

**PUBLIC WORKS/PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES DESTIN CITY HALL BOARDROOM
TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2023 - 5:30 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGANCE:

Public Works Director Michael Burgess called the Public Works/Public Safety Committee to order on Tuesday, April 11, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Members Present

James T. Wood, Jr.
John Green
Tom Weidenhamer
Sam Perman
John Stephens
Curtis Smith

Members Absent

Marcie Bell

Staff

Kim Montgomery Deputy City Clerk
Michael Burgess PW Director
JT Hart PW Deputy Director
Danny Sullivan, Code Comp. Dep. Director
Webb Warren, Deputy City Manager
Ryan Scott, City Engineer

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 2023

Motion by Chairman Wood, seconded by Committee member Weidenhamer to approve both January 10, 2023 and February 21, 2023, as amended, passed unanimously, 7-0.

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

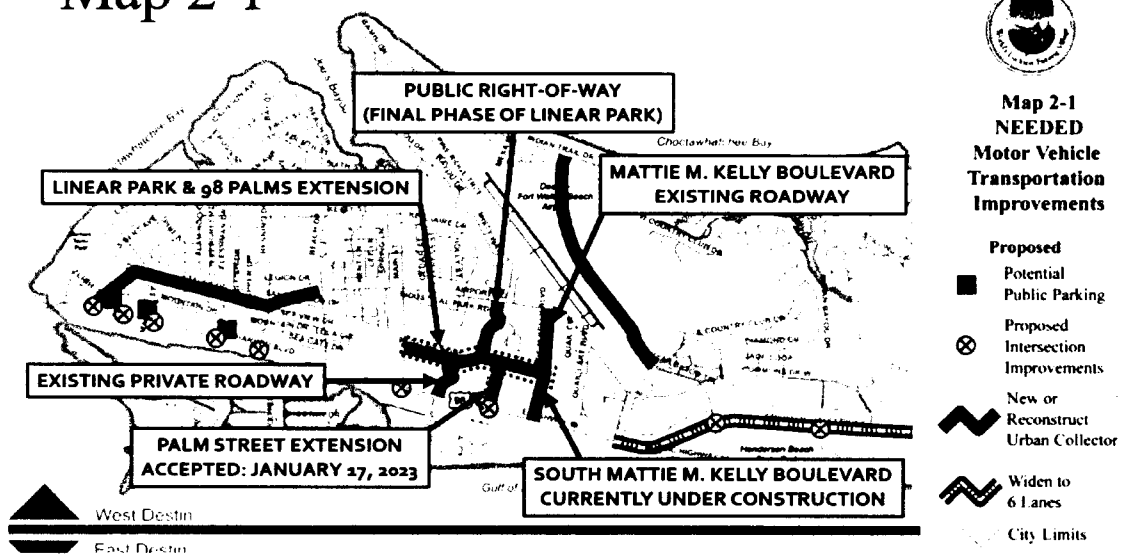
Chairman Wood changed the order of the day to move the Linear Park Conceptual Plan followed by the Twin Lakes Presentation up to the beginning of the meeting.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

➤ Linear Park/98 Palms Extension

Mr. Scott presented the members with the conceptual plan for the Linear Park and briefly explained the city was able to obtain a grant with the assistance of Representative Maney and how the design elements of the park as well as the roadway need to be fast-tracked because the of the expiration date of the grant is the end of October. He informed the committee members a lot of all the additional items will have to come into play for the project and how it just makes sense to include the roadway design in with the park design, since the roadway is part of the Comprehensive Plan's Chapter 2, Transportation Element and showed them Map 2-1, and the policies adopted by Council. He provided the members with a visual of the map showing the roadway connections.

Map 2-1



➤ Twin Lakes Cordgrass Court – Mike Irons HOA President

Mr. Irons spoke of how Twin Lakes subdivision is comprised of 85 homes built very closely on just 13 acres located between Big Kahuna's and Airport Road. He then encouraged everyone who has not been in the neighborhood to drive through there between 5-7 PM to see children who are always playing in and around the street. He then briefly spoke of how the way subdivision was designed, the sidewalks were installed too close to the homes therein making the driveways too short, and as a result, the homeowners have to park their additional cars and vessels on the street, so essentially, it's really just a one-way street. He explained that with this proposed design, if approved, people would potentially be able to drive through their neighborhood, which is what they do not want. Additionally, just a short distance over to Mattie M. Kelly Blvd., anyone would be able to connect through that roadway instead of their and there would no dangerous impacts to the Twin Lakes neighborhood, and that is what they are proposing for the committee to consider and make recommend to City Council, to keep south end of Cordgrass Court closed to through traffic.

