

March 19, 2024  
5:30 PM

The City Council of the City of Inverness met on the above date in Regular Session at the Valerie Theatre 207 Courthouse Square with the following members present:

President Bega  
Vice President Hepfer  
Councilman Davis  
Councilwoman Lizanich  
Councilman McBride  
Mayor Plaisted – *Absent*

Also present were City Manager Williams, City Attorney Hartley, Staff Members, and City Clerk Jackson.

The Invocation was given by Councilman McBride and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by the City Council.

#### **ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA**

Councilman McBride motioned to accept the Agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilwoman Hepfer. The motion carried.

#### **PRE-SCHEDULED APPEARANCES**

**Proclamation Presentation – Water Conservation Month** with President Bega presenting the proclamation to Public Works Director Dilmore and SWFWMD Representative Carrieann Adkins.

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS / WORKSHOP**

**5)a) 2023 ICRA Annual Report\*** with City Manager Williams stating in October 1990, the Inverness City Council created the City’s first CRA, as well as the Inverness Community Redevelopment Agency (ICRA) consisting of seven board members to serve as the governing body of the Agency. In 2014, significant changes were made to its community redevelopment plan and expanded the CRA. The 2023 report focused on the 2023 Financial Statements – unaudited; updated on projects in the approved 5-year CIP; potential projects for budget development; history of the ICRA; and projects related to the bond issue and total project cost. The ICRA board adopted the 2023 Annual Report at its regularly scheduled March 7, 2024 meeting. **The Public Hearing was opened.** Community Development Director Shoemaker provided a PowerPoint presentation of the annual report and spoke of various projects, including downtown lighting, parking, Medical Arts District, City Walk, etc. Councilwoman Lizanich questioned aspects of the lighting project if they will be the same type as in other areas. Councilwoman Hepfer questioned approx. how long they would last. Councilman Davis spoke of the restored shoreline with City Manager noting this project was over budgeted and the dock relocation was included. Councilman McBride stated how special this small town is, and we continue to grow and draw people to our area.

**No one spoke for or against the Annual Report.**

**The Public Hearing was closed.**

**Councilwoman Hepfer motioned to accept the 2023 Inverness Community Redevelopment Agency Annual Report as presented. Seconded by Councilwoman Lizanich. The motion carried.**

#### **OPEN PUBLIC MEETING**

Leslie Barris thought the ICRA report was insightful and encouraged building a parking garage and seeking additional funding from FEMA.

Bob Steele stated the Bike Fest as a great event and thanked the Council for allowing it to be held in Inverness at Whispering Pines Park. He also thanked Parks Director Worley, Asst. Director Bechtel, and the entire park staff, as well as area businesses for support. Noted there were people from all over the country that attended the three-day event. Councilman McBride spoke of his skepticism of the Bike Fest, but it was very well organized and exceeded his expectations.

Michael Puzino questioned any decision on bocce courts at Whispering Pines Park with City Manager reminding that this can be discussed in the upcoming budget process. Mr. Puzino spoke of pesticides entering into the lakes and who should someone contact. City Manager Williams informed that is State controlled.

Debbie Wheatley noted she resides right outside of Whispering Pines Park and thought the Bike Fest was very good. No major issues in that area.

#### **CITY ATTORNEY REPORT**

City Attorney Hartley spoke of the Tourist Development Council and the \$150,000/yr. draft agreement between the BOCC and the City to promote tourism. He stated after reviewing recent TDC and BOCC meetings, revisions were made and he forwarded the draft to the County Attorney, as that was the direction given for both attorneys to work together. City Manager Williams spoke of several emails that were sent from the County Attorney to City Attorney Hartley. He stated the City Attorney is professional and was acting with the knowledge that the TDC and BOCC administration was supportive of the agreement. President Bega referenced the email thread and thought it should be forwarded to the County Commissioners, and the repeated push back by a certain person. Councilwoman Hepfer stated the TDC voted unanimously in support of the agreement, as she serves on that Council as the City representative. City Manager suggested that a City Elected Official should possibly contact the County Commission Chair or draft a letter referencing the positivity of working together. Councilwoman Lizanich stated she has phoned Commissioner Schlabach and thought the City should give the County more time to work through the draft agreement. City Manager noted that the County had received this draft in December of last year, and the issue was the tone of the emails Mr. Hartley received. It had previously been stated by the County that this item would be on the next BOCC agenda. Councilwoman Lizanich questioned if this could be addressed through the County Administrator. She also stated that the tone of the emails received might have been a little aggressive. Councilwoman Hepfer stated that the City had made a presentation regarding this subject in June 2023. Councilman McBride suggested a letter be sent to the BOCC from the Council as it is vital to maintain good relations, but the issue must be addressed. Councilman Davis stated the City had expedited the draft to be helpful, not step on toes. He spoke with three of the Commissioners regarding this. Noted the tone of the

emails was hard to digest and wants to preserve the relationship. He attended both recent meetings of the TDC and BOCC. Suggested waiting to see if the item was on the next BOCC agenda. City Manager Williams suggested to reach out to the BOCC in a supportive and positive manner. Councilwoman Hepfer stated she will contact the BOCC Chair in a one-on-one situation. **Council consensus was for incoming Council President Hepfer speak one-on-one with the BOCC Chair.**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- a) Bill Listing\*
  - Recommendation – Approval
- b) Council Minutes – 03/05/2024\*
  - Recommendation – Approval

