

January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
5:30 PM

The City Council of the City of Inverness met on the above date in Regular Session at 212 W. Main Street with the following members present:

President Hinkle  
Vice President Hepfer  
Councilwoman Bega  
Councilman McBride  
Councilman Ryan  
Mayor Plaisted

Also present were City Manager DiGiovanni, City Attorney Haag, Asst. City Manager Williams, Community Development Director Malm, Public Finance Director Chiodo, Event Director Skeelee-Hogan, Woodard & Curran Director Regina, and City Clerk Davis.

The Invocation was given by Councilman McBride and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by the City Council.

#### **ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA**

Councilwoman Hepfer motioned to accept the Agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilwoman Bega. The motioned carried.

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None

#### **OPEN PUBLIC MEETING**

**Citrus County Commissioner Scott Carnahan** spoke of the recent county workshop and the finding of many holes in the medical corridor issue. He advised that it may be expanded into a four lane, but the medical corridor will probably come to a screeching halt. They are aware of the impact that would be caused to the city should the medical corridor proceed. The outlook is to reach out to HCA to keep investing in the city and keeping the economy strong.

Councilman McBride questioned the issue of binding contracts with Mr. Carnahan stating he understood that there are possibly 47 contracts that may be binding with the County. He spoke of the consultant hired for this project, and how mind boggling all of this is. Mr. Carnahan believes there is a consensus to four-lane Lecanto Highway eventually.

Council President Hinkle congratulated the County on hiring new County Administrator, Mr. Randy Oliver. Council President is looking forward to a good relationship and a good future for our County.

## **SCHEDULED APPEARANCES**

**6)a) Ray Morris, Deco Café Petition** was addressed. Mr. Ray Morris appeared before Council and reading back portions of a letter written to him from City Manager DiGiovanni, which listed statements made by him to City Manager DiGiovanni, and Councilman David Ryan. Mr. Morris stated that he was not against Car Shows, but due to the shortage of parking spaces and the closure of the street for the events, it was hurting his business. His customers for his fine dining on Friday evenings, were not willing to walk a block or two to get to the restaurant. He additionally stated that the vendors were competing with the local businesses, by selling the same things in the street. They pay taxes and the City should be helping them. Mr. Morris proposed that the city move the Car Show back to the Government Center parking lot. Mr. Morris stated that some of the business owners were talking of taking legal action against the City if it remains as is. He stated that there were 40 empty buildings in the city limits of Inverness and if we don't start working together we are going to have more of them.

President Hinkle stated that the City was pro-business and we try to do things to bring business into the City, such as decreasing the Impact Fees.

Mr. Morris stated that a member who used to sit on the City Board, asked to have her letter read at the meeting this evening regarding the events in downtown Inverness. She questioned who is and is not benefiting from the events, the successfulness of the events, and why are the majority of them downtown.

He questioned why the Council does not meet with the downtown merchants, and Council President Hinkle advised that the Council meetings are open to the public and they may come to a Council meeting anytime to discuss things.

## **MAYOR'S LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS**

None

## **CITY ATTORNEY REPORT**

Attorney Haag advised that he had attended the County Commission meeting today and it was very enlightening and wished to congratulate our new commissioners on asking some very pointed questions.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

**Councilwoman Hepfer motioned to accept the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Councilman McBride. The motion carried.**

- a) Bill Listing\*
  - Recommendation – Approval
- b) Council Minutes – December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014\*
  - Recommendation - Approval
- c) Cemetery Lot Repurchase – Lot 291, Southwest Addition\*
  - Recommendation – Approval

## **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

**10)a) Impact Fee Resolution** was addressed by City Manager DiGiovanni who spoke to correspondence received from Jeanette Collins, Planning and Development Director for Citrus County, and how the Board of County Commission (BOCC) has directed a rescission of all Impact Fees for a three-year period. The City of Inverness currently participates with the County School Board, City of Crystal River and the BOCC in a cooperative agreement, which includes school impact fees. Newly Elected County Officials have brought forward the notion to review and possibly alter the assessment and collection of the school impact fees. City of Inverness and the City of Crystal River have the responsibility to assess and collect school impact fees, based on the cooperative agreement and founded within the county ordinance. He explained the complexities involved, should the county choose to rescind or place a moratorium on the collection of these fees. The recent belief is to temporarily suspend Impact Fees to spur development, but should be accomplished with a plan to reinstate such fees over time. The approach would be for School Impact Fees, once suspended, be appropriately reinstated over a three year period.

Councilwoman Bega spoke to the documents and resolution included in the agenda. She stated the documents do not give any detail of what the school board would not be receiving.

City Manager DiGiovanni explained that conversations with the school system centered around that. There is room for consideration to suspend the impact fees short-term, look at the activity in the community, and then look to reinstate. School Board has voiced what they believe and we are in concert with them.

