



City Commission Work Session Minutes

January 12, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

City Hall, Commission Chambers
401 S. Park Avenue | Winter Park, Florida

Present

Mayor Phil Anderson, Commissioners Marty Sullivan, Sheila DeCiccio, Kris Cruzada, Todd Weaver; City Manager Randy Knight; Assistant City Manager Michelle del Valle; City Attorney Kurt Ardaman; City Clerk Rene Cranis

1) Call to Order

Mayor Anderson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2) Discussion Item(s)

a. Stormwater and Flood Management Presentation

Mr. Knight gave an update on post-storm management efforts and said the Stormwater and Lakes divisions have resolved some of the issues that occurred during Hurricanes Ian and Nicole. Staff is evaluating infrastructure, equipment and policy changes to determine what is needed for stormwater management improvements.

Assistant Public Works Director Don Marcotte stated that Hurricane Ian resulted in 15-18" of rainfall in the city and while there were some conveyance issues, the significant contributor to flooding was the volume of rainfall. He reviewed the storm preparedness process including maintenance of sewers, ditches and outfalls and lowering bodies of water where the city is allowed to do so.

Mr. Marcotte presented a map of reported areas of flooding throughout the city and spoke about how impacts to lake levels and several neighborhoods. He said staff continues to collect data on flood damage to homes and businesses and will be performing studies to consider permanent interconnections between Lake Sylvan to Lake Mizell and Lake Knowles to Lake Maitland. He noted drainage improvements have begun for College Point Phase II and that Temple Drive and Canton Avenue drainage improvements are part of the five-year plan.

Mr. Marcotte showed images of flooding from the MLK Pond and Lake Killarney basins and Lake Bell to Lee Road. He reviewed a schematic showing the drainage process for Lake Killarney and its interconnection to MLK pond and spoke about pre-storm efforts to lower lake levels. He reviewed future mitigation plans to increase storage for Lake Killarney, MLK pond and Lake Bell.

Mr. Marcotte explained that as part of lake monitoring efforts, staff discovered that levels for Lake Grace had increased. He said a pump was used to reduce lake levels and the city may want to consider purchasing a similar pump for water mitigation in the future. He showed images of flooding in the Little Econ Basin which includes Winter Pines Golf Course and spoke about improvements to the area including dredging the ditch systems throughout the golf course and cleaning ponds which will improve street drainage. He reviewed future flood mitigation considerations.

Mr. Knight gave an update on the Community Rating Service (CRS) program and said the city is still evaluating the membership process. Staff has spoken with agencies currently in the program, FEMA, and program representatives who created a "What-if" report for the city, which outlines the fiscal impact of being a member. He explained the eligibility process and rating system and said the main benefit of the program provides a discount for residents who have flood insurance. He reviewed the statistics of eligible properties for discount and said at best, it would save roughly 400 customers about \$26,000 in total or \$63 on average per customer. He said this data alone may not support being part of CRS. Staff is looking for a compelling reason to join other than for the benefit of 400 customers and waiting for the results from FEMA on the Community Assistance Visit report which will be received in 60-90 days.

Mr. Knight said membership in CRS is not typically found as a requirement for grant funding. Discussion followed on basis of membership and whether it is financially feasible. Mayor Anderson addressed CIP projections and spoke about the need for a project manager who could manage the 5-year plan projects as well as the CRS plan.

Mayor Anderson spoke about flood prevention and the time frame by which 15-18 inches of stormwater entered homes. He said the goal is to prevent this type of water from going into homes and the city needs a plan that cuts out the last ten inches. In-depth discussion followed on project cost, design criteria for stormwater mitigation and flood prevention, and impacts to future development and permitting. Director of Natural Resources and Sustainability Gloria Eby addressed future development and recurrent flooding and noted the city has been awarded an FDEP grant for climate resiliency with flooding mitigation being a part of the grant.

