

**MINUTES
SPECIAL WORKSHOP
DESTIN CITY COUNCIL
JULY 10, 2019
CITY HALL ANNEX
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
5:30 PM**

The Council for the City of Destin met in special workshop session with the following members present:

Destin City Council

Mayor Gary Jarvis
Councilmember Parker Destin
Councilmember Cyron Marler
Councilmember Prebble Ramswell

Councilmember Chatham Morgan
Councilmember Skip Overdier
Councilmember Steven Menchel
Councilmember Rodney Braden

Destin City Staff

City Manager Lance Johnson
Code Compliance Manager Joey Forgione
Public Information Manager Catherine Card
City Planner Samantha Brisolara
Community Development Dir. Louis Zunguze
Land Use Attorney Kimberly Kopp

City Clerk Rey Bailey
Deputy City Manager Webb Warren
Finance Director Bragg Farmer
City Planner Lauren Witt
City Planner Dawn McDonald
City Attorney Kyle Bauman

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gary Jarvis called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. He called for a moment of silence; which was then followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

WORKSHOP

A) Zoning Map and Future Land Use Map Alignment

Community Development Director Louis Zunguze stated that the City has approved changes to the Future Land Use Map of the City's Comprehensive Plan. However, the Zoning Map of the City's Land Development Code was not updated to reflect these changes, as required by Florida Statutes. The City Council has directed the Community Development staff to address the existing discrepancies between the Zoning Map and the Future Land Use Map. The purpose of this workshop is twofold: (1) Discuss the four remaining areas that still have conflicting Future Land Use Map designations and Zoning districts (Areas 4, 5, 7 and 15); (2) Determine the height and density parameters for the Town Center Mixed Use (TCMU) zoning district. The following timeline outlines the City's effort towards the alignment of the Zoning Map and Future Land Use Map:

- February 26, 2019: City Council workshop was held to discuss the alignment of the Zoning Map and Future Land Use Map (FLUM)
- March 4, 2019: City Council directed staff to rezone all areas to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, except areas 7 & 15

- April 18, 2019: Staff proposed the FLUM and Zoning Map alignment to the Local Planning Agency (LPA)
- May 16, 2019: The LPA made the recommendation to the City Council to approve the proposed alignment (without areas 7 & 15)
- June 3, 2019: The City Council removed areas 4 & 5 from the proposed alignment for further consideration

At this time, Mr. Zunguze turned the matter over to City Planner Lauren Witt.

B) Land Use Designations for Areas 4, 5, 7 and 15

Ms. Witt provided a summary of zoning designations for Areas 4, 5, 7 and 15. She also explained the steps they plan to take to determine the appropriate future land use and corresponding zoning designations for these areas.

Areas 4 and 5

AREA	FUTURE LAND USE	CURRENT ZONING	INTENT
4	Residential, Office and Institutional (ROI)	Medium Density Residential Village (MDR-V)	Must provide specific ROI designation
5	Residential, Office and Institutional (ROI)	Medium Density Residential Village (MDR-V)	Must provide specific ROI designation

Comparison of Existing Conditions to Residential, Office & Institutional (ROI) Intent

- Areas 4 and 5 are in a transitional area directly between Low Density Residential and Commercial Trades and Services
- Located at the corner of two thoroughfares: Benning Drive and Azalea Drive
- Additional landscaping and creative urban design shall be required of any future developments to ensure a smooth transition

There are 4 ROI zoning districts:

- Crystal Beach Residential (CBR)
- Tourist Development (TD)
- Village Residential (VR) **
- General Development (GD) **

(** Focus is primary on Village Residential and General Development)

- Crystal Beach Residential is location based and not applicable in these areas
- Tourist Development is not a compatible zoning district with these areas as it focuses on transient uses and prohibits long-term uses
- Village Residential does not allow any short-term uses but conserves long-term residential uses
- General Development is designed to accommodate offices, permanent residential uses and institutional uses

Options:

Option 1: Complete the alignment of the FLUM and Zoning Map, and select an ROI zoning district (ROI-GD or ROI-VR)

