

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH, 2022
CITY COMMISSION STRATEGY WORKSHOP – 8:00 A.M.**

Present: Jesse Nelson, Mayor
Brandon Aldridge, Commissioner
Pat Perno, Mayor Pro Tem
Jamie Warrick, Commissioner
Judy Tinder, Commissioner
Vickie Gainer, City Manager
Chief Ramie, Sergeant at Arms

Introduction.

Mayor Nelson welcomed everyone and called for open and honest discussion as they set the course for the City.

How did we get to this point?

City Manager Gainer explained the process of working with the Department Heads in staff workshops, including a one-day retreat on the FSU campus, to arrive at this point in the Strategic Plan document.

What do we need to accomplish today?

City Manager Gainer asked the Commission what they would like to accomplish from this workshop.

Commissioner Aldridge – What we want to see that is not happening now. To make sure we have a vision and a goal.

Commissioner Warrick - SMART goals so we can measure our progress, and question why something was not achieved if we do not achieve it.

Commissioner Perno – enrich our culture and preserve our City for the future.

Commissioner Tinder – Gaining confidence in the community (with the residents).

Commissioner Aldridge – would like to see focus on replanting trees (bringing them back).

Mayor Nelson – as a Commission to be more unified based on what we see and decide here today. When we ask staff to do something, and they try, the Commission should try to support staff in that endeavor in the face of residents who may have a different agenda and not necessarily understand the background strategy that the Commission has agreed to. The Mayor emphasized the need for the Commission to gain the confidence of the staff and City Manager, to ensure there is no apprehension among the staff about moving forward on these agreed strategic goals. Mayor Nelson said that this is the time NOW for the Commission to say if they don't like something on the plan. He said that it will be in this way that they will gain the confidence of the community.

Commissioner Warrick – said that as he read through this whole document – everything he looked at had a dollar sign. He asked the question - can we afford it? He said he is worried about the debt level and the last thing he wants to do is make decisions that put the City back in debt like the previous administration.

Mayor Nelson explained that just like a mortgage on a home, this type of debt will be what is called smart debt. This City Manager has reduced the overall debt and still achieved so much. Strategic planning around our City's maintenance NOW will prevent huge debt in the future trying to fix what wasn't taken care of strategically.

City Manager Gainer – this is where the Commission gives the City direction and tells us the only time we borrow is when it is a clear emergency. There will come a time in the City where we will

have to borrow again, right now we are not.

HR Director Hodges – three words – visioning provides direction – The Commission should identify the priorities of this visioning plan which is huge. As a staff we need to know the priorities as we move forward each year. Nothing is more frustrating than to get a project and keep switching due to lack of clear direction/guidance. The Commission providing the priorities gives the administration clear direction.

Mayor Nelson – Agreed that we need 3-5 priorities and a plan to ensure they are upheld in the community.

Public Utilities Director Kidwell – managing our growth and planning for that growth has three real components - 1) sewer plant upgrade 2) capacity of water and sewer lines 3) growing the service so we don't become land-locked.

Finance Director Roman – we are in a much better financial position even than before Hurricane Michael. The debt was a necessity after Hurricane Michael. We have a plan that we will continue along that was signed off by the Debt Review Committee. There will be debt needed for some of our infrastructure for the future – there is no other way around that. But we are in a significantly better position that we were.

CRA Director Janke – it is important to go back and revisit the goals we set for last year to see if we actually reached them, and if not – why? Then make minor adjustments.

Development & Planning Director Richard – reminded everyone that in our comprehensive plan the State requires that when we get to a certain capacity, we must have plans in place to accommodate that growth, otherwise the State will not allow us to grow. It won't be a choice.

Commissioner Perno – reiterated that the City to our South is growing, North and East and the other areas we should be growing in, and it is a scary thought to not be allowed to expand if we don't update our infrastructure. We may be annexed away to extinction because if we don't take up the land it will be absorbed by the cities around us. Ultimately, expanding the infrastructure will be protecting and preserving our City. He expressed the need for the City to continue the Department Heads' path of putting the citizens first and enhancing the City's culture. We can't let things get stagnant because of what people say, but we still need to let each citizen have a voice.

