

Requested by: Finance Department
Prepared by: Finance Department, City Clerk

ORDINANCE NO. 2017-23

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF VENICE, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 66, TAXATION, BY ADDING ARTICLE VI, FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES AND FACILITIES SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS, TO ALLOW FOR FUNDING OF FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES AND FACILITIES THROUGH THE IMPOSITION OF SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS; PROVIDING THE PROCEDURE FOR THE IMPOSITION OF SUCH SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS AND FINDINGS; AUTHORIZING THE IMPOSITION AND COLLECTION OF ASSESSMENTS TO FUND THE COST OF FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES AND FACILITIES PROVIDING A SPECIAL BENEFIT TO REAL PROPERTY WITHIN THE CITY; ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR NOTICE; ADOPTION OF THE FIRE ASSESSMENT ROLL AND FOR CORRECTION OF ERRORS AND OMISSIONS; PROVIDING THAT ASSESSMENTS CONSTITUTE A LIEN ON ASSESSED PROPERTY; ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES AND METHODS FOR COLLECTION OF ASSESSMENTS, INCLUDING ASSESSMENTS IMPOSED ON GOVERNMENT PROPERTY; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

WHEREAS, special assessments may allow the city a more equitable method to raise funds for the payment of fire services and facilities; and

WHEREAS, the city wishes to adopt a procedure to avail itself of the ability to levy special assessments for fire services and facilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VENICE, FLORIDA:

SECTION 1. The whereas clauses above are ratified and confirmed as true and correct.

SECTION 2. The Code of Ordinances for the City of Venice is amended to add Chapter 66, Taxation, Article VI, Fire Protection Services and Facilities Special Assessments to read as follows:

ARTICLE VI. FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES AND FACILITIES SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS

DIVISION 1. INTRODUCTION.

Sec. 66-301. Definitions.

When used in this Ordinance, the following terms shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

"Annual Rate Resolution" means the resolution described in Section 66-312 hereof, establishing the rate at which a Fire Protection Assessment for a specific Fiscal Year will be computed. The Final Assessment Resolution shall constitute the Annual Rate Resolution for the initial Fiscal Year in which a Fire Protection Assessment is imposed or reimposed.

"Assessed Property" means all parcels of land included on the Assessment Roll that receive a special benefit from the delivery of the fire protection services, programs or facilities identified in the Initial Assessment Resolution or a subsequent Preliminary Rate Resolution.

"Assessment Coordinator" means the City Manager or designee thereof.

"Assessment Roll" means the special Assessment Roll relating to a Fire Protection Assessment approved by a Final Assessment Resolution pursuant to Section 66-310 hereof or an Annual Rate Resolution pursuant to Section 66-312 hereof.

"Building" means any structure, whether temporary or permanent, built for support, shelter or enclosure of Persons, chattel, or property of any kind, including mobile homes and manufactured homes. This term shall include the use of land in which lots or spaces are offered for use, rent or lease for the placement of mobile homes, manufactured homes, travel trailers, or the like.

"Building Permit" means an official document or certificate issued by the City, under the authority of Ordinance or law, authorizing the construction or siting of any Building within the City. The term "Building Permit" shall also include set up or tie down permits, or the functional equivalent, for those structures or Buildings, such as a mobile home or manufactured home, that do not require a Building Permit in order to be constructed.

"Certificate of Occupancy" means the written certification issued by the City that a Building is ready for occupancy for its intended use. The term "Certificate of Occupancy" shall also include set up or tie down permits, or the functional equivalent, issued for those structures or Buildings, such as a mobile home or manufactured home, that do not require a Certificate of Occupancy in order to be occupied.

"Clerk" means the clerk of the City or designee thereof.

"City" means the City of Venice, Florida.

"City Council" means the City Council of Venice, Florida.

"City Manager" means the chief administrative officer of the City or designee thereof.

"Customer Service Office" means the administrative office of the City designated by the City Council to collect interim Fire Protection Assessments, or such office's designee.

"Final Assessment Resolution" means the resolution described in Section 66-311 hereof which shall confirm, modify, or repeal the Initial Assessment Resolution and which shall be the final proceeding for the initial imposition of Fire Protection Assessments.

"Fire Protection Assessment" or "Assessment" means a special assessment lawfully imposed by the City Council against Assessed Property to fund all or any portion of the cost of the provision of fire protection services, facilities, or programs providing a special benefit to property as a consequence of possessing a logical relationship to the value, use, or characteristics of the Assessed Property.

