



City of Venice

401 West Venice Avenue
Venice, FL 34285
www.venicegov.com

Meeting Minutes City Council

Thursday, May 21, 2020

2:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Special Virtual Meeting - Assisting Businesses During COVID-19

Instructions on How to Watch and/or Participate in the Virtual Meeting

[20-4517](#)

Instructions on How to Watch and/or Participate in the Virtual Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Feinsod called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Mayor Ron Feinsod, Council Member Richard Cautero, Vice Mayor Charles Newsom, Dr. Margaret Fiedler, Council Member Helen Moore, Council Member Nick Pachota and Dr. Joseph Neunder

ALSO PRESENT

City Attorney Kelly Fernandez, City Clerk Lori Stelzer, City Manager Ed Lavallee, and Recording Secretary Mercedes Barcia.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Stelzer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Fernandez referenced Executive Order No. 20-69 issued by Governor DeSantis and Executive Order No. 2020-04 issued by the city regarding public meetings, and commented on public participation in public meetings.

I. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION will be limited to one hour.

Ed Martin, 409 Everglades Drive, commented on cities with non traffic shopping streets, city staff communicating with Chamber of Commerce and Venice MainStreet on ideas to enhance downtown dining and shopping, adding a wooden platform in front of restaurants to expand dining areas, maintaining alleyway open, and traffic lanes on Venice Avenue.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. COUNCIL ACTION/DISCUSSION

[20-4519](#)

Direct City Manager to Issue an Executive Order to Require All Restaurant Employees Who Come in Contact with the Public to Wear Masks During the COVID-19 Declared Emergency

Mayor Feinsod passed the gavel.

A motion was made by Mayor Feinsod to approve Item No. 20-4519. The motion failed due to lack of a second.

[20-4520](#)

Direct City Manager to Issue an Executive Order to Reduce Building Permit Fees by Twenty-Five Percent During the COVID-19 Declared Emergency

A motion was made by Dr. Neunder, seconded by Council Member Caetero, to approve Item No. 20-4520.

Discussion took place regarding reducing fees collected by the city and proposed recommendation.

Mr. Lavalley provided background information on recommendation.

Discussion continued regarding permit fee reductions in other municipalities, reserves, and supporting small business owners.

Mr. Lavalley noted reduction in permit fees is only during the declared emergency.

Discussion ensued on the building fund, economic development grants and funds, general fund, supporting local businesses, small business permit fees, initiating projects, city hall and fire station no. 1 expansion project, individuals obtaining permits, and definition of a small business.

Mr. Lavalley advised he will provide council with a profile of individuals obtaining permits and the definition of a small business.

Dr. Neunder commented on representing the entire city and supporting small businesses.

Ms. Fernandez explained reduction of building permit fees would be across the board.

Discussion continued regarding order's expiration date, following the same process as other municipalities, reducing permit fees across the board, individuals benefiting from proposed recommendation, obtaining more information from staff, issuing rebates for specific projects, dedicated funds for economic development, building fund status, and other funding sources to help businesses financially.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Mr. Caution and Dr. Neunder

No: 5 - Mayor Feinsod, Vice Mayor Newsom, Dr. Fiedler, Ms. Moore and Mr. Pachota

[20-4521](#)

Direct City Manager to Issue an Executive Order to Temporarily Modify the Policy Regulating the Use of Public Rights-of-Way in the Downtown Business District for Restaurants During the COVID-19 Declared Emergency

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Newsom, seconded by Council Member Moore, to approve Item No. 20-4521.

Discussion took place on helping downtown merchants, pedestrian traffic on the sidewalk, and surveying businesses within city limits.

Mr. Lavalley explained purpose of recommendation is to address pedestrian walkway and space constraints.

Discussion continued regarding survey results, neighboring merchants supporting expansion, having flexibility, the city's liability relating to expansion, and upcoming season.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Mayor Feinsod, Mr. Caution, Vice Mayor Newsom, Dr. Fiedler, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pachota and Dr. Neunder

[20-4522](#)

Direct City Manager to Issue an Executive Order Suspending Temporary Sign Restrictions During the COVID-19 Declared Emergency to Support Business Reopenings

A motion was made by Council Member Moore, seconded by Vice Mayor Newsom, to approve Item No. 20-4522.

Discussion took place regarding assisting businesses outside of the downtown area.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Mayor Feinsod, Mr. Caution, Vice Mayor Newsom, Dr. Fiedler, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pachota and Dr. Neunder

Ms. Fernandez advised staff met yesterday to discuss virtual versus in person meetings and the recommendation was to continue with virtual meetings through summer break.

Mr. Lavalley explained challenges with in person meetings in council chambers.

Discussion followed regarding Laurel Road presentation to include scheduling a special meeting and funding agreement proposal, council

chamber configuration, and in person meetings.

Dr. Neunder stated he had no issues attending meetings at city hall.

Discussion ensued regarding budget meeting process and public participation.

III. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

ATTEST:

Mayor - City of Venice

City Clerk