

**CITY OF FREEPORT
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

June 22, 2023, 6:30 PM
Council Chambers, Freeport City Hall

Council Members Present: Mayor Russ Barley, Councilwoman Brannon, Councilman Bud Day, Councilwoman Elizabeth Haffner, Councilman Tracey Dickey, and Councilman Eddie Farris

Staff Members Present: City Attorney Clay Adkinson, City Manager Mark Martin, City Clerk Kathie Gatewood, Finance Officer Sara Bowers, Planning Director Latilda Hughes-Neel, Parks, Wastewater Supervisor Paul Johnson, City Engineer Cliff Knauer, Billing Supervisor Rebecca King, and HR Generalist Chris Quinley

1. Meeting called to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Mayor Barley in the Council Chambers of Freeport City Hall.

2. State of the City Address

Mayor Barley gave the 2023 State of the City Address.

City Clerk's Note: A copy of the State of the City Address is available in the City Clerk's Office.

3. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Councilwoman Haffner gave the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was recited.

4. Recognition of Guests

5. Consent Agenda

a. Bills

b. Revenue and Expenditure Reports through May 2023

6. Public Comment on Consent Agenda

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

7. Approval of Consent Agenda

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilman Day

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To approve the consent agenda as presented.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilwoman Haffner aye
Councilman Day: aye
Councilman Farris: aye
Councilwoman Brannon aye
Councilman Dickey: aye

Carried.

8. Consideration of Additions and Deletions to Agenda

1. Planning – Addition – Planning Conference Attendance

9. Approval of Agenda with Additions

Moved by: Councilman Farris
Seconded by: Councilwoman Haffner

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To approve the agenda additions as proposed.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilwoman Haffner aye
Councilman Day: aye
Councilman Farris: aye
Councilwoman Brannon aye
Councilman Dickey: aye

Carried.

10. Staff Reports

- a. Water
- b. Sewer
- c. Parks

1. Freeport Football and Cheer Fee Waiver Request

City Manager Martin presented the item and asked for a motion for approval of him to negotiate changes while using last year’s agreement for guidance.

Moved by: Councilman Farris
Seconded by: Councilman Dickey

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To approve the City Manager to negotiate changes to the Freeport Football and Cheer Agreement and Fee Waiver providing the City Attorney has reviewed and approved the agreement.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilwoman Haffner	aye
Councilman Day:	aye
Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Brannon	aye
Councilman Dickey:	aye

Carried.

d. City Manager

e. City Clerk

f. Finance

1. Budget Workshops

Finance Officer Bowers discussed possible Budget Workshop dates with the Council. She asked for a motion to approve two agreed upon Budget Workshop dates in July.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner

Seconded by: Councilman Dickey

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To approve Budget Workshops for Thursday, July 13, 2023 at 5:00pm and Thursday, July 27, 2023 at 5:30pm, both meetings in Council Chambers.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilwoman Haffner	aye
Councilman Day:	aye
Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Brannon	aye
Councilman Dickey:	aye

Carried.

g. Billing

h. Planning

1. Request for Qualifications – Continuing Engineering Services

Planning Director Hughes-Neel announced the rankings of the RFQ participants in order. She asked the Council for direction. City Manager Martin explained that the city could keep Dewberry under contract for projects but add one or two more qualified engineering firms to create a rotation much like Walton County has in place. Councilman Farris expressed interest in a rotation. Councilwoman Brannon also liked the idea of a rotation but wanted time to research the firms

and perhaps have them come to a regular council meeting for interviews. After discussions, the following motion was made:

Moved by: Councilwoman Brannon

Seconded by: Councilman Dickey

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To accept staff rankings and request Council interviews with the top 3 ranked firms, Alday Howell, MB Consulting, and Seaside Engineering And Surveying (SEAS), for the Council to determine entering into negotiations with any or none of them.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilwoman Haffner aye

Councilman Day: aye

Councilman Farris: aye

Councilwoman Brannon aye

Councilman Dickey: aye

Carried.