Commissioner Warrick – remembers early on when we initially voted on the stormwater, the Commission room was packed with people who didn't want it. We voted on it and put it in place regardless because we knew it was the right thing. He understands we can't make everyone happy. He thanked the staff for all that they do and wanted them to please know that the Commission appreciates all that they do, and that he thinks they are vital to the success of the City.

City Manager Gainer explained how the staff spend hours every day doing what is best for the City, and that is all that is asked of the Commission – that they do what is right for the City.

Chief Infrastructure Director Baker – explained the preliminary discussions held with Bay County about our utilities. Bay County do not want to be in the retail business – they want to be in the wholesale business. They want us to take over those parcels of land and if we don't do it then another city will, and we will wither away as a city and eventually be absorbed into another city.

Mayor Nelson – suggested that the North could be our industrial area from an investment perspective for our City's growth.

Mr. Baker – it would be more than North of us. It will be the airport etc. too.

Commissioner Aldridge – has been discussing this need to continue to annex and expand for about two years now. One issue was about not being contiguous to our side of the water. Also, Southport voters did not like it at all.

- Ms. Richard – we have a status update on the annexing issue. We were focused on the

aesthetics project just recently, but now are focused on the annexing. We are now focusing on which parcels need to be annexed and ‘cleaned up’. Due to some issues with the County/State GIS systems, some parcels are half in and half out. some that we thought were in are out, and some we thought were out but are actually in. So, we will shortly bring them to the Commission to get them resolved.

- City Manager Gainer – explained there are a lot of things happening behind the scenes.
- Chief Ramie – asked that we don’t annex recklessly because we need to be sure we can service the land we annex in. He referenced another city that had annexed too many parcels in and were unable to provide adequate services.
- Commissioner Perno – if we put it to the Northern community again, he is sure they would want our services now.
- Ms. Richard – we normally only annex in for people who approach us to annex in. Now when we update the map, we will be approaching people to ask them if they would like to annex in. Whereas the community Chief Ramie referenced that annexed to the point where they could no longer service everyone was not doing voluntary annexing in line with what services that city could provide.
- Commissioner Warrick – if you look at Lynn Haven there is a lot of development happening and many are not happy about it. The communities to the North are also used to the things that are out there and may not like the changes.

Rebuild Update presentation.

City Manager Gainer provided an update on the City’s rebuild.

Recap of previous Strategy Plans.

City Manager Gainer provided a recap on how the previous Strategy Plans were created, and how the City had translated them into the current plan.

Cornerstone 1 - Lynn Haven will build strong infrastructure for the future.

ACHIEVED:

Commissioner Warrick – is it worthwhile quantifying some of these things e.g. we spent this amount of dollars, but will save this amount of dollars over this period of time?

- City Manager Gainer agreed to have staff go back and quantify areas that they can.
- Public Works Director Lightfoot advised that the work-order program will allow us to do this.
- Commissioner Warrick – asked that when they are getting ready to vote on something he would like to be provided with the data in terms of what the dollar amount return on investment is projected be and in what period of time.
- Commissioner Perno – said that the City also has a hard decision to make about the splashpads in terms of enhancing Cain Griffin while closing Kinsaul – quantifying this effort will be good exercise in terms of the difference in the cost to repair Kinsaul and ongoing maintenance versus the cost to close Kinsaul and only maintain Cain Griffin.
- Mayor Nelson - asked if the Commission wanted to put this on the priority list? All agreed yes.
 - City Manager said the splashpads reopen in May and we need to decide soon if we are going to spend a lot of money on Kinsaul splashpad.
- Mrs. Hodges - advised that along with just fixing it we have to bear in mind the expense of upkeep and manning the splashpads.