Councilman Ryan questioned if School Board is in agreement with the suspension of the impact fees. City Manager DiGiovanni stated that the school board understands what has been happening and their preference is to leave the protocol in place, suspend them, evaluate, and then reinstate the impact fees.

Councilman McBride was not sure what he is voting on, and would like to take a step back and address at a later date.

City Manager DiGiovanni wants the city to state to County government that we are saying we understand the suspension would be okay, but not eliminate the program. He spoke of the gray areas within the resolution so that other entities can include particulars. This is saying that Council understands the situation, can agree with a suspension, but that the program remains in place so it may be restarted when necessary, with regard to a 3 year time period, in a measured way.

Council and City Manager discussion included possible actions by County government, if the two cities in the County are on board, economic variables, getting into our County, etc.

Chuck Dixon, Citrus County School District, stated that enrollment is flat. October 2014 they received \$49,000 from impact fees which goes into a trust fund through the Board of County Commissioners so that when the school board has a project that impact fees can fund, they request funding from their own funds. BOCC has scheduled a public hearing to have a moratorium on all impacts fees. A better scenario would be a measured

suspension rather than eliminate impact fees. If a measured response is quantifiable, it is a better alternative than elimination.

Councilman McBride questioned the amount of current funds in coffers, with Mr. Dixon stating approximately \$2 million for schools, which is not much if you have to build a school.

City Attorney Haag questioned Mr. Dixon if the county repealed the impact fee ordinance and before could be re-instituted would there be a completely new impact fee study. Mr. Dixon stated there is a plan to have a workshop in February and update the study. BOCC are looking at suspending all 8 impact fee categories.

**Councilman Ryan motioned to have City Clerk Davis read Resolution 2015-01 by title only. Seconded by Councilwoman Hepfer. The motion carried.**

#### RESOLUTION 2015-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL, OF THE CITY OF INVERNESS, SUPPORTING THE MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT APPROACH TO THE COLLECTION OF SCHOOL IMPACT FEES.

Councilman McBride questioned why we are doing this now with City Manager stating if no action is taken now, the City's voice will not be in the stream prior to action. The impact fee issue is scheduled to be presented before the BOCC next week. This is the opportunity to be part of the process that can lend a voice to the suspension approach vs something else.

**Councilwoman Hepfer motioned to adopt Resolution 2015-01, by roll call vote. Seconded by Councilman Ryan. Roll call vote was as follows: Councilman Ryan, yes; Councilwoman Bega, yes; Councilman McBride, yes; Councilwoman Hepfer, yes; President Hinkle, yes. The motion carried.**

**10)b) Inverness Big Bass Fishing Tournament** – Resolution was addressed by City Manager DiGiovanni, who explained that the Event and Visitors Bureau (EVB) will be utilizing the waterfront park system for the Inverness Big Bass Classic on March 21, 2015. As Council is aware, fees for a city event must be adopted by resolution and is included for council to acknowledge and establish the fee. The fees for this event will be \$85.00 per fisherman which registers a fisherman (max 2 per boat) for the opportunity to win prize money for the biggest fish of the day, etc. The EVB is working with corporate support from Yamaha and Skeeter Boats to bring a profession grade tournament to the City.

He noted a change in the resolution to change the wording after \$85.00/ per registrant (inclusive of sales tax), to read (**Non**-inclusive of sales tax) vs (Inclusive of sales tax).

Councilwoman Bega, stated that she wished to exercise an abundance of caution and recuses herself from this discussion and abstains from the vote due to her affiliation with a business sponsoring the event.

**Councilman Ryan motioned to have City Clerk Davis read Resolution 2015-02 by title only. Seconded by Councilwoman Hepfer. The motion carried.**

RESOLUTION 2015-02

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF INVERNESS, FLORIDA ESTABLISHING A FISHING TOURNAMENT REGISTRATION FEE AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**Councilwoman Hepfer motioned to adopt Resolution 2015-02, with noted changes, by roll call vote. Seconded by Councilman Ryan. Roll call vote was as follows: Councilman Ryan, yes; Councilman McBride, yes; Councilwoman Hepfer, yes; President Hinkle, yes. The motion carried.**

**10)c) Legislative Delegation meeting – Topics of Discussion** were addressed. City Manager DiGiovanni referenced the recent letter received from Senator Charles Dean with regard to the annual meeting by the Delegation members for residents and City/County Officials to present their concerns. He reviewed a few topics of discussion they may wish to bring forward. **1) Project Assistance Funding for US 41N; Low Density Community Fire Service Qualification; Alteration to Whispering Pines Park Management Plan; Inter-Model Bicycle Plan; RCW Extension. 2) To Reduce or eliminate unfunded mandates & fund items previously passed. 3) Maintain the integrity of State Revenue Sharing and all pass through revenues. 4) Oppose any erosion or interference of Home Rule 50; lake protection, clean-up, and related improvements.** City Manager recommended that Council discuss the listed suggestions and address the items they wish to bring forward.