Chairman Wood spoke of how two motions that was made at the Local Planning Agency meeting last week after the presentation they were, *"To continue the design as is containing all components but to construct in two phases, the first phase being the trail and the second phase being the road."* and the second motion was *"To recommend that the planning for the connection at the back of Twin Lakes be ended, so that when the planning phase is implemented, that opening would not be included in the design."*

According to Committee member Smith, in traffic engineering and planning, the wrong thing to do is to not open the connection to roadway traffic when a road is being installed and he cannot support the request because of that reason.

Committee member Stephen stated that he is conflicted because of the safety of the children playing in the neighborhood, but also the fact that all the cars that park on the roadway is code violation, so he cannot support that aspect of the request.

Motion by Chairman Wood to continue the design as is containing all the components but to construct it in phases, Phase One being the trail and phase two being the roadway with Committee member Weidenhamer provided the second to the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of 6-0.

Committee member Weidenhamer made the motion to omit the connection to Cordgrass Court in the Twin Lakes Subdivision, with Committee member Stephens providing the second.

Committee member Stephens asked if anyone considered having an exit only out of Cordgrass Court. According to Mr. Scott, that is an option that has been discussed.

Mr. Irons pointed out that the subdivision has never had that opened and everyone is content with leaving it that way. Pointing out that it still would not keep people from Airport Road cutting through the neighborhood. Noting that their conflict is that their neighborhood was not designed as a throughfare, and if it's connected, it will become one.

Committee member Weidenhamer spoke of how this subdivision is very congested and he does not see why there would be any issues with making the connection to Mattie Kelly Blvd. instead since it is not a subdivision with houses already built as this one is.

According to Mr. Scott, best solution is to design both the roadway and the park then remove whatever needs to be removed or added later and can be made a condition of the permits.

Committee member Smith again spoke against the removal of the access in terms of good engineering and planning design and mentioned how the opening could possibility diminish the traffic counts on other roadways by opening up the south end of the subdivision to access other businesses and Highway 98 by not having to drive to Airport Road to get to those, especially when there is a school bus access that is factored in the equation. He then spoke of how there is always other ways to discourage traffic from cutting through by installing signs indicating no through traffic as well as speed humps or speed tables.

According to Weidenhamer, installing signs and lowering the speed limit is not going to make a difference, if people want to cut through and can, they will.

Committee member Stephens agreed there should be an exit only connection and made an amendment to the motion on the floor to add the exit only to the south end of the subdivision, Committee member Green provided the second for discussion.

Committee member Green agreed with this being a city owned street, not designing the roadway in the beginning, is a bad plan. He then spoke of how he feels every one of the homeowners need to provide the city with their comments if they want the connection or not, before construction noting that in the end, he feels they are going to want it and will use it, once it's there and a gate or some kind of barrier should be considered.

With no further discussion, **the motion failed 4-2.**

Back to the original motion, to omit the connection, Chairman Wood called for the vote and the motion failed 4-2.

➤ **Harbor District Paid Parking – Deputy City Manager Webb Warren**

Mr. Warren presented to the members the history of paid parking timeline and how initially was only located in the Harbor District and spoke of how there were a lot of challenges for that initial program. He explained how the program was later simplified by changing the program to a flat rate to \$5.00 for all day parking and how that eventually morphed to additional paid parking being brought into the program in various areas around the city to a citizens yearly parking pass program with a sticker to aide Code Compliance Officers when patrolling. Recently, City Council increased the fees from \$5.00 to \$20.00 for the beach and harbor districts to take effect in mid-May. Additionally, Council directed staff to come up with parking options for employees that work in the Harbor District and bring that before this committee for their review and recommendation. Additionally, staff developed a \$250 per year, nontransferable sticker plan for the business district of the harbor to be registered with the tag of the vehicle.

Motion to recommend City Council to offer a nonrefundable and nontransferable Harbor District parking pass for nonresidents and businesses for \$250 annually, with Committee member Stephens providing the second. The motion passed unanimously.