Option 2: Amend the FLUM and Zoning Map to select an alternative future land use and zoning classification

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Area 7

AREA	FUTURE LAND USE	CURRENT ZONING
7	Town Center Mixed Use (TCMU)	Commercial General (CG)

Comparison of Existing Conditions to TCMU Intent:

- Currently, all frontage on Harbor Blvd between Beach Drive and Airport Road is zoned TCMU, except for Area 7
- Area 7 is the only area in Destin located west of Airport Road which is zoned CG
- Consideration should be given to (1) continue the Mixed-Use Concept for Harbor Blvd. to provide consistency; (2) Remove the more intense zoning district (CG); and (3) Provide a transition to the Medium Density areas located to the west

Options:

Option 1: Complete the alignment of the Future Land use Map and Zoning Map, and rezone Area 7 to TCMU

Option 2: Amend the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Map to select an alternative future land use designation

The Mayor asked what the adjacent properties in that area are predominantly zoned currently.

According to Ms. Witt, the north side of Harbor Blvd going east to Airport Road is all Town Center Mixed Use; and it is primarily North Harbor Mixed Use going to the west with some Medium Density Residential to the north of Harbor Blvd.

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Area 15

AREA	FUTURE LAND USE	CURRENT ZONING
15	CG	ROI-TD

Comparison of Existing Conditions to Town Center Mixed Use Intent:

- Currently, Area 15 is zoned ROI-TD and is the only parcel with frontage along Emerald Coast Parkway from Henderson Beach Park to Trista Terrace Court, which is not zoned Commercial General
- There are existing ROI districts (ROI-VR and ROI-CBR) located directly south of Area 15, which currently provide a transition to the lower density residential district
- Because of the predominance of residential units located south of Area 15, protection of the character of those neighborhoods should be considered, in terms of compatible uses and adequate buffering

Options:

Option 1: Complete the alignment of the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Map, and rezone Area 15 to Commercial General

Option 2: Amend the Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan to ROI, to match the current zoning district, ROI-TD

Option 3:

- A) Complete the alignment of the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Map, and rezone Area 15 to CG; and
- B) Amend the Land Development Code to convert all uses allowed in CG and not ROI-TD from “permitted” to “conditional”; and
- C) Add additional buffering requirements in the CG zoning district when adjacent to residential uses

Councilmember Destin would like to see all of Areas 4 and 5 to remain a residential neighborhood rather than a mixed-use zoning area. Perhaps the ROI-VR would be the zoning category that secures no short-term residential uses would be allowed so they would not have a proliferation of short-term rentals. It would preserve a more conservative long-term residential use of that area.

Councilmember Destin also remarked that for Area 7, which is currently zoned TCMU in the Future Land Use Map, he does not see it being a problem if it stays TCMU in the future. He continued that there is a brand-new Autozone, a restaurant, and a brand-new mini storage currently in that area; and that the likelihood of them evolving into something else is fairly low.

Councilmember Destin noted that with regards to Area 15, which is the parcel that abuts Sovereign Isle, the deepest concern of residents of Sovereign Isle is what could go in their neighborhood that could be a nuisance and interfere with their quality of life. He asked if they could rezone that parcel narrowing down the commercial uses or making the uses conditional to allow the Council to have some oversight. He also asked if there was a way to buffer a significant portion of the back side of that property.

According to the Land Use Attorney, she and the Community Development Director have been discussing this issue, and if the Council decides to change the zoning to CG to match the Future Land Use Map, they could make the uses conditional so that nothing will be developed on the property without coming to Council for approval and addressing any incompatibility with the adjacent residential neighborhood; adding that it would be a public

hearing process. They could also include increase buffering between commercial and residential to allow those properties to get the commercial zoning.

Councilmember Braden asked which part of the code states that Low Density Residential – Village (LDR-V) does not allow short-term rentals.

Ms. Witt replied that Article 7 of the Land Development Code outlines which districts short-term rentals, single-family dwellings and multi-family dwellings are allowed.