"Fire Protection Assessed Cost" means the amount determined by the City Council to be assessed in any Fiscal Year to fund all or any portion of the cost of the provision of fire protection services, facilities, or programs which provide a special benefit to Assessed Property, and shall include, but not be limited to, the following components:

- (1) The cost of physical construction, reconstruction or completion of any required facility or improvement;
- (2) The costs incurred in any required acquisition or purchase;
- (3) The cost of all labor, materials, machinery, and equipment;
- (4) The cost of fuel, parts, supplies, maintenance, repairs, and utilities;
- (5) The cost of computer services, data processing, and communications;

(6) The cost of all lands and interest therein, leases, property rights, easements, and franchises of any nature whatsoever;

(7) The cost of any indemnity or surety bonds and premiums for insurance;

(8) The cost of salaries, volunteer pay, workers' compensation insurance, or other employment benefits;

(9) The cost of uniforms, training, travel, and per diem;

(10) The cost of construction plans and specifications, surveys and estimates of costs;

(11) The cost of engineering, financial, legal, and other professional services;

(12) The costs of compliance with any contracts or agreements entered into by the City to provide fire protection services;

(13) All costs associated with the structure, implementation, collection, and enforcement of the Fire Protection Assessments, including any service charges of the Tax Collector or Property Appraiser and amounts necessary to offset discounts received for early payment of Fire Protection Assessments pursuant to the Uniform Assessment Collection Act or for early payment of Fire Protection Assessments collected pursuant to Section 66-318 herein;

(14) All other costs and expenses necessary or incidental to the acquisition, provision, or construction of fire protection services, facilities, or programs, and such other expenses as may be necessary or incidental to any related financing authorized by the City Council by subsequent resolution;

(15) A reasonable amount for contingency and anticipated delinquencies and uncollectible Fire Protection Assessments; and

(16) Reimbursement to the City or any other Person for any monies advanced for any costs incurred by the City or such Person in connection with any of the foregoing components of Fire Protection Assessed Cost.

"Fiscal Year" means that period commencing October 1 of each year and continuing through the next succeeding September 30, or such other period as may be prescribed by law as the Fiscal Year for the City.

"Government Property" means property owned by the United States of America or any agency thereof, a sovereign state or nation, the State of Florida or any agency thereof, a county, a special district or a municipal corporation.

"Initial Assessment Resolution" means the resolution described in Section 66-306 hereof which shall be the initial proceeding for the identification of the Fire Protection Assessed Cost for which an Assessment is to be made and for the imposition of a Fire Protection Assessment.

"Maximum Assessment Rate" means the highest rate of a Fire Protection Assessment established by the City Council in an Initial Assessment Resolution or Preliminary Rate Resolution and confirmed by the City Council in the Final Assessment Resolution or Annual Rate Resolution.

"Ordinance" means this Fire Protection Assessment Ordinance, as amended from time-to-time.

"Owner" means the Person reflected as the Owner of Assessed Property on the Tax Roll.

"Person" means any individual, partnership, firm, organization, corporation, association, or any other legal entity, whether singular or plural, masculine or feminine, as the context may require.

"Preliminary Rate Resolution" means the resolution described in Section 66-312 hereof initiating the annual process for updating the Assessment Roll and directing the reimposition of Fire Protection Assessments pursuant to an Annual Rate Resolution.

"Property Appraiser" means the Sarasota County Property Appraiser.

"Tax Collector" means the Sarasota County Tax Collector.

"Tax Roll" means the real property ad valorem tax Assessment Roll maintained by the Property Appraiser for the purpose of the levy and collection of ad valorem taxes.

"Uniform Assessment Collection Act" means Sections 197.3632 and 197.3635, Florida Statutes, or any successor statutes authorizing the collection of non-ad valorem Assessments on the same bill as ad valorem taxes, and any applicable regulations promulgated thereunder.

Sec. 66-302. Interpretation.

Unless the context indicates otherwise, words importing the singular number include the plural number, and vice versa; the terms "hereof," "hereby," "herein," "hereto," "hereunder" and similar terms refer to this Ordinance; and the term "hereafter" means after, and the term "heretofore" means before, the effective date of this Ordinance. Words of any gender include the correlative words of the other genders, unless the sense indicates otherwise.

Sec. 66-303. Findings.

It is hereby ascertained, determined and declared as follows:

(1) Article VIII, Section 2 of the Florida Constitution and Section 166.021, Florida Statutes, grant the City all governmental, corporate, and proprietary powers to enable the City Council to conduct municipal government, perform municipal functions, and render municipal services, and exercise any power for municipal purposes, except when expressly prohibited by law, and such powers may be exercised by the enactment of City ordinances.

(2) The purpose of this Ordinance is to (1) provide procedures and standards for the imposition of city-wide Fire Protection Assessments under the general home rule powers of a municipality to impose special assessments; (2) authorize a procedure for the funding of fire protection services, facilities, or programs providing special benefits to property within the City; and (3) legislatively determine the special benefit provided to Assessed Property from the provision of the City's fire protection services.

(3) The Assessments authorized herein shall constitute non-ad valorem assessments within the meaning and intent of the Uniform Assessment Collection Act.

(4) The Assessments imposed pursuant to this Ordinance will be imposed by the City Council, not the Property Appraiser or Tax Collector. Any activity of the Property Appraiser or Tax Collector under the provisions of this Ordinance shall be construed solely as ministerial.

Sec. 66-304. Legislative Determinations of Special Benefit.

