

CALL TO ORDER

A Workshop of the City Council of Marathon, Florida was held on March 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 (via Zoom)

Councilmember Kenny Matlock

Councilmember Jeff Smith

Vice Mayor Robyn Still

Mayor Gonzalez, comprising a quorum.

Also in attendance were:

City Manager, George Garrett

City Attorney, Steve Williams

City Clerk, Diane Clavier

Planning Director, Brian Shea

Sr. Planner, Amber Stonik

Gerard Rousin, Building Official

Code Director Ted Lozier

Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Captain Don Hiller

Monroe County Commissioner, Jim Scholl

Monroe County Planning Commission Vice Chair Ron Demes

Williams asked the Council to approve Councilmember Landry's zoom attendance. The Council was in favor of Landry's remote participation.

Solar Co-op Launch for Florida Keys Residents - Laura Tellez with Solar United Neighbors of Florida presented a PowerPoint on solar technology, and explained the economics of a solar co-op and how solar worked and how panels are attached. Tellez explained that if the power should go out, the system would shut off as a safety measure and if someone needed power and gave an example of needing power for medical equipment, they could look into battery storage and more information was available on www.solarunitedneighbors.org/storage. Tellez explained the three different warranties available and recommended that those having solar power installed to let their insurance agent know for homeowners insurance since the homeowner may have to carry an umbrella insurance policy of one million dollars. Tellez recommended a visual inspection every year. Tellez explained the costs of solar and financing options as well as how solar co-ops work and informed everyone they needed to sign up by the end of May.

Martin Kamph asked how we could keep other entities from reducing solar buy back. Tellez responded you would be grandfathered in.

Beth Lozier asked if it could be incorporated into new construction and if there was a hybrid battery backup. Tellez explained it depended on how long the construction would be and there was a hybrid system.

Diane Scott commented she didn't like solar.

Meg Nelson asked if there were any issues with metal roofs and leak problems. Tellez commented that metal roofs were the best and a clip is used so there are no penetrations. Nelson also asked if you have another home in another state, can you get credit on both. Tellez responded yes.

Tellez also responded that there was a direct pay option of 30% for cities, schools and not for profits.

Olek Musinski questioned if there were any studies on how long it takes to amortize. Tellez responded seven to ten years, if you have electric vehicles, it would be less time. Tellez informed everyone there is no sales tax, but it is not a taxable improvement, but when selling the appraisals are higher.

Mary Ann Royce – asked about the environmental impact with batteries Tellez explained there are no emissions with solar, there is also water savings, it is a trade off, but better than the alternative, and she felt confident of the recycling opportunities in the future. Royce asked who the contractor was. Tellez responded Solar Florida One.

Steve Williams asked if they had municipal experience. Tellez responded yes.

Lisa Kuschke – asked if she could join the co-op anytime and asked about warranties. Tellez responded it closes in May and explained/went over the standard warranties.

Jim Scholl informed everyone that the City of Key West installed solar over the parking area and the return on the investment was thirty percent.

Devin Collins with SALT informed everyone SALT was the installer on the City of Key West project and the product warranties and workmanship needed to be 25 years on both.

Vice Mayor Still asked how the contractor that was chosen and if they were local. Tellez explained they put out a request for proposals and the contractor chosen by the members of the co-op and the contractor is a local keys contractor.

Matlock commented that SALT installed the solar structure on Pigeon Key and they were still there after Irma.

Smith asked if the cost was \$31 a day. Tellez commented it was a monthly fee, not a daily fee. Smith asked what the average savings were for a co-op. Tellez commented about twenty percent, but it could vary. Smith questioned what the battery life expectancy was. Tellez responded a ten-year warranty is common.

Ray Johnson with Florida Solar One commented that he was the local contractor chosen and a solar panel will not stop working after 25 years. Johnson also commented that there were new tax credits.

Building Permit Fee Discussion –Williams explained that the Florida Ethics Commission responded to his question regarding the Council giving potential refunds as well as his two alternative questions. Williams explained that the Council cannot take any funds, but they can waive the funds for themselves and family members, but the funds must be waived in writing. Raftelis can get this done quickly and Williams suggested members of the public must apply for the refund, that we only go back two years, the refund issued to the homeowner and not the contractor. Williams recommended a sunset date on the application and suggested this fiscal year. Williams commented with head nods he would put this on the April agenda.

Smith asked if the funds not refunded could be used toward nonprofits. Williams suggested the additional fees could be used for those who need help affording the costs of permitting.


Diane Scott commented that any extra funds should be used to fix the flooding on 41st Street.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Gonzalez adjourned the meeting at 5:49 PM by unanimous consent.

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


Diane Clavier, City Clerk


Date