

TOWN OF OCEAN BREEZE
MINUTES REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, December 14, 2020, 10:30 a.m.
Ocean Breeze Resort Clubhouse, Pineapple Bay Room
700 NE Seabreeze Way, Ocean Breeze, FL

1. **Call to Order** – President De Angeles called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.
 - Pledge of Allegiance – Mayor Ostrand led the Pledge of Allegiance
 - Roll Call – Present: Mayor Karen M. Ostrand, President Kenneth De Angeles, Vice-President Richard Gerold, Council Members Terry Locatis, David Wagner, Bill Arnold and Kevin Docherty
 - Staff Present – Town Management Consultant, Terry O’Neil; Town Clerk, Pam Orr; and Bookkeeper/Clerical Assistant, Kim Stanton
 - Staff Absent: Town Attorney, Rick Crary

2. **Approval of Minutes** – Council Member Wagner, seconded by Council Member Arnold, made a Motion to approve the Minutes of the November 9, 2020 meeting.

President De Angeles asked for any additions, corrections or deletions.

There were none.

All in Favor: Yes: De Angeles, Gerold, Arnold, Docherty, Locatis & Wagner; No: None; Motion Passed - 6 - 0

3. **Congratulations to Mayor Ostrand on her receipt of the Florida League of Cities HOME RULE HERO AWARD** – President De Angeles recognized and congratulated Mayor Ostrand as the recipient of the 2020 Home Rule Hero Award.

4. Update on continuing negotiations with Martin County and Florida East Coast Railroad/Brightline regarding proposed traffic pattern alterations to West End Blvd. – Marcela Camblor, Planning Consultant gave an update on her communications with Brightline, Martin County Engineering Department and Commissioner Smith. She gave an update of the designated location of the new Brightline tracks, ADA compliant and pedestrian crossing over the new tracks, proposed closure of one of the points of access to the round-about, West End Boulevard, Sun Communities connection to West End Boulevard, and presented the various options. She suggested that once the County and Brightline have worked out some solutions, that the Town should re-enter with a design of the Town’s multi modal path and collaborate with the County and the CRA on the beautification of West End Boulevard.

Mr. O’Neil stated that Ms. Camblor had been working with the Town on possible improvements to West End Boulevard and that effort was underway when the railroad improvements came to light, which could alter the direction of traffic on West End Boulevard. He commented that the Town had written to the County Commission to ask for more engagement regarding the railroad improvements and he believed the County was complying with the Town’s request for some attention and communication during this process.

Discussion ensued regarding the scheduling of the proposed changes, pedestrian crossing location(s), Commissioner Smith’s input, various options and exiting the resort from West End Boulevard.

5. Comments from the public on topics not on the Agenda – Liz Reece, a resident at Seawalk, asked for an explanation of her property tax bill which she recently received from Martin County; she asked what services the Town provided for her, as a resident of Ocean Breeze.

Mayor Ostrand explained that the Town budget could be viewed on the website and stated that the Town recently lowered the millage rate by over thirty percent. She explained the capital improvement plans would be laid out in the Town's forthcoming comprehensive plan.

Ms. Reece spoke about her property tax bill, her shock and dismay over the amount of that bill and outlined some of the charges. She inquired as to why her taxes were so high when the Town was not providing fire rescue, schools or any other service. She also asked for an explanation of why the Town's reserve was over \$300,000.

Mr. O'Neil stated that he believed this was an issue of timing and with the development of the Ocean Breeze West (Seawalk), there was a significant increase in the Town's overall assessed value. He added that going forward, this would give the Town the opportunity to lower the tax rate which did take place in the last budget cycle of about 30 percent. He commented that with the current rate of development in Seawalk and Ocean Breeze Resort, that trend would continue and the values would be increasing and each budget season, the Council would have the opportunity to bring down the millage rate which lowers the taxes for the property owners. He spoke about the trend of lowering the millage rate, coupled with the reserves, would also allow the Town to push some of those reserves into operations to assist in bringing down the millage rate.

