropriate contact information for purposes of property management. It was the consensus of the Commission for Code Compliance Manager Hiteshew to look at the last six months of code violations and see the total number of properties cited with permits pending in relation to the total number of violations issued.</p>
6.	<p><u>Other - Continued</u> – Commissioner Robinson inquired if staff were ready with a response to his request for an update on the proposed park in the Coleman Park area. Deputy City Administrator Miller stated that [a] there are some easement issues associated with the creation of the park; and [b] she would get an update for the Commissioners.</p> <p>Redevelopment Manager Briesemeister [a] gave an update on the status of the City Center Cafe; [b] stated that there were four responses to the new RFP that was issued; [c] stated that Purchasing and Contract Manager Laudermilk has issued a letter of acceptance to the first ranked vendor; and [d] stated that the City’s goal is to bring the negotiated lease to the February 9, 2009 City Commission Meeting in order to have the business up and running in time for the opening of City Center.</p>
7.	<p><u>Adjournment</u> – 11:31 a.m.</p>