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- Marketing Manager Jennings – how about charging an entrance fee, with residents being a much lower fee.
 - Finance Director Roman – we will then have financial burden on teens or younger people around dealing with money etc. so it doesn't seem like the risk is worth it.

1-3 YEAR PLAN:

City Manager Gainer - asked if someone picks up this plan and we are not around, will they understand what we are intending by what we have written? She suggested the staff will go back in and reword the information to make it clearer.

Mayor Nelson – at the welcome signs, could we have words on the front and back to say, “welcome to Lynn Haven” and “thanks for visiting Lynn Haven”?

Commissioner Warrick asked about putting all utilities underground.

- Mr. Kidwell – regarding the 390 projects relocates – they will be updated to underground – as well as the next phase – but we are talking about the next 10-20 years not just 3-5 years. Currently the last 3 major developments have also planned to place their utilities underground.

Mayor Nelson – is there a way to get more comprehensive info and communication about the new developments that come before us and how it impacts everything?

- Mr. Kidwell and City Manager Gainer explained that is what the Technical Review Committee (TRC) does and perhaps those comments can be shared.
- City Manager Gainer asked how the Mayor would like the comprehensive info to be communicated to them?
- Mayor Nelson – to include the TRC comments in the agenda reports.
- Ms. Richard – reassured them that if the engineer/consultant doesn't fix their plan then staff won't bring it to the Commission.
- Mayor Nelson asked that those comments be included with the reports regardless so that the Commissioners can be made aware of the issues that were discussed and be more informed when they make their decisions on those requests.

Public Utilities Deputy Director McArdle – The Fat, Oils & Grease (FOG) program is being worked on and will be brought to the Commission in the next few months. Mr. Kidwell said it will give them more authority to enforce the ordinances.

- City Manager Gainer – the Commission has asked what we can do when people do not follow the code. Well, these are tools we can put in place and implement.
- Mr. McArdle – most of our blockages and stoppages are created by grease. We should be able to get our restaurants and industries to prevent or mitigate the grease they allow into our utility system. He asked that when the Commissioners see the proposed ordinance to please come and speak with him if they have any questions so he can give them all the information they need.
- Commissioner Warrick – the ordinances should include putting more teeth into enforcing the rules, like stop work orders and fines.
- Commissioner Warrick – another one is the gutters hooked up to the stormwater system - we could pass an ordinance with “teeth”.
 - Chief Ramie said the property code (IPCM) the Commission are considering should cover those types of things.

Mr. Kidwell – The SCADA program is an operational program for lift stations (a good affordable option). The system will let us know what is going on with the lift station and water distribution system instantaneously, therefore a faster response time and maintenance tool for the plants.

Mayor Nelson – the goal on the 3-5 year for a new 3-person narcotics squad – is this in anticipation of the growth in the area?

- Chief Ramie said yes as well as the current trends his squad have seen over the past few months.

Cornerstone 2 - Lynn Haven will remain financially solvent.

City Manager Gainer asked the Commission – based on their concerns about debt, what do they think will be acceptable to cause the City to borrow money? Emergencies? Etc....

Mayor Nelson – The wastewater management system expansion.

- Mr. Kidwell advised that is a \$32 million project. City Manager Gainer said the first thing we will do is search for grant funding to cover this type of expense, and we may have to do this expansion in phases to allow the City to do what it can afford through each phase, but there may be an amount of money we may not get the grant funds for.
- Commissioner Warrick – part of that goes under what was discussed about preventative maintenance, but by continually doing this we will save the City money in the long run.
- Mr. McArdle – the rate increases are important as well because that will also allow us to keep those preventative measures up. Panama City spends over \$850k just in penalties, instead of infrastructure. Lynn Haven doesn't want to end up in the position where we are spending \$500k on fines instead of actual infrastructure. Getting in front of the infrastructure repairs and increasing rates now will be the best thing Lynn Haven can do.
- Commissioner Warrick – maybe we should do a business analysis to see if it is even worth it.
 - City Manager Gainer explained the County is using a business analyst to work it out.
 - Mr. Kidwell advised that they have a follow-up meeting on the 17th with Raftelis (Bay County Utility Authority) regarding Lynn Haven Assumptions.
 - Commissioner Warrick – can Commissioners attend?
 - City Manager – yes.