It is hereby ascertained and declared that the fire protection services, facilities, and programs provide a special benefit to property because fire protection services possess a logical relationship to the use and enjoyment of property by:

- (1) Protecting the value and integrity of improvements, structures and land through the provision of fire protection services;
- (2) Protecting the life and safety of intended occupants in the use and enjoyment of property;
- (3) Lowering the cost of fire insurance by the presence of a professional and comprehensive fire protection services program within the City and limiting the potential financial liability for uninsured or underinsured property; and
- (4) Containing and extinguishing the spread of fire incidents occurring on property, including but not limited to unimproved property, with the potential to spread and endanger the structures and occupants of property.

DIVISION 2. ANNUAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSESSMENTS

Sec. 66-305. General Authority.

- (a) The City Council is hereby authorized to impose an annual Fire Protection Assessment to fund all or any portion of the Fire Protection Assessed Cost upon benefitted property at a rate of Assessment based on the special benefit accruing to such property from the City's provision of fire protection services, facilities, or programs. All Fire Protection Assessments shall be imposed in conformity with the procedures set forth in this Division.
- (b) The amount of the Fire Protection Assessment imposed in a Fiscal Year against a parcel of Assessed Property shall be determined pursuant to an apportionment methodology designed to provide a fair and reasonable apportionment of the Fire Protection Assessed Cost among Assessed Property on a basis reasonably related to the special benefit provided by fire protection services, facilities, or programs funded with Assessment proceeds.
- (c) Nothing contained in this Ordinance shall be construed to require the imposition of Fire Protection Assessments against Government Property.

Sec. 66-306. Initial Proceedings.

The initial proceeding for the imposition of a Fire Protection Assessment shall be the adoption of an Initial Assessment Resolution by the City Council (1) containing a brief and general description of the fire protection services, facilities, or programs to be provided, (2) determining the Fire Protection Assessed Cost to be assessed, (3) describing the method of apportioning the Fire Protection Assessed Cost and the computation of the Fire Protection Assessment for specific properties, (4) establishing an estimated Assessment rate for the upcoming Fiscal Year, (5) establishing a Maximum Assessment Rate, if desired by the City Council, and (6) directing the Assessment Coordinator to (a) prepare the initial Assessment Roll, as required by Section 66-308 hereof, (b) publish the notice required by Section 66-309 hereof, and (c) mail the notice required by Section 66-310 hereof using information then available from the Tax Roll.

Sec. 66-307. Initial Assessment Roll.

- (a) The Assessment Coordinator shall prepare, or direct the preparation of, the initial Assessment Roll, which shall contain the following:
 - (1) A summary description of all Assessed Property conforming to the description contained on the Tax Roll.

(2) The name of the Owner of the Assessed Property.

(3) The amount of the Fire Protection Assessment to be imposed against each such parcel of Assessed Property.

(b) The initial Assessment Roll shall be retained by the Assessment Coordinator and shall be open to public inspection. The foregoing shall not be construed to require that the Assessment Roll be in printed form if the amount of the Fire Protection Assessment for each parcel of property can be determined by use of a computer terminal available to the public.

Sec. 66-308. Notice by Publication.

(a) Upon completion of the initial Assessment Roll, the Assessment Coordinator shall publish, or direct the publication of, once in a newspaper of general circulation within the City a notice stating that at a meeting of the City Council on a certain day and hour, not earlier than 20 calendar days from such publication, which meeting shall be a regular, adjourned, or special meeting, the City Council will hear objections of all interested Persons to the Final Assessment Resolution which shall establish the rate of Assessment and approve the aforementioned initial Assessment Roll. The published notice shall conform to the requirements set forth in the Uniform Assessment Collection Act.

(b) Such notice shall include:

(1) A geographic depiction of the property subject to the Fire Protection Assessment;

(2) A brief and general description of the fire protection services, facilities, or programs to be provided;

(3) The rate of Assessment including a Maximum Assessment Rate in the event one was adopted in the Initial Assessment Resolution;

(4) The procedure for objecting provided in Section 66-311 hereof;

(5) The method by which the Fire Protection Assessment will be collected; and

(6) A statement that the initial Assessment Roll is available for inspection at the office of the Assessment Coordinator and all interested Persons may ascertain the amount to be assessed against a parcel of Assessed Property at the office of the Assessment Coordinator.

Sec. 66-309. Notice by Mail.

(a) In addition to the published notice required by Section 66-309, the Assessment Coordinator shall provide notice, or direct the provision of notice, of the proposed Fire Protection Assessment by first class mail to the Owner of each parcel of property subject to the Fire Protection Assessment.

(b) Such notice shall include:

(1) The purpose of the Fire Protection Assessment;

(2) The rate of Assessment to be levied against each parcel of property, including a Maximum Assessment Rate in the event one was adopted in the Initial Assessment Resolution;

(3) The unit of measurement applied to determine the Fire Protection Assessment;

(4) The number of such units contained in each parcel of property;

(5) The total revenue to be collected by the City from the Fire Protection Assessment;

(6) A statement that failure to pay the Fire Protection Assessment will cause a tax certificate to be issued against the property or foreclosure proceedings to be instituted, either of which may result in a loss of title to the property;

(7) A statement that all affected Owners have a right to appear at the hearing and to file written objections with the City Council within 20 days of the notice; and

(8) The date, time, and place of the hearing.