Councilmember Ramswell pointed out that the parcel at the top portion of Area 7 that is being shown on the screen, is part of the Destin United Methodist Church parking lot, which is currently split zoned. She stated that she brought this issue before because it does not make sense for a parcel to have dual zoning.

Mr. Zunguze stated they will look at that parcel closely and verify if the property is split zoned, and then come back with the information.

Councilmember Ramswell stated that there may have been a development in Area 4 that had been put on hold for more than a year. She would like to address this issue at some point and discuss what they could do to allow the property owner to move forward with his development instead of being in limbo for so long. She asked staff if they have any suggestions on how they could move forward amicably and allow the property owner to develop his property.

Mr. Zunguze noted they had a pre-application meeting with the property owner. The property owner was waiting to see what this effort would yield, and that he seemed to be comfortable with the process that affirmed the FLUM.

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C) Town Center Mixed Use Zoning District Requirements

City Planner Samantha Brisolara presented this item to the City Council. She explained that the mixed-use concept is the idea that someone can live, work, play and shop all in one place; and that in order to have a successful mixed-use district, there should be a mix of uses that encourage a pedestrian-oriented environment that layers of compatible land uses, public amenities, and utilities together at various scales and intensities. Successful mixed-used districts often become a destination or place for people.

The current intent of the Town Center Mixed Use district includes the following:

- The TCMU shall be a focal point for reinvestment in a community mixed use center anchored by the Main Street Corridor
- Shall not be allowed to include short-term residential uses unless the properties have direct or secondary access to Harbor Blvd (Hwy 98)
- Permitted uses are:
 - ❖ Multi-family residential
 - ❖ High density single-family (not less than 7 units per acre)
 - ❖ Retail
 - ❖ Service
 - ❖ Restaurant

- ❖ Office
- ❖ Commercial uses
- ❖ Civic uses

The following table shows the current Comprehensive Plan requirements for TCMU developments:

USE	MAX. HEIGHT	MAX. DENSITY (UNITS PER ACRE)	MAX. FLOOR AREA RATIO
Single-Family Residential	35' / 3 stories	Up to 9.0	N/A
Muulti-Family Residential	50' / 4 stories	Up to 24.0	N/A
All other permitted uses	75' / 6 stories	N/A	1.5

OPTIONS – The following are the options available for Council:

Option 1: Maintain the current Comprehensive Plan requirements for TCMU

Option 2: Reduce the maximum density for multi-family residential from 24 to 20 units per acre and reduce the height of multi-family residential and all other permitted uses from 50'/4 to 35'/3 stories and 75' /6 to 35'/3

Option 3: Amend the Comprehensive Plan to modify the intent of the TCMU to prohibit multi-family residential developments, and amend the Land Development Code to remove multi-family residential dwellings as a permitted or conditional use in TCMU, and add long-term single-family dwellings as a permitted use, and short-term single-family dwellings as a conditional use

Councilmember Overdier inquired as to the reason for the proposal to reduce maximum density for Multi-Family Residential use from 24 to 20 units per acre.

Mr. Zunguze explained that none of the developments they have seen so far has reached the maximum density of 24 units per acre; adding that the average has been 15 units per acre.

Councilmember Destin brought up the fact that the type of developments that had been promoted under the current system are mostly apartment style complexes, which in his opinion does not benefit the residents of Destin. The population that lives in these apartment complexes are transient, averaging about 2 to 4 years. He feels these are quite intensive residential structures that create a lot of traffic; and that the only people that are benefiting from this style development are the out-of-town developers who receive large annuities and leave all the burden to the City. He also opined that option 2 does not go far enough because he does not really want to see any more of those apartment style complexes being built; adding he would prefer to see another option that really reduces the multi-family residential densities and promotes a single-family residential layout. He would also like to see maximum height to go down closer to 3 stories.

According to Councilmember Overdier, he would be in complete agreement with Councilmember Destin if not for the fact this is a Town Center Mixed Use district. There are certain areas where an apartment complex might be beneficial to the person buying the property if they plan to develop it. However, he would support Councilmember Destin's opinion as long as they have the ability as the Council to do a Conditional use within this district.

