

**MINUTES  
SPECIAL ORMOND BEACH CITY COMMISSION  
HELD AT CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS**

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**July 13, 2021**

**7:00 p.m.**

**Commission Chambers**

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Present were: Mayor Bill Partington, Commissioners Dwight Selby, Troy Kent, Susan Persis, and Rob Littleton, City Manager Joyce Shanahan, Assistant City Manager Claire Whitley, City Attorney Randy Hayes, and Acting City Clerk Wendy Hontz.

**A G E N D A**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. INVOCATION**
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 4. DISCUSSION ITEMS: PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE PROPERTY AT 56 NORTH BEACH STREET**
- 5. ADJOURNMENT**

Item #1 – Meeting Call to Order

Mayor Partington called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Item #2 – Invocation

Mayor Partington gave the invocation.

Item #3 – Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Partington led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item #4 – Discussion Items: Public Comment Period and Discussion Regarding the Property at 56 North Beach Street

Ms. Donna Birenbaum, 1 John Anderson Drive, discussed her concern over the property being turned into a parking lot. She mentioned improving other parking facilities and installing parking signage in other areas around the city instead. She requested the Commission reconsider making any decisions regarding the property at the current time.

Mr. Robbie Coleman, 332 Oak Drive, stated he had spoken with many families and residents in regards to the property and many stated they did not want a parking lot to be constructed at the site. He discussed other parking options in Downtown Ormond Beach. He requested the Commission delay demolition of the structure.

Mr. Rob Bird, 26 Silk Oaks Drive, noted his position on The Ormond Scenic Loop and Trail Corridor Management Organization. He explained the designation categories of The Loop as a National Scenic Byway, and how 56 North Beach Street fell into the historic resources' category. He stated one of the Ormond Scenic Loop and Trail Corridor Management Organization's goals was to protect the byway's intrinsic resources, and noted the organization would support a six-month moratorium of the demolition.

Mr. Robbie O'Brien, 160 East Granada Boulevard and on behalf of Salty Church, stated that Salty Church wanted to be an asset to the community and help find solutions regarding the property site. He mentioned Salty Church was willing to help if there was a way for them to do so.

Mr. Douglas Kinney, 13 Silk Oaks Drive, expressed his concern regarding the demolition of the structure on the property and the costs associated with it. He stated his concern on how long the site would remain a parking lot and asked the Commission to hold off on making any final decisions regarding the property.

Mr. Tom Caffrey, 1409 North Beach Street, discussed real estate values and the possibility of selling the property. He stated that he did not believe a parking lot was the right choice for the site, as parking had never been an issue for him in the downtown area.

Mr. Bill Partington Sr., 4 Pine Valley Circle, stated he thought the vote to demolish the property was premature and did not allow adequate opportunity for the public to be heard. He discussed the lack of public input at the workshop that was previously held regarding the property. He asked that the demolition be delayed until a study could be conducted to evaluate all potential options for the site.

Ms. Rita Press, 875 Wilmette Avenue, noted the city lacked a structure to hold large events at and discussed the need for a community center in the area. She stated the church could be restructured to what the city needed, while still fitting in with the surrounding community. She mentioned the citizens were not necessarily asking the Commission to change their minds, but rather to explore further options.

Ms. Connie Colby, 108 Roble Lane, stated the former church structure's architecture was aesthetically consistent with the surrounding area. She discussed the condition of the church, the repairs needed, and suggested potential uses for the property.

Mr. Dick Hildebrand, 14 Sherrington Drive, discussed various hazards that existed within the former church structure and the large cost that would be associated with repairing the building.

Mr. Lew A Welge, 88 Mound Avenue, discussed the former church building and history of the site. He noted per his understanding, Salty Church had offered to help provide funds to repair the building and he requested that sufficient time be allowed to gain citizen input on the subject matter.

Ms. Julia Truilo, 307 John Anderson Drive and on behalf of Ormond Beach MainStreet, discussed several possible uses for the property, as well as the architecture of the structure. She stated that time was needed for parking studies to be completed, and discussed the idea of a possible citizen committee.

Mr. Jerry Valcik, 236 Ormwood Drive, stated he was an advocate for a minimum six-month pause on making a decision regarding the property. He noted he felt the pandemic played a large role in the lack of public input on the subject. He proceeded to discuss his concerns regarding the property and stated he felt the need for a historical urban consultant and citizen committee.

Ms. Judith Stein, 166 Orchard Lane, discussed the mid-century modern architecture and history of the building. She stated that the building was named one of the "11 to Save" by the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation. She proceeded to note that the Ormond Beach Arts District and Historical Society supported preservation of the building and requested the Commission pause the demolition of the structure.