Discussion followed on regulations for building homes. Mr. Knight explained that the city follows FEMA rules for building in flood zones and Building Official Gary Hiatt added that the current standard is to build homes one foot above base floor elevation for construction. He said the city can implement, by ordinance, a higher standard but must keep in mind the floor height of adjacent properties.

Mayor Anderson feels the city needs to invest in a simulator model that looks at all drainage basins and replicates flooding to determine what can be prevented. Ms. Eby said there is an expectation that flooding and resiliency will be a part of the climate resiliency grant. Mayor Anderson said the city should not wait for the grant money to do

the simulator model. Ms. Eby stated that staff is moving forward and will be focusing on an RFP for the simulator once some of the post-hurricane work is completed.

Commissioner DeCiccio said storms exposed problems with infrastructure and feels the city needs a full assessment of issues and to determine the cost for improvements as soon as possible.

Director of Public Works and Transportation Charles Ramdatt explained that the grant will help to understand what needs to be done at a macro level and then a micro model to determine existing and future storage needs. He spoke about impacts to the St. John's River and said the water management district will be conducting a macroscopic model as well which will give insight into how the city should move forward. He noted that staff has discussed a program to comprehensively assess parks and roadways and determine what needs to be fixed and will prioritize improvements from that plan. He said staff is looking at creating additional storage for Lake Bell and will provide that information to the commission as soon as possible.

Mr. Ramdatt responded to questions. He said staff will be discussing whether an outside expert is needed to assist with some of the microscopic modeling and will come back to the commission with a plan of action. Staff is looking at a number of strategies for improvements across the city and Lake Rose is included in those plans. In-depth discussion continued on strategies and studies of stormwater mitigation throughout the city. Mr. Ramdatt said staff is working with different agencies on ways to create additional storage. Ms. Eby spoke about future pre-hurricane efforts. She said a related policy is being developed that will be presented to the Lakes Boards and the Commission.

Commissioner Weaver spoke about flooding and noted that an outfall (weir) in the Howell Creek basin that runs through the Lake Maitland chain of lakes, is not adjustable. He feels if the city had control over that weir, it would alleviate issues with dropping lake levels ahead of storm events. Mr. Marcotte said that the weir has been studied twice by the St. John River Management District (District) and concluded that adjusting the weir would have adverse effects downstream, thus the District decided not to adjust the weir. Mr. Ramdatt said he is confident that the state will do a comprehensive study of the impact to the St. Johns River and staff intends to engage with the District on a regional modeling effort. Discussion continued on flood prevention and storage capacity.

Mr. Ramdatt said staff is in discussions with city management to determine what, if anything, is needed and Mr. Knight will follow up with the commission when those talks are complete. Mr. Knight added that staff will move forward with smaller items/equipment purchases within his authority.

Mayor Anderson would like to have a preparedness plan and interim capital plan outlining connectivity between lakes and noted that a long-term plan should include

simulator modeling. He said staff should aim for July 1st as the deadline for a Hurricane Preparedness Policy and a certification report of conditions.

Mr. Ramdatt said he and Director of Water and Wastewater David Zusi are meeting on a regular basis and monthly with staff to discuss issues related to the crossover between stormwater and wastewater. Mayor Anderson addressed sanitary sewer infrastructure and feels there should be open check regulatory waiver that allows the city to control pressure.

Mr. Ramdatt said he was very impressed with the teamwork between departments after the storm, especially the 7/day a week commitment from staff. Mayor Anderson echoed his comments.

Commissioner DeCiccio asked that the preparedness plan be distributed to all departments so it can be followed by everyone. Mr. Ramdatt confirmed that the plan is being worked on by every department.

In response to questions regarding plans for MLK park, Mr. Ramdatt said staff will come back to the commission with a path forward for pursuing grants.

Commissioner Weaver noted that he spoke to staff about impacts to Lake Mendesen. He suggested that staff ask the District to allow a lower well level in exchange for the city dredging the lake.

Mayor Anderson commended and thanked staff for their hard work and dedication after the storm.

3) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:24 p.m.

Mayor Phillip M. Anderson

ATTEST:

City Clerk Rene Cranis