Mr. O'Neil discussed the property tax bill at Ocean Breeze Resort versus the Seawalk property tax bill and that the Town was the regulatory agency for the development of the Resort, Seawalk and Ocean Breeze Plaza. He spoke about the demands for a Building Official, a Code Enforcement officer, staff, along with ways and means of answering questions and enforcing provisions of the PUD. He commented on the need for oversight of the development orders and adherence to the PUD by the developers. He explained some of the ordinary costs of requirements that a Town government must meet including but not limited to audits, budgets, etc. He continued that major services were provided by Martin County which had been the dynamic for the Town since incorporation in 1960. He added that the property tax amount for the Town of Ocean Breeze would not go to zero because there was a need to collect these taxes, but that over the next couple of budget seasons, that figure would go down.

Discussion ensued regarding the history of setting the millage rate, new residents and voters in Seawalk, budget neutrality, the development of the millage rate, other revenue sharing that the Town collected from the State and other sources, and the 2021/2022 budget season (July – September) at which the Town Council would seek public input in setting the millage rate.

President De Angeles asked for further comments from the public.

Mayor Ostrand thanked Ms. Reece and another Seawalk resident for attending today's meeting and asked that they invite more of their neighbors.

Janet Galante, 217 NE Coastal Dr, Sun Communities, reported that in the island on Indian River Drive that there was one tree that had been removed and she believed it should be replaced and asked who oversees the maintenance of the islands.

Mr. O'Neil answered that the Town of Ocean Breeze was ultimately responsible for the landscaping in the medians; however, in sponsorship of the grant project, the Town had a sub-agreement with Sun Communities which obligated them to maintain the existing landscaping scheme. He thanked her for calling the matter to the Town's attention and added the Town would contact Sun to remind them of their obligation to maintain the landscaping.

Ms. Galante asked if that would also include the "one by the railroad circle?"

Mr. O'Neil answered that would be Martin County.

Ms. Galante stated that she would speak with Martin County.

President De Angeles suggested Ms. Galante make her observations known to Sun Communities directly.

President De Angeles asked for further comments from the public.

Mr. Scott Orr, Oppenheimer Group, introduced himself and Mr. Mark Bogert, as wealth managers who would be expanding into Martin County. Mr. Bogert provided his number for the public (561) 383-3965.

President De Angeles asked for further comments from the public.

There were none.

6. Comments from the Council on topics not on the Agenda – Council Member Docherty reported that as entering the Town on Indian River Drive from the south, the trees along the sidewalk were growing and blocking the Town's "Your Speed" sign. He asked if the Town could ask Sun Communities to trim those trees back in order for the drivers to see that sign.

Mr. O'Neil answered "yes."

President De Angeles asked for further comments from the Council Members.

There were none.

7. Comments from the Town Management Consultant Terry O'Neil – there were none.

8. Comments from Mayor Ostrand – Mayor Ostrand reported on her activities at the legislative conference, Home Rule, Annexation, the push from the Florida League of cities for residents to get involved in legislation that preempting any other rules or laws on local government, she spoke about the importance of the Florida League of Cities, small businesses located in the Town and possible help available to them, the ease of writing Representatives and Senators because of a new link on the League's website. She spoke about her work on the planning and economic committee regarding mobility plans and the committee's desire to have more clear-cut laws regarding and golf carts, scooters, etc. She invited everyone who would like to be involved to contact the Town office and provided her cell phone number: (772) 418-6460

She wished everyone happy holidays and reminded everyone to wear their masks.

President De Angeles recognized Ann Kagdis. Bay Drive, Ocean Breeze Resort.

Ann Kagdis announced that she was now the President of the History Museum of Jensen Beach and added that in January, the museum would be moving into the Community Center of Jensen Beach with the Chamber of Commerce. She thanked the Town Council for supporting local activities that help to develop a sense of community. She thanked the Seawalk residents for attending the Town Council meeting.

9. Announcements – Council Member De Angeles announced the next Regular Town Council Meeting, Monday, January 11, 2021 at 10:30 am to be held at Ocean Breeze Resort Clubhouse, Pineapple Bay Room, 700 NE Seabreeze Way, Ocean Breeze, Florida.

President De Angeles extended his wishes for everyone to have a blessed and happy holiday.

10. Adjourn – Council Member Wagner, seconded by Council Member Arnold, made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pam Orr
Town Clerk

Minutes approved: January 11, 2021