

A Workshop of the Apalachicola City Commission was held on Wednesday, September 27, 2023, at 4PM at the Apalachicola Community Center, #1 Bay Avenue, Apalachicola, Florida.

Present: Mayor Brenda Ash, Commissioner Adriane Elliott, Commissioner Despina George, Commissioner Anita Grove, Commissioner Donna Duncan, City Manager Travis Wade, City Clerk Lee Mathes, City Attorney Dan Hartman, Planner Bree Robinson, Chief of Police Bobby Varnes

Mayor Ash called workshop to order.

AGENDA ADOPTION

Motion to adopt agenda made by Commissioner Grove, seconded by Commissioner Elliott. Motion carried 4 to 0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Ash stated she has received an email from Dixie Partington concerning turning Commerce Street into a one-way street. Mayor Ash stated she will forward email to City Clerk to be made part of the record.

Donna Ingle – discussed benefits of two-way traffic on Commerce Street, parking of RVs and golf carts in the downtown area, and lack of downtown parking in general.

Rob Zingarelli – presented solutions to allow Commerce Street to remain a two-way street, parking enforcement, parking striping, parking of RVs and boats/trailers in downtown area, and parking signage in downtown area.

Michelle Seawright – expressed concern that businesses along Commerce Street were not notified of workshop to discuss the traffic pattern of Commerce Street. Also expressed concern on the following issues on Commerce Street – uneven sidewalks, lack of benches and trash cans, tree trimming, and lack of landscaping. Also addressed parking problems in downtown area.

Commissioner Duncan joined meeting at this time.

FDOT FIVE YEAR WORK PROGRAM & COMMERCE STREET – DISCUSSION

Commissioner Elliott outlined purpose of workshop, outlined FDOT five-year work program and FDOT funding for City managing the caution and traffic lights, and outlined the FDOT standards for road widths and FDOT standards for parking space size.

Commissioner George stated she is in favor of keeping Commerce Street a two-way street, and signage should be installed to direct traffic to parking areas and signage installed to prohibit RVs and boats/trailers in downtown parking areas.

Commissioner Elliott stated that according to FDOT standards, if Commerce Street remains a two-way street, then there will be space for parking on one side of the street.

Commissioner Duncan stated she is in favor of keeping Commerce Street as a two-way street. Parking enforcement would help, but there is a parking problem in the downtown area in general.

Commissioner Grove stated many elements in the Comp Plan are not current, and FDOT does not have any interest in any roads off Highway 98. Enforcement of RVs and boat/trailers parking in the downtown area would help greatly. Commissioner Grove addressed additional issues such as trash cans on ROW in downtown area, congestion at intersection of Avenue D & Commerce, and parking issues created because of the short-term rentals in the downtown area.

Chief of Police Bobby Varnes stated signage would help, but the downtown area is getting more congested, and the parking problem just keeps getting worse. Officers enforce as much as they can.

Discussion held concerning enforcement, parking pattern along Commerce Street, FDOT requirements regarding street and parking space widths, signage, street striping and parking space striping, downtown maintenance upkeep including sidewalk, tree trimming, general cleaning of downtown area, and signage directing RVs and boats/trailers to designated parking area.

Attorney Hartman and Commissioner Elliott will review FDOT standards and provide recommendations for a parking plan.

DOWNTOWN PARKING MITIGATION

Commissioner Elliott outlined parking mitigation dilemma and offered suggestions to move forward to get everyone into compliance.

Commissioner Grove provided history of parking mitigation origination and how program was intended to work.

Attorney Hartman addressed Municode error regarding Ordinance 2018-02 which deals with parking mitigation.

Commissioner George stated there are several errors in Municode, and Attorney Hartman will provide a report at regular meeting on how we need to proceed to correct the errors.

Discussion held concerning parking mitigation and map, and Municode errors.

City Planner Robinson stated Ordinance 2018-02 is currently in the books to give some direction for parking mitigation.

Clayten Mathis, local business owner, stated communication is key. Business owners need to be made aware of all requirements and make sure all the requirements have been met before any type of permit is even issued.

Discussion continued regarding parking mitigation ordinance revisions, pending projects waiting parking mitigation, and Municode corrections.

Commission agreed to hold a parking mitigation workshop on November 7th at 6PM following the regular meeting.

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Elliott, seconded by Commissioner George. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Brenda Ash, Mayor

Lee Mathes, City Clerk