



MINUTES
Commission Workshop Meeting
Thursday, May 6, 2021 - 5:15 PM
Commission Chamber

ATTENDANCE:

Present:

Ellen Glasser, Mayor - Seat 1
Bruce Bole, Commissioner - Seat 2
Michael Waters, Commissioner - Seat 3
Candace Kelly, Commissioner - Seat 4
Brittany Norris, Mayor Pro Tem / Commissioner - Seat 5

Also Present:

Shane Corbin, City Manager (CM)
Brenna Durden, City Attorney (CA)
Donna Bartle, City Clerk (CC)

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Glasser called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

Lee Elmore spoke in opposition to the potential proposal for reclaiming rights-of-way for future public parking and highlighted specific areas of concern.

Lauren Somers spoke on behalf of a new homeowner on Beach Avenue, noting concerns and disappointment that their new neighborhood is being discussed for additional street parking. The homeowner is concerned about additional trash on the street.

Brinkley Harrell spoke about a historical parking document from 1972 regarding beach access parking, reduction of beach access parking over the years, and the need for better parking management including parking signage and street marking near the beach access streets.

Kelly Diaz thanked the Commission for their work and the proposed Resolution promoting the use of Hanna Park by offering discounts to military families. She spoke about the need to have consistent marking of public parking spaces and the lack of public parking near beach access points affecting the surrounding neighborhoods.

Jane Hart thanked the Commission for all they do. She asked if rights-of-way were recorded on historical maps and spoke about parking issues at Marvin's Garden Park and her opposition to paid parking.

Mary Nordhauser commented on the excessive trash and ongoing police activity near 18th Street parking and spoke in support of a paid parking program.

Tom Goelz thanked the Commission for their work. He spoke about the Commission's responsibility to support the resident of Atlantic Beach, the need for more parking, and the importance of keeping the character of the City in mind.

Pam Mullarkey Robbin spoke about Beach Avenue being a small, quaint street allowing residents to walk and ride bikes safely, and spoke against reclaiming the rights-of-way on Beach Avenue.

John Reich expressed concerns regarding the conditions on 18th Street and noted it would cost the City \$22,000 to remove parking spaces relative to beach renourishment. He requested the Commission do something to fix the issues.

Scott Ransom spoke in opposition of any public parking on Beach Avenue, noting the narrow street and safety issues.

Linda Ginsberg spoke about the stop sign located at Coral Street and Beach Avenue, noting drivers often turn the wrong way at the intersection. She commented that additional and more prominent signage should be added and the GPS system should be updated.

Terry Cook spoke about 18th Street parking, noting additional parking in rights-of-way would deteriorate the look of the neighborhood and would just spread out the parking problem to other areas, including more traffic on Beach Avenue. She suggested a possible solution to increase parking for visitors would be to use the parking at Waters Park. She also suggested the City of Atlantic Beach (COAB) work with the City of Jacksonville (COJ) to promote Hanna Park's use by offering incentives.

Susan Snead stated she understands the importance for the City to meet the FDEP requirements and cost-sharing funding eligibility for beach renourishment; however, it is more important to keep the integrity of the beach community. She noted destroying green space to add more parking is not the solution. She explained there is often traffic traveling the wrong way on Beach Avenue, and adding more parking spaces to Beach Avenue would cause more unsafe issues with traffic.

Kira Mauro asked if a license plate survey has been done to know where the people actually using the parking spaces on 18th Avenue are from. She indicated most of the people using the parking spots are Atlantic Beach residents and neighbors. She explained part of the problem is the "natives" of Atlantic Beach are not welcoming to non-residents using the beach. She stated Atlantic Beach is not a restricted HOA.

Darren Lowe spoke about the issue of bicycles traveling the wrong way on roads and believes adding parking spaces on Beach Avenue would be blocking the sightlines. He noted if rights-of-way on Beach Avenue were taken away, the residents of Beach Avenue would most likely end up parking in the additional parking spaces resulting in no additional public parking. He reported many of the people parking at the 18th Street beach parking lot are not going to the beach; they park there to go biking or walking.

Steve Fouraker thanked the Commission for addressing the parking issue at 18th Street. He noted the presentation to the City Commission by a consultant for the North Florida

Transportation and Planning Organization was disturbing. He stated he is strongly against the idea of lower parking restrictions and building parking garages in the area. He expressed concern that the City of Neptune Beach (CONB) wants to add additional development in the downtown area and believes the citizens of both Neptune Beach and Atlantic Beach need to decide if they will be run by commercial interests or residential interests. He noted both cities need to stop giving liquor licenses to businesses that do not have enough parking. He suggested Atlantic Beach re-evaluate its relationship with the Town Center Agency and stated parking enforcement is what is needed in the COAB.

Suzi Ritter explained the City should have whatever number parking spaces is required for beach renourishment funding. She asked, with all the parking issues, why the City continues to grant parking variance for businesses and restaurants; why COAB is more concerned about parking for non-residents and less concerned about the quality of life for its residents; and why there was an agenda item regarding resident-only parking options for residents on the west side of Seminole Road and not all the residents. She noted the number of visitors is increasing and is a city-wide issue.