The Mayor asked if there were enough large parcels left within this TCMU district to encourage single-family development. He stated that lots may not be big enough or someone may not want to purchase a lot to build single-family houses when it is surrounded by apartment complexes.

Mr. Zunguze noted there are 2 or 3 parcels that are large enough to potentially encourage single-family development and for a redevelopment to take place. He also stated that staff has not questioned the validity of the Comprehensive Plan; and that if the Council requires them to do so, they may have to revisit the meaning of "mixed-use" in this particular district. There may be a "balancing act" that may have to be considered, or a give and take elements as far as density is concern.

The Mayor noted that the TCMU is a special taxing district. He asked staff that if another option is created to consider Councilmember Destin's suggestions, to integrate the potential ad valorem tax implications with the County.

Councilmember Marler stated that he is not opposed to apartment complexes, but he agrees with most of Councilmember Destin's suggestions. He feels these apartment complexes are mostly overpriced and are not affordable workforce housing.

Councilmember Ramswell noted that she works in Panama City and she is also friends with people who lost everything from the storm. People in Panama City are finding out it is too expensive right now to live there because of the increased prices. Some of them are moving to Destin because for the first time ever Destin is cheaper than Panama City. She also stated they have discussed height and density during previous visioning sessions; and that the one thing they were all very much in agreement with was reducing height and density. The last thing they need is more apartment complexes and more people jammed in this area. They are trying to solve their current problems to make sure people can get around and that their infrastructure can support the things they have and the things they would like to have in the future. She also stated that she completely supports trying to reduce the heights and densities even further.

D) Land Use and Zoning Recommendations – Trey Goodwin/Ken Metcalf

Mr. Trey Goodwin noted that with regards to Area 15, he represents only one property owner and not all property owners in that area. He asked the Council to support and have confidence in their comprehensive plan policy and ensure their zoning and development order review processes protect the property owners from unintended or harmful uses. He feels Councilmember Destin quite artfully and thoughtfully articulated that issue; and that his puts forth a reasonable balance to address that issue. He urged the Council to go forward in that direction and to move forward in a way that protects the property owners; adding that everyone in the community has a vested right to expect quite an enjoyment of their property.

Mr. Ken Metcalf, Planning Director, Stearns-Weaver-Miller, provided the following presentation:

LAND USE AND ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

- City Zoning Evaluation Process
 - ❖ Identified Area 15 “consolidated districts” or Planning Areas (484 properties) where zoning did not conform to the FLUM
 - ❖ City Council adopted zoning changes to conform zoning to FLUM for all planning areas, except Areas 7 and 15
 - ❖ City Council delayed zoning change for Areas 7 and 15 pending further analysis
- FLUM and Zoning Deliberations
 - ❖ FLUM amendments are legislative, but FLUM deliberations on site specific parcels should not occur at a workshop
 - ❖ Zoning amendments are subject to quasi-judicial procedures and should not be discussed in a workshop session
 - ❖ Planning areas are site specific due to limited acreage and number of parcels
 - ❖ Comprehensive plan direction for zoning determinations from a City-wide perspective is appropriate for discussion at a workshop
- Site Specific Nature of Planning Areas
 - ❖ Planning areas 4 and 5 are contiguous and comprised of 12 parcels
 - ❖ Planning area 7 is comprised of 9 parcels and part of a 10th parcel
 - ❖ Planning areas 15 is comprised of 2 parcels
- Florida Zoning Law
 - ❖ Section 163.3194, Florida Statutes, requires “development orders” (including zoning amendments) to be consistent with the comprehensive plan, particularly as related to permitted uses, densities and intensities
 - ❖ The consistency requirement is deemed so important that Section 163.3215, F.S., grants an “aggrieved and adversely affected party” the right to enforce Section 163.3194, F.S. when zoning decisions are not consistent with the FLUM
 - ❖ Rezoning decisions are quasi-judicial and must be based on competent and substantial evidence at duly advertised public hearings (not general workshops)
- Objective 1-1.3: Commercial and Mixed-use Development
 - ❖ Objective 1-1.3:
 - Organized in large and small walkable centers
 - Strategically located areas that best accommodate specific site location, access, public facility needs and market requirements
 - ❖ 2015 FLUM amendments designated properties based on Objective 1-1.3
 - ❖ Properties should not be arbitrarily re-designated, particularly where the re-designation would result in a reduction in permitted uses, densities and intensities
 - ❖ Commercial/Mixed Use FLUM based on:
 - Consumer demand, location and space requirements
 - Potential fiscal impacts
 - Environmental impacts
 - Need to protect and preserve residential areas
- Objective 1-1.3: Consumer Demand, Location and Space Requirements
 - ❖ Properties fronting US 98 within established commercial areas warrant commercial use

