

**CALL TO ORDER**

A Workshop of the City Council of Marathon, Florida was held on February 28, 2023 at the Marathon City Hall, Council Chambers, Marathon, Florida, Mayor Gonzalez called the meeting to order at 4:32p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ROLL CALL - There were present:**

Councilmember Lynn Landry

Councilmember Kenny Matlock

Councilmember Jeff Smith ---VIA Zoom

Vice Mayor Robyn Still

Mayor Gonzalez, comprising a quorum

Also in attendance were:

City Manager, George Garrett

City Attorney, Steve Williams

Deputy City Clerk, Hillary Palmer

Public Works Director/City Engineer, Carlos Solis

Building Official, Gerard Roussin

Planning Director, Brian Shea

Planner, Erin Dafoe

Planning Administrative Assistant, Lorie Mullins

Williams explained Councilmember Smith was not able to attend in person and requested to attend via Zoom. Williams explained under Florida Statutes it takes a vote of the other members present to allow an absent City Council member to attend via Zoom or electronic means.

Gonzalez called for any no votes, hearing none, Councilmember Smith's request was approved.

Gonzalez explained the public is welcome to speak on each topic.

### **33<sup>rd</sup> Street Corridor Project**

Heather Carruthers, K2M Design, introduced herself as the Business Development Director, Dane Suchoza, Director of Design and Devon Ayers, project manager and Rachana Kulkarni, Project Architect as the hired engineer and architecture firm for the redevelopment of the 33<sup>rd</sup> street project.

Mayor Gonzalez acknowledged Monroe County Commissioner Michelle Lincoln in the audience.

Carruthers began the presentation by explaining the history of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Street revitalization project. She explained the project was originally envisioned in the 2006 edition of City of Marathon Master Plan and then resurfaced in 2017 under the City Management of Chuck Lindsey, but Hurricane Irma stalled the project and stagnation continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The project was re-engaged with K2M Design Firm in the early part of 2022 but was stalled again until after the City Council elections in November that year.

Carruthers identified the civic assets surrounding the 33<sup>rd</sup> Street properties, such as Fisherman's Hospital, Stanley Switlik Elementary School, out of service Fire Station building, Monroe County Senior Center, Recreation Center and Marathon Yacht Club. She spoke on the mixed ownership of the properties and spoke on the potential future transfers of ownership from Monroe County to the City of Marathon.

Carruthers spoke on the need for a functional fire station at the south end of Marathon and possibly more boat trailer parking by the boat ramp at the end of 33<sup>rd</sup> Street. Suchoza spoke on City of Marathon's "wish list" including government offices and the opportunity for commercial space that could generate revenue for the City. He commented on the flood zone ramifications in the event of a serious hurricane.

Suchoza identified other surrounding landmark buildings such as the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority and new Monroe County Library and explained these buildings provide services to the community. He spoke on the parking issues in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Street area and the idea of elevating the buildings for more parking.

Suchoza spoke on the need for a City master plan to assess the parking situation. He spoke on the need for a civic district and spoke on keeping the option open to other opportunities such as another community park.

Landry thanked K2M for meeting with Council individually prior to the Workshop. He commented on the need for more meetings and spoke for a master plan and supports moving forward with the redevelopment project.

Marathon Yacht Club Representative spoke in favor of the Club being involved in future discussions and spoke in favor of more control over boat trailer parking.

Matlock thanked K2M Design for meeting with Council individually prior to the workshop also and asked what the next step will be and asked if a site plan can be prepared.

Carruthers stated there is a lot more work to be done before a site plan can be prepared and asked Council for their input to develop a master plan.

Suchoza spoke on densifying the properties and for future building locations which will require a series of meetings to design a master plan.

Garrett spoke on focusing on property ownership, design and reconfiguration of 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and spoke in favor of more discussions with Council. He supported the idea of a master plan.

Gonzalez thanked K2M Design and expressed a need for a fire station at the south end of town and a need for an upgrade to the Senior and Recreation Centers. He supported the idea of a master plan. He stated he wants to focus on the 33<sup>rd</sup> Street improvements amidst of all the other ongoing projects within Marathon. He emphasized the need for 33<sup>rd</sup> Street to be redeveloped as soon as possible and mentioned the City is not in the business to accommodate trailer boat parking.

Still stated she supports a Fire Station at the south end of town also. She suggested a second traffic signal in the south area of town and spoke for the importance of a Recreation Center for the local children. She supported the idea of a master plan.

