



City Council Chambers
9101 Bonita Beach Road
Bonita Springs, Florida 34135

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MINUTES

November 1, 2023

1. Call to Order

Mayor Steinmeyer called the workshop to order at 4:00 pm.

2. Roll Call

The Mayor dispensed the roll call and asked the Clerk to record attendance during introductions.

3. Welcome and Introductions

Mayor Steinmeyer welcomed attendees and asked each person at the table to introduce themselves.

Those present:

City Council:

Mayor Steinmeyer, Deputy Mayor Forbes, Council Member Fullick, Council Member Corrie, Council Member Carr, Council Member Purdon, Council Member Bogacz

Wonder Gardens Board of Directors:

Donna Flammang, Chair; Larry Vars, Angela Swanepoel, Wendy Arsenault, Eileen Tasso

Also Present

Arleen Hunter, City Manager

Neil Anderson, Wonder Gardens Executive Director

Derek Rooney, City Attorney (remote)

4. Discussion Regarding Current Status of Wonder Gardens Site and Facilities

Nicole Perino, Director of Parks & Recreation, provided an overview of the rehabilitation of the gift shop and the administrative building following damages incurred from Hurricane Ian.

Lora Taylor, Director of Communications, presented on the City Facility Assessment Report completed by Weston & Sampson.

5. Presentation of Wonder Gardens Master Plan

Neil Anderson, Executive Director of the Wonder Gardens, presented the Wonder Gardens Master Plan (Master Plan on file in the Clerk's office). In response to Councilmember Fullick's question about priority projects, Mr. Anderson stated the priorities are the otter exhibit and the animal care center.

6. Review of Original Operating Agreement

City Attorney Rooney summarized the city's primary concerns with the current operating agreement, which includes issues of compliance with certain requirements in the agreement on the part of Wonder Gardens. Mr. Rooney stated that a new agreement, with a new slate of understandings and clearly defined roles and responsibilities will accomplish clarity and a fresh new start.

A discussion ensued regarding a new operating agreement, and the importance of repairing the relationship and building a strong cooperative partnership in order to successfully move forward.

Wonder Gardens Chair Donna Flammang stated that she would like a public-private operating agreement, with a long-term lease.

7. Discussion Regarding Next Steps and Future Workshops

There was consensus to move forward with drafting a new operating agreement. Wonder Gardens Chair Donna Flammang suggested that joint negotiation meetings be held with her, Mr. Anderson, the City Manager, and the City Attorney. City Manager Hunter suggested that the City Council select a liaison to attend the meetings, who will then provide updates at Council meetings.

8. Public Comment

Trish Leonard – Expressed hope that a new agreement, written correctly, would provide a clean slate moving forward.

Arden McCurdy – Commented on the difficulty with soliciting for donations from the public for Wonder Garden projects without the security of a lasting agreement or lease.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

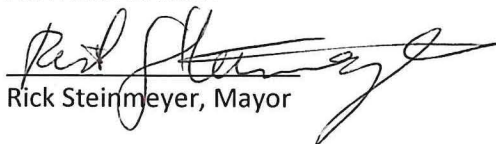
Prepared by:


Mike Sheffield, City Clerk

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL

Date: 11/15/23

AUTHENTICATED:


Rick Steinmeyer, Mayor