

**FORT MYERS BEACH
WORKSHOP MEETING
AUGUST 22, 1996**
Nations Bank, Council Chambers
2523 Estero Boulevard
FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA

I CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was opened on Thursday, August 22, 1996, at 6:35 P.M. by Anita T. Cereceda, Mayor.

Present at the meeting were: Anita T. Cereceda, Mayor and Council Member; Ted FitzSimons, Vice Mayor and Council Member; Council Members Rusty Isler, Ray Murphy, and Garr Reynolds; Marsha Segal-George, Town Manager; and Attorney Richard Roosa.

II PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All assembled recited the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

III DISCUSSION OF DRAFT OF TOWING ORDINANCE

Debra Wallinsky, owner of Carribean Alley in Helmerich Plaza, stated that the plaza has enough parking for the shoppers in the plaza, but not for beach parking. She pays a lot of rent and only has two parking spaces in front of her store. She feels that she has the right to tow people who aren't shopping. Helmerich had a contract with Tropic Towing in the past but no longer has the contract and there are no spotters any more. She suggested having the newspapers make people aware that they will get towed.

A. J. Holman of Jewel Real Estate, who manages the property for Frank Helmerich, said that if someone illegally parks, they are subject to towing. Some people think that if they buy a soda then go to the beach that that allows them to park there all day. The problem is that there are businesses who do not have adequate parking, so their customers have to park elsewhere, usually in another business' place. Businesses must be required to have adequate parking. He suggested parking cars at Bowditch and that the Town ease the rules to allow people to make legitimate parking lots (even though he thinks that the paid parking is very seldom full.)

Marsha Segal-George confirmed that under the Times Square Overlay, the merchants can get by with less parking, but that it will also make it easier to have parking lots. Victor Dover thinks the private sector will take care of the problem when it becomes bad enough, then the government doesn't have to take care of it. She thinks we need to take an inventory of available parking and get maps published in the papers showing where parking is located

Ray Mertens blames the business property owners for the parking problem because they don't provide enough parking for all the business in their building and that puts the burden on the business owners that do provide parking. If his business is empty, he will tow cars from his lot because they must be shopping or eating elsewhere or going to the beach.

Mr. Mertens suggested making businesses pay for the privilege of increasing outdoor seating and reducing parking by making them buy parking spots at a nearby parking lot. The Town can buy a lot at 4% then sell the parking spots three times over, financing at 5 1/2%. The revenue from the parking lot goes to pay for the loan on the second story. After those two are paid off, the money goes to pay for the swimming pool or another parking lot or something else for the town. A business could not get the variances unless they buy the parking. The Town needs a string of these lots all along the island.

Mr. FitzSimons believes that there is already parking available, it is just not utilized. People don't want to park that far away and don't want to pay. Mr. Holman said the most expensive lots are full because they are the most convenient. People will pay, but only for a good parking space.

The island has seasonal parking lots, but that does not help when there are special events outside of the seasonal schedule. The Town needs to allow them to operate on weekends and when needed.

Mr. Isler believes that businesses should pay for their customers to park. The County should provide parking for people coming to county beaches. But who should pay for day trippers who come to

the beach? Is it the resident's place to pay taxes to provide parking for out-of-town beachgoers? He believes they should have to pay for parking.

The Council took a break at 7:55 P.M. and reconvened at 8:05 P.M.

IV CONTINUING DISCUSSION ON THE BUDGET

Mr. Isler suggested that perhaps the budget needs more detail. For instance, salaries should be broken out separately, office supplies broken down, etc.

He suggested that Capital Equipment be changed to Office Equipment. The Town has computers, sound systems, phones, etc. Now it needs to get accounting software, which could be from several hundred to several thousand dollars, and may need a dedicated server to run the software.

He also did not think that the Historic Society loan advance should be a capital improvement. He is also worried because they would have to go under our audit which could be a problem. Mr. Roosa suggested it should be moved to a service center. He agreed that the Town needs to have control over how that money is spent dollar for dollar and that we cannot just give them \$30,000 because the money is taxpayer money. He said the Town will have to have a lease with them and the lease will provide that they can spend up to \$30,000 and they will have to prepare a budget and submit it to the Town. It was agreed that the category should be changed to Long Property Operation and Maintenance and that the Historical Society be removed from the description in order to give the Council more flexibility.

Mr. Isler questioned whether Financial Services Including Budget Preparation needed to be \$18,000. He suspects that next year the Town will be able to do the budget themselves patterned after this year. The staff thought that because of grant money, financing issues such as a parking garage, etc. they might need more help in analysis and budget preparation. He suggested calling it "Financial Services."

Regarding the item for Human Services, he did not think it should be included if the Town does not have a program in mind, nor that the money should be given to churches. Marsha Segal-George clarified that it was not her intention that the money be given to the churches, but that the ministerium might be a resource for identifying where the needs of the Town are. It was suggested that it be called "Community Service" instead and be available for use for other community needs such as the drug-free prom party, Little League, etc. Mr. Roosa suggested dividing out those things that are at the discretion of the Town Manager to spend and those which must come back to the Council for specific disbursements. That way Community Service would not have to be specific until it is voted on by the Council.

Motion: Mr. FitzSimons moved and Mayor Cereceda seconded that \$20,000 be reinstated in the budget but renamed from Human Services to Community Service and moved to the Service Cost Center. The motion passed unanimously.

Regarding the proposed municipal utility tax, the Council struggled with the promise made during incorporation that the new Town could be run at no extra cost to the taxpayer. Mr. Gucciardo noted that the staff still believes this is true, but if we don't have the utility tax, we will only have \$50,000 in contingency. There are so many variables in this first budget that the staff feels that the Town needs a contingency. If the Town doesn't spend the money this year, the Council can knock off the utility tax next year, or decrease the millage. But the residents may decide that now that we are a town, they want more services and want to keep the utility tax to provide extras.

Based on a \$125,000 homesteaded property, if the Town didn't exist, taxpayers would be paying \$10.00 more in higher millage to the County, and \$11.29 more than last year in All Hazards. If the Town enacts the utility tax, the taxpayer would pay \$36 per year (on an average bill of \$100 per month). Therefore the taxpayer is only paying \$14.71 more per year than they would have if the Town had not incorporated. If the County enacts the electric franchise fee (which looks probable), the Town taxpayers will actually pay less than taxpayers in unincorporated Lee county.

Mr. Roosa reported that the Town will get a part of the Lee County occupational tax after all. The Council needs to pass an ordinance that vendors

must have a county license and be in compliance with town zoning. The Town may get as much as \$1600.

Marsha Segal-George reported that the Town probably won't get any cable revenue after all.

Mayor Cereceda would like to see Travel and Training increased to \$20,000 so that more Council and staff can take advantage of educational seminars and conventions.

She also thinks the Town may need to look at subsidizing the trolleys so that the Town can have more than one trolley during the off-season.

She also would like to include \$10,000 for seasonal decorations, community affairs, concerts, special events, etc.

She also would like some type of fund to focus on children to provide safety courses, softball uniforms, youth services.

It was decided to increase Community Services to \$30,000 to cover these types of need.

V ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Salfen
Recording Secretary