(c) The mailed notice shall conform to the requirements set forth in the Uniform Assessment Collection Act. Notice shall be mailed at least 20 calendar days prior to the hearing to each Owner at such address as is shown on the Tax Roll. Notice shall be deemed mailed upon delivery thereof to the possession of the United States Postal Service. The Assessment Coordinator may provide proof of such notice by affidavit. Failure of the Owner to receive such notice due to mistake or inadvertence shall not affect the validity of the Assessment Roll nor release or discharge any obligation for payment of a Fire Protection Assessment imposed by the City Council pursuant to this Ordinance.

Sec. 66-310. Adoption of Final Assessment Resolution.

(a) At the public hearing as noticed pursuant to Sections 66-309 and 66-310 hereof, or to which an adjournment or continuance may be taken by the City Council, the City Council shall receive any oral or written objections of interested Persons and may then, or at any subsequent meeting of the City Council adopt the Final Assessment Resolution which shall:

(1) Confirm, modify, or repeal the Initial Assessment Resolution with such amendments, if any, as may be deemed appropriate by the City Council;

(2) Establish the rate of Assessment to be imposed in the upcoming Fiscal Year;

(3) Establish a Maximum Assessment Rate that may be imposed in the event such rate was included in the Initial Assessment Resolution;

(4) Approve the initial Assessment Roll, with such amendments as it deems just and right; and

(5) Determine the method of collection.

(b) The adoption of the Final Assessment Resolution by the City Council shall constitute a legislative determination that all parcels assessed derive a special benefit from the fire protection services, facilities, or programs to be provided or constructed and a legislative determination that the Fire Protection Assessments are fairly and reasonably apportioned among the properties that receive the special benefit. All written objections to the Final Assessment Resolution shall be filed with the Assessment Coordinator at or before the time or adjourned time of such hearing. The Final Assessment Resolution shall constitute the Annual Rate Resolution for the initial Fiscal Year in which Fire Protection Assessments are imposed or reimposed hereunder.

Sec. 66-311. Effect of Final Assessment Resolution.

The Fire Protection Assessments for the initial Fiscal Year shall be established upon adoption of the Final Assessment Resolution. The adoption of the Final Assessment Resolution shall be the final adjudication of the issues presented (including, but not limited to, the determination of special benefit and fair apportionment to the Assessed Property; the method of apportionment and Assessment; the initial rate of Assessment; the Maximum Assessment Rate, if any; the initial Assessment Roll; and the levy and lien of the Fire Protection Assessments), unless proper steps shall be initiated in a court of

competent jurisdiction to secure relief within 20 days from the date of the City Council's adoption of the Final Assessment Resolution. The initial Assessment Roll, as approved by the Final Assessment Resolution, shall be delivered to the Tax Collector, as required by the Uniform Assessment Collection Act, or if the alternative method described in Section 66-320 hereof is used to collect the Fire Protection Assessments, such other official as the City Council by resolution shall designate.

Sec. 66-312. – Annual Adoption Procedures.

(a) Annually, during the budget adoption process, the City Council shall approve the Assessment Roll in accordance with the procedures of this Section, unless the City Council makes a determination that a Fire Protection Assessment shall not be collected for the subsequent Fiscal Year.

(b) The initial proceedings for approval of the annual Assessment Roll shall be the adoption of a Preliminary Rate Resolution by the City Council:

(1) Containing a brief and general description of the services, facilities, or programs to be provided;

(2) Determining the Fire Protection Assessed Cost to be assessed for the upcoming Fiscal Year;

(3) Establishing the estimated Assessment rate for the upcoming Fiscal Year;

(4) Establishing or increasing a Maximum Assessment Rate, if desired by the City Council;

(5) Authorizing the date, time, and place of a public hearing to receive and consider comments from the public and consider the adoption of the Annual Rate Resolution for the upcoming Fiscal Year; and

(6) Directing the Assessment Coordinator to:

(a) Update the Assessment Roll;

(b) Provide notice by publication and first class mail to affected Owners in the event circumstances described in subsection (f) of this Section so require; and

(c) Directing and authorizing any supplemental or additional notice deemed proper, necessary or convenient by the City.

(c) At the public hearing established in the Preliminary Rate Resolution or to which an adjournment or continuance may be taken by the City Council, the City Council shall receive any oral or written objections of interested Persons and may then, or at any subsequent meeting of the City Council, adopt the Annual Rate Resolution, which shall (1) establish the rate of Assessment to be imposed in the upcoming Fiscal Year and (2) approve the Assessment Roll for the upcoming Fiscal Year with such adjustments as the City Council deems just and right. The Assessment Roll shall be prepared in accordance with the method of apportionment set forth in the Initial Assessment Resolution, or any subsequent Preliminary Rate Resolution, together with modifications, if any, that are provided and confirmed in the Final Assessment Resolution or any subsequent Annual Rate Resolution.

