

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF BONITA SPRINGS
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2017
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CITY COUNCIL BUDGET HEARING
(BUDGET HEARING BEGINS 5:05 P.M.)
CITY HALL
9101 BONITA BEACH ROAD
BONITA SPRINGS, FLORIDA 34135
MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Peter Simmons called the special meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Mayor Simmons and all Council Members were in attendance, except for Council Members Steve Slachta and Amy Quaremba.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

[6:07:21 pm](#) Rick Steinmeyer reported that FEMA has set up at the recreation center.

[6:07:41 pm](#) Charlie Strader, a resident of Kent Road, addressed the hurricane and events that occurred as a result. He hopes there is a shelter in the city one day.

[6:08:57 pm](#) Heidi Narah, a resident of Saunders Avenue, stated her houses stayed dry and is high. She questioned plans to make sure flooding doesn't occur again in the area.

IV. HURRICANE IRMA AND IMPACTS ON CITY PRIORITIES AND LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES AND DIRECTION TO STAFF.

[6:11:23 PM](#) Mayor Simmons furnished a brief overview explaining that he called this special meeting to see about legislative priorities and how Hurricane Irma may have impacted that, and how to move forward. He addressed Council on their thoughts. Discussion followed.

Council Member Greg DeWitt agreed that this altered the priorities and addressed the need to figure out what is going on east of town, etc. He would like to see Council switch some of their priorities from transportation, i.e., the quadrant, to transportation and drainage of the area around the river. There are at least five communities in this area, i.e., Citrus Park, Lake Shalimar, Morton Groves, IBE and the Quinn/Downs area. He feels they need to first get an idea of why this is occurring and whether it's a drainage problem, an elevation problem, etc.

[6:17:03 pm](#) Council Member Peter O'Flinn addressed water quality and flooding in the DRGR, which is about retention and holding more water on the land. Edison Farms is now preserved and will provide the potential for more retention. He doesn't think they need more studies, but rather they need to start moving forward in doing things. A second issue deals with localized flooding, which is about stormwater systems. He referred to Council Member Forbes proposal regarding stormwater assessments.

The areas on the north and south sides of Imperial parkway need to be looked at very carefully for solutions to the flooding there. He feels the need to promptly bring expertise on board so they can understand what's causing the flooding in this area. Also, on the east side of Imperial on Dean Street it appeared that the flooding that was occurring down on Orange Blossom/Tangerine was caused by narrow flow from the river going south. It's something he feels should be looked at. Third, he feels it would be helpful that somehow we be even more of a catalyst so when people come forward with issues that we can address and provide direction - a heightened effort in that regard.

6:23:46 PM Council Member Mike Gibson agreed that there are a lot of issues and that there is a need to start acting on them and to reprioritize. There is a need at the quadrant to alleviate some of that traffic in season, and for emergency purposes. It's something he would not want to drop completely, but they do need to rearrange how they are spending money in the short term. As far as flooding and diking, he has a concern that they dike one area and it floods two more areas, as they really need to be careful. There is a need for a study to see what's going on. He agrees that their priorities have been rearranged.

6:25:27 PM Council Member Fred Forbes stated Palmira was also flooded and had water in their houses for almost a week. Worthington still has water on their golf course. He agrees with everything that Council Member O'Flinn stated. He feels another legislative priority, whether City Council, or City Council helping someone else, is a need to push on people acquiring more and more land that can store water. As point person with the SFWMD, Estero Bay, the RPC, and Charlotte Harbor, he developed a Scope of Work that includes tasks that will be available for Council's upcoming meeting. He has a proposal to which the principal investigator will be in Room 188 all day Wednesday before the meeting. He further addressed items it entails. It includes a work schedule of about 3 months, but during that time they may, as projects that would be brought to City Council, they can bring in other groups of people and get things done very quickly. He also feels they need to look at changing the priorities on letting people develop right now until they can provide them with options. He agrees with Council Member O'Flinn in making the water and acquiring land #1, but to move forward with the quadrant and allow Public Works Director Matt Feeney to go out with an RFP to get the design drawings done.

6:31:19 PM Mayor Simmons stated he feels there's a lot of issues to discuss. He concurs with comments made. They are going to tackle the issue head on and work with FEMA, the Governor's Office, the Lee County Commission, etc.

