

New Smyrna Beach City Commission Meeting

February 26, 2019

Mayor Russ Owen-absent; Vice-Mayor Hartman presided;
Commissioners Sachs, Kolodi, McGuirk present

1.Presentation-Magnolia Street Traffic Calming Recommendations

After much discussion and comments by many Magnolia Street homeowners, the commissioners opposed the recommendation to erect a temporary diversion/barrier, at 9th street and Magnolia, that would have diverted traffic to the east or west. There was no vote, only discussion. The commissioners also agreed to forego any further studies on the traffic using the street. Traffic studies have been conducted over the past two years by both the NSB Police Department and by the consulting firm, Traffic Engineering Data Solutions. Colleen Jarrell from the consulting firm presented their findings. The C about dividing the existing neighborhood if a barrier was erected. There was also a concern that diverting traffic from Magnolia Street would negatively impact adjacent streets. The commissioners discussed alternative methods of slowing the cut-through traffic such as roundabouts, more stop signs on Magnolia, and possibly speed bumps. Many Magnolia street residents expressed their concerns for the safety of pedestrians and bikers because of the speeding traffic. They also felt that the city was very slow responding to their needs. Homeowners are generally opposed to a diversion/barrier. The consensus of homeowners was not to restrict through traffic-just slow it down. They felt that additional stop signs, speed bumps, and more policing would resolve the issue.

2. Update on the Special Election/ Project list for 0.05% Sales Tax

City Manager Pam Brangaccio and Brian Fields presented an update on the upcoming special election for the ½% sales tax. Ballots will be mailed out by May 1 and need to be returned by May 21. They stated that there would be a meeting at the Brannon Center the first week in March to discuss the sales tax and the possible projects proposed by both the city and county. Some of the projects may be projected out 20 years. A recent survey indicated that 70% of respondents were concerned about transportation issues and 30% about water. Commissioner Sachs expressed concern about the proposed extension and placement of Williamson Blvd.

3. Ordinance # 09-19 Amendments to the City's Land Development Regulations which would strengthen and clarify the criteria for the removal of historic and specimen trees

This was the first reading for this ordinance. The owner of Mullinax Ford on SR 44, Larry Mullinax, addressed the Commission to oppose the proposed new restrictions for tree removal. He stated that he has already purchased wooded lots behind his dealership for expansion of his business and that the new restrictions would hinder his ability to expand. Jack Holcomb, owner of NSB Chevrolet and Chrysler- Jeep also opposed the tighter restrictions on tree removal for similar reasons. Realtor/broker Stewart Mitchell, representing Mitchell Equity Group stated that the amendments would hinder future development of vacant lots. James Kern, a local builder, opposed the amendment also, stating that he has been working on a building project of 44 units off of Esslinger Rd.that will be difficult to complete if he cannot remove the needed trees, several of which are dead or diseased. Attorney Glenn Storch appealed to the commissioners to think about the goals they are wanting by amending the criteria for removing trees. He asked them to consider the "law of unintended consequences." The new restrictions may not accomplish the goals the city intends. He stated that the added regulations may (1) stop the development of vacant properties, and (2) place a burden on staff which must decide which trees can and cannot be removed. Commissioners Sachs and McGuirk reiterated their love of trees, but Commissioner McGuirk said he would like to see what other communities are doing.