

**New Smyrna Beach City Commission Meeting
Aug. 10, 2021**

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Members of City Commissions past and present and state Sen. Tom Wright celebrated the opening of the city's new home for Development Services and a state-of-the-art Commission Chambers in the historic former First Baptist Church, 214 Sams Ave.

Built in 1929, the red brick structure known for its "weeping mortar" exterior underwent two years of sweeping renovations that transformed it into a building "that will stand the test of time," according to Mayor Russ Owen and Commissioner Jason McGuirk. Mayor Owen also unveiled a plaque naming the new home for the City Commission as the James W. Hathaway Commission Chambers, in honor of Hathaway, a former Mayor and City Commissioner who served for more than two decades in city government.

Hathaway was Mayor in 2016 when the Commission decided to buy the vacant and dilapidated church adjacent to City Hall for \$600,000. The city received a \$400,000 Volusia County ECHO grant to offset the cost of the purchase and renovations, which were estimated at \$4.7 million. In addition to the Commission Chambers that will play host to public meetings, a separate area of the first floor and the entire second floor will house new offices for the city's Planning, Engineering and Building Department staff.

After the ribbon cutting, Mayor Owen turned his seat on the dais over to Hathaway and invited him to call the Aug. 10 Commission meeting to order with one of two gavels that were hand-carved from the building's reclaimed, heart-pine lumber. Owen gifted Hathaway with the gavel afterward.

Continuing the theme of historic preservation, Sen. Wright also presented the city with two checks totaling \$1.5 million to boost local preservation projects. One \$900,000 check will go toward repairing and preserving a 200-foot retaining wall of coquina rock that was built in 1933 at the east side of Old Fort Park. The second check for \$600,000 will help pay for a full renovation of the Woman's Club of New Smyrna building, which was built in 1924 and is on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.

City Commissioners voted 3-2, with Vice Mayor Jake Sachs and Commissioner Randy Hartman dissenting, to authorize consultants Traffic Engineering Data Solutions to prepare a conceptual plan for potential turning lanes/improvements to the intersection of Flagler and Peninsula avenues. The \$37,525 cost will be funded by transportation impact fees. ⁽¹⁾_(SEP)

Referencing a preliminary concept that Commissioners viewed earlier, Commissioner Hartman said he wasn't comfortable with the traffic layout and he'd prefer having a September workshop to discuss the issue. He said he thought "the intent was to use more of that property (for parking) at 120 Flagler Ave. That isn't encompassed in this design."

The concept plan for possible improvements to the busy intersection includes:

- ✓ A new, northbound left-turn lane (from Peninsula Avenue northbound, turning left onto Flagler Avenue).

- ✓ A new southbound right-turn lane (from Peninsula Avenue southbound turning right onto Flagler Avenue)
- ✓ Extending the existing Flagler Avenue eastbound left turn lane (for eastbound vehicles on Flagler Avenue, turning left onto Peninsula Avenue)

Hartman said the concept plan Commissioners looked at previously is “taking all the parking away in front of the apartment complex on the west side. You’re taking the parking away in front of the CorMeth Boutique which is on the east side. I don’t want ... unintended consequences ... That’s the only parking for the apartments.”

Vice Mayor Sachs also commented that the 120 Flagler Ave. property at the northeast corner of the Flagler-Peninsula intersection, which recently was purchased by the city, looks as if it won’t fit very many cars for parking. He suggested the city could “flip this property” and possibly make a small profit on it.

Commissioner Jason McGuirk answered, “We’re going to put a turn lane on there. That’s why we bought the property.”

City Manager Khalid Resheidat added, “Commissioner Hartman has a valid concern regarding the parking on the east side of Peninsula. I think if you approve the contract tonight, that’s just going to proceed with the survey. We can have a workshop on Sept. 1 and we can discuss his concerns.” (*A Sept. 1 workshop is scheduled for Commissioners to discuss how to use the property at 120 Flagler Ave. and an existing building on the lot.*)

Mayor Owen agreed. “My thought process was, let’s find out what is possible. It doesn’t mean we’re going to do all that. ... Figure out what is conceptually possible, and then we can figure out which of those options we want to do. And we can add it to the workshop agenda so we can have a more in-depth discussion.”

The City Commission voted unanimously to vacate two parts of Booker Avenue and Conner Avenue, totaling 0.67 acres of an 11.2-acre property proposed for a residential subdivision called Old Mission Cove.

The two vacated parcels have approximate boundaries of Ingham Road to the east, Mission Drive to the south, Old Mission Road to the west and SR-44 far to the north.

Assistant City Manager Brian Fields said the developer of Old Mission Cove intends to dedicate 1.98 acres of public right-of-way in the proposed subdivision plat.

The developer told the Commission he is willing to increase subdivision lot widths from 50 to 55 feet, to allow for more landscaping, fencing and space beside each home. He added he was conveying a 15-foot right-of-way to protect some large trees on the property.

Vice Mayor Sachs asked if he was willing to set aside small parcels of land for plantings of Florida native plants to provide habitat for bees, butterflies, and birds. The developer noted there are three areas in the proposed subdivision where trees are being preserved, and he agreed to plant native Florida species in those preservation’s areas and along the rights-of-way that are being dedicated to the city, as well as to offer the option of planting native vegetation for the landscaping plans of individual homes.

“We look forward to being a responsible community, where we put out a reasonably-priced product with a high level of quality,” he said.

City Commissioners voted 3-2, with Vice Mayor Sachs and Commissioner Michael Kolody voting no, to permit the removal of a 52-inch, historic Laurel Oak tree on property that's slated for construction of the Greenlawn Manor senior affordable housing project at 600 Greenlawn St.

The Commission also approved waiving fees and landscaping requirements associated with the tree's removal.

Staff members said the site has five large historic trees. Plans for the 80 units of multifamily housing in Greenlawn Manor can be modified to preserve four of the trees, but not the fifth, which is located in what would be the main drive aisle of a proposed parking lot.

An arborist's report said the Laurel Oak has multiple branch/bark inclusions and significant decay. An inclusion occurs when two branches or stems of a tree grow too closely together in a "V" formation.

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