

New Smyrna Beach City Commission Meeting – Jan. 25, 2022

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City Commissioners voted 4-1, with Zone 1 Commissioner Michael Kolody dissenting, to approve a map of new Commission zones.

New Smyrna Beach's charter requires the City Commission to redraw Commission zone boundaries every 10 years after the city receives new Census data.

A public hearing for the new map of City Commission zones is set for Feb. 8. First and second readings and another public hearing for the related redistricting ordinance will be scheduled later.

Commissioner Kolody opposed the proposed changes because Zone 1 becomes a mainland district that extends south to pick up territory that used to be part of Zone 2 and all the properties beachside will now be included as Zone 2. He commented, "I think the staff did do what we asked them to do at the last hearing."

Zones must be equal in population as much as possible. Any differences can't exceed five percent of the average population for all City Commission districts. In addition, the redistricting goal is to keep neighborhoods intact, and the aggregate length of all zone boundaries should be as short as possible. Land areas separated by waterways shall not be included in the same zone unless those waters can be crossed by bridges or other means of access. One exception would be that, population permitting, islands not connected to the mainland or to other land areas by bridges or other access points shall be included in the same zone as the nearest city land area.

City Manager Khalid Resheidat said the proposed map of new Commission zones incorporates Commissioners' preferences and staff input from earlier public meetings and meets the required criteria.

"We've talked about this at numerous different workshops," Mayor Russ Owen noted.

"We've gotten down to almost the parcel by parcel detail ... This is an amalgamation of all of that. I know it's not anyone's ideal. To some it's less ideal than others. But at this point we've got to put something forward for redistricting. Tonight is not the final vote. We're just saying, 'Staff, this is the one we want.'"

Zone 2 Commissioner Jake Sachs added he believes some newer city residents may be confused about how they can vote for members of the City Commission. Because Commissioners must live within their districts, he said some citizens think if they live in that representative's zone they can only vote on that particular Commission seat. That's not true, Sachs pointed out, because in New Smyrna Beach everyone in the city can vote for the Mayor and all of the Commissioners who are on the ballot during an election year.

Mayor Owen asked staff members to educate the public on that issue this year.

The City Commission also heard the first readings of requests for proposed changes to two Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).

One request involved 106.3 acres of the Coastal Woods development that is expected to be the site of a new hospital. It is at the northeast corner of SR-44 and I-95, bordered on the east side by Sugar Mill Drive. Advent Health is seeking to remove that tract from the existing Coastal Woods PUD and create a new PUD Master Development Agreement and Conceptual Development Plan for a new hospital and associated medical-retail complex.

The second requested change to a PUD related to 6.9 acres of undeveloped land on the east side of Saxon Drive, between Third Avenue and Seventh Avenue and immediately south of the Publix supermarket. Development representatives have asked the city to change the existing Hog Eye Camp PUD Master Development Agreement from a previously approved project of 150 apartment units and 16,420 square feet of retail space, to a townhouse development with a maximum of 77 townhouse units and no office/retail space.

Concurrent with the Master Development Agreement changes, developers also are asking the city to change its future land use designation for the property from Commercial to High Density Residential.

Second readings and public hearings for all the above development agreement requests and PUD changes are scheduled for Feb. 8.

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