

**New Smyrna Beach City Commission Meeting
March 9, 2021**

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1. City Commissioners voted unanimously to request proposals for a short-term line of credit to fund about \$14 million in capital improvement projects, including replacing two deteriorating local bridges.

Some of the capital projects' costs will be offset by \$7,602,000 in grant money/cost sharing from the Florida Department of Transportation. When the line of credit matures the city's share of expenses (projected to be \$5,710,300) would be refinanced with a long-term bank loan. New Smyrna Beach already has spent \$834,700 in current and prior cash outlays related to its proposed capital improvements list.

Commissioners also agreed to add up to \$250,000 to the capital projects list for beautification and roadway improvements to a section of Barracuda Boulevard between the bridge and the North Causeway.

Proposed capital projects include:

- ✓ A replacement for the 5th Street Bridge - \$4,180,000.
- ✓ A replacement for the Barracuda Boulevard Bridge - \$4,447,000.
- ✓ Washington Street improvements - \$3,400,000.
- ✓ Landscaping for U.S. 1 medians - \$681,000.
- ✓ Landscaping for SR-44 medians - \$439,000.
- ✓ Relocation of the Building Maintenance Division - \$500,000.
- ✓ Contingencies - \$500,000.

In a related matter, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve a services agreement with DRMP, Inc., an engineering consulting firm, to perform necessary work for the proposed Washington Street Streetscape. The firm will be paid \$360,616 to do surveys, a geotechnical evaluation, a traffic analysis, an archaeological review of the roadway/streetscape/utilities design, coordinate public meetings and workshops about the project, and assist the city with seeking bids and obtaining permits for the work.

The Washington Street Streetscape is planned for a segment of the street measuring 0.35 of a mile between US 1 and Riverside Drive. It will improve the road's alignment, the safety of its intersections, install improved sidewalks and drainage, street lighting and landscaping. Plans call for existing overhead lines to be buried underground, and for water and sewer mains, and associated services, to be upgraded. Other project goals are to make it safer for pedestrians and bicyclists to travel along Washington Street.

2. The City Commission unanimously chose an option to repair in place some cracked and damaged areas in the Old Fort Wall, rather than disassembling and rebuilding the historic structure.

The question of how best to repair deteriorating parts of the historic coquina block wall and shore it up ... and what that would cost ... has lingered over several years as an unresolved issue. The wall at 200 North Riverside Drive extends for about 375 feet along Julia Street and North Riverside Drive. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) reportedly built it in 1933. *(The adjacent coquina foundation in Old Fort Park is believed to be much older.)*

New Smyrna Beach previously applied for a Volusia County ECHO grant (Environmental, Cultural, Historical and Outdoor Recreational Purposes), and was awarded an \$80,000 grant in 2019. However, restoration work on the Old Fort Wall will cost a lot more.

Michelle Valance, the city's capital improvement projects manager, said staff members recommended returning the current ECHO grant and reapplying for a new grant when the county's grant cycle opens up again, likely this spring. The new grant request would reference the current estimated cost of \$950,000 to repair the Old Fort Wall in place. The city would contribute 50 percent of the cost -- about \$475,000. The staff's report on the matter says ECHO grant awards probably would be made this October. If the city receives a suitable grant, bids for the work could go out soon after and construction could start this winter.

In the meantime, Valance said the staff will continue to monitor the condition of the Old Fort Wall. Commissioners also approved a staff recommendation to install a guard rail about 15 feet back from the edge of the wall to keep people from walking on it.

3. City Commissioners voted 2-3, with Mayor Russ Owen, Vice Mayor Jake Sachs and Commissioner Michael Kolody dissenting, to turn down a property owner's offer for the city to buy his vacant lot and use it for stormwater retention.

The parcel's owner had proposed to design, obtain permits and build a dry stormwater retention area on the vacant lot, then sell it to the city for \$417,000.

4. Mayor Owen proclaimed March 9, 2021 as "Bob Morrow Day" in honor of longtime local businessman Bob Morrow, who owned and operated Bob's Automotive on Cana; Street for 50 years.

Morrow is an Oxford, Mass. native and U.S. Army Veteran, who moved to Volusia County with a vision to establish a gas station and automobile repair business. He is a founding member of the Downtown Business Association and he also enjoyed coaching local softball teams.

Morrow retired Dec. 17, 2020 after years of building friendships while working on cars at his landmark business on the corner of Canal and Faulkner streets.

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