Ms. Terry Mercer, 31 Dix Avenue, stated she did not want the building to be torn down or a shell parking lot to be constructed at the site. She discussed parking in the downtown area and suggested tracking the use of the current parking lot before demolition of the structure. She stated the city needed buildings like the former church to maintain heritage.

Mr. Bill Denny, 1027 North Halifax Drive, discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic prevented public forums on the topic and requested a sufficient delay to allow for several forums to take place to discuss the property. He stated that he and many citizens who visited the site had a different opinion than the Commission on the condition of the former church. He discussed the historical aspect of the structure and possible grant options. He provided the Commission with a petition of over 200 signatures to delay demolition of the structure.

Ms. Lee Dunkel, 94 Ormond Parkway, noted she was in support of saving the former church and against the construction of a parking lot.

Ms. Suzy Williams, 26 Big Buck Trail, stated she believed the former church structure could be saved and more parking could be provided by tearing down the concrete portion on the structure. She discussed possible uses for the property, including a venue to host events and church services.

Mr. Bondi N. Powell, 21 Lincoln Avenue, stated he was against the construction of a parking lot. He mentioned the sand currently at the site was an issue for the surrounding residents. He agreed with Ms. Williams that the concrete part of the church should be torn down as it does not have the same history as the remainder of the structure. He stated he was in favor of delaying the demolition.

Mr. Winston Churchill, 39 Coquina Point Drive, discussed the Veterans Museum located on Beach Street in Daytona Beach and how the museum had lost their lease. He believed the property would be an ideal location for the Veterans Museum to reestablish itself. He requested that staff reach out to the Veterans Museum Organization for further discussion.

Ms. Merri Churchill, 39 Coquina Point Drive, waived her time to speak.

Mr. Ed McGraw, 34 Seville Street, stated he wanted to keep the former church structure and maintain its history.

Mr. Mark Rubin, 891 North Beach Street, requested more time to perform studies to see how the property could be saved. He proceeded to discuss the history and preservation of buildings.

Ms. Cathy Wharton, 1 John Anderson Drive, compared the former church property structure to The Casements. She discussed the possibility of the structure turning into a community center that would host public events.

Ms. Linda Williams, 131 Bosarvey Drive, stated she was there to promote finding common ground and creative ideas regarding the property. She mentioned some possible ideas of a "green" building or music hall. She then discussed a possible trolley to help with traffic and parking concerns.

#### Commission Discussion

Mayor Partington noted no votes or motions would take place at the current meeting. He explained that depending on discussion and if there was a consensus, staff would bring an item back to a future meeting for formal approval.

Commissioner Selby complimented members of the public who provided input and thanked them for remaining civil in their discussion. He stated he voted against the demolition of the building and was hoping the Commission would approve a six-month pause on the demolition of the structure. He noted he had a discussion with City Attorney Randy Hayes, who had explained the Commission could not reconsider a contract that had already been issued, but noted the Commission was allowed to contact the contractor to see if they would be willing to modify the contract. He explained staff had expressed that the contractor was receptive to modifying the contract. He proceeded to discuss potential modifications that could be made and the steps that would need to be taken to modify the contract. He noted no formal action could be taken at the current meeting, but stated the Commission could provide direction on where they stood regarding the project.

Commissioner Selby stated he was emotionally charged regarding the topic of 56 North Beach Street and discussed the building and site in further detail. He noted he believed fixing the former church building would not incur as high of costs as had been previously alleged by some individuals. He clarified he did not want any of his comments to imply guilt or fear. He expressed his opinion that the Commission should delay demolition of the structure to provide the community with an opportunity to come up with a plan for the site.

Commissioner Kent stated he had visited the former church building several times and discussed the poor condition of the building. He noted the citizens elected the Commission to represent them and explained that sometimes they may agree or disagree. He stated he voted to purchase the property, discussed the waterfront location and the potential for a community center at the site. He noted if a community center was not decided upon for the site, he would be in support of selling the property if it profited the citizens of Ormond Beach and discussed reasons why. He noted he did not believe the property was going to work as a community or civic center. He discussed the term "partnership" that had been mentioned by various organizations and noted he felt many organizations wanted to use the property at the city's expense. He discussed the

appraisal for the property and stated he did not want a long-term parking lot at the site. He noted he did not support keeping the building in the condition it was in, unless a purchaser was willing to assume all liability in repairing the building. He discussed the idea of a veteran museum establishing at the site. He stated he was still in favor of demolishing the building and approved of a short-term parking lot being constructed at the site until the Commission made a further decision.

