

BOARD WORK SESSION, 11/1/23

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK, FLORIDA MET IN A SPECIAL BOARD WORK SESSION AT THE VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK ADMINISTRATION OFFICE, 1650 NORTH HIGHLAND PARK DRIVE, ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2023, AT 3:00 P.M. WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFFPERSONS PRESENT:

BRANDON MCWHORTER, MAYOR-COMMISSIONER (Seat 2)
AMANDA UPDIKE, COMMISSIONER (Seat 3)
LITA O'NEILL, VILLAGE CLERK
BRIAN UPDIKE, CITY MANAGER

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor-Commissioner Brandon McWhorter called the meeting to order at 3:23 P.M.

ROLL CALL

The Village Clerk called the roll. Mayor-Commissioner Brandon McWhorter and Commissioner Amanda Updike were present. A quorum was present.

City Commissioner Seat 1 Vacancy

Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter opened the floor by asking Commissioner Updike about updates regarding the vacant Commission seat (Seat 1 vacated by Marcus Hinshaw). Commissioner Updike noted that she spoke with both Mark Smith and Derek Camann, but not Chris Wharem. She noted that Mr. Camann is very eager to work for the Village and also noted that he would be an engaged commissioner. She commented that Mr. Smith would be a good candidate to serve as legal counsel for the Village of Highland Park at some future time.

Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter commented that he arranged a meeting with Mr. Camann to talk about work needed within Highland Park. Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter stated that Mr. Camann came to the meeting very prepared. He also noted that he would likely make a good commissioner based on what he has seen. Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter also noted that Mr. Mark Smith may not wish to work in that capacity due to his recent retirement, but the Commission should check with Mr. Smith about his willingness to provide legal services in the future. Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter then commented that he would be more inclined to hire a City Manager with more experience, like Ric Busbee.

Commissioner Updike then asked whether a Deputy City Manager position would be possible in case the City Manager is out of town. A successor would need to be identified because Ric Busbee may not want to do the job for a long time. It would also allow the City Manager to train the Deputy City Manager so there is backup when the City Manager is unavailable. Discussion ensued about the importance of training someone to take over the responsibilities of the water system for the long-term.

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Brian Updike, City Manager, addressed the Commissioners about the details of the City Manager position. The City Manager also noted that the water system now has backup via the inter-connection to the City of Lake Wales.

The Commission discussed the benefits of creating a Deputy City Manager position. The Clerk noted the FRS requirement for staff people working for the Village. Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter noted that any person may be trained on a contractual basis.

Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter would like to give an opportunity to these experienced people who have a vested interest in working for the Village. Commissioner Updike agreed. Commissioner Updike asked whether Ric Busbee was ever hired or if he was contracted to work. He has only ever been contracted, never hired as staff.

New Business

Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter invited Mr. Updike to speak about any new business to discuss or add to the agenda for the next meeting.

Mr. Updike told the Commission that he spoke to Wendy at Bullard Insurance today about the emergency repair for the damage caused by a lightning strike and connecting to the Lake Wales line. Mr. Updike asked whether he could get quotes/pricing about replacement for the equipment needed. The Clerk provided copies of the cost estimate from Central Water and Electric that were sent from the City Manager. Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter provided copies of Resolution 2023-02 regarding procurement policies and noted that Section 3 lists exceptions to bidding requirements, including Item #1, Emergency Purchases. Damage caused to the water system and subsequent use of the Lake Wales water line when the system gets fixed should be covered under the same claim from Bullard Insurance Agency. Mr. Updike is waiting to hear back about the claim and will share that information when he receives it.

Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter asked if there were any other pressing issues regarding the grounds. There were none discussed.

Mr. Updike recommended getting a budget-to-actual report from the Treasurer, Mary Bradley, at each work session and regular meeting so that the Commission would be able to discuss the budget and special projects, such as street curbs or other projects that the Commission determines are important to the Village. Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter commented that a payables report would be helpful and requested that the Village Clerk request from the Village Treasurer these reports in advance of meetings and work sessions. The Village Clerk agreed to do so.

Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter suggested meeting for work sessions every other month on the off months from regular meetings. He also asked the Village Clerk to create a 2024 calendar for meeting dates and times. The Clerk asked for clarification about the December work session, which would be December 26th (the 4th Tuesday of the month). The Commission decided to have the December work session on December 19th at 3:00pm (instead of the 4th

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Tuesday due to the holidays). Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter asked the Clerk to create a 2024 meeting calendar with the 4th Tuesday for regular meetings and Wednesdays for work sessions.

Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter asked about the demolition of the property at 1441 North Highland Park Drive. Mr. Updike mentioned that they may have secured a demolition permit from Polk County, but we do not issue authorizations for demolition.

Beautification Funds

The question was raised about getting a custom-made conference table made for the room. The Clerk will connect with Ric Busbee, who donated the Persian rug, to create a layout for the room before the next regular meeting.

The Clerk provided an update about the Division of Historical Resources sign that will be placed near the VHP Administration Building. The Highland Park Association donated around \$12,000 when the organization dissolved. Suggestions such as an azalea bed with a plaque in memory of Mr. Frank Kanzinger by the administration building. The wife of Mr. Kanzinger is going to be in town in December, so Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter encouraged staff to try to get this project going. The Clerk will check with Action Signs, who made the sign in memory of Earl Sehi near the flagpole.

Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter asked for any additional items to discuss.

Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter brought it to the attention of those present that Focus Builders had approached the Village this week about development of the golf course property. Mr. Updike noted that years ago Attorney Jack Brandon and Attorney Mark Smith were involved. At the time, Therriac and Spain, land use attorneys out of Tallahassee, were hired to deal with this issue then. The City Manager suggested reviewing previous meeting minutes. Mr. Updike noted that the owners bought the land well aware of the existing zoning.

Elections

Elections information was provided by the Clerk. The Village needs to notify the Polk Supervisor of Elections office in January about whether an agreement for elections needs to be executed. The estimated cost of an election is \$2,500, and the equipment used would not require the use of a land line.

Newsletter

The Village Clerk reported that she spoke with previous clerk, Blair Updike, who used to send out a newsletter. The new Clerk has dedicated a page on the website for newsletter items. In addition, a link and/or a QR code will be shared via the water bills so that anyone that wants to join the "Friends of Highland Park Group" on Facebook. Mr. Updike cautioned the Commissioners about posting anything on Facebook due to Government in the Sunshine Law.

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Ethics Course

Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter asked the Village Clerk to share information with the Commissioners about how to register for an ethics training.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no additional comments.

The Mayor adjourned the work session at 4:25pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lita O'Neill, Village Clerk

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