

MINUTES OF THE R/UDAT (REGIONAL / URBAN DESIGN ASSISTANCE TEAM) GRANT APPLICATION WORKSHOP FOR THE BOARD OF CITY COMMISSIONERS FOR THE CITY OF PORT ST. JOE FLORIDA HELD AT 2775 GARRISON AVENUE, August 8, 2019, 12 Noon

The following were present: Mayor Buzzett, Commissioners Hoffman and Langston. City Manager Jim Anderson, and City Clerk Charlotte Pierce were also present. Commissioner Ashbrook arrived at 12:18 P.M., Commissioner Lowry and attorney Albritton were absent.

The purpose of the Workshop was to review the R/UDAT (Regional / Urban Design Assistance Team) Grant Application from the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

Agenda

R/UDAT Grant Application

Cassie Studstill, who has written the grant application, answered questions from the Commissioners about the application.

Commissioner Hoffman's concerns were if the Letters of Support were valid since they endorse the Long Range Planning Committee and not the City; if it included the County; questioned if the County Long Range Planning Committee was 100% behind the application; and wanted something in writing that there would be no cost to the City now or later.

John Russell, of FEMA Community Recovery Assistance, stated that FEMA strongly supports the planning process, and noted the AIA is a trade organization that normally does their work pro bono in disaster areas.

Commissioner Langston feels the grant would be good for the community; wants something in writing that there will be no expense to the City, questioned how existing organizations would be helping, and wanted to know how incoming groups would be disbursed.

Commissioner Ashbrook joined the Workshop at 12:18 P.M.

Commissioner Ashbrook stated he saw no glaring issues, it is a good document, feels there is no commitment to anything, but is concerned if there would be any cost to the City.

Mayor Buzzett asked who decided that the City needs the suggested plan as a number of the items listed are already being done by the City. He noted that the City is in a recovery mode, Staff is short at this time, we are trying to hire a police officer, and that assistance to the incoming group will be challenging. Mayor Buzzett stated that he does not support the document in the current form, feels the educational section is not acceptable and wants it removed from the application.

Mrs. Studstill responded that the grant is focused on the city, and she has written the application. She hopes to have representatives from each group that she has listed in the application to work on the project, and create a website to engage people. She stated that she was to meet with Superintendent Jim Norton but something has come up and he was not able to meet with her.

Christy McElroy took exception to numerous statements in the application, questioned why some of those involved in the law suit against the City concerning the 10th Street Ball Park had not been contacted; she feels the document is not appropriate, and it does not include any of the 15 articles that have been made public about the lawsuit. Ms. McElroy requested that the record reflect that Ms. Studstill was not being truthful.

Robert Branch questioned the supporting documents for the application and feels the facts need to be stated.

Mildred Hamilton expressed her concerns about the application and questioned if the individuals coming in would be stepping on toes of the residents. She stated this City is amazing and she loves it. Ms. Hamilton noted that seniors do not use computers, depending on their age, many cannot read very well, wanted to know if seniors would receive help, and what the cost to the City would be.

Commissioner Hoffman noted that people do not like to be told about things that are not always positive. You have to solve problems before changing the overall issue. He suggested stepping back, looking at the situation, and seeking guidance.

Cindy Branch questioned a letter from former Mayor, Bo Patterson, on page 53 of the application.

John Russell, of FEMA Community Recovery Assistance, shared that his observations is there is too much information and suggested paring down the information. FEMA supports good planning and he is willing to continue to facilitate work on the application. He feels the City needs to own the document and this is a good opportunity for the City.

Mayor Buzzett expressed his desire to see the application paired down to an easily readable document, appreciates everyone's interest in the City, and pointing out places to improve. He wants the education section taken out of the application.

Commissioner Ashbrook stated that he had talked with an individual that assured him the fiber grant would not be killed by not having something from the R/UDAT Grant immediately.

Mayor Buzzett adjourned the Workshop at 1:02 P.M.

Approved this 20th day of August 2019.

Rex Buzzett
Rex Buzzett, Mayor

8/20/19
Date

Charlotte M. Pierce
Charlotte M. Pierce, City Clerk

8/20/19
Date