

A Regular Meeting of the Apalachicola City Commission was held on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 6:00 PM at the Former Apalachicola Municipal Library, 74 6th Street, Apalachicola, Florida.

Present: Mayor Brenda Ash, Commissioner Anita Grove, Commissioner Adriane Elliott, Commissioner Despina George, Commissioner Duncan, City Manager Travis Wade, City Clerk Sheneidra Cummings, City Planner Bree Robinson, Chief Bobby Varnes

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Ash followed by prayer and Pledge of Allegiance

AGENDA ADOPTION

Motion made by Commissioner George to approve the agenda as presented, without the addition of New Business Item #4, seconded by Commissioner Grove. Motion failed, 2-3. Mayor Ash and Commissioner Duncan opposed.

A subsequent motion was made by Commissioner Duncan to adopt the agenda with the amendment, (addition of New Business Item #4). Motion was seconded by Commissioner Elliott. Commissioner George opposed. Motion carried 4-1.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Caty Greene informed the Commission about the new president of the Historical Society and the Raney House, Ken Essex.

NEW BUSINESS- Arbor day Foundation Proclamation

Read by Attorney Hartman. Motion to adopt the Arbor Day proclamation made by Commissioner Grove seconded by Commissioner Elliott. No discussion. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS- Tree Ordinance

Manager Wade presented the proposed edits to the Tree Ordinance. Dennis Winterringer commented on the updated presented. Requested the Commission provide guidance and approval to schedule 2 workshops to discuss the Ordinance.

Attorney Hartman commented.

Commissioner Grove commented on the changes to the submitting process. Commissioner grove suggested table New Business Item #2. Motion to table New business item #2 to 2/4/25 was made by Commissioner Grove, seconded by Commissioner George. No further discussion. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS: Cemetery Ordinance

Attorney Hartman presented a draft cemetery ordinance aimed at addressing recent issues with tours and commercial activities in municipal cemeteries. The ordinance provided options to either regulate or prohibit commercial activity.

Discussion held.

Shan Ratzloff commented in support of restricting the Cemetery being used for commercial activity.

Commissioner Grove is in favor of restricting all commercial activity.

Commissioner George is in favor of restricting all commercial activity.

Commissioner Duncan commented on the definition of "commercial activity".

Discussion held.

Commissioner Elliott was not in favor of restricting commercial activity in cemeteries. Stating that based on the ordinance presented, activities would be highly regulated. Commissioner Elliott would like to strike the additional verbiage in sec 10-10 i.e., the "or" language.

Motion made by Commissioner Grove to strike the language "or all commercial activity is prohibited within municipal cemeteries" and proceed with the drafted version as presented; Commissioner George seconded with discussion. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS- Manager Wade's Leave Payout

Motion made by Commissioner Elliott to approve Manager Wade leave payout, seconded by Commissioner Duncan. Discussion, Commissioner Grove; Commissioner George. No further discussion. Motion Carried, 3-2. Commissioner Grove and George opposed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS- Grant Approval Policy

Manager Wade presented the updated grant approval policy. Motion to approve the Grant approval policy made by Commissioner Grove and seconded by Commissioner Elliott. Discussion, Commissioner George was not in support of approving the policy as presented. 1 opposed, Commissioner George. Motion carried, 4-1. Commissioner George opposed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS- Gibson Parking Plan

Public Comments continued.

Al Ingle- commented in opposition to Gibson's Parking plan.

Susan Keith- commented in opposition to the parking plan.

Attorney Hartman presented the Commission with additional information for their parking plan and parking mitigation.

Cutler Edwards presented the updates on the proposed parking plan and provided the Commission with clarification on the proposed parking, and comments in opposition to the proposed plan.

The Commission discussed a complex parking plan for the Gibson Inn development project. Key points included:

- A request for historic waivers of 8 parking spaces each for the Gibson Inn and Buck House buildings
- A request to mitigate 11 additional required parking spaces through payment to the city's parking fund
- Concerns about the accuracy of parking space counts and measurements in the proposed plan
- Questions about the applicability of historic waivers to different parts of the project
- Debate over whether to consider the project as separate structures or as one combined site

Discussion held.

