

MINUTES
CITY OF LAKE WORTH BEACH
CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION - PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS
MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2020 – 6:00 PM

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pam Triolo on the above date at 6:00 PM in the City Commission Chamber located at City Hall, 7 North Dixie Highway, Lake Worth Beach, Florida.

ROLL CALL: Present were; Mayor Pam Triolo; Vice Mayor Andy Amoroso; and Commissioners Scott Maxwell, Omari Hardy and Herman Robinson. Also present were City Manager Michael Bornstein, City Attorney Christy L. Goddeau and Deputy City Clerk Melissa Ann Coyne.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: led by Commissioner Omari Hardy.

UPDATES/FUTURE ACTION/DIRECTION:

Public Private Partnerships

City Manager Bornstein stated that Public Private Partnerships (P3s) had been discussed in various jurisdictions across the country the past and by the City Commissioners more frequently. He stated that the purpose of the work session would be to get information about P3s and allow the Commissioners to ask questions of the experts and staff.

Jim Gilmore, Partner at Gilmore Hagan Partners (GHP), stated that GHP was a diversified economic development and government relations firm that specialized in public/private partnerships, incentive negotiation, strategic planning and public outreach and strategic communications; GHP had invented many options that were in place throughout the state. He explained that a P3 was a close business transaction involving trust between the parties and could produce a “win-win” for both by achieving investment and return objectives with additional benefits including job creation and other intangible benefits resulting from the capital investment. He said that the Public Sector/Private Sector would take the lead to identify objectives such as infrastructure, redevelopment programs, public parking with revenues and municipal facilities. He spoke about the importance of having a communications strategy, contacting the correct developers and having the proper tools for project market analytics. He stated the significance of being protected in case of “what if” scenarios and considering the risk factors related to financing a project. He said that the City would have to determine the vision for the Beach Casino Property and different options for the type of P3 involved. He spoke about the next steps for the casino property including market data collection, private market opportunities, identifying potential private partners and developing public outreach programs, and next steps for parking including a parking study, analysis of parking demand and potential locations.

Comments/requests summary:

1. Commissioner Robinson stated that there were two potential opportunities for P3s with the casino property and parking; the City would have to decide what was wanted. He asked what GHP would assist with and if they had done P3s with big projects comparable to the beach property. He inquired if GHP would help with the County’s involvement. He said that six million dollars had been set aside for the waterfront improvement, not just a pool.

Mr. Gilmore replied that the GHP and WGI would research people in the area and provide a list of people with redevelopment expertise, attorneys with a deep background in transactional work and work on an outreach strategy within the community. He said that he had worked with Jacksonville Beach, which was comparable. He stated that the County should be contacted to determine their involvement. He said that there was great interest in the City's beachfront and it would be important to identify who might be interested and what the market might be to partner with the City.

2. Mayor Triolo said that she spoke with many cities, both small and large, that had projects involving P3s. She asked what the difference would be for the City to put out an RFP or RFQ and having a P3.

Mr. Gilmore responded that just putting out an RFP or RFQ was a fishing expedition; due diligence would produce specific developers who would be interested in partnering with the City.

3. Commissioner Hardy said that it would be critical to understand that a win-win would have to be positive for both parties; residents often made suggestions for options that a partner would not be interested in. He said that there was a standoff between the services residents wanted and the changes that would be necessary to provide funding for the services, which the residents opposed. He asked how it would be possible to get some options back on the table.
4. Mayor Triolo stated that there were opportunities throughout the City and the P3 could be looked at for many different properties.
5. Commissioner Robinson expressed hope that the beach property would attract hospitality groups. He asked if there could be a P3 for the pool and a separate one for a restaurant.
6. Vice Mayor Amoroso stated that the downtown parking was of interest to change the culture.
7. Commissioner Maxwell said that he was comfortable with the P3 concept and asked the Mayor to allow public comment or ask questions. No one from the public commented.
8. Commissioner Robinson stated that he was interested in downtown parking, which was more of a CRA issue and could be dealt with in steps, but a partner was essential for the beach.
9. Mayor Triolo said that it was important for the community to be engaged and there would be more input with a P3 process.

City Manager Bornstein stated that the City would have to determine what to do at the beach and what the market would bear. He asked what level of detail would be necessary to move the project forward and get developers interested.

Mr. Gilmore replied that there should be simultaneous conversations with staff, the commission and the community about what was wanted at the beachfront and what the market said could be done, and with the real estate development community about what they would want to do there. He recommended not putting out anything formal; he would help identify what was being done in the surrounding markets and which developers might be interested.

10. Mayor Triolo stated that the casino property issue had been contentious for decades and it had been almost impossible to find a solution that would suit everyone, but the community was agreeing with the types of things they wanted there.

11. Commissioner Hardy said that there should be a process to define what would be non-negotiable at the beach property. He stated that he would be open to P3s anywhere in the City.

City Manager Bornstein asked Mr. Gilmore how extending the leases at the beach to 30 years would benefit P3s.

Mr. Gilmore replied that a 30-year term was very important and would be sufficient for a private partner to obtain financing for a project and was the standard throughout the state.

12. Commissioner Robinson said that he was looking forward to finding a partner who would be able to leverage the six million dollars committed to the property. He asked what the next step would be.

City Manager Bornstein iterated the three ballot issues, which were the 30-years leases, the Steinhardt property and the Gulfstream Hotel.

13. Commissioner Maxwell said that the 30-year leases only pertained to property east of A1A and that it would be difficult to get developers interested in projects in other parts of the City.

14. Commissioner Hardy said that it would be necessary to have discussions with the residents about what must happen and what the consequences would be if no changes were made.

15. Mayor Triolo said that after showing the residents that the City was a good steward of their money, they might gain confidence and buy into the projects.

16. Vice Mayor Amoroso said that after the March election there should be a conversation about putting the 30-year leases for the rest of the City on the November ballot.

City Manager Bornstein asked for clarity regarding next steps.

Mr. Gilmore recommended against having an RFQ until after the March election. He stated that in the time before the election, GHP would gather the market data and talk to the development community to determine who might be interested in a partnership with the City.

17. Commissioner Hardy said that the City should wait until after the March election to proceed.

18. Commissioner Maxwell stated that the City would need to have all the components of the transaction considerations in place before going ahead. He agreed that the City should wait until after the election before taking action.

19. Mayor Triolo said that it would be important to move ahead with the beach property but not to muddy the waters before the election. She spoke in favor of having a P3 no matter the outcome of the election.

City Manager Bornstein said that he would speak with GHP about gathering market data to be ready once the ballot question was decided. GHP had fulfilled the contractual obligations regarding P3s and discussion regarding further work would be forthcoming.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 PM.

Minutes approved: February 4, 2020.

A digital audio recording of this meeting will be available in the Office of the City Clerk.