

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES - SEPTEMBER 10, 2014

The Indian Shores Council meeting convened at 6:00 P.M. Those present were: Mayor Lawrence, Vice Mayor Herndon, Councilor Petruccelli, Councilor Smith and Councilor Soranno.

Also Present: Chief Hughes; Elaine Jackson, Town Clerk; Bonnie Dhonau, Director of Administration; Walter Pierce, Director of Finance and Personnel; Mary Karayianes, Finance Department Advisor; Barb Haselden, No Tax for Tracks; Jeff Danner, Greenlight Pinellas; and numerous citizens and interested parties.

1.0 SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

1.0 Consideration of approving Council Agenda for September 10, 2014.

Motion by Vice Mayor Herndon – seconded by Councilor Smith, to approve the Council Agenda for September 10, 2014. Motion carried 5-0.

2.0 Comments from the public on any Agenda item.

There were no comments.

3.0 PUBLIC HEARING: Announcement of proposed tentative Ad Valorem millage and percent, if any, by which tentative millage exceeds the rolled-back rate.

Mary Karayianes announced the proposed tentative Ad Valorem millage rate was 1.8700, which is 6.85% greater than the roll-back rate of 1.7501. The roll-back is that rate which would generate last year's revenue. Property values have risen 7.2 % this year.

4.0 PUBLIC HEARING: Adoption of tentative Ad Valorem millage of 1.8700 mills per \$1,000.00 of assessed valuation for FY 2014/2015.

Motion by Councilor Smith – seconded by Councilor Petruccelli, to approve the adoption of tentative Ad Valorem millage of 1.8700 mills per \$1,000.00 of assessed valuation for FY 2014/2015. Motion carried 5-0.

James J. Lawrence
Mayor

Joan G. Herndon-Parrott
Vice Mayor

William F. Smith
Councilor

Patrick C. Soranno
Councilor

Michael "Mike" Petruccelli
Councilor

Bonnie Dhonau
Director of
Administration

Terry E. Hughes
Chief of Police

Walter H. Pierce, III
Director of Finance
and Personnel

Elaine N. Jackson, MMC
Town Clerk

Robert J. Metz, Jr.
Town Attorney

Steve Andrews
Building Official

5.0 PUBLIC HEARING: Adoption of Tentative Budget for FY 2014/2015.

Ms. Karayianes stated the budget packet gives a brief explanation of the budget, how it is used, the trim process and requirements of municipalities and counties. The revenues are broken down by General Fund, totaling \$2,807,025; Road and Bridge Fund, totaling \$111,500 and used for roads, street lighting, traffic signal maintenance; and Capital Improvement Fund totaling \$892,962, which is designated for Capital Improvement projects, principal and interest for debt payment, Interfund transfers and communication services tax. There is a listing of all maintenance and service contracts for upkeep and control of the building, professional services and election costs.

Ms. Karayianes clarified that the maintenance of the Park Boulevard Bridge does not come out of the Indian Shores budget, and the millage rate has no effect on utility taxes.

Mayor Lawrence stated Council has had many workshops and meetings and this is a culmination of the long, involved process.

Motion by Councilor Smith – seconded by Councilor Soranno, to adopt the Tentative Budget for FY 2014/2015, as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

6.0 PUBLIC HEARING: Re-computation, if necessary, of proposed millage rate and announcement of percent, if any, by which recomputed proposed millage rate exceeds the rolled-back rate.

No re-computation was needed.

7.0 Presentations relative to the Greenlight Pinellas Project.

*Barb Haselden, Spokesperson and Campaign Manager for No Tax for Tracks, presented a PowerPoint presentation in opposition to the **Greenlight Pinellas** project. The presentation pointed out that public transportation usage has declined over decades as well as population, and that only 1.6% of the public in Pinellas County use public transportation. PSTA has an \$87 million budget this year, and has built a \$4 million facility and expanded their bus lines. Governor Scott vetoed this plan because it was a huge opportunity for a tax increase.*

Ms. Haselden also stated this is not a “tax swap”; it is a \$100 million net increase in PSTA revenue due to a sales tax increase from 7 to 8%, which would make the sales tax rate the highest in the state of Florida. Light rail average speed is less than 25 mph, which will tie up traffic at the 41 intersections between St. Petersburg and Clearwater. An environmental impact study has not been completed, but there is no plus side. This is about special interests. The new Gateway connector will be an express toll road and will enable commuters to travel without stopping.