Commissioner Persis thanked all audience remarks speakers for their comments. She noted she was a long-time resident of the City of Ormond Beach and had attended many events at the former church. She noted the city bought the property in an effort to make a profit for the citizens of Ormond Beach and listed options that had been discussed for the site. She stated she had toured the former church building and had conversations with various builders regarding the structure. She detailed multiple treatments and improvements that would need to be done to bring the building up to standards. She stated she felt the building was unsafe and needed to be demolished. She noted once the building was demolished, she would like to see something at the site that all members of the public could enjoy. She explained she would approve of not having a parking lot at the site and was fine leaving the property vacant. She stated she had many residents reach out to her who preferred to see a community center constructed on the property. She stated if a community center was not an option for the site, she felt the city should sell the property for a profit. She noted she would not be changing her vote on demolishing the structure at the site.

Commissioner Littleton thanked all speakers for remaining polite in their comments. He stated he was seeking justification to change his vote and reconsider the contract, explaining the justification he was seeking would have been a plan with funds attached. He noted he did not hear any plans that included what he was seeking and stated he would not reconsider the contract.

Mayor Partington noted the Commission was not there to reconsider the contract, but was there instead to see if the Commission was in favor of a six-month delay to explore other options for the site. He requested Mr. Hayes explain the request for proposals (RFP) process and what was required under the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) statute for a property located in the downtown area.

Mr. Randy Hayes, City Attorney, provided details regarding the project and contract. He noted if there was a desire from the Commission for a change in direction regarding the terms of the contract, it would require staff to bring back an amendment to the contract with consent from the contractor. He stated the purpose of that amendment would be to allow any interested parties to bring forward a proposal to the city. He detailed the process of what would need to take place if the Commission chose to go that direction. He noted the building was located within the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) district and discussed the impacts that had on the property and how the property could be disposed or redeveloped. He continued to detail the process of the next steps if the Commission decided to pause the demolition and allow for proposals to be submitted.

Mayor Partington stated he was in support of a six-month delay to allow the process Mr. Hayes had described to move forward and allow the Commission to hear proposals. He noted Commissioner Kent and Commissioner Persis were willing to sell the property for a profit, but explained the city would not know if that was a possibility without having an RFP. He questioned if the Commission would support a six-month delay to investigate RFPs for the property.

Commissioner Kent stated he would not support a six-month delay to allow for RFPs to be submitted. He noted a prior report had shown that the property was worth the same amount of monies with or without the former church building on it, and may be potentially worth more without the building at the site.

Commissioner Persis stated for the same reasons described by Commissioner Kent, she was also not in support of a six-month delay to allow for RFPs.

Mayor Partington stated he supported the six-month delay of demolition and felt the site was an amazing asset. He stated he had received multiple emails from citizens requesting to delay the demolition of the building. He noted an overwhelming number of residents wanted to save the property. He stated it was dangerous to not listen to residents, and explained the special meeting was called to hear input from citizens. He discussed the Osceola/Ortona Elementary School decision that had been made by the Volusia County School Board, in which he felt the public was not fairly heard. He noted

he held the special meeting because he refused to allow the city to treat residents the same way. He stated he hoped a Commissioner would have changed their mind to allow a delay.

Commissioner Selby discussed the statute regarding disposition in the CRA district. He questioned if demolition of a building included in that statute fell under the same time requirements; whereby, Mr. Hayes stated it did, but explained the Commission had some discretion within the statute to define the purpose and scope.

Mr. Hayes discussed the CRA statute in further detail and its requirements, reiterating the Commission had the discretion to shape the scope as deemed appropriate as long as there was a public purpose and a finding for that purpose.

Commissioner Selby stated the statute would be triggered if the real estate left public hands and was sold or leased to someone other than the city; whereby, Mr. Hayes confirmed that was correct and explained there was a provision within the statute that pertained exclusively for how to dispose of real property within the CRA district.

Commissioner Selby noted many of the audience remarks speakers may not have enough information to come forward with a proposal with dollars attached at the current time. He noted many citizens were requesting an opportunity to explore all possible uses for the property. He questioned if Commissioner Littleton would allow the public time to explore all potential uses for the site and come back with a plan.

Commissioner Littleton noted the city purchased the property three years ago and stated he was ready to move forward with making the property useful for citizens. He noted no citizens had come to him with a final plan for the property during the past three years.

Commissioner Selby stated the current meeting was the first opportunity for the citizens to begin to express their plans for the site. He stated he believed the Commission owed the citizens time to form a plan. He noted he respected each Commissioner and their decisions. He questioned why there was a rush to move forward with demolition of the property and felt a six-month delay would not have any harm.

Mayor Partington explained that organizations who may be willing to commit dollars may be waiting until RFPs were performed to see how they read. He noted he and Commissioner Selby were in support of a six-month delay, but explained one of the other three Commissioners would need to be in support of the delay as well. He stated he respected each of the Commissioners' decisions. He discussed the importance of listening to members of the public and allowing them to have input regarding public property.

Item #5 – Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

APPROVED: August 17, 2021

BY:

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Bill Partington, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Wendy Hontz,  
Acting City Clerk