

**CITY OF LABELLE  
REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING  
APRIL 14, 2022**

**CALL TO ORDER & INVOCATION & PLEDGE**

Mayor Wilkins opened the regular March Commission Meeting at 6:05 p.m. A roll call was taken. Members present were Commissioner Bobbie Spratt, Mayor Julie Wilkins, Commissioner Jackie Ratica, and Commissioner Daniel Akin. Pastor Hunt spoke a passage and followed with the prayer. Mayor Wilkins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**OPEN DISCUSSION (NON-PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS)**

**LABELLE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION CORPORATION (LDRC) SPECIAL EVENT REQUEST**

Mayor Wilkins called upon Kelly Boone, Director of the LDRC to address the Commission. Mayor Wilkins clarified that Mrs. Boone was requesting alcohol at certain events, although it was not stated in the applications. She noted that Mrs. Boone would be in contact with the Sheriff's Office to coordinate for their presence at those events.

Kelly Boone explained that she preferred to submit all of the LDRC events concurrently in advance, in order to be more efficient with her schedule for planning the events. She then gave a description of each event. She stated that she wanted to work with City staff to confirm where the sprinkler system was in Barron Park to avoid any future damages, in addition to not allowing any trucks within the park during the Smoke Under the Oaks event. Deputy Clerk Jessi Zubaty, asked for clarification on which events would have alcohol. Mrs. Boone explained that Howl O Ween, Smoke Under the Oaks, and the Block Party for the Swamp Cabbage Festival were the events that she was requesting alcohol for.

Commissioner Spratt praised LDRC for their previous events throughout the year. She expressed that she was very impressed with the attendance at the events.

*Commissioner Spratt made a motion to approve the proposed events, Commissioner Ratica seconded the motion.  
The motion carried 4-0.*

**LDRC REIMBURSEMENT FOR WORK DONE AT BARRON PARK**

Mayor Wilkins explained that in cooperation with the City of LaBelle, the LDRC had done improvements to Barron Park with a grant obtained by the LDRC. She further explained that a portion of the improvements were not included in the grant, but were an additional expense, and that she had expressed that the City would reimburse the LDRC for the additional costs.

Commissioner Spratt expressed her concern that approval to reimburse the funds was given prior to the request being brought before the Commission. She stated that there was already a portion of the funds agreed upon to be reimbursed that did not include the additional improvements.

Mayor Wilkins confessed that she did not expect the additional improvements to be so costly when she agreed reimburse the LDRC for the additional work done.

Commissioner Spratt questioned where the funds would be taken from to cover the additional costs.

Mayor Wilkins called upon Gracie Morton, City of LaBelle Finance Director to address the Commission. Mrs. Morton explained to the Commission that there were set funds in the recreation budget that would cover a portion of the request, and that there were also additional funds in the account that came in through tax revenue that were allocated for recreation purposes that could be used.

Discussion was had on how the recreation funds should be allocated to all parks, not just Barron Park.

Commissioner Spratt expressed that the improvements were wonderful, but her concern was that the initial request was not brought before the Commission for approval.

Mayor Wilkins stated that it was her policy to consult the Commission for such matters, and apologized for not doing so with this instance.

Kelly Boone explained that she had applied for another grant for the LDRC to do further improvements to the Barron Park.

There was more conversation on how the Commission should have been approached prior to the approval of the initial reimbursement agreement.

Commissioner Spratt noted that there is an additional grant that the City could apply for that could be utilized for parks and recreation. There was discussion on whether or not the County could also apply for the grant. It was clarified by Attorney Derek Rooney that the County would not be able to do so if the funds were to be used for Barron Park, but they could issue a letter of support.

Commissioner Spratt stated that additional improvements were still needed in Barron Park and that the work should continue.

Commissioner Akin noted that the Commission should follow the procurement policy set forth in the code.

Attorney Rooney pointed out that the Mayor has authority to make the decisions based on a the amount being less than \$50,000.

Further discussion was had on the funds in the recreation budget.

*Commissioner Ratica motioned to pay half of the invoice totals until the following month.  
Commissioner Akin seconded the motion.  
Commissioner Spratt was opposed to the motion.  
The motion carried 3-1*

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **RESOLUTION 2022-23 RATIFYING COVID-19 RESOLUTIONS**

There was no discussion.

*Commissioner Ratica made a motion to accept the resolution. Commissioner Akin seconded the motion.  
The motion carried 4-0.*

### **CITY VILLAGE PUD AMENDMENT-FIRST READING**

Attorney Derek Rooney read Proposed Ordinance 2022-04 into the record.

Mayor Wilkins asked for any public comment. There was none.

As there was no discussion, Mayor Wilkins moved to the next item on the agenda.

### **RESOLUTION 2022-17 IGLESIA OASIS SPECIAL EXCEPTION**

Alexis Crespo, City of LaBelle Planner, presented the information on the requested special exception and summarized her staff report. She noted that during review they formed the condition that a Certificate of Occupancy would be required prior to occupancy of the building in order to confirm the safety of the facility.

