

Neighborhood Council

January 27, 2020

Council Members present: W. R. Herman, Chairman, S. Moore, B. Johnson, E. Ball, J. Larkin, C. Meadows, T. Bowen, D. Bell, L. Palmer. Randy Herman commented it was the first time all 9 NC members have been present.

Public Participation:

None. Mr. Herman offered the floor to the public after each agenda topic was presented.

New Business:

Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (drones) for NSB Law Enforcement

Chief Coffin requested for the NC to review the plan submitted for drone surveillance and encouraged their input/questions as well as the public's input to address concerns, department policy, state laws, and community fears. [Powerpoint Presentation](#).

Chief Coffin stated provisions under the FAA and Florida State law governing the use of unmanned surveillance equipment, ie. drones.

Currently requested air support via helicopters from the sheriff's dept., takes a minimum of 12 minutes to get the craft into the air, but it can take longer given weather conditions. Efficiency is the greatest asset to the drones; they can be deployed quicker than a helicopter, at significant taxpayer savings.

No aerial search of private property can take place without a search warrant. Lt. Chris Kirk is the Support Services Trainer. All drone operators must be licensed by the FAA. The drone must remain in the observer's sight at all times as they are not autonomous.

Uses for drones include fire, missing persons, waterway searches, storm and disaster assessment, traffic evidence in an accident, and non-crime benefits, including city planning.

Chief Coffin stated the expense is impact fee funded, not a "stand alone" duty, but a collateral one in nature. The expense of the purchase is already included in the 2020 budget. The total cost of the purchasing four crafts is \$55k, and each craft has approximately a 5-year lifespan. The Chief has submitted an RFP for maintenance expenses.

He is seeking a recommendation from the Council, and if recommended, approval by the Commissioners. If approved, the Chief would like to return to the NC to address any concerns and questions from the NC and residents. It should be noted that Drones are infrared equipped and cannot "see" through buildings other than heat sources.

Florida State laws governs drone usage. Citizens concerned about the presence of private drones should contact the NSB police and not approach the drone operator themselves. Try and document the drone with a photo and or video, as well as get the craft number and/or a description of both the drone and the operator if seen.

Video taken by drones is admissible in court because of a valid search warrant. However, there are pending legislative bills that may relax the requirements of collecting images and data without a warrant. H.B. 1433 and S.B. 520.

A resident applauded the use of new technology to protect our residents and the decision to watch other agencies implement it before proceeding.

The NC unanimously approved the use of unmanned aircraft by the NSB police department with a suggestion to utilize volunteer citizens who are FAA licensed and trained by NSB police staff.

Fireworks Regulation and Enforcement

Phillip Veski, NSB information officer, presented via a resident's request for the NC, NSB's regulations and enforcement of beachside fireworks. The City uses social media to educate the public where they will clearly state local, county and State ordinances prior to the 4th of July and New Year's Eve. He cautioned that enforcement is difficult due to staff restrictions.

Chief Coffin stated anything happening on the beach is governed by the County beach patrol. If the beach patrol calls local police for support, NSB will respond. On New Year's Eve, there were 81 calls for service to the NSB police, 9 were for fireworks. Criminal and domestic matters take precedence.

NC expressed that fireworks are more than just a nuisance, they are a threat to public safety when they land on boats, docks, roofs, cars, or dry plants. There is a risk of property damage, fire and explosions if near a gas container.

NC expressed an obvious conflict when fireworks are openly sold within city limits, yet illegal to use them outside of the ordinance parameters. Chief Coffin indicated that vendors are required to have purchasers sign a waiver indicating they acknowledge the legal ordinance and agree to adhere to it. Sales cannot be stopped as the allows sales with the waiver.

NC and the public asked how to best educate tourists and visitors of the laws to encourage responsible decisions. Chief Coffin will consult the NSB city attorney about the possibility of tightening the sale and waiver process.

The Council suggested a public education forum at the NC May meeting to include fireworks purchase and usage guidelines including possible coordination with the Chamber of Commerce to educate tourists and visitors.

Old Business:

Phillip Veski discussed the topic of a proposed expansion of recreational facilities, west of I-95, and stressed that the issue needs to be included in the NSB Comprehensive Development Plan. He provided the NC with suggestions for including the public and introduced David Ray, NSB Recreation Facilities Director to further discuss the topic.

Mr. Ray indicated a western facility would be ideal and stressed the need for land, program, and facility development, personally reviewing all the current services and programs a recreational facility provides.

[See presentation.](#) He also reviewed the benefits of the recently proposed turf and lighting improvements presented to City Commissioners for the current facility (Sports Complex), with the substantial cost savings and reduced environmental impact via reduced water consumption, payroll due to lesser maintenance requirements, lower utility bills, and reduced chemical applications. He predicts increased usage and lifespan to offset the initial investment and recommended these elements should be included if a west expansion facility is a reality.

A new complex would be presented as a business plan to include the knowledge and experience he has demonstrated within the current facility service, showing both revenue growth and successes since he became director which includes new services, program and facility improvements, knowledgeable staff, partnering with community businesses, and serving tots through adults.

Mr. Ray would like direction from the NC for proposing a western complex including suggestions for the components/facilities and searching for grants to fund the project. The city does not currently own land west of 95; that ownership was mostly within trusts and the Utilities Commission.

The NC asked about fees and the current status of the Sports Complex improvements and indicated the need to assess the availability and purchase of suitable land for a new western complex.

Cleaning of Babe James Exterior

Mr. Veski indicated the city has hired an outside vendor to power wash the exterior of the Babe James Center and asked the NC to review the work to assure it is to the expected standard.

NC Member Reports:

Zone 1 expressed concern over the lack of consistent buffers on Canal and beachside to shelter commercial buildings from residential structures and suggested a public meeting to review the truck route plans

Short term rental legislation was discussed briefly. NSB ordinance on short term rentals is still in effect.

When will full ADA access on beachside be restored? Two entrances were wiped out in storms; Clancy is the 1st priority to restore.

A three-way stop sign request on Nextdoor.com reflects how residents get their concerns on the table for community input. Discussion about making note of topics found there is something the NC could address.

Proposed moving NC meetings to different locations to allow more resident attendance; Mr. Veski indicated it has been and can be done if recording and broadcasting can be accomplished within the specific facility.

City Staff Comments:

Best practice and method for communication with the public of city information was brought up: a tiny newspaper ad in a publication that isn't provided to every resident v. posting on social media which seems to be resulting in more transparency, education and information sharing.

Mr. Veski stated he believes the current postings of city related events and information is improving public knowledge and engagement.

The city has limited access to Nextdoor.com, requests NC to alert city staff of relevant topics.

The NC has the power to make recommendation to utilize social media as a tool of purpose.

The NSB FB account has recently exceeded all previous records of engagement.

The NC has a link for residents to access their zone representative with comments and questions.

Sunshine Law training is scheduled for city staff and NC. (Date, time and place was not provided)