

MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CITY COMMISSIONERS FOR THE CITY OF PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA, HELD IN THE COMMISSION CHAMBERS AT CITY HALL, DECEMBER 6, 2011 AT 5:00 P.M.

The following were present: Mayor Magidson, Commissioners Gingell, Buzzett, Patterson and Kennedy. City Manager Charlie Weston, Attorney Tom Gibson and City Clerk Jim Anderson were also present.

Proposed Observation Tower to be located at the Billy Joe Rish Parking Lot:

Ms. Gail Alsobrook, Director of the Port St. Joe Redevelopment Agency gave a presentation to the City Commission. The goal of the tower is to attract new visitors and provide a spectacular view. The design will be coordinated with the City entrance signs and kiosks with a budget of \$103,618. The true cost of the project can't be determined until the project is bid.

ADA Compliance will need to be addressed. Equal access can't be given to the top level, but we have the option to utilize cameras with monitors on the ground.

Insurance coverage would need to be under the City policy. The current proposed height is 45' and would be used for signage as well.

The two options for stairs are as follows: Spiral, which would be aluminum and could cause an increase in accidents. The second option is switch back stairs which would be made of wood, less expensive and safer.

Commissioner Gingell noted that one of the initial intents of the tower was to have a central location for signs.

Commissioner Buzzett feels that the tower is too large for the lot. We should complete the parking lot and shelf the tower. A kiosk on the corner would be a better benefit.

Mr. Weston noted that the Buffer Preserve has a 50' tower. It's impressive, but it's big. It could be great along the bay, but he is not sure about the location. He recommends that each commissioner view the Buffer Preserve Tower.

Commissioner Buzzett indicated that maintenance cost could be high and he's not sure who will pay for it.

Patrick Jones the PSJRA Board Chairman noted that the idea is to create an eye grabber as someone drives along Highway 98. The tower is not meant to blend in.

Commissioner Buzzett would like to shrink the tower. He would like to have the look of an observation tower but not functional.

Mayor Magidson suggested considering the idea of moving the tower closer to the bay.

Commissioner Gingell feels that moving the location would defeat the purpose.

Willie Ramsey, a PSJRA Board Member, indicated that during the design phase, we asked ourselves "What can do on this site to draw people to Port St Joe?" We wanted kids to tell their parents that they want to climb the tower. To some extent, if the tower is not tall, it's not going to provide the desired effect. Yes, there is some liability.

Commissioner Kennedy noted that looking at the drawing a structure will not be allowed in the slope of the storm water pond. He likes the concept, but the tower is big and is concerned about public safety.

Mayor Magidson asked, "Is there a way to lock the tower in the plans?"

Ms. Alsobrook responded, "Locks would need to be discussed."

Mr. Jones envisions that an operation plan would be needed. Items such as posting the rules and automatic timers could limit the risk. The tower needs to be functional to get people talking about it.

Commissioner Buzzett recommends downsizing the tower.

Mr. Jones noted that certainly we have all heard about competing markets. We don't have one thing to bring folks in to Port St. Joe.

Commissioner Gingell would like to see a revised drawing with the Daily Dock & Dive Building to reference the height of the proposed tower.

Attorney Gibson asked, "Why did the size of the storm water pond grow?"

Clay Smallwood, III, indicated that once designed, it required a storm water pond of this size.

Ms. Alsobrook noted that we are on a grant deadline and need some guidance on the tower height.

Mr. Jones suggested visiting the observation level of the Daly's Dock & Dive building.

Mayor Magidson would like to visit the Buffer Preserve Tower. We have a lot of unknowns with public safety being the big one.

Ms. Alsobrook asked, "Can we schedule another workshop in the near future? I think we have a consensus to have a structure similar to this.

Mayor Magidson thinks that Ms. Alsobrook is on the right path with the tower.

Commissioner Kennedy suggested a spread sheet for the tower with the switch back stairs.

A workshop is scheduled for December 20, 2011 at 5:00 P.M.

Parking Ordinance:

Mr. Weston noted that staff has been working on a Parking Ordinance as requested. Things that need to be considered are commercial vehicles, employee parking, RV's, etc.

Mayor Magidson feels that we need an Ordinance. Some commercial vehicles have been in our parking lots for weeks.

Attorney Gibson indicated that fixing the overnight commercial parking is easy, but is that all that the Commission wants to do?

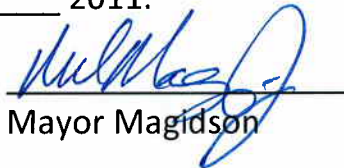
Commissioner Buzzett noted that when we get all of our downtown built out, then we should look at a Parking Ordinance. Personally, he doesn't think we have a huge problem. The biggest problem is employees parking on Reid Avenue.

Commissioner Gingell disagrees.

Mr. Weston requested that specifics for the proposed parking Ordinance be sent to him.

The workshop was adjourned at 5:55 P.M.

Approved this 20th day of December 2011.



Mayor Magidson



Jim Anderson, City Clerk