- ❖ Larger properties with greater frontage, acreage and depth are highly suitable due to the ability to:
 - Attract consumers through visibility on US 98
 - Satisfy consumer demand and space needs
 - Provide mix of uses or unique commercial use/service
 - Achieve unique, attractive designs
- Objective 1-1.3: Fiscal Impacts
 - ❖ Potential Fiscal Benefits:
 - Commercial tax base
 - Impact fees/MMTD benefits
 - Infill parcels = high tax benefit to infrastructure cost ratio:
 - Served by US 98/larger properties typically signalized
 - Served by water and sewer
- Objective 1-1.3: Protect and Preserve Residential Areas
 - ❖ Comprehensive plan achieves compatibility and protects residential neighborhoods by:
 - Transition of land use where feasible
 - Development standards – height, setbacks, buffers, landscaping, lighting, etc.
 - Larger properties allow for compatible design treatments
- Zoning Must be Consistent with the FLUM and Implement the Comprehensive Plan
 - ❖ Properties that are consistent with Objective 1-1.3 should be maintained as Commercial or Mixed-Use based on the prevailing future land use pattern
 - ❖ Zoning should be consistent with prevailing zoning pattern where consistent with the comprehensive plan and must not result in a spot zone
 - ❖ The City's zoning scheme is designated to implement the FLUM category by applying the corresponding zoning district
 - ❖ A lower intensity zoning should be considered only where infrastructure constraints preclude the ability to service the maximum zoning intensity allowed by the FLUM
 - ❖ Landowners are entitled to the corresponding zoning, absent a significant infrastructure constraint
 - ❖ FLUM amendments significantly reducing previously allowed permitted uses, densities and/or intensities will negatively impact property rights and create significant uncertainty for property owners

E) Crystal Beach Zoning Petition

The Land Use Attorney noted that a copy of the petition from Sovereign Isle residents is included in the meeting packet for informational purposes.

The Mayor stated that individuals who wish to speak on this subject may do so at this time.

Ms. Rhonda Dossey, President of Sovereign Isle Homeowners Association, stated she is formally submitting a petition with 153 signatures to the City of Destin and the Destin City Council. These signatures represent residents and property owners from Sovereign Isle, Sunsail and Emerald Breeze that oppose the rezoning of Area 15. She stated they started this effort to provide an avenue for residents and property owners to make their feelings known on this issue.

While many of these people are not able to attend this meeting due to work or scheduled commitments, these collective voices and overwhelming opinion of this matter are still relevant and warrant significant consideration. She stated that the current zoning of ROI-TD has been in place for this parcel for many years. The current zoning was in place when the current owner purchased the property in 2012 from Hancock Bank after the bank has secured the final judgement of foreclosure. Nothing in this zoning has changed during his 7 years of ownership. They recommend maintaining the current zoning. If the current owner, or a future owner, develop or has a proposed use that is outside the current zoning, but would benefit the community, they could bring the proposal through the Local Planning Agency and the City Council. The zoning could be modified to include the additional use, or a variance could be granted to accommodate that request. This is a very prudent and measured approach to facilitate future development and maintain residential quality for the current and future residents, both of which are stated goals in the current comprehensive plan.