Commissioner Warrick – have we looked at implementing a bonus system where someone who does something great for the City that saves a large sum of money gets a percentage of the savings?

- City Manager Gainer said the HR Director and her have been working on this and they should add it to the plan if Commissioners want.
 - Commissioner Warrick said yes.

Commissioner Warrick – utility bills – should we not rather do them digitally – he knows he would prefer it.

- Customer Services Director Nickell explained they are waiting on Tyler Content Manager. Until that is ready residents can still go online to view their utility bill. Mrs. Nickell also shared the adverse response she had received when she tried to send bill notifications online when the residents thought they were not getting their paper bill. But paperless billing is likely to be happening this fiscal year.
- Commissioner Warrick – how much does it cost to send bills out to each resident?
 - Mrs. Nickell said about \$5k a month.
 - City Manager Gainer said to remember that residents have a choice and a lot of residents

do not want that. Remember they are also an older population who view this as an outing.

- City Manager Gainer reminded all that there will be the payment kiosk set up at the Sports Complex as well.

Commissioner Warrick – automating records is also important – particularly public records requests.

- Ms. Roman – we are purchasing a number of MUNIS modules and one of them is TCM that scans every document and places it in the relevant directory. It works with the workorder program, fixed assets etc. all automated. We are moving fast into the 21st century. She is committed to get staff trained so we use MUNIS to the full capacity of the modules we have. The Building module is a little pricier than we had hoped, but it would give the permitting and building staff the functionality they need.
 - Building Official Vannatter – also contractors will be able to do their application submittals online. Building inspection approvals will be done online too. The online storage portal will also allow the contractors to interact digitally.
- City Manager Gainer – this will be important for public records requests too because all this info will literally be at our fingertips.
- Mrs. Hodges – public records requests (PRR) – we may not necessarily have the record and we do not (should not) **build** the record. There are about 120 exceptions to public records, so they need legal review to ensure it is not illegal or exempted. We could be charged for releasing a public record inappropriately. So, a review needs to be done for each request to mitigate liability. Similarly, if we do not release it, we can be liable. Our jobs come to a stop so we can respond to public records requests. Also, many of our records were destroyed by Hurricane Michael.
- Ms. Richard – the original old city hall upstairs room was full of hundreds of boxes of records – all of them were utterly destroyed by Hurricane Michael.
- City Manager Gainer – consistency is also important. As a Commission, if you ask for a public records request, should we charge you?
 - Commissioner Aldridge – if it costs the City money and others have to pay then the Commission should too.
 - Mrs. Hodges said the standard through the courts is that any PRR that takes longer than 15 minutes should have a minimum special service charge (hourly rate of whoever does the review – if it goes through the attorney, it is \$130/hour).
 - Chief Ramie – mentioned the issue of Commissioner PRR slowing the Police Department down, and where some requests have required him to request assistance from the state Sheriff department.
- Mayor Nelson – asked if we request payment before releasing the information.
 - Mrs. Rushing explained the billing process she uses during the PRR process.
- Commissioner Warrick expressed concern about having to pay for information he may need in order to make decisions on Commission issues.
 - City Manager Gainer explained should the Commissioners require information they should not hesitate to contact her. She will determine if it is a request for policy decisions or an actual PRR. She encouraged all Commissioners to always contact her for pertinent information when it comes to policy decisions. She advised that we have to be very careful that we don't violate HIPPA or inadvertently give out personal information when personnel records are requested via Public Records Request. This can therefore be a very time consuming and drawn-out process.

Mayor Nelson would like to start reviewing policies on a more regular basis so we can empower our staff to enforce City policies. Also, would like to start considering what policies can be put in place that are not already in place.