6:32:22 pm Council Member DeWitt stated he agreed with comments made. He referred to Edison Farms and the DRGR, both are holding water now. He agrees with Council on the Quadrant Study, but feels it should be placed way down on the list. There is about \$5 million for the Quadrant Study, and it may take that money to do what needs to be done in the river, with stormwater retention. There is a need to find out what the problem is first.

6:38:53 PM Council Member O'Flinn stated he felt they need to merge into the post mortem to address what can be done better. He informed Council of a post mortem the Village of Estero held whereby they addressed emergency communication systems that are available. He referred to the Fire District who handed out fliers and suggested building on that as something that would be ready to go when communications break down. He referred to the 1992 and 1995 flooding studies that were done in which the Health Department addressed fecal matter. At the last Council meeting he asked Staff to reach out to the Health Department to have testing in areas where water has been standing.

6:43:09 PM Council Member Forbes stated he felt that fliers should be handed out sooner. He found residents are most interested in what we are doing for them. With respect to water, he would request that if the Department of Health is not going to test the water, he wants the water tested at least in the Quinn

Street area, the standing water in Worthington, and around Morton Grove. Council Member DeWitt stated he feels all standing water needs to be tested. Council Member Forbes agreed. Additionally, he would like to see dumpsters put in various areas – Morton Grove, Lake Shalimar, IBE, and in Citrus Park with permission. He feels it would also be good to have tents in these locations stockpiled with water, etc. He also suggested requesting use of the Lion’s Club hall and kitchen for people to come for supplies and that it be manned with our people. He also suggested more city Staff going through the various areas to see if there’s anything the residents need – a system where some of the other departments would rotate on shifts and go around and make calls in these areas.

6:49:21 pm Mayor Simmons referred to Legislative Priority #7, relating to affordable insurance. It’s an issue that remains and the City will work through. Mayor Simmons addressed the priorities listed and stated he didn’t see a reason to change Items #6 para-mutual facilities, #5 sustainability initiatives, #4 fracking, #3 Pine Lake Preserve. Council Member O’Flinn stated he felt the new #1 will be water. He questioned the need to take any item off the list. He would see keeping items #1 and #2.

6:53:27 pm Council Member Forbes stated he thinks that the city should, if there is standing water, if there’s a way to pump, they need to move forward and pump. Council Member DeWitt agreed, and addressed the need to make sure from the SFWMD that it is a doable thing first. Council Member Forbes suggested that for the month of October meeting weekly. Council consensus yes, and to be scheduled in the evening.

6:57:46 pm Council Member O’Flinn addressed housing and FEMA vouchers and those who cannot return to their homes. He suggested they focus more on being a resource. He suggested the City Manager perhaps have someone on Staff, for a month or two, try to bring everything together. Council Member DeWitt suggested perhaps hiring someone part time.

7:01:43 pm Council Member Forbes suggested for the next two or three weeks, until they see the water off the streets, that people can get in, have a rotation of employees to go to various areas and see if they are having difficulties, or if they would like water.

7:02:21 pm City Manager Schwing furnished an overview of direction.

7:17:19 pm Mayor Simmons addressed calls from the various organizations with food, etc., asking where they should go. The problem is not supplies or people want to help, it’s getting out the communication and information in real time. He referred to the FEMA billboards and suggested including daily updates on the billboards on Terry.

7:22:42 pm Council Member O’Flinn referred to the 1995 floods which he stated peaked in October. He feels another item to add to the list may involve individual situations they can hop on quickly such as the Dean Street item they discussed, so that if there a series of rain events, that if there are some immediate things that are practical they can get done, to get done, which would be in coordination with the South Florida Water Management District.

Council Member O’Flinn next addressed the Mayor’s Challenge and discussion followed.

V. COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Addressed above.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

7:36:47 pm Rick Steinmeyer addressed Love Inc.

7:38:09 pm Alan Glazier addressed flooding near the roundabout downtown. He also addressed use of the former community hall building and the need to have something in downtown area that can be used by the residents.

7:41:42 pm Charlie Strader addressed the Mayor's Challenge, flooding, and short-term needs.

7:45:00 pm John West echoed comments made by Charlie Strader.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items to discuss the meeting adjourned at 7:51 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,


Debra Filipek, City Clerk

APPROVED:
BONITA SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL:

Date: 10/19/17

AUTHENTICATED:


Peter Simmons, Mayor