Councilmember Destin noted that one of the reasons he wanted to rezone that area from permitted uses to conditional uses is so that any proposed use would have to come before this City Council in a public hearing giving resident the opportunity to object. It will be a review process and it will give this Council the opportunity to modify or reject an application.

Councilmember Ramswell stated that she would be interested in receiving input from residents of Sovereign Isle, Sunsail and Emerald Breeze, either tonight during public comments, by email or at the next regular City Council meeting, whether Councilmember Destin's suggestion is something they think might be feasible or workable.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Councilmember Braden addressed the postcards sent to residents of Destin announcing that the crosstown connector will be discussed at this workshop. He stated that the postcards came from another entity and not from the City of Destin.

Mr. Karl Seekamp, a Sovereign Isle resident, expressed his opposition to the rezoning of Area 15. He stated that when he and several of his neighbors purchased their property at Sovereign Isle a few years ago; Area 15 was zoned with the conditional restrictions in place. He felt comfortable purchasing his property knowing those restrictions would protect him and prevent something less desirable from being developed next to his property. He also noted that the current zoning does not allow such things as a tattoo parlor, a McDonald Restaurant, or a gas station to be built on that parcel; however, that would not be the case if zoning of that parcel is changed. He also pointed out the required setback is 10 feet, and that his house is 10 feet from his border; and whomever builds on that property could also build from their border. His house would only be 20 feet away from whatever commercial business is developed on that property. He stated that his neighborhood is all single-family residential houses, and that rezoning of Area 15 would be a significant factor in their quality of life. He urged the Council not to change the zoning of this parcel.

Ms. Jackie Siverson, a Sovereign Isle resident, stated that she picked Sovereign Isle because she feels it is a safe place to live and raise her children. She also mentioned that her brother who will soon retire from the military also plans to live and raise his family in that area. She feels if the zoning of Area 15 is changed, there is a likelihood something less desirable will be developed on that property that would negatively affect her peace of mind and those who live in that area.

Mr. Fred White, a Destin resident, commented on the crosstown connector. He said they have been discussing that road for over 20 years, and the City had bought some lands to accommodate it, but nothing has been done. He stated that he supports the connector because he feels they need to have another way to get through town; add that the tourists have discovered the back roads and the amount of traffic there is just ridiculous. He stated they do not need any more parks or conduct any more studies. The crosstown connector has been in the planning stage for quite a while and it needs to be constructed. Mr. White also noted that a lot of their streets need some striping, and they need to do something about it soon as it is exposing the City to tremendous liability.

Ms. Lana Woodring informed the Council that she owns two homes at Emerald Breeze; one of which is located near Area 15. She would like to be notified if something is about to be developed on that property because a large portion of her yard will be affected by it.

The Mayor noted that there would be a public notice in the newspaper. He also mentioned that a regular City Council meeting is scheduled the first and third Mondays of the month, and that an agenda is published before each meeting.

Councilmember Ramswell pointed out that individual properties located within 300 feet of a development should also receive some sort of notification from the City informing them of the pending development.

The Land Use Attorney confirmed that the City provides a notice to property owners located within 300 feet for certain land use applications.

Councilmember Menchel also noted that City staff, especially the City's Public Information Manager, is doing a great job putting information out on Facebook, website and in the newspapers. He encourages everyone to attend Council meetings or access the website or the social media.

Next, Ms. Marcie Bell, a Destin resident, read a portion of a letter written and read before the City Council by the late Diana Lynn on December 16, 2015:

"CONSERVATION LAND OVER PARCEL B & C:

The State of FL has designated 2 areas in the City of Destin as Conservation. One such area has a 34 acre preserve, Audubon habitat, and freshwater lake. Another area is now your City park Norriego Pointe. To this very day the State still designates these two areas as Conservation. All areas are in Coastal High hazard areas, FEMA flood zone VE and have environmental impact to public interest. Your 2020 comp plan definition of Conservation uses. Activities or conditions within land areas designated for conserving or protection of quality or quantity of groundwater or surface water, floodplain mgt, passive recreation, commercially or recreationally valuable fish and shellfish, or protection of vegetative communities or wildlife habitats. Conservation lands are conserved due to environmental conditions.