The issue of enforcing building codes was discussed briefly and how to reduce those or set and enforce appropriate penalties.

- City Manager Gainer – we are looking at addressing contractors and penalizing the contractors/developers for building, clearing land, etc... without permits. In those instances, the resident is simply a victim.
- Commissioner Tinder agreed. She felt the city needs to have something in place for contractors, developers and others when permits are not properly pulled.

Ms. Richard – explained the binders for the ULDC and Comprehensive plan are being put together for the Commission. She asked that the Commissioners remember that it is a living document and that as it changes online, their binders will become out of date.

Cornerstone 3 - Lynn Haven will, for residents and visitors alike, continue to enjoy the highest quality of life where families will thrive.

Mayor Nelson - How do we handle purchasing land financially?

- City Manager Gainer advised that if it is not in the budget she would bring it to the Commission with a resolution to increase the budget in a specific area if they found land the City wanted to acquire.

Mayor Nelson - How are we progressing with the Florida Ave property?

- Mr. Janke said the listing price is a little above market value right now, so we are in negotiations. Because we are a local government, we have to do an appraisal and we can only offer the appraised value to the seller.
- On Illinois street opposite public works is a vacant property that we have been looking at that can be used as additional parking for employees. City is in discussions with the Owner.

Mayor Nelson – do we have something, outside of the City’s scheduled recreational activities, for youth engagement and family-oriented activities?

- City Manager Gainer – when the gym opens it will be available, and this is something the new Sports and Recreation Director will champion. He had some great ideas during his interview. We will also be able to partner with the Boys and Girls Club when they are set up. She also welcomed other suggestions.

Mr. Janke said another important point is we need a new commerce park. He recommends the City start with a Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP).

- City Manager Gainer said that we will also identify grants to fund the study we would like to undertake for this.
- Commissioner Tinder – the fuel depot – that’s a lot of property, does it not factor into this?
 - City Manager Gainer said that is all now private property. Marina Island is still working on their Master Plan to bring to back to the Commission.
 - Commissioner Perno said he would love to see a crosswalk from HW 77 over to Florida Ave from Sheffield Park to connect the City. Maybe it can be put under the 3–5-year plan to pursue a grant to do this? Much discussion ensued and staff were excited about the project.
- Commissioner Warrick – going back to what Mr. Janke said about a commerce park, he has

been saying for a while that we need to invest in a way to generate business income for the City. Have we looked at the vacant property behind Trane?

- Mr. Janke said it is Aberdeen Loop and is owned by the St Joe company. Whenever they impact any land that they develop in a City they deed that land at Aberdeen Loop to mitigate, and so it can never be developed. The only area that can be developed is the 10 acres right off the Aberdeen Loop.
- Ms. Richard said that the SEDP will likely identify the land we would be able to invest in, even though the study is expensive.
- Mr. Janke – advised the Commission that we will not be eligible for these development grants unless we have such a study done.

Commissioner Warrick – there are rumors about Marina Island that if they didn't do anything with the land then something will be done – is there any truth to that?

- Mr. Baker – the deal was the City didn't want them to flip the land, so if they flipped the land in the first year, we would get 50% of the profit and if they flipped it in the second year, we would get 40%, because we wanted them to develop it.
- City Manager Gainer – they are working on their next public workshop.

Mayor Nelson – Would like the team to consider the idea to provide access to those with golf carts across 390 etc. City Manager stated she did not have a problem with it, but this would be a FDOT approval. Her biggest concern was allowing underage children to drive golf carts across 390 which is a huge safety concern.

- Commissioner Warrick – there was discussion about golf cart trails around the regional stormwater pond area.

Mayor Nelson – any more thought about additional CRA's in the City?