(d) Nothing herein shall preclude the City Council from providing annual notification to all Owners of Assessed Property in the manner provided in Sections 66-309 and 66-310 hereof or any other method as provided by law.

(e) The City Council may establish or increase a Maximum Assessment Rate in an Initial Assessment Resolution or Preliminary Rate Resolution and confirm such Maximum Assessment Rate in

the Annual Rate Resolution in the event notice of such maximum rate Assessment has been included in the notices required by Section 66-309 and 66-310 hereof.

(f) In the event (1) the proposed Fire Protection Assessment for any Fiscal Year exceeds the rates of Assessment adopted by the City Council, including a Maximum Assessment Rate, if any, that were listed in the notices previously provided to the Owners of Assessed Property pursuant to Sections 66-309 and 66-310 hereof, (2) the purpose for which the Assessment is imposed or the use of the revenue from the Fire Protection Assessment is substantially changed from that represented by notice previously provided to the Owners of Assessed Property pursuant to Sections 66-309 and 66-310 hereof, (3) the method of apportionment is revised or altered resulting in an increased Fire Protection Assessment from that represented by notice previously provided to the Owners of Assessed Property pursuant to Sections 66-308 and 66-309 hereof, or (4) an Assessment Roll contains Assessed Property that was not included on the Assessment Roll approved for the prior Fiscal Year, notice shall be provided by publication and first class mail to the Owners of such Assessed Property as provided by law. Such notice shall substantially conform with the notice requirements set forth in Sections 66-308 and 66-309 hereof and inform the Owner of the date, time, and place for the adoption of the Annual Rate Resolution. The failure of the Owner to receive such notice due to mistake or inadvertence, shall not affect the validity of the Assessment Roll nor release or discharge any obligation for payment of a Fire Protection Assessment imposed by the City Council pursuant to this Ordinance.

(g) As to any Assessed Property not included on an Assessment Roll approved by the adoption of the Final Assessment Resolution or a prior year's Annual Rate Resolution, the adoption of the succeeding Annual Rate Resolution shall be the final adjudication of the issues presented as to such Assessed Property (including, but not limited to, the determination of special benefit and fair apportionment to the Assessed Property, the method of apportionment and Assessment, the rate of Assessment, the establishment or increase of a Maximum Assessment Rate, the Assessment Roll, and the levy and lien of the Assessments), unless proper steps shall be initiated in a court of competent jurisdiction to secure relief within 20 days from the date of the City Council action on the Annual Rate Resolution. Nothing contained herein shall be construed or interpreted to affect the finality of any Fire Protection Assessment not challenged within the required 20-day period for those Fire Protection Assessments previously imposed against Assessed Property by the inclusion of the Assessed Property on an Assessment Roll approved in the Final Assessment Resolution or any subsequent Annual Rate Resolution.

(h) The Assessment Roll, as approved by the Annual Rate Resolution, shall be delivered to the Tax Collector as required by the Uniform Assessment Collection Act, or if the alternative method described in Section 66-319 hereof is used to collect the Assessments, such other official as the City Council shall designate by resolution. If the Assessment against any property shall be sustained, reduced, or abated by the court, an adjustment shall be made on the Assessment Roll.

Sec. 66-313. Lien of Fire Protection Assessments.

Upon the adoption of the Assessment Roll, all Fire Protection Assessments shall constitute a lien against Assessed Property equal in rank and dignity with the liens of all state, City, district, or municipal taxes and special assessments. Except as otherwise provided by law, such lien shall be superior in dignity to all other prior liens, mortgages, titles, and claims, until paid. The lien for a Fire Protection Assessment shall be deemed perfected upon the City Council's adoption of the Final Assessment Resolution or the Annual Rate Resolution, whichever is applicable. The lien for a Fire Protection Assessment collected under the Uniform Assessment Collection Act shall attach to the property included on the Assessment Roll as of the prior January 1, the lien date for ad valorem taxes imposed under the Tax Roll. The lien for

a Fire Protection Assessment collected under the alternative method of collection provided in Section 66-319 shall be deemed perfected upon the City Council's adoption of the Final Assessment Resolution or the Annual Rate Resolution, whichever is applicable, and shall attach to the property on such date of adoption.

Sec. 66-314. Revisions to Fire Protection Assessments.

If any Fire Protection Assessment made under the provisions of this Ordinance is either in whole or in part annulled, vacated, or set aside by the judgment of any court, or if the City Council is satisfied that any such Fire Protection Assessment is so irregular or defective that the same cannot be enforced or collected, or if the City Council has failed to include or omitted any property on the Assessment Roll which property should have been so included, the City Council may take all necessary steps to impose a new Fire Protection Assessment against any property benefited by the Fire Protection Assessed Costs, following as nearly as may be practicable, the provisions of this Ordinance and in case such second Fire Protection Assessment is annulled, vacated, or set aside, the City Council may obtain and impose other Fire Protection Assessments until a valid Fire Protection Assessment is imposed.