In the early stages of city planning State and then County land records were incorporated to hold compatible record. Your 2020 plan is defining Compatible as...A condition in which land uses or conditions can coexist in relative proximity to each other in a stable fashion over time such that no use or conditions unduly negatively impacted directly by another use or condition.

In city records language used are words like, Protect, Preserve, Ensure, Prevent, Manage, Restrict, Enforce, Support & Conserve are common throughout and so is implement corrective actions. I beg you to pay close attention to understand how and why this 2020 Comp plan was compromised. In city minutes 02-20-03 Scott Shirley reminds commissioners that they should not do anything CONTRARY to public interest. Protect the interest of the public and vegetative communities and wildlife. Over the last several years the constant public question has been in regard to changes for HDR for the conservation lands on Holiday Isle. FLUM maps changed, zones rezoned and all without public notices, signs or even a hint of a notice in city agendas. Searching in every direction your City manager or Staff directed researchers we found nothing mentioning parcel zoned conservation designation being changed to HDR. I began to question even if the Council had full knowledge of every change that was implemented."

Mr. Bill McIssick, a Destin resident, stated that he agrees with a previous speaker regarding the importance of building the crosstown connector; adding that the cross-town connector would take traffic through town and away from all school zones, increasing the safety for the school children. He continued it would also make it a lot easier for residents, especially those on Azalea Road, to back out of their driveways.

Mr. Bill Reddington, a Destin resident, spoke of the traffic jam they are currently experiencing on Kelly Street, Main Street, Airport Road and the Destin Commons; stating it is a perfect example of motorists avoiding Hwy 98 and the highway construction and using the back roads instead. He also stated that until they solve the bottlenecks at the Destin Commons and at Stahlman Avenue intersection, having a cross-town connector at the center of town is not going to serve a useful purpose.

Mr. Kevin Woodward, a Destin resident, noted that he lives on Legion Drive and that it is hard to back out of his driveway without having a confrontation with a motorist. He stated that too many cars are speeding through his neighborhood and they have been unable to get any relief at all.

Mr. Charlie Saleeby, a Destin resident, expressed his opposition to the crosstown connector. He stated they should not force traffic through their neighborhoods because it would destroy the neighborhoods. He noted that Mountain Drive is a buffer zone; and that if they force traffic down Azalea Drive, Kelly Street would then become a buffer zone.

Mr. David Waddle, a Destin resident, spoke of the crosstown connector. He stated that they have one road on Indian Bayou and a lot of people live there; and that it would be very difficult to go anywhere if a big storm hits. He continued that they should have had the crosstown connector built at least 5 years ago; and that he believes the main reason it has not been built is they have had so much turnover in City Council and City management. He urged the Council to build the connector soon.

Mr. Jerry Sullivan, representing Trees on the Coast, noted that during their board meeting, they unanimously voted in favor of the crosstown connector and to partner with the City for the median. He stated they have the funds to put a beautiful canvass on the median and streetscape it with some beautiful trees and landscaping.

Mr. Dewey Destin, a Destin resident, stated that the Council needs to figure out how to build the crosstown connector without severely impacting the neighborhoods. He stated they

need to address the Stahlman Avenue intersection as well as the changes they would need to make at the Calhoun intersection before they build the crosstown connector, which he considers an alternate road to Hwy 98. Otherwise, they would find themselves in similar situation they were in when a previous Council approved the Emerald Grande, which severely impacted their intersections and infrastructure. He continued that if they force traffic through the middle of town without a plan on how to get it back safely on US Hwy 98, they will compound that mistake and ruining the quality of life of the residents in these neighborhoods.

Ms. Becky McFarland, a Destin resident, expressed her support of the crosstown connector; stating she does not believe it will serve as an alternative road to US Hwy 98. She also stated that traffic is already in their neighborhoods, with everybody speeding through town going in different directions.