Ken Brown expressed concern that the current plan does not apply equal laws to everyone. He stated website pictures show targeted areas only and not other areas. He explained that he pulled the City's FLDEP local government funding request for beaches project application and the City is compliant on 12th and 13th. He noted the only primary parking access designation listed in Atlantic Beach is Hanna Park and suggested utilizing Hanna Park as a primary access point more may help the parking situation.

Shylo Kline reported her experience with traveling on Beach Avenue is horrible due to the amount of beach traffic. She noted she had encountered many incidents with drivers not paying attention to their surrounding while driving on Beach Avenue.

Rick Carper explained, as a prior Director of Public Works Director, Hanna Park is designated as a primary access because a primary access is required to have a restroom and regular beach access points in COAB do not have restrooms. He noted the AB Comp Plan requires no net reduction in beach parking; the City should follow the Comprehensive Plan; the right-of-way varies with every plat and enforcing the width of additional parking spaces on Beach Avenue would be too difficult to enforce; and there are other roads in Atlantic Beach with large City right-of-ways that could be used for additional parking. He is not in favor of adding additional paved parking, but instead encourages parking on side streets. He stated he does not support paid parking at the beach access.

Elliot Zisser spoke about his limited view when leaving his driveway. He stated with all the current pedestrian traffic, adding additional parking on Beach Avenue would kill the fantastic ambiance of the area. He stated he does not support making Beach Avenue narrower and blocking beach access.

Jeannie Gracy explained that the people parking are not from Atlantic Beach and it is difficulty to ride bikes down 18th Street due to the traffic and parking.

(Commissioner Bole left the meeting from 6:20 to 6:23 p.m.)

MOTION: Move item 2D to the beginning.

Motion: *Brittany Norris*

Second: *Candace Kelly*

Ellen Glasser

For

Bruce Bole

For

Michael Waters

For

Candace Kelly (Seconded By)

For

Brittany Norris (Moved By)

For

Motion passed 5 to 0.

2. TOPICS

D. Reclaiming City rights-of-way

Staff Presentation of Reclaiming City rights-of-way

CM Corbin stated the Workshop regarding rights-of-way was requested by Commissioner Kelly.

Commissioner Kelly stated her concern about beach access parking. She expressed the topic of reclaiming rights-of-way should be equal throughout the City, not just specific areas. Commissioner Kelly asked CM Corbin why only the beach parking areas are being reviewed. CM Corbin explained the beach area parking is the most talked-about area. He stated additional areas on Mayport Road might be looked at as well.

Mayor Glasser asked if the rights-of-way are already reported. CM Corbin responded they were, and the numbers vary throughout town. Mayor Glasser asked if a permit was needed if someone wanted to place something in their right-of-way. CM Corbin confirmed and explained a revocable right-of-way permit would be required.

Mayor Glasser asked if there is a policy for new properties or redeveloped properties for putting things in the rights-of-way. CM Corbin stated that would be applied equally to all properties.

Commission Discussion – Q & A

Commissioner Bole thanked the public for attending. He stated there is no need to reclaim rights-of-way; the problems are enforcing the current parking spots and he does not want to change the unique rights-a-way in the City.

Commissioner Kelly stated this issue consists of two problems. One problem being the dune restoration. The other problem affects the residents on the west side of the City needing to drive to the beach. She stated the parking issues should be addressed by the City as a whole and in the least disruptive way.

Commissioner Norris thanked the public for their attendance. She stated the City does not want to be looked at as bias and therefore, any different solutions must be looked at and discussed. She stated she does not want to add more beach parking and wants to make the current parking safer. She stated limited access to the beach is not an option as it is codified in the State Statutes. She explained that comments about limiting access to the beach are hurtful to those living on the west side of the City; citizens of her district also pay taxes and have the same rights as other citizens.

Commissioner Waters thanked the public for their attendance. He stated many visitors come to Atlantic Beach. He explained he would like to reduce the amount of parking in the area if possible. It should be a matter of cost-sharing instead of beach renourishment. With the amount of bike traffic, the overflow of people coming to the beach is flowing over to all beach access areas, not just 18th and 19th. He noted he is focused on the safety and quality of life for all residents.

Mayor Glasser thanked the resident for their attendance. She explained, at times, the City needs to look at reclaiming rights-of-way. For example, wider sidewalks allowing safer foot and bike traffic; however, she does not think Beach Avenue is a good location for reclaiming rights-of-way. She indicated she would like to manage the existing beachside parking instead of adding additional spaces.

There was a consensus of the Commission not to put additional parking spots on Beach Avenue due to a review of reclaiming rights-of-way to allow additional public beach access.

(Break from 6:45 to 6:55 pm)

A. Frequently cited myths of beach renourishment parking count

CM Corbin referred to the information in the agenda packet and explained the debate between him and a previous commissioner on whether 26 parking spaces were needed at 18th Street. A conclusion was reached that there was a calculation error in a report and a letter from DEP was sent regarding the correction in the parking count related to beach renourishment.

