

**New Smyrna Beach City Commission Meeting
Oct. 22, 2019**

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFnpWTUfup3BtTrUyHaJisA>

1. City Commissioners voted 4-1, with Vice Mayor Randy Hartman dissenting, to ask their staff members to start a six-month pilot program allowing businesses located in the Mixed Use zoning district to use one additional sandwich board sign – for a total of two.

The city had restricted the use of such signs, prompting numerous complaints from local businesses. That led Commission members to talk to their staff about offering some relief from the sign regulations.

“My desire is to authorize staff to rectify this situation temporarily and bring back a permanent solution,” said Mayor Russ Owen.

The pilot program approved Oct. 22 ... resulting from a motion by Commissioner Jason McGuirk ... will permit Mixed Use District businesses to have one additional sandwich board advertising their business.

What’s currently allowed is one sandwich board directly in front of a business on a public sidewalk. The pilot program would, for six months, let businesses have one additional sandwich board sign that may be placed on a public sidewalk within 500 feet of that business, with permission from the other business owner where the second sign is located. The second sandwich board sign also could be placed on private property, but must be within a business district.

“I see the need for revision,” Commissioner Michael Kolody said. “Sandwich boards are something that has been around forever. However, there’s a need to control how they can be placed.”

Commissioner Jake Sachs said he supported sandwich board signs, as long as merchants use them judiciously and the signs don’t impede pedestrian traffic.

2. The City Commission listened to a presentation on the benefits of replacing the grass football field at the 68-acre, New Smyrna Beach Sports Complex with artificial turf, and replacing its lighting with LEDs. They unanimously agreed to have their staff apply for a \$400,000 ECHO grant from Volusia County for the artificial turf project.

(Volusia County’s ECHO grant program provides funding for facilities and projects that make significant improvements in environmental/ecological, cultural, historical/heritage, and outdoor recreational opportunities.)

Commissioners also asked Acting City Manager Khalid Resheidat to look into other grant opportunities and funding options, such as potential sponsorships.

David Ray, Manager of the New Smyrna Beach Sports Complex, presented the costs and benefits of swapping the grass football field for artificial “field turf,” as well as changing the lighting to LEDs.

The new, artificial turf field would display permanent markings for sports such as football and soccer. Ray estimated the city would save more than four million gallons of water a year in irrigation and eliminate treating the field with pesticides and fertilizer. In addition,

a natural grass field can handle only 900 hours of play a year, while the artificial turf could handle 3,000 hours. The latter also handles heavy rain better than natural grass, he said. However, those benefits come at a price of \$950,000 to purchase and install the new artificial turf.

With added revenue from additional rentals of the facility and staging of bigger events like concerts, plus potential field sponsorships and lower maintenance and other expenses, Ray estimated the artificial turf cost could be paid for in five to seven years.

Likewise, he said the LED lighting for the sports complex would cost \$1,587,000, but annual electricity costs would be reduced by 65-75 percent. The field currently is lighted by 482 metal halide, 1,500-watt lights, which could be replaced in phases over a six-year period.

The sports complex at 1800 Turnbull Bay Road was built in four phases in 1998 around the existing city football stadium at an original construction cost of \$7.4 million, plus donated services and materials from local citizens and businesses. Besides the stadium, the complex includes a high school baseball field, four lighted youth baseball fields, three lighted softball fields, three lighted soccer fields, and one lighted multi-purpose field.

"That's a pretty big price to pay," Commissioner Kolody observed, after Ray's presentation. "There certainly are benefits, most of them to New Smyrna and the rest of Volusia, in general. I like the idea of a turf field in the long run."

However, he added, "I do not know how I could justify an increase in the budget that much to pay for it. On something that has a long life like this, it's a perfect example of something that should be bonded."

One of the city's long-term debt obligations will be expiring in a couple years, Commissioner Kolody noted, and at that time perhaps the city could consider it. Mayor Owen had a different take on the matter.

"My thought on this is probably going in a little different direction than my colleague," he said. "There's very few things that people stand at that podium to present that have an ROI (return on investment) ... It's the nature of the business we're in. Very few things that we can point to and say, 'Yeah, that makes business sense to do,' and have a funding mechanism or source with it. So, the notion that we're going, over 30 years, to save \$1.5 million (in electricity costs) on the LEDs, and at least break even on the (artificial) turf, not including all the other ancillary benefits, the water conservation and less fertilization, and so on ... Given the opportunity and these assets ... I'm on the other side and asking why we wouldn't do this. I think there are big sponsorship opportunities. I'd like to see us challenge ourselves to raise something in the six-figure range."

Vice Mayor Randy Hartman added, "I'd like to see us do this. I think there are several grant opportunities out there."

3. City Commissioners voted unanimously to rezone about 152 acres near Turnbull Creek from a mix of Conservation and several different single-family and two-family designations. Those will change to a city zoning of Conservation with an "Airport Overlay."

Known as the Turnbull Trace property, this tract is the first environmentally sensitive land to be preserved through a bond issue that voters approved last year.

The property is generally between Pioneer Trail on the north and Jungle Road to the south, extending west of Otter Boulevard.

4. The City Commission unanimously approved offering \$35,000 in Homeless and Disadvantaged Grants for seven programs aimed at providing new services or expanding existing aid to the city’s homeless and disadvantaged individuals and families.

No more than 15 percent of grant funds may be used for operating expenses, including office rent, salaries or compensation, utilities or other expenditures that don’t provide a direct benefit to homeless and disadvantaged individuals to pay for food, clothing, shelter, transportation, or basic necessities.

5. City Commissioners voted unanimously to annex, change the land use and rezone 2.52 acres at 2635 Glencoe Farms Road. The property is on the west side of South Glencoe Road, north of Cone Lake Road.

The land use changed from Rural Agriculture in the county to Rural in the city. Its city zoning will be Rural Agriculture, too.

6. The City Commission voted 5-0 to annex, change the zoning and land use for 2.3 acres at 957 Corbin Park Road. The property is on the east side of Corbin Park Road, north of Doster Drive.

It is changing from a county land use of Urban Low Intensity and Environmental Systems Corridor, to the city’s land use of Low Density Residential and Conservation. Likewise, its county zoning of R-4 (Urban Single-Family) and Resource Corridor, was changed to Low Density Residential and Conservation.

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7. Mayor Owen appointed three citizens to the city’s new Charter Review Committee, completing its 11-member board. The mayor’s fellow Commission members had already appointed their committee members on Oct. 8, when he was absent. His appointees are Patricia Tudeen, Eric Preston and Terry Dallas. The Charter Review Committee will study and recommend updates to the New Smyrna Beach city charter.

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