2. The Oaks at Freeport Major Development Application

Curtis Smith of Nautilus Civil Engineers, Inc. presented the 128 apartment project details to the Council. Acreage is 11.44 overall and the project is a much lower density than the allowable amount. Sewer pumps for the Verandas next door had previously been upgraded and will now serve both projects. Councilwoman Haffner asked about fencing to limit people from going onto neighboring private property, noting the past issues residents of the Verandas have had. Mr. Smith explained the setback could not be used for a fence due to the powerlines, to which Councilwoman Brannon asked if they were using the powerline easement as their setback, and he confirmed they were. Councilwoman Haffner noted the project is under the density allowed, and there are no zoning or variance requests. She appreciated the extra parking and their willingness regarding buffering the backside of the property. Planning Director Hughes-Neel mentioned a prior meeting with the developer and the neighbors to discuss ways to help discourage people from going onto private property. Councilwoman Brannon expressed her desire for proper separation between the development and neighbors. After a discuss regarding motion options, Councilwoman Brannon made the following motion:

Moved by: Councilwoman Brannon

Seconded by: Councilwoman Haffner

Mayor Barley called for public comment.

Resident and Planning Board Member Manny Vital appreciated the presentation and said he was happy to see the developer will be adding a fully length sidewalk which will help with the safety of kids.

To approve the proposed Development Order with the condition that before finalization is completed that the Development Order shows community meetings were held with the public regarding separation.

City Attorney Adkinson suggested the following amended motion:

Providing approval of the Development Order providing a satisfactory buffer was developed and the city was shown proof that community meetings were held demonstrating as such as part of the Development Order.

Both Councilwoman Brannon and Councilwoman Haffner amended their motions.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilwoman Haffner	aye
Councilman Day:	aye
Councilman Farris:	aye
Councilwoman Brannon	aye
Councilman Dickey:	aye

Carried.

3. Lafayette Creek Commerce Park Major Development Application

Senior Planner Graves summarized the history of the 2008 development stating the developer reconfigured the remainder of the project to be more aesthetically pleasing, more functional and better meet ADA compliance. Curtis Smith of Nautilus Civil Engineering, Inc. presented the project to the Council and answered questions.

Planning Director Hughes-Neel said the Planning Board really liked this project and the changes made. She asked for a motion to approve as presented.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner
Seconded by: Councilwoman Brannon

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To approve the Lafayette Creek Commerce Park Major Development Application as presented.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilwoman Haffner aye
Councilman Day: aye
Councilman Farris: aye
Councilwoman Brannon aye
Councilman Dickey: aye

Carried.

4. Starburst at Hammock Bay Phase I

Planning Director Hughes-Neel presented the Council with the Starburst at Hammock Bay Phase I final plat and asked for a motion to approve it as presented. She requested the Council to stay after the meeting to sign, if approved.

Moved by: Councilwoman Brannon
Seconded by: Councilwoman Haffner

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To approve the Starburst at Hammock Bay Phase I final plat

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilwoman Haffner aye
Councilman Day: aye
Councilman Farris: aye
Councilwoman Brannon aye
Councilman Dickey: aye

Carried.

5. Planning Conference

Planning Director Hughes-Neel asked for a motion to approve Senior Planner Graves and herself to attend this year's Planning Conference.

Moved by: Councilwoman Haffner
Seconded by: Councilwoman Brannon

Mayor Barley called for public comment and there was none.

To approve Planning Director Hughes-Neel and Senior Planner Graves to attend an upcoming Planning Conference for continuing education.

A roll call vote was ordered, and the vote was as follows:

Councilwoman Haffner aye
Councilman Day: aye
Councilman Farris: aye
Councilwoman Brannon aye
Councilman Dickey: aye

Carried.

i. Legal

j. Engineering

11. Old Business

12. New Business

a. Mayor Barley

b. Councilwoman Brannon

c. Councilman Farris

d. Councilwoman Haffner

e. Councilman Dickey

f. Councilman Day

13. Public Comment

Mayor Barley called for public comment.

Developer Jay Odom complimented Mayor Barley's State of the City Address and noted what a pleasure it has been to work in the city and with staff.

Kyle Steel with Freeport Football and Cheer thanked the Council for their continued support of their organization.

Riley Palmer, developer, commented on what a pleasure it is to work in the city of Freeport compared to other municipalities.


14. Adjournment


With no other business, Mayor Barley motioned to adjourn at 7:26 p.m.

Minutes were prepared by City Clerk Gatewood and approved by the City Council on July 11, 2023.



ATTEST:


Russ Barley, Mayor


Kathie Gatewood, City Clerk