

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Special City Commission Meeting
December 2, 2002

The City Commission met in a formal session Monday, December 2, 2002 at 7:30 p.m. in the City Commission meeting room at City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Alexander, and the following were present:

1. Roll Call:

Mayor Mark Alexander, Mayor/City Commissioner
George Gardner, City Commissioner, Mayor Elect
Susan Burk, City Commissioner
Raymond Connor, City Commissioner
Errol D. Jones, City Commissioner Elect
William Lennon, City Commissioner
Donald A. Crichlow, City Commissioner Elect

William B. Harriss, City Manager
Jack E. Cubbedge, Assistant City Manager
James B. Wilson, City Attorney
Martha V. (Nell) Porter, City Clerk
Dr. William Adams, Director, Heritage Tourism
Timothy A. Burchfield, Director, General Services
Mark Litzinger, Director, Financial Services
John Regan, Director, Utilities
William H. Harding, Director, Public Works
Paul Williamson, Public Affairs
James Owens, Fire Chief
David Shoar, Police Chief
Karen Rogers, Recording Secretary

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Pastor Oliver Simmons, St. Paul AME, presented the invocation. Commissioner Lennon led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. PRESENTATION AND DEPARTING COMMENTS:

Mayor Alexander presented a plaque of appreciation to Commissioner Green for service to the community.

Commissioner Green extended his thanks to the Mayor, Commissioners, his wife, City Staff, and volunteers. He acknowledged Mayor Alexander's eight years and Commissioner Connor's four years service to the City.

Mayor Alexander presented a plaque of appreciation to Commissioner Connor for service to the community.

Commissioner Connor extended his appreciation to his wife, family, friends, the Commissioners he served with, City Staff, volunteers, and the citizens of St. Augustine for giving him the privilege to serve. He wished the in coming Commissioners well.

Commissioner Connor presented a plaque of appreciation to Mayor Alexander for service to the community.

Mayor Alexander also thanked the City Staff, friends, family, and foremost his wife Margo. He wished the new Commission well in their adventures.

4. OATHS OF OFFICE BY JUDGE PATTI CHRISTENSEN.

4.A/ Oaths to Mayor Gardner and Commissioners Crichlow and Jones.

Tracy Upchurch, attorney, former State Representative, and former St. Augustine Mayor/Commissioner, explained that Judge Christensen was unable to attend the meeting. He called the Commissioners elect forward and said that Katy Crichlow would hold the Bible for Commissioner Crichlow, Sally Gardner for Mayor Gardner, and Arnett Chase for Errol Jones.

Mr. Upchurch administered the oath of office to the Mayor and Commissioners, whereupon they took their seats at the Commission table.

5. CITY COMMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.

5.A/ Establish meeting time.

MOTION

Mayor Gardner MOVED that regular meetings be held at 7:30 p.m. Commissioner Jones SECONDED the motion.

Commissioner Jones agreed that 7:30 p.m. was better then 4:00 p.m.; however, 7:00 p.m. seemed to be a better hour to insure adjournment before midnight.

Commissioner Burk stated that although she understood the concerns, she preferred the 4:00 p.m. schedule. She suggested that the Commissioners schedule the meetings for 4:30-5:00 p.m., as meetings often continued from four to seven hours, and the Commission could not remain alert at midnight to achieve thoughtful decisions. She stated that the agenda could remain flexible to work around the needs of the citizen. She pointed out the hardship for staff that worked from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and then would have to return to the City to attend a potentially long meeting at 7:30 p.m. She agreed that a change was necessary, but she suggested that they take incremental steps by starting at 5:00 p.m. but maintain the option to start later if deemed necessary.

Commissioner Lennon said that when the Commission met at 7:00 p.m. the elderly had complained that the meetings were too late, therefore a survey had been conducted the result of which indicated that the meetings should begin earlier. He added that the earlier time was also beneficial to the functions of staff.

Commissioner Crichlow noted that often a meeting could go 4-6 hours, at which time the crowds would dwindle because of the late hour. He stated that he was in favor of a convenient time schedule for the public, but he was not certain what that time might be. He suggested trying Commissioner Burk's suggestion of starting at 5:00 p.m. with a flexible agenda.

Commissioner Burk said that she would like a mechanism in place for citizens to conduct their business during Commission meetings.

Commissioner Crichlow suggested that the Commission could also recess if necessary to be flexible for the public.

MOTION

Mayor Gardner amended his MOTION to set the meeting time for the next meeting only at 7:30 p.m. to give the Commissioners time to talk with the community and give the issue thought and address the matter at a later time.

Commissioner Jones stated that in light of what he had heard from the Commissioners he would support a compromise of a 6:00 p.m. scheduled meeting time. He said that out of courtesy he would accept the Mayor's motion for 7:30 p.m. for one meeting only, but he would come back and fight hard for 6:00 p.m. as the meeting time.

Commissioner Jones SECONDED the amended motion.

VOTE ON MOTION

AYES: Gardner, Jones, Crichlow

NAYES: Burk, Lennon

MOTION CARRIED 3/2

CONSIDERATION OF TAX DEED

SALE RELATIVE TO PROPERTY LOCATED AT 64 N. WHITNEY STREET. (¹ Item 6. was heard before item 5.A.)

Mayor Gardner explained that the property aforementioned would be going for tax sale on December 5th prior to the subsequent Commission meeting. He said there was approximately \$4,000 taxes and \$7,000 in City liens on the property. He questioned whether the property should be bid on to protect the City's investment.

MOTION

Commissioner Lennon MOVED to accept the purchase of the property.

Commissioner Burk questioned whether the value of the property exceeded the amount of the liens, and the response was affirmative.

Commissioner Burk SECONDED the motion.

Commissioner Crichlow questioned what the City normally did with property in that situation.

After a brief dialogue it was determined that if the City was the successful bidder the property would be kept in proper condition, could be sold to adjacent property owners, or create a green space.

VOTE ON MOTION

AYES: Lennon, Burk, Crichlow,
Jones, Gardner

NAYES: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7. CLOSING COMMENTS BY MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSIONER.

Commissioner Lennon expressed appreciation to his family and supporters. He recognized Bootsie Batson and Barbara Ellis for the years of their support. He welcomed the new Mayor and Commissioners saying that he looked forward to working with them while keeping the City in the forefront.

Commissioner Burk stated that she was excited about the new Commission, and she looked forward to wonderful things happening with the City. She noted that Mayor Gardner would not want "yes people" on the Commission, and everyone knew that she spoke her mind and made people aware of her position.

Commissioner Crichlow thanked all in attendance for the occasion, and he expressed gratitude to the outgoing Commissioners. He said the only difference between the Commissions was how they wanted to accomplish making the City better. He said that he looked forward to working with the Commissioners and the residential and business community to make the City attractive

to visitors while simultaneously a wonderful place to live. He welcomed the honor and challenge of serving the people of St. Augustine.

Commissioner Jones thanked the citizens of St. Augustine for bestowing upon him the opportunity to serve. He extended appreciation to family and new and old friends for their support. He recognized Reverend Richardson for his support over the years.

Mayor Gardner acknowledged the diverse group in attendance. He proceeded to read an address given by his grandfather to the people of Schenectady, New York when elected mayor on a reform ticket 90 years ago. He said that his pledge was to bring the community together as a complete community to meet, face, debate, and resolve the future challenges.

BENEDICTION.

Reverend Frederick D. Richardson Jr. delivered the benediction.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

MAYOR

CITY CLERK