Commissioner Elliott commented on ADA accessibility and size of parking spaces. Commissioner Elliott recommend restoring the handicap parking space and the corner of Ave D and 4th Ave with an additional creation of another handicap space. Commissioner Elliott is not in favor of having 4 parking spaces alongside of 4th Street and Ave C (across from the Taranto House).

Commissioner Duncan, no comment.

Commissioner Grove commented and thanked Staff and Attorney Hartman to resolve the parking issue. Commissioner Grove inquired with City Planner that the spaces have been measured and is allowable based on City code. City Planner Bree Robinson confirmed that the parking plan presented meet code.

Commissioner George provided the public with an update on the process and prior approvals. Commissioner George also commented on the stormwater retention requirement that was set on Jan. 10, 2022, and mentioned that the developer knew from that meeting date. 7:23 Commissioner George question if 18 parking spaces are available to be placed on Ave D.

Further Discussion held.

Motion made by Commissioner George to approve the historic waiver of eight (8) parking spots for the original Gibson Inn building, and after determining the number of parking spaces that abut the Buck house property, the Buck house property will be entitled to a historic waiver for the difference between the eight spaces and the number of parking spaces that currently abut the Buck House totaling 8 parking spaces for that historic structure. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Grove. Discussion, Commissioner Elliott. Motion failed, 3-2.

Commissioner George immediately noted that she accidentally voted against her motion and requested to restate her vote. Discussion held on point of order. It was determined that the motion was disposed of, and new motion was needed.

After extensive discussion, the following motion was made by Commissioner Grove to approve a waiver for the 8 spots for the Gibson Inn. Motion seconded by Commissioner Elliott. Discussion, Commissioner George. No further discussion. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

Motion made by Commissioner Grove to table the second historic waiver request for the eight spots for the Buck House structure until 2/4/25 in order for staff and Attorney Hartman to determine the number of spaces the Buck House qualify for. Motion seconded by Commissioner Duncan. Discussion, Commissioner George and Commissioner Elliott. Further discussion was held. Motion failed, 2-3. Mayor Ash, Commissioner Elliott, and Commissioner Duncan opposed.

Motion made by Commissioner Elliott to approve the waiver request for the Buck House. Motion was not seconded. Motion failed for lack of second.

Motion made by Commissioner George to table the remaining request for parking mitigation for 11 parking spots in the amount of \$55,000 until a verified parking plan is presented to accurately determine the number of spaces currently provided and the number of spaces that are needed for the historic waiver for the Buck house. In addition, Commissioner George stated due to the undetermined number of parking spaces that are needed for the waiver, the cost is unknown. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Duncan. Discussion, Commissioner Elliott and Commissioner George. No further discussion. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

The applicant was directed to provide more detailed and accurate parking measurements, particularly for angled parking on Avenue D, for the February meeting.

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Mayor Ash commented. Mayor Ash recommended that the City follow up on the strategic planning workshop, AAHM and relocating the City Hall.

Commissioners provided updates on various projects and committees they were involved with, including:

- Working with Alex on a Fire Mitigation Program
- Various activities held at the library
- Increasing sales tax and establishment of CRA

- FDOT project submissions
- Discussions about oyster licensing
- Updates on the community garden initiative
- Information about affordable housing efforts
- Resignation of City Manager and application review process
- Associated costs to secure facilitator for the proposed Strategic Planning Workshop/Meeting

Commissioner Elliott informed the public that the P3 Board has an upcoming meeting next week and invites the Community to contribute and participate.

MANAGER COMMUNICATIONS

Manager Wade provided updates on various ongoing projects, the building official position; and increasing security during City events. Manager Wade provided additional updates on:

- Duke Energy's plans to replace a tower on Commerce Street
- The need to fill the Building Official position
- Plans to improve security for upcoming events using concrete barriers
- Progress on the Leslie Street project

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to adopt consent agenda made by Commissioner George; seconded by Commissioner Grove. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn meeting was made by Commissioner George; seconded by Commissioner Elliott. None opposed. Motion carried, 5-0.

BRENDA ASH, MAYOR

ATTEST:

SHENEIDRA CUMMINGS