➤ **Electric Bicycle and Scooters - State Statutes & Local Ordinance**

Mr. Burgess explained they have before them the State regulations on both and their definitions per the state. He showed the members a short video that explains the laws in the State of Florida and how some cities in the state allows them and their restrictions, as an example.

Captain Fulghum explained the challenges his department would face trying to enforce the speed limits because of the way a laser detector measures speed and wanted everyone to understand the issues that would come into play.

Committee member Perman spoke of how the Florida Statutes prohibits riders under the age of 16 from operating E-Bikes. According to Capt. Fulghum, he is not aware of that rule and

would have to investigate that adding that he is only aware that anyone under the age of 16 has to wear a bicycle helmet.

Committee member Weidenhamer spoke of how so many people don't follow the rules of the roadways and ride their bikes in the wrong direction and how most people driving a car are accustomed to looking left before pulling out of an intersection or side road because they are looking towards the oncoming traffic for a clear pathway to pull out and not in the opposite direction at what is coming towards them.

According to Capt. Fulghum, they provide a tremendous amount of education, but it is to juveniles through the school resource officers and there is not any program for adults.

Committee member Green suggested a sticker program for people to attend a safety course and once passed, they get a sticker to place on their bikes and the ones that are stopped with no sticker, they are informed of the proper operation and the course that can be taken.

Chairman Wood provided the following rules for E-Bikes in the form of a motion:

- **E-Bike rentals within the city of Destin by commercial/private entities are not authorized.**
- **E-Bike personal ownership and uses are authorized under the following conditions:**
- **E-Bikes are authorized on the wider 6, 8, & 10 foot multipurpose paths, this is the preferred use for over roadways for safety purposes.**
- **May be operated on roadways or bike lanes on roadways as desired by the operator with the understanding of increased safety risks in these venues:**
- **Will not be operated within city parks, grass fields and/or walking paths.**
- **Use of E-Bikes must not be operated in a reckless manner. Reckless is defined as:**
 - **Must be operated without willful or wanton disregard for the safety of others.**
 - **Must be operated in such a manner that it is not to cause unreasonable risk or harm to a person or property of others on a city multipurpose path or roadways.**
 - **Must be operated in such a manner that reasonable and prudent under the conditions existing at the time having regard to the actual and potential hazards existing.**

He mentioned that since it was discussed earlier how difficult it is to monitor the speeds, he did not include those, but they can always be addressed later and added. **Committee member Stephens provided the second for discussion.**

Committee member Smith explained he used to bike quite a bit when he lived in Pittsburgh which is a huge biking town. He spoke of how they have a safety courses to take and stickers that have to be purchased to put on bikes and agreed that kind of program would be good to have. However, he is not sure that Destin is a big enough city to take on such a program and doesn't feel the width of the sidewalks would be necessary to prohibit, unless in certain areas of the city such as parks and the harbor. There was additional discussion regarding regulating the age requirements and enforcing anyone that looks to be under the age of 16 operating who are any type of bicycle without a helmet.

Committee member Smith amended the motion to remove the sidewalk width to just say any sidewalk over 5-feet as well as adding, E-Bikes will not be operated within any city parks, grass fields or walking paths, or other paths so marked by the city prohibiting the use of E-Bikes, with Committee member Stephens providing the second. The motion passed unanimously 6-0.

6. CONTINUING BUSINESS:

A) Okaloosa Half Penny Status Update – Krystal Strickland

Ms. Strickland provided the members with the YTD synopsis on the Okaloosa County ½ cent penny sales tax and the total revenues are currently \$303k with \$100k spent so far, and the net collections to date are just over \$200k. She informed the members that if they desired, they could make a request to Mr. Burgess on how they would want to budget the funds for next year. Adding that they can spend up to \$200k or spend the same amount they did this year (\$100k) and save some for future spending.

