

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR WORKSHOP MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL  
BOCA RATON, FLORIDA  
MONDAY, JANUARY 7, 2008  
1:30 PM

The Workshop Meeting of the City Council of the City of Boca Raton, Florida was called to order by Mayor Abrams at 1:30 p.m.

ATTENDING THE MEETING WERE:

Mayor Steven L. Abrams  
Deputy Mayor Susan Whelchel  
Council Member M. J. Mike Arts  
Council Member Peter R. Baronoff  
Council Member Bill Hager

Also attending the meeting were:

City Manager Leif J. Ahnell  
City Attorney Diana Grub Frieser  
City Clerk Sharma Carannante

**1. BOARD INTERVIEWS:**

There were no positions advertised.

**2. PUBLIC REQUESTS:**

John Stetz provided negative commentary regarding nursing homes and then reported that the Florida Department of Transportation still had not corrected the turn lane markings at the intersection of Glades Road and NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. He concluded his comments by again advocating construction of a desalinization plant and windfarm generators for water conservation.

Packard Larson voiced opposition to using public money to purchase surveillance cameras for a private company, specifically, Town Center Mall (Simon mall).

Cathy Strauss, a former employee of Town Center Mall and neighbor to Nancy and Joey Bochicchio, the mother and daughter found murdered at the mall on December 13, 2007, stated that Simon mall should pay the costs for better security and more police presence - not the city.

Anthony Majhess indicated opposition to Ordinance No. 5014, which would provide for uniform treatment of places of public assembly and add places of worship as a permitted use in single-family districts. Referring to the Planning and Zoning Board meeting, he reviewed concerns raised by Board members and suggested Council take more time to deliberate over this ordinance. He then stated that this legislation appeared to eliminate the City Council approval process and citizens' input by making places of worship a permitted use. In addition, he did not believe the proposed revision restricting places of worship to areas with direct vehicular access to collector roads went far enough. He also stated that places of worship have similar commercial applications, such as employees and deliveries, and voiced concern over their placement in residential areas. Finally, Mr. Majhess raised the issue of setting a precedent in that developers might wish to obtain zoning changes to construct higher density buildings, perhaps adjacent to a place of worship, and opined that the City might open itself to a lawsuit.

Mayor Abrams advised that tomorrow night would be the first of two public hearings so there would be time to have questions answered. Mr. Ahnell explained that there was time to send the ordinance back to the Planning and Zoning Board if Council still had questions. He noted that the majority of places of worship in the City are already located in residential districts. In addition, this ordinance was being brought forward as a result of Federal decisions.

**3. REVIEW OF REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:**

a. Questions relating to the agenda.

(Consent Agenda Item No. 3.f. – Resolution No. 5-2008 / Agreement with Documed Systems, Inc. for purchase of a license for Emergency Pro, EMS reporting software) Council Member Arts questioned whether there was an annual licensing fee. Mr. Ahnell explained that there was a one-time license fee of \$99,000 and then \$15,000 per year for maintenance; details were provided.

(Consent Agenda Item No. 3.g. – Resolution No. 6-2008 / Affirming the decision of the City Manager to offer a reward of \$350,000 in connection with a recent homicide case) Council Member Baronoff indicated that he would like to pull this item tomorrow night that Council might vote on it separately.

(Consent Agenda Item No. 3.f. – Resolution No. 5-2008 / Agreement with Documed Systems, Inc. for purchase of a license for Emergency Pro, EMS reporting software) Council Member Hager requested information regarding the functionality of the software. The City Manager explained that this software is used by Fire Rescue Services for reporting of patient information and billing purposes; details were provided.

(Consent Agenda Item No. 3.e. – Work Order No. 7 with Eckler Engineering, Inc. for professional engineering services related to the Water Treatment Plant) Deputy Mayor Whelchel questioned whether this work would take place at Military Trail and Yamato Road. Mr. Ahnell stated that this work order related to the water plant site, itself.

**4. FUTURE AGENDA MATTERS/ITEMS OF COUNCIL/PUBLIC CONCERN:**

There were no items for consideration.