**Councilwoman Hepfer motioned to accept the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Councilwoman Lizanich. The motion carried.**

**CITY CLERK’S REPORT**

**9)a) Council Reorganization and Board Appointments\*** with City Clerk Jackson referencing the **City Charter, Section 2.10, states “annually on the third Tuesday in March, City Council Members shall meet for the purpose of reorganization, and at such meeting choose a new president and vice-president.”** Selection of the Council President and Vice-President has followed a rotation to provide an opportunity for each Councilmember to serve as President. All appointments will commence the next day following this meeting. In addition to the above, appointments to various boards and committees are decided. A separate document to identify member appointments to mandatory and elective committees was included. Councilman McBride announced he would not be seeking re-election in the 2024 General Election and reminded that he has served as MPO rep. for several years but that will end in November. He spoke of a three-day training that is provided and suggested Councilman Davis as the MPO representative. **Councilwoman Bega nominated Councilwoman Hepfer for Council President. Seconded by Councilman Davis. Councilwoman Hepfer nominated Councilman Davis for Vice President. Seconded by Councilman McBride. The motion carried.**

Council members appointed to various boards as follows:

Citrus County Chamber of Commerce	Councilman Gene Davis
Citrus County Special Library	
District Governing Board	Councilwoman Crystal Lizanich
Community Charitable Foundation	Councilwoman Crystal Lizanich
Tourist Development Council	Councilwoman Jacquie Hepfer
Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply	Councilman Gene Davis
Keep Citrus County Beautiful (KCCB)	Councilwoman Linda Bega
Hernando/Citrus MPO	Councilman Cabot McBride <i>(until Nov. elections)</i>
Alternate to MPO	Councilwoman Gene Davis
Valerie Theatre Board	Councilwoman Linda Bega

**Councilwoman Bega motioned to accept the Board Appointments as stated. Seconded by Councilwoman Hepfer. The motion carried.**

#### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

**10)a) July 3 – Patriotic Evening** with City Manager Williams stating July 3 event planning is underway and have secured the musical entertainment, Parmalee. Parks & Rec Director Worley provided a PowerPoint presentation including video snips of Parmalee. Since having big named entertainment since 2022 and 2023, 2024 will be huge. The event has continued to draw thousands of people. There will be vendors, using non-profit organizations for some of the food, etc.

#### **10)b) Project/Program Updates (Verbal)**

- Assistant City Manager – Frank Calascione introduced himself and is excited to be a part of the City for this next chapter in his career. Councilman Davis commended City Manager Williams for his choice for this position.
- Nature Coast Bike Fest brought a new dynamic to the City and throughout the County with the number of cycles and cyclists, many from out of town. Looking forward to continuing this event in Inverness next year.
- St. Patrick's Parade was another huge success with a huge number of people in the Depot District for events there. Parade route crowd was amazing.
- Referenced a letter from the Corvette Club's event and bringing people into the City.

#### **COUNCIL/MAYOR SUBJECTS**

Councilwoman Hepfer congratulated President Bega on an excellent job serving as Council President. Spoke of an amazing weekend with so many events, and St. Patrick's Parade proves we are doing it right. Thanked City staff for all they do.

Councilwoman Lizanich spoke of Big Bass, Bluegrass, and BBQ 3-day event, a busy time this weekend and enjoyed all of the events. Looks forward to upcoming events and thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

Councilman Davis spoke of his skepticism of the Bike Fest and proud there were no complaints. Amazed by the people attending the St. Patrick's Parade and passing out 1,500 beads, next year might need to double that amount. Heartwarming to see a gentleman in a wheelchair dressed up as a leprechaun and winning the contest. Spoke of the fishing event and how his nephew has won in the last two years. This is a Small Town Done Right.

Councilman McBride spoke of the fishing event being named the Joe Bega Big Bass Classic and spoke of all the recent events. Spoke of decision to not run for re-election and it has been an honor to represent the City for many years. Highly rewarding and a wonderful opportunity for anyone interested.

President Bega thanked everyone for a great year serving as Council President and for all the support. Very good friends. Listed upcoming events, dates, and times.