Motion by Chairman Wood to budget \$100k for TRSAF, with Committee member Weidenhamer providing the second. The motion passed 6-0.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT: Stormwater & Floodplain Management Issues - Comments from the Public

➤ Carol McIvor 4718 Seastar Vista, President of Destiny East HOA Bob Burnett, President of Destiny West HOA – Four Prong Lake Flooding Issues

Mrs. McIvor explained how the lake receives stormwater runoff from over 500 acres and was a natural spring fed lake but because of all the development in the city, the lake receives additional stormwater runoff, and any rain event, the neighborhood floods so bad that they are forced to pump the water from the lake by renting machinery, pipes and tubing to run across Scenic 98 or through the pedestrian tunnel. She spoke of the hazards the equipment causes and how costly it has been from the equipment rentals to a lawsuit being brought because someone tripped over them. She explained they asking for help in the form of a recommendation for approval in order be able to bore under Scenic 98 to install tubes to connect to pumps so that they can safely pump

the water into the Gulf of Mexico, which would only be a temporary fix until they can get the proper permits from the State to install a weir drain in the middle of the lake.

Mr. Robert Barnett, 77 Vista Bluff explained the problem is duly shared by both HOA's and spoke of the dangers and the hassle of getting the water out to the Gulf and how the short term solution would help them out tremendously.

Committee member Smith spoke of bringing this problem to this committee previously and the need to have a plan in place that is approved by the city and the HOAs so that when the water gets to a certain elevation, in order to reduce the risk of flooding in the homes, it can be implemented. He spoke of how the lake should have never been the property of the HOA or developed in the first place, and how it should have been either a city asset or deemed water of the State and maintained as such because of the fact that it is a closed basin, and because it was never considered as a closed basin, is why the problems now exist. He feels this is reasonable to ask the city for help with the problem and agrees that a pumping plan that works hydraulically out of the catch basin with the bore design is the answer and Mr. Cozadd, the Grants Manager is actively assisting them to obtain a grant from the State in order to be able to bore under the road to install quick connects on either side, to quickly connect the piping, when necessary.

Committee member Green agreed the piping installed under the road and asked what needs to be done. Mr. Burgess explained a boring company would provide all the information necessary to get the job done.

Mayor Wagner explained how there are unencumbered funds available in the budget that could be utilized to assist and would have to be approved by Council.

Committee member Smith made the motion to approve the city assist with the piping and boring below Scenic Highway 98 to remain within the rights-of-way and to provide a way so that temporary emergency pumping can take place without the unsafe setup that has taken place in the past. Additionally, have Public Works go to a boring contractor to get quotes on 12-inch HTP boring with camlocks on either side and bring back to the committee. Committee member Stephens provided the second. Committee member Smith amended his motion to add, continue forward with the pump action plan in coordination with the city engineer, the HOA, and their 3rd party engineer to come up with a temporary pump out action plan to support this. Committee member Stephens provided the second to the amendment. The motion passed unanimously 6-0.

8. CONTINUING BUSINESS:

➤ Public Works and Emergency Management Update – JT Hart

Mr. Hart provided the members with a brief update on the following:

- Resurfacing projects
- Street sweeper purchase was approved by Council
- Additional Pedestrian Crossing Systems coming
- Royal Melvin Heritage Park work to get it finished
- New Dump Truck may be delivered in a few weeks

9. OLD BUSINESS:

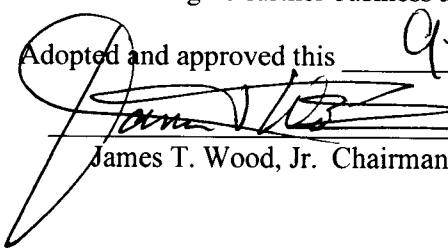
➤ **Member Comments:**

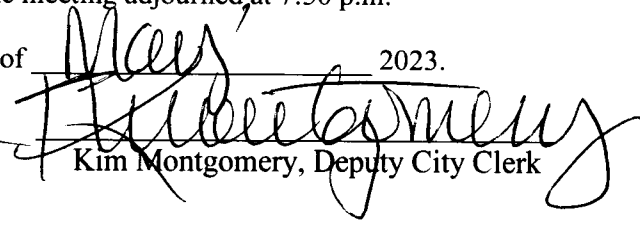
- **Committee member Smith** – Spoke of the cost of the earlier presentation on public parking noting that building parking spaces is very costly at this time and feels that continuing to monitor those needs would be the best practice.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

Having no further business at this time, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Adopted and approved this 9th day of May, 2023.


James T. Wood, Jr. Chairman


Kim Montgomery, Deputy City Clerk