Sec. 66-315. Procedural Irregularities.

Any informality or irregularity in the proceedings in connection with the levy of any Fire Protection Assessment under the provisions of this Ordinance shall not affect the validity of the same after the approval thereof, and any Fire Protection Assessment as finally approved shall be competent and sufficient evidence that such Fire Protection Assessment was duly levied, that the Fire Protection Assessment was duly made and adopted, and that all other proceedings applicable to such Fire Protection Assessment were duly had, taken, and performed as required by this Ordinance; and no variance from the directions hereunder shall be held material unless it be clearly shown that the party objecting was materially injured thereby.

Sec. 66-316. Correction of Errors and Omissions.

(a) No act of error or omission on the part of the Property Appraiser, Tax Collector, Assessment Coordinator, City Council, or their deputies or employees, shall operate to release or discharge any obligation for payment of a Fire Protection Assessment imposed by the City Council under the provisions of this Ordinance.

(b) When it shall appear that any Fire Protection Assessment should have been imposed under this Ordinance against a parcel of property specially benefited by the provision of fire protection services, facilities, or programs, but that such property was omitted from the Assessment Roll; or such property was erroneously assessed; or was not listed on the Tax Roll as an individual parcel of property as of the effective date of the Assessment Roll approved by the Annual Rate Resolution for any upcoming Fiscal Year, the City Council may, upon provision of a notice by mail provided to the Owner of the omitted or erroneously assessed parcel in the manner and form provided in Section 66-309, impose the applicable Fire Protection Assessment for the Fiscal Year in which such error or omission is discovered, in addition to the applicable Fire Protection Assessment due for the prior two Fiscal Years. Such Fire Protection Assessment shall constitute a lien against Assessed Property equal in rank and dignity with the liens of all state, county, district, or municipal taxes and special assessments, and superior in rank and dignity to all other prior liens, mortgages, titles, and claims in and to or against the real property involved, shall be collected as provided in Article III hereof, and shall be deemed perfected on the date of adoption of the resolution imposing the omitted, delinquent, or corrected Assessments.

(c) Prior to the delivery of the Assessment Roll to the Tax Collector in accordance with the Uniform Assessment Collection Act, the Assessment Coordinator shall have the authority at any time, upon his or her own initiative or in response to a timely filed petition from the Owner of any property subject to a Fire Protection Assessment, based upon presentation of competent and substantial evidence, to correct any error in applying the Fire Protection Assessment apportionment method to any particular parcel of property not otherwise requiring the provision of notice pursuant to the Uniform Assessment Collection Act. Any such correction shall be considered valid ab initio and shall in no way affect the enforcement of the Fire Protection Assessment imposed under the provisions of this Ordinance. All requests from affected property Owners for any such changes, modifications or corrections shall be referred to, and processed by, the Assessment Coordinator and not the Property Appraiser or Tax Collector.

(d) After the Assessment Roll has been delivered to the Tax Collector in accordance with the Uniform Assessment Collection Act, any changes, modifications, or corrections thereto shall be made in accordance with the procedures applicable to correcting errors and insolvencies on the Tax Roll upon timely written request and direction of the Assessment Coordinator.

Sec. 66-317. Interim Assessments.

(a) An interim Fire Protection Assessment shall be imposed against all property for which a Certificate of Occupancy (or Building Permit, as determined by the City Council) is issued after the adoption of the Annual Rate Resolution. The amount of the interim Fire Protection Assessment shall be calculated upon a monthly rate, which shall be one-twelfth of the annual rate for such property computed in accordance with the Annual Rate Resolution for the Fiscal Year for which the interim Fire Protection Assessment is being imposed. Such monthly rate shall be imposed for each full calendar month remaining in the Fiscal Year. A credit shall be granted against the interim Fire Protection Assessment for any Fire Protection Assessment paid for the same property for the same time period. In addition to the monthly rate, the interim Fire Protection Assessment shall also include an estimate of the subsequent Fiscal Year's Fire Protection Assessment. Issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy (or Building Permit, as determined by the City Council) by mistake or inadvertence, and without the payment in full of the interim Fire Protection Assessments shall not relieve the Owner of such property of the obligation of full payment. Any interim Fire Protection Assessment not collected prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy (or Building Permit, as determined by the City Council) may be collected pursuant to the Uniform Assessment Collection Act as provided in Section 66-318, under the alternative collection method provided in Section 66-319 or by any other method authorized by law. Any interim Fire Protection Assessment shall be deemed due and payable on the date the Certificate of Occupancy (or Building Permit, as determined by the City Council) was issued and shall constitute a lien against such property as of that date. Said lien shall be equal in rank and dignity with the liens of all state, county, district or municipal taxes and special assessments, and superior in rank and dignity to all other liens, encumbrances, titles and claims in and to or against the real property involved and shall be deemed perfected upon the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy (or Building Permit, as determined by the City Council).