**5. CITY MANAGER REPORTS:**

The City Manager had nothing to report at this time.

**6. CITY ATTORNEY REPORTS:**

The City Attorney had nothing to report at this time.

**7. MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBER REQUESTS AND REPORTS:**

a. Video Surveillance Program

Responding to Council Member Hager, Mr. Ahnell provided an update on overall security at Town Center Mall. He began by explaining that the mall is private property; however, there are approximately seven different property owners. Most major stores own their own properties, such as Sears, and are not part of the Simon group. The mall, itself, encompasses most of the smaller stores. In addition, some parking lots are owned by Simon, and others are owned by the larger department stores.

Mr. Ahnell stated that the mall provides their own security guards, as do some of the stores. When the City took over, following annexation, on January 1, 2004, the mall was added as a “zone,” meaning police officers were dedicated to that area. Approximately 17 officers were assigned to cover the mall and surrounding residential areas, nearly doubling the presence previously provided by the County. Mr. Ahnell explained that, for holiday activity, additional staff is on hand both inside and outside the mall. In addition, there is an overlapping of zone coverage with unmarked police cars, tactical units, and special operations patrolling the area. Following the December 12 incident, police presence was significantly increased at the mall and included undercover officers. He noted that the mall increased their security as well.

Regarding security cameras, in 2006, the City obtained a grant to install cameras at the mall, primarily directed at the entrances and exits of the property; this is referred to as buffer zone protection. He advised that staff has long had discussions with the mall related to video surveillance; the mall started planning a video surveillance system in 2006. However, it takes time to complete and implementation of Phase I of the system is anticipated to coincide with completion of the mall expansion in March or April; at that time, another 50 cameras should be coming online.

Mr. Ahnell then reported that the City began looking a year ago at implementing a Citywide surveillance system. Staff is about a week away from issuing an RFP (Request For Proposal) to hire a consultant to research implementation of same. He added that staff is also reviewing financial and privacy issues connected with security cameras and concluded his report.

Deputy Mayor Whelchel advised that she spoke with the manager of Town Center Mall, Joe Cilia, and then asked that Council make a formal request of the mall to change the location of the valet parking to make sure mothers and children can park close to the stores.

Council Member Baronoff provided comments expressing disappointment in the behavior of the mall owners and management in light of the December tragedy. He then referred to the \$350,000 reward being sponsored by the City and indicated that he would pull same tomorrow night for a separate vote. He suggested that the mall might wish to participate and also put up some reward money. Mr. Baronoff concluded his comments by reiterating his disappointment at the mall's lack of responsibility and accountability.

There followed discussion related to financial responsibility for installation of surveillance cameras at the mall and joint funding of same. Most Council members appeared to be in opposition to joint funding, stating that the mall is responsible for its security. In addition, a precedent would be set with other retail areas in the City wanting the same treatment and funding. Responding to Council, Mr. Ahnell advised that the overtime costs to the City for additional police presence at the mall since the incident was approximately \$70,000. Regarding the police substation currently located in the mall, Mr. Ahnell explained that the mall donated the existing space, and the space for the expanded substation has also been donated; the City pays no rent or other charges.

Following further discussion, it was suggested that an invitation be extended to mall representatives to speak with Council about the surveillance system. At this time, Mr. Ahnell explained that the City would be installing five additional wireless cameras in approximately two weeks, which would provide surveillance of all surface parking lots. Once the mall's surveillance system is in place, they could be relocated to other locations in the City.

Deputy Mayor Whelchel reiterated her request to ask the mall to move the valet parking and car wash area to other locations and allow parking up front for mothers and children. There were no objections.

Council Members Baronoff and Hager advocated inviting mall representatives to address Council about their security system and to speak about their responsibility to the community.

The regular workshop meeting of the City Council of the City of Boca Raton, Florida, adjourned at approximately 2:21 p.m. on Monday, January 7, 2008.

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Vanessa Hines, Assistant City Clerk