Councilwoman Hepfer stated this is how we have previously discussed concerns on the State level and is presented perfectly.

Councilwoman Bega questioned how this will be presented, with City Manager stating the correspondence was addressed to Mayor's Office that this would be an open meeting, therefore they need to discuss who would make the presentation. This can be put in letter form and have signed by the Council President and hand to them after speaking.

This meeting will be held January 14<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm at the Courthouse.

Mayor Plaisted suggested that Councilman McBride speak. and Councilman McBride stated, that to get 41 expanded further, we will need additional funding and noted others could go.

Council President Hinkle commented on several issues coming up this year such as Whispering Pines management, fire services, etc.

**Consensus was to present noted items listed by letter at the meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup> with Councilman McBride and Mayor Plaisted agreeing to attend. Councilwoman Bega also advised that she would attend.**

**10)d) Budget – Trim Compliance Correspondence** was presented for information only, keeping Council informed that we received correspondence from the Dept. of Revenue, noting that the revised and re-advertised millage certification of the Final Budget process went well, and the State accepted everything. We have commenced conversation with the Property Appraiser Office to try to avoid any future problems.

**10)e Valerie Theatre Update (verbal)** City Manager DiGiovanni advised that the project is moving forward and we had a lengthy discussion at our last meeting with some of the representatives from the building to the right (of the Valerie). He wanted council to understand, that to get on the property to maintain your own building, the State of Florida has passed legislation, (FS 704) which provided language to give us the ability, if it becomes absolutely necessary, to file for some relief through the court system to secure the benefit of an “easement of necessity”. The Valerie Theatre is no different than any other building in the downtown. This investment of the City to improve the building benefits property owners in any town, whether immediately adjoining the property or ½ to a block away, for properties to be well maintained. If dilapidated, or falling down, buildings only bring down the value. Our petition, if necessary, will be inclusive of language as that and be a reasonable approach.

Staff is also looking into a full analysis of the appraisal that was performed. He stated that a city government and community need to keep a keen understanding of the what the values are, and what the market of the downtown can support on a square foot basis. If the square ft. number is too high the business fails. We may be ordering an additional appraisal or two, to keep in sync.

City Manager DiGiovanni additionally reported on the following:

- The State of City address and what was heard earlier this evening can see some of the difficulties and challenges in coming up with meaningful activities.

He spoke to the past efforts and events from 1994 forward being what made the City what is today, and how the merchants were in support of events downtown. The greater good and marketing of Inverness is not for the benefit of the few or one, but for the many. It cannot be allowed that the few drive what the protocols will be for the many. The greater good is what we are here for and we will fail without it!

## **COUNCIL/MAYOR SUBJECTS**

Mayor Plaisted agreed totally with what was stated by City Manager. This is the place to be and people love coming here. Last meeting was a great State of City address and took highlights to the Women’s Political Network of Citrus County meeting. They were enthusiastic about it. Mayor noted the amount of traffic on 200/Hwy 41North to and from Ocala and we really need to get the road done. He questioned if there are meetings set up with new County Administrator.

Councilman McBride underscored the appreciation of the new commissioners. They are going to focus on how our money is being spent, and where they want to go now and how to get there. He is looking forward to the upcoming meeting with the legislative delegation. Questioned the number of new business opening up in City being 83.

Councilwoman Hepfer was glad to be healthy again, and watched the BOCC meeting online. It was refreshing to watch and hopes there will be positive changes. Finds it amazing that people are complaining about things.

Councilwoman Bega thinks it is important to listen to comments from merchants and take into consideration their concerns. One merchant wants the car show moved from downtown and yet another merchant wanted to move the car show away from IGC. There is no pleasing everyone, but it is important to listen. She will attend the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> with Mayor and Councilman McBride.

Councilman Ryan noted his attendance at the car show, and all the city events, and noted his appreciation of all the hard work the staff does. Majority of businesses he has spoken with in downtown love what we do, and agrees with Councilwoman Bega that we must listen to concerns.

Council President Hinkle stated we try to do for the better good. When car show is downtown people go to the other businesses. He referenced speaking to merchants, all events, 2015 and challenges ahead.

### **CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA**

**George Gouldbourne**, Huntinglodge Dr. Questioned the Thomas/Mountjoy property and asked if the Contractor for the Valerie Theatre project had insurance to cover damage during construction, and was informed that they did.

Meeting adjourned @ 7:11pm

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**City Clerk**

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**Council President**