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Ms. Haselden further stated empty buses are an indication that the PSTA system needs to be refined. No Tax for Tracks is a single-issue organization. We feel it is a high risk and we are all co-signing the credit card. This should not become the centerpiece of our county with a landslide of money. Once established, there is no getting out of it. We can't let a handful of people push this for their own special interests.

Jeff Danner, representative for Greenlight Pinellas, gave a presentation in favor of the Greenlight Pinellas project. He stated it is their desire to give people more options, but we have an underfunded system. We are losing young workers, due to stagnation in business, and this plan would be a component to connect the three most populated areas in the county to the three largest employment centers to promote growth and attract business and young people. There are enough people living in these areas to take advantage of the service. There will be a 65% increase in service for Pinellas County, running from hub to hub for transfers and working on a grid system for more efficiency and convenience. It will not disrupt neighborhoods. The plan also includes a corridor to Tampa, as DOT has a \$25 million plan to replace the Howard Franklin Bridge. Elimination of the property tax increase would offset the one cent sales tax increase. The benefits to Indian Shores would be doubling of the bus trolleys that carry employees and tourists, as well as additional service on weekends.

Both sides answered numerous questions proposed by attendees relative to:

- (1) The \$1.5 to \$1.7 billion dollar cost of the project.*
- (2) Determining ridership by developing a bus system in place of the rail system.*
- (3) The Interlocal agreement with Pinellas County wherein the sales tax will not be awarded if the PSTA does not eliminate the property tax assessment, or opts to reinstate it in the future.*
- (4) Whether people can get from the rail line to where they want to go.*
- (5) The adverse effects of rail, as it is noisy and in some cases, causes urban decay.*
- (6) The projected rail use by 9,000 per week day in 20 years at a cost of \$2.3 billion to \$3.1 billion.*

Ms. Haselden closed by encouraging voters to study this issue, citing a telephone poll conducted of 1640 voters showing that only 35.9% were in favor and 48.3% were opposed.

Mr. Danner closed by stating transportation is a problem that needs to be fixed and he encouraged people to vote on November 4th.

8.0 Comments from the public on any subject.

Larry Shear, Fire Commissioner, announced the Pinellas Suncoast Fire and Rescue District has a new Fire Chief, Sal D'Angelo from Naples, Florida, who will take the helm at the next meeting on September 16, 2014. He is young, aggressive and enthusiastic.

Commissioner Shear also announced there will be no ceremony on 9/11, as there were staff and construction problems with the concrete base. There is no definite schedule for the dedication.

*Mr. Shear also pointed out that on the **TRIM** notice, the figure at the bottom for fire service is the lowest in the county.*

One gentleman stated he was a disabled veteran who depends on the buses. He stated the buses are full all the time and need to be upgraded.

One gentleman inquired relative to ordinances requiring buildings to be kept up and he was advised there were nuisance ordinances and should talk to the Building Official to determine violations.

One gentleman inquired as to dogs being prohibited on the beach.

Chief Hughes stated an officer needs to view the offense and the department will respond if called. The only exception is service dogs.

*Ken Elliot, bus operator for **PSTA**, stated even if you do not use the transit service yourself, please think about how it affects others. Public transportation should be a bipartisan issue. People who ride it, need it and tourists love it.*

*Commissioner Mark Deighton, Redington Beach, and representative of **PSTA**, stated there are 27 communities that have a light rail system and of these, 26 are currently expanding or making provisions to expand.*

*Mr. Skully, with No Tax for Tracks, commented we need public transportation that is managed sensibly; however, there have been three investigations on **PSTA** regarding use of funds. Homeland Security funds had to be returned due to misuse of the funds. Citizens have reported tires blowing off buses due to neglectful maintenance.*

9.0 Mayor's and Council Members comments on any subject.

Councilor Petruccelli stated he was pleased to see the turnout for the meeting and that this is what democracy is all about.


Councilor Soranno announced the Coastal Cleanup on October 18th and volunteers are still needed.

Councilor Smith thanked Ms. Haselden and Mr. Danner for coming and for everyone being civil.

Vice Mayor Herndon said it was a wonderful meeting and there is a lot to think about.

Mayor Lawrence reminded everyone there is a Council meeting on September 17th at 6 pm wherein Council will be addressing the branding design.

The Town Council meeting adjourned at 7:56 P.M.



ELAINE JACKSON, MMC
Town Clerk