



City Commission Work Session Minutes

October 8, 2020

Virtual Meeting

Present

Mayor Steve Leary
Commissioner Carolyn Cooper
Commissioner Marty Sullivan
Commissioner Sheila DeCiccio
Commissioner Todd Weaver

City Manager Randy Knight
City Attorney Dan Langley
City Clerk Rene Cranis

1) Call to Order

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

2) Discussion Item(s)

a. Work Session to discuss Single Member Commission Districts

Mr. Knight provided a document containing policy issues to be addressed in order to draft an ordinance to place Single Member Districts on the ballot.

Commissioner Weaver commented that increasing the members on the Commission would require additional funding for salaries and he would feel obliged to go back to the citizens for additional salaries. He stated that he is not in favor of spending more money and feels the mayor should be elected at large with four districts.

Commissioner Sullivan stated that his objective is to determine and agree on basic parameters such as the number of districts and boundaries that will guide staff and the City Attorney to draft an ordinance.

Mayor Leary said he feels single member districts will not resolve some resident's perception of under-representation by minorities and that every resident is represented by all Commission members who have served residents equally. He said he has not aware of wide-spread support and that the Commission should focus on helping citizens and businesses during the pandemic rather than on this issue.

Commissioner DeCiccio supported placing this on the ballot, but that the districts are drawn after the election. She is opposed to expanding the size of the commission and supports the mayor elected at large.

Commissioner Weaver expressed his reservations about single member districts but agreed with Commissioner DeCiccio that this should be placed on the ballot.

Mayor Leary said he could support this on the ballot in 2022, after the 2020 census data is released and if community discussions, work sessions and open forums were held to educate the community over the next year.

Mayor Leary departed the meeting at 1:51 p.m. Commissioner Cooper chaired the meeting.

Commissioner Sullivan commented that the Commission should define boundaries after the 2020 census and referendum.

Commissioner Cooper opposed addressing this at this time during the pandemic and unrest. She stated she has not seen overwhelming community support for this and would like for petition signatures to be collected when the state reopens. She opposed increasing the number of Commissioners and believes the mayor should be elected at large.

Mr. Knight stated that policy decisions needed to be made in order for the City Attorney to draft an ordinance for first reading on November 11th. He reviewed the proposed schedule to put this on the ballot for March 9, 2021. The following policy decisions were made:

Number of Commissioners - Mayor at-large and four commissioners

Time of drawing districts - Draw boundaries after the referendum and release of 2020 census data.

Composition of Commission - Require district residency, elected by voters within the district.

Transition Method - District representation will begin with the March 2022 election. Leading into that election (which is for seats 3 and 4), the districts must be established. Since the commissioners in seats 1 and 2 will still have another year on their terms as of March 2022, they should be slotted in the district encompassing their residence if possible to serve out the one year remaining on their term. Seats 3 and 4 will become new districts that do not have representation following the slotting of seats 1 and 2. As current terms conclude, incumbents must follow the same rules as anyone else wishing to run in a district.

Redistricting Committee (to draw initial boundaries) - Seven-member committee in the same manner as regular board appointments outlined by the City Charter.

Commissioner Sullivan suggested appointing an outside facilitator to lead the boundary definition effort. Approved by consensus.

Future Redistricting - Mr. Knight presented language from City of Winter Garden's policy and explained that the policy is reviewed every ten years after census unless there is a large population increase that creates disproportionate district sizes.

After discussion, Attorney Langley provided background information on the lawsuit and will provide the Commission with documentation from the final judgement from the lawsuit for their review.

Mr. Knight concluded reviewing the policy issues and asked the Commission if they'd like to address any other issues.

Discussion was held on the basis for placing on the ballot without prior community discussion. Commissioner Cooper asked the Commission to consider having community forums and place on a future ballot with community support without petition.

Commissioner Sullivan advised that Rollins College is willing to assist in educating the public on the impact of single member districts on the governance of the City. He added that he would like to see a vote for Single Member Districts on the 2021 ballot.

Members of the commission restated their position and Commissioner Cooper closed the Single Member Districts discussion.

Commissioner Cooper commented on the OAO stating that transfer of development rights proposed is different from other municipalities and will require a lot of research and City Attorney time to draft the ordinance. She stated that if the Commission is not going to be in support of transfer of residential density, it would be best to advise Staff so they do not put forth the policy.

Commissioner Sullivan is opposed to transfer of development rights as written in the first version of OAO ordinance.

Commissioner Weaver opposed transfer of development rights unless it involves environmental or historical preservation.

Commissioner DeCiccio said she is unsure at this time and feels the OAO should move forward without the “bookend” properties and develop land use code and let the zoning considerations take place when the properties come forward with their plans.

After discussion, consensus was to schedule a work session for Wednesday, October 21st at 1:00 p.m. to discuss the future of OAO, alternative ideas, and removal of bookend properties from OAO.

The work session adjourned 3:09 p.m.

Mayor Steve Leary

ATTEST:

City Clerk Rene Cranis