

New Smyrna Beach City Commission Meeting
Aug. 25, 2020

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

1. Speaker after speaker recounted how local families have celebrated 60 years community milestones and supported charitable events at the New Smyrna Boat and Ski Club, hoping to convince the City Commission to renew their facility lease.

Commissioners agreed, choosing to renew the club's lease for five years at \$300 a month, with an option to extend the lease another five years after the first term ends. The \$300 amount is a modest increase over the \$200 monthly rent that the club pays now. The Commission directed staff members to bring back a final lease document at a future meeting.

In doing so, city officials turned down another offer to rent the club's building and site for \$2,000 a month, also in support of charitable groups.

Commissioners explained why.

"Everybody has their definition of charm," Commissioner Jason McGuirk noted. "I can tell you ... It's the people who make up this community. It's the people who put roots down in this community. It's the people who let those roots grow that to me make this community so special. And here you have generations of families who have come through this building that was built by those people.

"I think we should absolutely renew the lease," he said. "I think we should renew the lease long enough to allow them to rebuild the dock and amortize that over time. I think we should not put any financial hardship on them."

Mayor Russ Owen added, "We heard from two different parties tonight who are interested in the property. But we heard in two very different ways. From one party we heard many, many different individuals speaking directly to their elected officials. And from the other party their attorney was speaking to us. That holds weight with me. That speaks to me. I'd certainly support the Boat and Ski Club lease being extended, in modern day terms."

The New Smyrna Boat and Ski Club built a small building at 242 N. Causeway, on city property near the city's East Boat Ramp, and began leasing the facility back from the city in July 1960. Marty Gough, the club's vice commodore, said Boat and Ski Club members have always tried to be good ambassadors and stewards of the community. The club sponsors and supports local charities, she said, and shares the facility with the Smyrna Surfari Club, a not-for-profit group that awards scholarships to local graduates. Club Member Janet Lyons added that the Boat and Ski Club was seeking a longer term lease so they can plan to replace their dock that was damaged by a hurricane.

"These people truly have a love for something that is very modest," Commissioner Randy Hartman said. There is absolutely no parking over there, and there is no air conditioning. There are not a lot of amenities over there. This truly is what New Smyrna is about. It's about the people who came here and who lived here and gave back to the community."

2. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to take a toll on the city's traditional fall events, as City Commissioners tentatively approved several alternatives. They cautioned however, that any of these could be cancelled if there is a major virus outbreak in the area.

David Ray, Interim Leisure Services Director for New Smyrna Beach, said the city would be partnering with the Marine Discovery Center to offer residents an alternative to the city's Halloween Parade and costume contest. The alternative "Trunk-or-Treat" event would give children an opportunity to dress up for Halloween and their parents could drive through an area where the kids could collect candy from local businesses. In addition, the Marine Discovery Center is sponsoring a "pop-up movie," similar to a drive-in movie, for parents and children to watch from their cars.

The Flamingo Follies art show event along Flagler Avenue still is set for Nov. 14-15, Ray said, but plans are for the tents to be spaced out farther, and all artists and vendor must wear masks at the event.

Commissioner Jake Sachs said he'd first like to see what happens with the COVID-19 case numbers a few weeks after the beginning of school, but his colleagues said if there is a major uptick in coronavirus cases, the Follies event could be cancelled.

"If we start having an outbreak, I'm not going to have any problem saying we're not going to have this," Commissioner McGuirk added. Speaking to Ray, he said, "If you can communicate with them (artists and vendors) on a (possible) kill date, let them know there's that possibility out there."

3. City Commissioners unanimously approved a \$75,390 expense to buy and install equipment to record and live-stream Commission and advisory board meetings at the Brannon Center.

Ray, the Leisure Services Director, said the city contacted several vendors to obtain the best price. Due to the ongoing pandemic and the small size of the regular Commission meeting chamber, all city meetings were moved to the larger Brannon Center so citizens, city staff, advisory board members and Commissioners could socially distance from one another.

City Manager Khalid Resheidat said the purchase would qualify as a COVID-related expense, and therefore can be reimbursed from federal monies through the CARES Act.

Mayor Owen said he supported the purchase because it will provide an opportunity to broadcast many city events as well as city meetings.

4. The City Commission unanimously approved a second amendment to the Ocean Way Village Master Development Agreement to allow an Automobile Service Center to be built at the southeast intersection of SR-44 and South Glencoe Road.

Speaking for the property owner and developer, Attorney Glenn Storch said one lot is planned to be the site of a Firestone Service Center. It would be part of a 16-acre site that once housed Buddy World, a former entertainment complex for kids. That business closed in 2006, he said. A Circle K convenience store is being built on a lot adjacent to the Firestone property.

Storch said the Firestone Service Center will be an upscale version of its regular building. He added that the property owner/developer is willing to guarantee the building will be constructed in accordance with architectural standards the city requested, and that it will be surrounded by larger and more mature trees for landscaping. If any of the landscape plantings dies it will be replaced within 30 days.

"This is a project coming into our commercial corridor; they're coming in agreeing to an aesthetic that we have pushed for our community, an aesthetic that is unlike other Firestones that you see," Mayor Owen commented. "I've said I want things to be Instagram-worthy. I want people driving down our corridor saying, 'Can you believe that was a Firestone ... it's the nicest one I've ever seen.'"

5. The City Commission voted unanimously in favor of the Final Plat and Development Plans for Phase 5 of The Palms, a residential subdivision.

The project will develop 18 single family lots and 216 duplex lots within 42.638 total acres generally located on the north side of SR-44 and west of Airport Road. The entire Palms development of 706 acres is directly adjacent to the Venetian Bay community.

6. City Commissioners unanimously approved a local truck route designed to prevent trucks delivering supplies to Flagler Avenue businesses from driving through nearby residential neighborhoods.

Trucks generally would be limited to Flagler Avenue between Peninsula and South Atlantic avenues, part of South Atlantic Avenue near Flagler Avenue, South Peninsula Avenue between Flagler Avenue and the South Causeway, and Third Avenue from SR-A1A to South Atlantic Avenue. The local truck route would be marked with signs to direct truck drivers where to go.

The city already has designated five loading and unloading zones for trucks on Flagler Avenue.

"It's not perfect," Vice Mayor Michael Kolody remarked. "It may have to be modified. But it's a step forward into maintaining a little civility in that area ... Flagler and the Central Beach area."

7. City Commissioners generally liked the idea of a local business group adopting Turnbull Park and proposing improvements that would enhance its activities for children, as well as converting part of the area into a fenced dog park.

Representatives of the New Smyrna Beach Board of Realtors told the Commission they were applying for a grant from the National Association of Realtors to beautify the local community, and the local Board of Realtors decided Turnbull Park would be a good candidate.

Commissioner McGuirk agreed a dog park is needed closer to town. Vice Mayor Kolody also liked the idea but noted consultants for the city will be starting an inventory and evaluation of all city parks soon, so any improvements should wait for that to be completed in January 2021.

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