Mr. Jason Klosterman, a Destin resident, also expressed support of the crosstown connector. He stated that before Commons Drive was built, there were some oppositions to it. Now they realize it would have been worst if they did not have Commons Drive and are forced to drive on US Hwy 98. He also stated there are people who say the crosstown connector would bring more traffic into their back roads; but he believes the traffic is already there, and that the crosstown connector will be able to move traffic through town more efficiently.

Mr. Mike Buckingham, a Destin resident, stated that he believes the crosstown connector is being pushed so hard because US Hwy 98 has already reached its full capacity; and that in order to construct more large buildings, they would need to have an alternate road. He suggests scheduling more workshops to give people the whole picture and not just part of it.

Mr. Jim Bagby, a Destin resident and a former Council member, stated that the crosstown connector was never originally discussed as being a 4-lane road. It has always meant to be a 2-lane road with median and sidewalk. It was designed to serve the needs of the citizens of Destin; and give the residents of Destin the option of not having to go through the entire length of Hwy 98. The goal was to take the traffic that already goes through the back roads away from the neighborhoods and through a nice, calm and beautifully landscaped area. There will be 3-way stop signs at both end of the connector; and if people have to wait for 30 cars to get back on Hwy 98, they probably would not use the connector. He also stated that he remembers how hard it was before Commons Drive was built. Now people use Commons drive every chance they get to avoid traffic on Hwy 98.

At this time, the Mayor closed the public comments portion of the meeting and gave each member of the Council the opportunity for final comments.

Councilmember Braden clarified that the instruction given to staff regarding the crosstown connector was to have the plans redesigned for a 2-way road.

Councilmember Marler urged those who oppose the crosstown connector to propose an alternative solution to the Council. He stated that they already have traffic in their neighborhoods; and that today's traffic jam is a good example. He continued that this Council has the power to go forward with the crosstown connector now. They can keep it at two lanes if they so desire. If they conduct another study, four members of the present Council may be gone by the time that study is completed, and that the new Council may decide to change everything again.

Councilmember Destin explained they are still moving forward with the crosstown connector; but they want to build a 2-lane road on a 2-lane right-of-way footprint. What has been presented to this Council for approval is a design that shows 4-laning of this road in the future and asking this Council to acquire property to support the 4-laning of this road. He continued that the road being proposed under the current design has a 30-foot median, which would provide a future Council the opportunity to expand it to 4 lanes. This Council had instructed staff to redesign the plan for a right-of-way acquisition for a 2-lane road and to simultaneously pursue improvements to the Stahlman Avenue intersection as they must fix the end before creating the highway in the middle of town.

Councilmember Morgan noted they already owned 85 percent of the property for the crosstown connector and that there is enough for a 4-lane road. The road that was going to be built will have 2 lanes with a median that would allow for it to be 4 lanes. The current plan is to redesign this road for a 2-lane right-of-way for the last 15 percent of this road; which a future Council could easily use eminent domain if they wanted to make it 4 lanes. It would not be too expensive because it would only involve .1 mile of eminent domain to widen it to 4 lanes. He stated that this Council is worried about a future Council widening the road to 4 lanes; but the way FDOT funding works, that will not happen until 2042, and only if they have a Council that is committed to it and to getting it to the TPO's long range plan. He further stated that Council is taking a preempted measure to reduce the right-of-way. He urged the Council to decide one-way or another; to kill the project or build a road that is already fully funded. They now have to wait for another 10 to 15 years while they wait for the result of the study and get back in line for funding and leave the residents at Legion Drive and Sandalwood in "limbo" because they do not know what will happen with their property. He added that the City recently unanimously voted to buy 3 townhomes to build this road. They now decided they are not going to use these townhomes at the moment. He also added that the claim that this road is going to accommodate more development is false because FDOT has no control over the development in Destin. Only this Council has that authority. He stated that he supports the crosstown connector because he feels it will make Legion Drive and Mountain Drive much nicer places to live.

According to the Mayor, redesigning the road means they would lose \$7.5 million in funding, and it will delay construction of that road for several years.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.



Gary Jarvis, Mayor

ATTEST:



Rey Bailey, City Clerk