CM Corbin reported an accusation that aerial photos showing the historic amount of parking spaces on 18th Street were photoshopped and explained the information is easily verifiable on Jax GIS, if anyone wishes to go there.

B. FDEP's response to COAB's request about whether 18th Street public parking could be reduced to 25 spaces

CM Corbin reported the email he received from DEP stating Duval County would lose funding if a certain amount of spaces were removed and not replaced appropriately.

C. Halff Associates Engineering Parking Study for City of Atlantic Beach

CM Corbin explained he recently found a copy of the 1992 COAB parking study. After reviewing the document, he believes many of the parking issues (signage, marking, spot inventory, etc.) remain the same from 1992.

Q & A for Items 2A, 2B, and 2C

Commissioner Waters spoke about 18th Street being left off the 15DU1 completed in 2014. He questioned the cost-sharing and why we are being held to not being able to get rid of a few spots, when you consider the amount of money City of Jacksonville (COJ) is losing from South Jacksonville Beach. City Engineer Steve Swann explained the cost-sharing agreements between the beach cities and COJ.

Mayor Glasser asked for clarification that if the number of spaces was reduced, would the COAB be required to pay back money to COJ. CM Corbin confirmed.

Commissioner Bole asked about the cost-share agreement for Ponte Vedra. CE Swann explained the agreement and requirements for Ponte Vedra.

Mayor Glasser asked CE Swann to state the details of the City's Comprehensive Plan regarding losing beachside parking. CE Swann referred to CM Corbin for details. CM Corbin briefly summarized the Comprehensive Plan stating the City would not reduce any beach access parking. CE Swann read Policy D1.4.2 and Policy E1.1.8 from the beach parking count report memo clarifying the City's policies of removing beach access parking spots. He stated those sections were the relevant policies shown in the Comp Plan. Mayor Glasser asked if the evolution document was part of the same section. Principal Planner Brian Broedell reviewed the 18th Street Beach Access Parking Space Evolution report and answered questions.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Kelly explained staff had completed a lot of research regarding parking issues and pointed out that removing parking spots on 18th Street would not solve the issue of additional parking for other residents wanting and needing to drive to the beach.

Commissioner Norris expressed she is not in favor of any reduction of parking spots. She explained the City is in good financial standings and would rather spend City funds on other exciting things for the residents to enjoy than paying back funds for removing parking spaces at the beach access points. She stated the citizens on the west side of the City have every right to have beach access. She explained removing parking spots was not going to help the overall City parking issue. She expressed desire to discuss a paid parking program to help with the beach parking issues and supports contacting Duval County regarding starting a program to promote the use of Hanna Park.

Commissioner Waters explained that because of the reported discrepancies found, he is requesting to obtain accurate information and numbers. Once accurate information regarding cost sharing, beach renourishment, and the number of parking spaces is presented, he would be open to other options. He reported, according to the information presented by CE Swann, it would cost \$22,000 over five years to remove 25 parking spots and improve the quality of life for residents on one street. COJ and DEP would pay the \$22,000. He thanked staff for their support. He would like to find a way for residents to access Hanna Park for free or a way to attract beachgoers to Hanna Park instead of the Atlantic Beach access points.

Commissioner Bole explained he would like to look at the big picture and the City's Master Plan and not just beach parking issues. He believes the enforcement of the current policies and laws would help the beach parking problems. He suggested reaching out to Duval County for assistance if needed.

Mayor Glasser explained her communication with COJ about these issues. She reported a revised version of the proposed Resolution to give Military families discounts to Hanna Park is on the next Council agenda for COJ. She explained she has sent emails and photos and has also been in contact with the Mayor of Jacksonville about the beach parking issues. It is challenging to have 19 Council people in Jacksonville agree on anything. She suggested the COAB not stop their efforts to comprehensive management. She explained the status of the Parking Committee by stating the committee was created by two Commissions ago and was not shut down, but rather sunset/ended. The committee ended by recommending 26 parking spaces on 18th Street instead of the previous 51. She explained the current Commission has reduced the number of spaces by nine and could remove a few more spaces if desired. She believes that after getting accurate information about beach access parking requirements, the Commission should end the back and forth workshops, agree to a solution, and move on to all the other topics and issues within the City. She indicated the Commission could remove spaces, convert spaces to golf cart parking, or continue to deliberate on the topic.

Item 2D was taken out of order and discussed earlier in the meeting.

The Commission decided not to address Items 2E and 2F at this meeting. The items will be taken up at a future meeting.

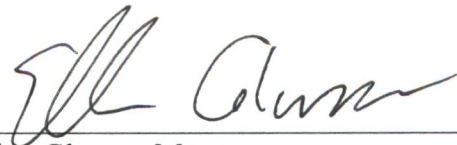
ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM.

Attest:



Donna L. Bartle, City Clerk



Ellen Glasser, Mayor

Date Approved: _____

10/11/2021