As the applicants were present, Mayor Wilkins asked them to address the Commission. The applicants, Benjamin Rodriguez, and Jacqueline Rodriguez explained that the request for the special exception was to provide another church in LaBelle for the Hispanic community, and possibly a support center for women in the future.

*Commissioner Spratt motioned to grant the special exception.  
After further discussion, Commissioner Akin seconded the motion.  
The motion carried 4-0.*

LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENT-FIRST READING

Attorney Rooney read Proposed Ordinance 2022-05 into the record.

Mayor Wilkins suggested that Commissioners meet with Alexis, the City Planner to voice their ideas/concerns. She then explained the changes, and the need for the changes.

As there was no further discussion, Mayor Wilkins took up the Consent Agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

There was no discussion.

*Commissioner Spratt made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Ratica seconded the motion.  
The motion carried 4-0.*

NEW BUSINESS

PSAP AGREEMENT

After brief discussion, the item was pushed to the next meeting for further review.

IMPACT FEES

Attorney Rooney explained to the Commission the process of implementing impact fees and the stipulations.

Mayor Wilkins asked if there was another avenue other than impact fees that would help pay for the additional strain new development would put on the infrastructure. Attorney Rooney stated that taxes could be raised. Mayor Wilkins noted she did not want to do that.

Micah Mims addressed the Commission about taxes and impact fees. She noted that her taxes have doubled in the past two years at her residence within the City. She also noted that the amount of development was increasing rapidly. She expressed her opinion that there should be impact fees instituted in order to compensate for new development and increasing population that would be utilizing personnel, and resources, such as the Sheriff's Office and Fire Department

Mayor Wilkins asked if the City could institute impact fees without the County instituting impact fees. Attorney Rooney stated that the City could, and explained that the fees relating to the Sheriff's office or Fire Department would only be able to be used for things such as facilities, or vehicles, and could not go towards hiring additional personnel.

Micah Mims asked if the fees could be designated for more roads or parks, or to improve existing roads. Attorney Rooney clarified that the fee would only cover the impacts caused by future development, and were not meant to repair older existing infrastructure. He further explained how impact fees were charged and disbursed.

There was further discussion from the Commission on impact fees.

PROPERTY SALES POLICY

Mayor Wilkins explained that there had been a request made by the adjacent land owner, to purchase a City owned lot. It was also noted that there had been other interested parties wanting to purchase the same lot. Discussion was had on how to determine whom would be able to purchase the lot.

Attorney Rooney noted that all sales should come before the Commission. He suggested that the Commission develop a policy of what they would like see done with the properties, so that guidance could be given when inquires were received.

The Commission then discussed the value of the lot in question.

Commissioner Spratt stated that it was her opinion that the City should not accept an offer for less than what the property value is listed for on the tax roll.

Mayor Wilkins voiced it was her opinion that priority be given to the adjacent property owner.

Leonard Enriquez suggested getting the properties appraised.

Attorney Rooney recommended that properties that are intended to be sold be first vetted through the City departments to be sure that no department has use for it, then declared surplus if no use is found. Staff would then reach out to adjacent property owners, giving them the first opportunity to purchase the property. The minimum price for the property would be the value listed on the Property Appraiser's website.

*Commissioner Spratt moved for Attorney Rooney to move forward with developing the policy as discussed.*

*Commissioner Akin seconded the motion.*

*Motion passed 4-0*

MAVIS FRIERSON PROPERTY

Mayor Wilkins brought before the Commission an opportunity to purchase a property that is adjacent to the City Maintenance property. She stated it was being offered to the City at the assessed value listed on the Property Appraisers website which was \$28,960.00.

The size and zoning of the property was discussed, as well as what would be done with the property if purchased by the City.

Commissioner Spratt asked where the funding would come from to make the purchase.

There was discussion on if there were any time constraints on purchasing the property, and the benefits of purchasing the property. After further discussion, it was determined that there was no specific use for the property and that the property would not be purchased.

FDOT VISIT

Mayor Wilkins expressed desire to invite the FDOT District Secretary to a meeting in order for the Commission to voice their opinions on the planned updates to the roadways. The Commission agreed.

RE-SCHEDULE OF AUGUST MEETING

Mayor Wilkins explained to the Commission that the scheduled August Commission meeting was during the Florida League of Cities annual conference, and suggested moving the meeting to the week prior, or the week after the regular scheduled meeting. After discussion, it was decided that the meeting would be held August 4, 2022.

FACC 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY RESOLUTION 2022-25

Mayor Wilkins explained that the resolution was recognizing the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Florida Association of City Clerks.

***Commissioner Ratica motioned to accept Resolution 2022-25. Commissioner Akin seconded the motion.  
The motion carried 4-0.***

**UPDATING OF SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX AUTHORIZED STAFF**

Mayor Wilkins stated that Resolution 2022-26 was to update the list of staff authorized to access the City of LaBelle safety deposit box.