Carruthers spoke on the importance of preparing a master plan that can grow with the City over time.

Matlock spoke on the possibility of acquiring the Florida Highway Patrol property.

Garrett spoke on the prior history of ownership in the area and explained that planning for the future with regards to acquiring the property is important and stated working with the state levels could take about five years. Garrett confirmed that Council would like to focus on the fire station which is an immediate need.

Carruthers supported Matlock's idea regarding the City obtaining the Florida Highway Patrol building.

Garrett spoke on relocating the various buildings on the corridor for the highest and best use and reaffirmed the Fire Station being as an essential building in the south end of town.

Garrett suggested going back to Tallahassee to lobby for more grant money for the project.

Suchoza spoke on the master plan and the highest and best use of the properties and density factors on the street.

Landry spoke for having more discussions with Monroe County and State officials and spoke for moving forward with a master plan.

Partner suggested the master plan should be called a "future local plan".

George Nugent congratulated the City of Marathon on their accomplishments as a City. He noted the City's various property acquisitions over the years and noted the changes in Marathon over the last forty years. He stated Marathon still has a lot of development potential and encouraged the Council to define

the use of the subject properties. He congratulated the new Council and the Mayor for his accomplishments.

### **Parking Meter Discussion**

Solis reported the parking meter stations have been installed but the collection system is still in progress. He reported the City's Public Information Officer is preparing a public notice regarding the details of the meters. Solis confirmed the local residents will not be charged. He explained the meter program and noted that if a person's vehicle is registered in Marathon there is no parking fee, which includes beach and boat ramp parking. Solis noted nonregistered vehicles are required to prove year-round residency in Marathon.

Matlock asked if a list of local boat ramp and storage locations can be posted somewhere.

Williams replied that as long as one is not preference it can be allowed.

Gonzalez asked Solis to explain the registration process for residents that do not have access to a computer and suggested paper applications be made available at public buildings such as City Hall, Library, Tax Collector Office, etc.

Solis explained registration is available online and confirmed he could make paper applications available to the public.

Matlock asked if a vote needs to be made for signage regarding the parking meters.

Williams replied no and advised it brought back at regular scheduled City Council Meeting for a vote.

Gonzalez requested an update on the parking meter camera system installation.

Solis reported the camera system installation has been postponed, but yet still forthcoming and noted parking tickets will be issued for taking up multiple spaces.

Gonzalez stated parking for the residents will be free and Solis confirmed.

### **Building Permit Fee Discussion – Attorney**

Williams spoke on the building permit fee refunds for City Council members and stated the Ethics Commission is not willing to give an oral resolution and stated the City must submit a request for opinion in writing. Williams stated the Ethics Commission opinion will be a public record including the personal financial information of the Council members and could take up to two months to receive. Williams stated the three questions he will submit in writing are as follows:

1. Would the refunds be qualified as disproportionately high based on the City's average?
2. If the opinion comes back as three Councilmembers disproportionately high and a quorum could not be reached could City Council waive the refunds or donate to charity.

3. If both above questions are answered in the negative, the third question is the City Manager able to act outside of a vote of City Council under the building permit statute, either lowering the permitting rates or give refunds.

Williams requested a head nod from Council to request the formal opinion from the Ethics Commission. Lower rate and move forward or continue with ethics commission. Williams advised Council to follow the direction of the Ethics Commission opinion.

Still asked if a written opinion is received would it clear any ethical questioning in the future.

Williams replied yes and explained that Ethics Commission would be responsible for the written opinion.

Landry supported the building permit fee refunds and moving forward with lowering the fees.

Williams explained it would cost the City more money to have the auditors re-review the permitting fee study if the refunds are approved.

Williams asked for a head nod from Council to request an Ethics Commission opinion.

Landry, Matlock and Still provided a head nod to move forward with the Ethics Commission opinion.

Williams confirmed three head nods from Council. He confirmed he will draft a request.

Garrett stated he would speak to the Auditors and Finance Director concerning the re-review of permitting fees.


Gonzalez thanked the public for being present and hopes to see them at the next City Council Meeting on March 14<sup>th</sup>.


Diane Scott asked to speak and was declined as the Mayor informed her public comment was given after each topic, relevant to the topic.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Gonzalez adjourned the meeting at 5:43 PM by unanimous consent.

I certify the above represents an accurate summary of the City Council Workshop of February 28, 2023.

  
Hillary Palmer, Deputy City Clerk

  
Date