(b) In the event the City Council chooses to collect the interim Fire Protection Assessment at the time a Building Permit is issued, the following procedure shall apply:

(1) In the event a Building Permit expires prior to completion of the Building for which it was issued, and the applicant paid the interim Fire Protection Assessment at the time the Building Permit was issued, the applicant may within 90 days of the expiration of the Building Permit apply for a

refund of the interim Fire Protection Assessment. Failure to timely apply for a refund of the interim Fire Protection Assessment shall waive any right to a refund.

(2) The application for refund shall be filed with the Customer Service Office and contain the following:

- a. The name and address of the applicant;
- b. The location of the property and the tax parcel identification number for the property which was the subject of the Building Permit;
- c. The date the interim Fire Protection Assessment was paid;
- d. A copy of the receipt of payment for the Fire Protection Assessment; and
- e. The date the Building Permit was issued and the date of expiration.

(3) After verifying that the Building Permit has expired and that the Building has not been completed, the Customer Service Office shall refund the interim Fire Protection Assessment paid for such Building.

(4) The applicant for a Building Permit which is subsequently issued for a Building on the same property which was the subject of a refund shall pay the interim Fire Protection Assessment as required by this Section.

DIVISION 3. COLLECTION AND USE OF FIRE PROTECTION ASSESSMENTS

Sec. 66-318. Method of Collection.

(a) Unless otherwise directed by the City Council, the Fire Protection Assessments shall be collected pursuant to the uniform method provided in the Uniform Assessment Collection Act, and the City shall comply with all applicable provisions of the Uniform Assessment Collection Act. Any hearing or notice required by this Ordinance may be combined with any other hearing or notice required by the Uniform Assessment Collection Act or other provision of law.

(b) The amount of a Fire Protection Assessment to be collected using the uniform method pursuant to the Uniform Assessment Collection Act for any specific parcel of benefited property may include an amount equivalent to the payment delinquency, delinquency fees and recording costs for a prior year's Assessment for a comparable service, facility, or program provided:

(1) The collection method used in connection with the prior year's Assessment did not employ the use of the uniform method of collection authorized by the Uniform Assessment Collection Act;

(2) Notice is provided to the Owner as required under the Uniform Assessment Collection Act; and

(3) Any lien on the affected parcel for the prior year's Assessment is supplanted and transferred to such Fire Protection Assessment upon certification of a non-ad valorem roll to the Tax Collector by the City.

Sec. 66-319. Alternative Method of Collection.

In lieu of using the Uniform Assessment Collection Act, the City Council may elect to collect the Fire Protection Assessments by any other method which is authorized by law or under the alternative collection method provided by this Section 66-319 as follows:

(1) The City Council shall provide Fire Protection Assessment bills by first class mail to the Owner of each affected parcel of property, other than Government Property. The bill or accompanying explanatory material shall include:

- a. A brief explanation of the Fire Protection Assessment;
- b. A description of the unit of measurement used to determine the amount of the Fire Protection Assessment;
- c. The number of units contained within the parcel;
- d. The total amount of the Fire Protection Assessment imposed against the parcel for the appropriate period;
- f. The location at which payment will be accepted;
- g. The date on which the Fire Protection Assessment is due; and
- h. A statement that the Fire Protection Assessment constitutes a lien against Assessed Property equal in rank and dignity with the liens of all state, county, district or municipal taxes and other non-ad valorem Assessments.

(2) A general notice of the Fire Protection Assessments may be recorded in the official records of Sarasota County, Florida. Nothing herein shall be construed to require that individual liens or releases be filed in the official records.

(3) The City Council shall have the right to foreclose and collect all delinquent Fire Protection Assessments in the manner provided by law for the foreclosure of mortgages on real property or appoint or retain an agent to institute such foreclosure and collection proceedings. A Fire Protection Assessment shall become delinquent if it is not paid within 30 days from the date any installment is due. The City Council or its agent shall notify any property Owner who is delinquent in payment of his or her Fire Protection Assessment within 60 days from the date such Assessment was due. Such notice shall state in effect that the City Council or its agent will either:

- a. Initiate a foreclosure action or suit in equity and cause the foreclosure of such property subject to a delinquent Fire Protection Assessment in a method now or hereafter provided by law for foreclosure of mortgages on real property; or
- b. Cause an amount equivalent to the delinquent Fire Protection Assessment, not previously subject to collection using the uniform method under the Uniform Assessment Collection Act, to be collected on the tax bill for a subsequent year.

(4) All costs, fees and expenses, including reasonable attorney fees and title search expenses, related to any foreclosure action as described herein shall be included in any judgment or decree rendered therein. At the sale pursuant to decree in any such action, the City may be the purchaser to the same extent as any Person. The City Council or its agent may join in one foreclosure action the collection of Fire Protection Assessments against any or all property assessed in accordance with the provisions hereof. All delinquent Owners whose property is foreclosed shall be liable for an apportioned amount of reasonable costs and expenses incurred by the City Council and its agents, including reasonable attorney fees, in collection of such delinquent Fire Protection Assessments and any other costs incurred by the City Council as a result of such delinquent Fire Protection Assessments and the same shall be collectible as a part of or in addition to, the costs of the action.