- Mr. Janke – initially we looked at the fuel depot as an expansion of the CRA but have not looked at forming a new CRA. We also expanded the boundaries for the CRA incentives programs.
- Mayor Nelson – we have been discussing identifying privately owned land and, together with the EDA, to show the owner what their land could potentially be used for to encourage them to develop businesses. Has this progressed? Also, what can we do to ensure EDA highlights our City to make us a more attractive option when it comes to industry.
- City Manager Gainer – we have sent Becca of EDA a vacant land list, and we are working on mockups of what could go up on those lots.
- Commissioner Warrick – do you think the vacant lots are being looked at being developed because of the stormwater fee? Mr. Lightfoot said potentially.

Mayor Nelson – Panama City brings in more funds even than the County, but they also have lobbyists out getting those funds for them. We may look into acquiring a lobbyist that could potentially bring in enormous amounts of funding. (place it on the 1–3-year strategy for the Mayor).

- Some Commissioners expressed that they did not like the idea of using lobbyists.
 - Mrs. Hodges – maybe instead of calling them a lobbyist, you can call them your state advocate. She had never seen a city or municipality getting significant federal funds without lobbyists. They know how to do the job, and it is what they do. Most up and coming cities have a lobbyist face to the legislature.
 - Mayor Nelson – will follow up with City Manager Gainer and Mr. Janke.

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- Commissioner Warrick – regarding the good relationship Mayor Nelson has with Trumbull; he himself has experienced the opposite. It took him 6 months to contact him and talk to him over the phone.
 - Mayor Nelson said his success has been simply from local lobbying.
 - Chief Ramie – Suggested the Commission could project a more professional image in decorum and appearance e.g., how do the commission at PC and PCB dress? He would also like the Commission to be united instead of projecting a divided image to Tallahassee. Chief Ramie also suggested that when residents call Commissioners with questions it is surely the Commissioner’s job to try to answer them (or refer them to City staff) straight away, instead of encouraging the resident to wait weeks to attend meetings to have those questions addressed there. He understands that the Commission meeting is a business meeting for City business, not a place to resolve specific residents’ issues. Residents’ issues can and should be resolved quickly if they were not asked to wait to address it at the Commission meeting.
 - Chief Ramie then suggested the Commission could start with a professional dress code for the Commission meetings and workshops. He only ever wants the best for the City. He himself holds his own staff to a certain standard of decorum and dress. City Manager Gainer holds all her staff to a certain standard of decorum and dress. He asked that the Commission consider establishing a certain standard in decorum and dress for themselves too.

Mayor Nelson – when this Annual Plan is published, he encourages the Commission to share it through their social media platforms and wave the Lynn Haven banner.

Facilities Maintenance Director Footen - would like to see that all the Commissioners attend grand openings etc. to honor the hard work of the staff.

Wrap up.

Mayor Nelson – just like the City Staff have a strategic plan the Commission could likewise have a strategic plan.

Ms. Roman gave an update on where we are financially compared to in the past, saying that yes, we have debt, but as the auditors will say there is good debt and there is bad debt. She does not envision the City increasing that debt. We do have assets that we could look at as a group that we could better utilize (like the property at Sandhills), we could look at our department functions, and a systematic overview that we should look at strategically, without a shotgun approach type reaction to things that flare up.

Commissioner Warrick – said he knows the City administration were put in a bad position and have come a long way. He does appreciate what the City has done, and it does mean a lot to him. The staff have helped the residents of Lynn Haven.

Mayor thanked staff for their open discussion and honest feedback, and for the work they do and for this very detailed Strategic Plan.

City Manager Gainer thanked the Commission for joining the team to establish and confirm priorities in this Strategic Plan. She and her staff will go back and update the information to make it clearer so that anyone can pick it up and know what was intended. They will also take on board what the Commission has requested in terms of providing more information in the Agenda reports to quantify requests for work. We will finish the other two cornerstones at a later date.

Mrs. Rushing asked the City Manager if it might be beneficial to have staff include the relevant strategic plan priority on the Commission report cover summary, showing how the decision being sought is in line with what was agreed at this Strategic Plan Workshop.