***Commissioner Ratica motioned to approve Resolution 2022-26. Commissioner Spratt seconded the motion.  
The motion carried 4-0.***

**OLD FLORIDA RV AGREEMENT**

Attorney Derek Rooney explained that the agreement was in order to approve the request of extending water lines, and sewer lines to the Lee County line in order to provide service to the proposed RV park. He stated that the developer had agreed to front the cost of the project. With each new project that will be developed a portion of those funds would be used to reimburse the developer for the costs. There was discussion on the need for new sewer and water facilities, and how those could be funded through the projects as well. He stated that the developer would also put fire hydrants every 1,000 feet in order to provide fire service to that area. Discussion continued on the need for a new sewer plant.

***Commissioner Spratt made a motion to approve the agreement with Old Florida RV.  
Commissioner Ratica seconded the motion.  
After further discussion,  
the motion carried 4-0.***

**WOODARD & CURRAN CONTRACT**

Mayor Wilkins explained that the contract needed to be approved in order to move forward with finding funding for infrastructure improvements.

Attorney Rooney stated that his firm does lobbying for Woodard and Curran, and he asked the Commission for their direction on whether or not they thought it was conflict of interest. He offered to get outside council to review future documents if so. It was determined it is not a conflict.

Mayor Wilkins gave an overview of the need for the contract to be approved in order for the Woodard and Curran financial team to search for available funding for the infrastructure improvements.

Attorney Rooney elaborated on what Mayor Wilkins explained.

***Commissioner Ratica made a motion to accept the contract. Commissioner Akin seconded the motion.  
The motion carried 4-0.***

**PROCLAMATIONS & PRESENTATIONS**

**MAYOR WILKINS NOMINATION OF NEW CLERK-COMMISSIONER**

Mayor Wilkins announced her nomination of Hugo Vargas to fill the seat of Clerk-Commissioner.

***Commissioner Spratt moved to accept Mayor Wilkins nomination of Mr. Vargas.  
Commissioner Akin seconded the motion.  
The motion carried 4-0.***

Attorney Rooney swore Mr. Vargas into office.

Mr. Vargas thanked everyone and gave brief speech on his aspirations for the future.

## GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

### GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT

Mayor Wilkins informed the Commission that the funds are awaiting approval by the Governor, and gave an overview of what the funds are planned to be used for if received.

### LETTER OF THANKS HENDRY COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Mayor Wilkins explained the letter was to show appreciation from the Hendry County School Board for a donation the City of LaBelle made to Project Graduation, and noted that the School Board was still accepting donations for the event.

### LETTER FROM ROCK ABOUJAOUDE IN REFERENCE TO THE LABELLE RODEO GROUNDS

Gary Hull, Superintendent of Public Works, asked for discussion on whether or not there would be any billing for the connection.

Mayor Wilkins clarified that Mr. Hull was asking if the fee for the usage of the sewer could be waived for the Rodeo Grounds. It was determined the Attorney would look further into the matter.

## BUSINESS BY COMMISSIONERS

**Commissioner Ratica** brought up the Tacos y Trokas event that was held recently. She stated that residents had approached her with complaints about the event and gave a summary of the complaints. She suggested that these issues be taken into account when approval for future events is needed.

There was further discussion on the issues with the event.

David Garcia, the owner of Latin Flo, and coordinator of the Tacos y Trokas event addressed the Commission. He gave a description of the event, as well as where the funds for the event are dispersed. He explained that the event attracted the Hispanic community from all over the state. It was clarified that the proceeds from the alcohol sales were donated to a non-profit in Lee County.

There was discussion on the proceeds and cost of putting on the event.

Commissioner Spratt asked that the dancing horses not be located inside the park due to damage to the grass in the future.

There was further discussion on the drinking issues, and the parking issues that were noted.

More conversation was had on trucks driving within the park and working with staff to locate the sprinkler system for future use.

Hugo Vargas voiced his opinion that the event was good for the community, but needed to be better organized and family oriented. He also stated that the donated proceeds should stay within the community.

Mayor Wilkins praised Mr. Garcia on the intent of the event.

**Commissioner Akin** noted that FDOT needs to be aware of the speeding through town. Discussion was had on traffic issues through town.

**Commissioner Spratt** noted her concern for the hiring process for the new Finance Director.

Mayor Wilkins explained her reasoning for the hiring of the new Finance Director.

Discussion was had on the budget, finances, and qualifications of the new Finance Director.

**Commissioner Vargas** also expressed concern for speeding through town, and the increase in traffic.

There was further discussion on the traffic issues within town.

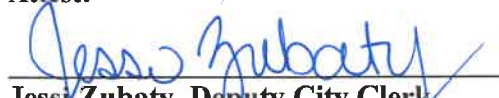
*Commissioner Spratt motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Ratica seconded the motion.  
The motion carried 5-0.*

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:54 p.m.

**APPROVED:**

  
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**Julie C. Wilkins, Mayor**

**Attest:**

  
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**Jessi Zubaty, Deputy City Clerk**