(5) In lieu of foreclosure, any delinquent Fire Protection Assessment and the costs, fees and expenses attributable thereto, may be collected pursuant to the Uniform Assessment Collection Act; provided however, that:

a. Notice is provided to the Owner in the manner required by the Uniform Assessment Collection Act and this Ordinance; and

b. Any existing lien of record on the affected parcel for the delinquent Fire Protection Assessment is supplanted by the lien resulting from certification of the Assessment Roll, as applicable, to the Tax Collector.

(6) Notwithstanding the City Council's use of an alternative method of collection, the Assessment Coordinator shall have the same power and authority to correct errors and omissions as provided to him or other City officials in Section 66-317 hereof.

(7) Any City Council action required in the collection of Fire Protection Assessments may be by resolution.

Sec. 66-320. Government Property.

(a) In the event Fire Protection Assessments are imposed against Government Property, the City Council shall provide Fire Protection Assessment bills by first class mail to the Owner of each affected parcel of Government Property. The bill or accompanying explanatory material shall include:

(1) A brief explanation of the Fire Protection Assessment;

(2) A description of the unit of measurement used to determine the amount of the Fire Protection Assessment;

(3) The number of units contained within the parcel;

(4) The total amount of the parcel's Fire Protection Assessment for the appropriate period;

(5) The location at which payment will be accepted; and

(6) The date on which the Fire Protection Assessment is due.

(b) Fire Protection Assessments imposed against Government Property shall be due on the same date as all other Fire Protection Assessments and, if applicable, shall be subject to the same discounts for early payment.

(c) A Fire Protection Assessment shall become delinquent if it is not paid within 30 days from the date any installment is due. The City Council shall notify the Owner of any Government Property that is delinquent in payment of its Fire Protection Assessment within 60 days from the date such Assessment was due. Such notice shall state that the City Council will initiate a mandamus or other appropriate judicial action to compel payment.

(d) All costs, fees and expenses, including reasonable attorney fees and title search expenses, related to any mandamus or other action as described herein shall be included in any judgment or decree rendered therein. All delinquent Owners of Government Property against which a mandamus or other appropriate action is filed shall be liable for an apportioned amount of reasonable costs and expenses incurred by the City, including reasonable attorney fees, in collection of such delinquent Fire Protection Assessments and any other costs incurred by the City Council as a result of such delinquent Fire Protection Assessments and the same shall be collectible as a part of or in addition to, the costs of the action.

(e) As an alternative to the foregoing, a Fire Protection Assessment imposed against Government Property may be collected as a surcharge on a utility bill provided to such Government Property in periodic installments with a remedy of a mandamus action in the event of non-payment. The City Council may contract for such billing services with any utility, whether or not such utility is owned by the City.

Sec. 66-321. Use of Assessment Proceeds.

Proceeds derived by the City from the Fire Protection Assessments shall be utilized solely to fund the Fire Protection Assessed Cost each year. In the event there is any fund balance remaining at the end of the Fiscal Year, such balance shall be carried forward and used only to fund fire protection related services, facilities and programs.

DIVISION 4. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 66-322. Alternative Method.

(a) This Ordinance shall be deemed to provide an additional and alternative method for the doing of the things authorized hereby and shall be regarded as supplemental and additional to powers conferred by other laws, and shall not be regarded as in derogation of any powers now existing or which may hereafter come into existence. This Ordinance, being necessary for the welfare of the inhabitants of the City, shall be liberally construed to effect the purposes hereof.

(b) Nothing herein shall preclude the City Council from directing and authorizing, by resolution, the combination with each other of (1) any supplemental or additional notice deemed proper, necessary, or convenient by the City, (2) any notice required by this Ordinance, or (3) any notice required by law, including the Uniform Assessment Collection Act.

SECTION 3. SEVERABILITY. The provisions of this Ordinance are severable; and if any Section, subsection, sentence, clause or provision is held invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions of this Ordinance shall not be affected thereby.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its approval and adoption as provided by law.

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PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VENICE, FLORIDA, THIS 27TH DAY OF JUNE, 2017.

First Reading: June 13, 2017

Second Reading: June 27, 2017

Adoption: June 27, 2017

John W. Holic, Mayor

Attest:

Lori Stelzer, MMC, City Clerk

I, Lori Stelzer, MMC, City Clerk of the City of Venice, Florida, a municipal corporation in Sarasota County, Florida, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full and complete, true and correct copy of an Ordinance duly adopted by the City of Venice Council, a meeting thereof duly convened and held on the 27th day of June, 2017, a quorum being present.

WITNESS my hand and the official seal of said City this 27th day of June, 2017.

Lori Stelzer, MMC, City Clerk

Approved as to form:

David Persson, City Attorney