

New Smyrna Beach City Commission Meeting – April 26, 2022

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The City Commission voted 3-2, with Mayor Russ Owen and Commissioner Jake Sachs dissenting, to amend the city’s Land Development Regulations by adding “Place of Assembly” as a use permitted by Special Exception in the city’s Mixed Use (MU) zoning district.

Senior Planner Bob Mathen explained that staff members didn’t suggest making Place of Assembly a permitted use in any zoning district because that would have required only a staff-level review. He said the staff wanted to build in more oversight and comment on any Place of Assembly requests that are submitted.

Mathen said the idea of a Special Exception use for the latter business came from staff members meeting with a Canal Street property owner who is interested in building a new building and parking lot to be used for public and private events. City officials met with the landowner and her design team about the creation of a proposed event venue that could be used for a variety of occasions, including weddings, art shows or exhibits, concerts, plays and musicals, and dance studios and competitions.

The business owner has vacant properties at 201, 211, and 215 South Orange Street, all of which are zoned for Mixed Use. Mathen said many vacant lots in that zoning district would be too small to provide required parking for a Place of Assembly business, but if multiple parcels were combined they could yield enough space for redevelopment associated with that use.

Commissioner Sachs wasn’t convinced the new Special Exception would be a benefit. “So, Bob, we’re essentially creating a special exception in all of the Mixed Use areas of the city for one property owner,” he noted. “The key word you just said right now is redevelopment. And redevelopment concerns me for our small city.”

The majority opinion was summarized by Commissioner Michael Kolody. “I don’t see it as a negative effect. We have so many places of assembly throughout our town. There’s no reason it can’t be in the Mixed Use district.”

City Commissioners unanimously approved adding two positions of a crime analyst and an administrative services manager to the Police Department and promoting two lieutenants to the rank of captain, as part of the Police Department’s strategic plan spanning Fiscal Years 2022-2024.

Police Chief Mike Coffin said his department recently analyzed its organizational structure, and the department’s challenges, threats, and opportunities. Due to its growth, it’s necessary to adjust the department’s command structure. Currently, 57 officers report to two lieutenants. Adding a civilian administrative services manager would allow department personnel in support services to report to a civilian supervisor, and free up sworn officers who serve as division supervisors to focus on providing guidance and supervision for police programs and police personnel.

Regarding the proposed captains, Coffin said the duties of the two police lieutenants are commensurate with the rank of captain and should be adjusted to ensure fairness and parity.

Chief Coffin said the department has enough money to implement these personnel changes through October. After that, the positions would need to be funded by a \$189,200 expenditure in the 2023 fiscal year Police Department budget.

"This item before you is phase three of our three-year, four-phase strategic plan.... I expect we'll be well over 70,000 calls for service this year. We're doing that with 2008 (level) staffing. I encourage you to look at that strategic plan as to where we want to go in year three and beyond."

The City Commission voted 5-0 to make changes to its Land Development Section that refers to Home-Based Businesses, to make it concurrent with updated Florida statutes.

The activities of the home-based business must be secondary to the property's use as a residential dwelling. Business employees who work at the residential dwelling must also reside in the dwelling, except that up to two employees or independent contractors who do not live there may still work at the home.

In addition, when viewed from the street the property must be consistent with the uses in its surrounding residential area. Any exterior modifications to a home-based business must conform to the residential character and architectural aesthetics of the neighborhood.

City Commissioners voted 5-0 to annex 0.288 of an acre at 2476 Pioneer Trail, rezone it to city Single Family Residential (R-2) in the Airport Height Notification Zone, and amend the city's Comprehensive Plan to show the parcel as Low Density Residential.

The property is on the south side of Pioneer Trail, between North Glencoe Road and Bridget Street, and its owner sought to voluntarily annex into the city.

The City Commission unanimously voted to annex 0.458 of an acre at 1506 Enterprise Ave. and rezone it to city Single Family Residential (R-2) in the Airport Height Notification Zone. Commissioners also voted 5-0 to amend the city's Comprehensive Plan to change the property's land use to city Medium Density Residential.

The lot is on the south side of Enterprise Avenue, between Cherry Street and Spruce Street. It also was a voluntary annexation from the county into the city.

Mayor Owen read a proclamation celebrating the 75th Anniversary of New Smyrna Beach Airport.

At the start of World War II, the U.S. Military redeveloped the former grass strip into the "Navy Outlying Field New Smyrna Beach," which operated as an auxiliary field to advanced naval flight training operations.

On April 10, 1947, the airport was deeded to the city of New Smyrna Beach and it has been owned and operated by the city ever since.

In 2005, the New Smyrna Beach Airport was renamed "New Smyrna Beach Airport/Jack Bolt Field" and dedicated to (the late) Jack Bolt, a retired colonel and long-time resident of New Smyrna Beach. He earned the accomplishment of being one of only seven men to become an "Ace" in both WWII and the Korean War.

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