

**Summary Minutes of the
ISLAMORADA, VILLAGE OF ISLANDS
(HYBRID) SPECIAL CALL VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING**

Founders Park Community Center
87000 Overseas Highway
Islamorada, FL 33036
Wednesday, July 21, 2021
5:30 PM

The Special Call Village Council Meeting was open to in-person attendance and also utilized the Zoom video conferencing application for public participation.

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Mayor Pinder called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Village Clerk Kelly Toth called the roll with the following Councilmembers being present on roll call: Mayor Buddy Pinder, Vice Mayor Pete Bacheler, Councilman Mark Gregg, Councilman David Webb and Councilman Henry Rosenthal. Also in attendance were Village Clerk Kelly Toth, Finance Director Maria Bassett, Village Attorney Roget Bryan and Village Manager Greg Oravec.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

Councilman David Webb led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Buddy Pinder provided the prayer.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Pinder opened public comment. Van Cadenhead spoke in favor of making a bid on the Walgreen's property to maintain Village control for parking and affordable housing.

DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION

TAB 1: Discussion Regarding the Potential Purchase of Property Located at 81981 Overseas Highway/ "Walgreens"

Mayor Buddy Pinder invited Village Manager Greg Oravec to present the report and lead the discussion. The Village Manager described the Walgreen's property location, its history, future possibilities and opportunities. He outlined the reasons why the Village would want to purchase the property specifically to maintain control of the property's future development. He suggested that if the Village acquired the property, restrictive conditions could be placed regarding resale and future uses. Mr. Oravec reported that parking, achievable housing, community events, and transitional uses were being considered; major conditional use issues could be raised depending upon the future owner's intentions; Village finances were analyzed determining that the purchase would still provide adequate Hurricane (Emergency) Reserves; funding sources were the General Fund and discretionary sales tax revenue. Mr. Oravec mentioned asking Finance Director Maria Bassett to lead internal effort to propose a fund reserve policy. He suggested if the Village acquired the property, it would begin with improving the current condition of the property; and move toward a public design process that would involve input from the community. The Village Manager recommended council direct staff to make an offer on the property, while considering Village issues and priorities.

Councilman Mark Gregg urged council to be mindful as it was a competitive bidding process so they should only discuss whether to bid, not what they would offer. Councilman David Webb noted some hesitation based on the real estate market being high, competing Village issues that needed to be addressed, the current low millage rate and the need to find a way to address all the issues. Although Councilman Webb had concerns, he stated that he still wanted to move forward with the bid. Councilman Henry Rosenthal agreed with Councilman Gregg regarding being careful as to not handicap the Village Manager and Village Attorney regarding negotiation process. Vice Mayor Peter Bachelier commended the Village Manager's report. Mayor Buddy Pinder thanked staff for their time and efforts regarding this project and reminded everyone the property could be resold in the future. Councilman Rosenthal commented about the current Walgreen's property owner regarding their selection of a bid and suggested urging their awareness of the Village's community character and not basing the sale strictly on price.

Village Manager Greg Oravec read a portion of the draft Letter of Intent (LOI) which expressed his hope that the Village offer was accepted not only because it was financially appealing but because it appeals to Walgreen's sense of Corporate Citizenship, helping to shape Islamorada's future. Mr. Oravec urged the Council to submit an offer noting that the Village may be out bid as it was unknown as to how many bids would be presented.

Mayor Pinder opened Public Comment.

Ed Davidson stated it was a unique opportunity to determine the future use of the property noting the purchase would stop any potential negative uses of the property.

Angel Borden mentioned a local candidate who was also bidding on the project that may be willing to give part of the property back to the Village, and suggested the Council consider this information.

Van Cadenhead suggested the Village needed to be the high bidder and expressed his disagreement with Ms. Borden's comments. He commented that the Village needed control of the future development; that if purchased, it could be used for a combination of things to benefit the citizens such as a transportation center and a central spot for Freebee charging stations.

Joe Robinson commented that a parking lot was a bad idea as it would increase traffic on the Old Road, and that it should be used to help citizens more than tourists.

Cheryl Meads expressed her support for purchasing the property.

Mayor Pinder closed public Comment.

Councilman Mark Gregg made a motion to approve. Vice Mayor Pete Bachelier seconded the motion. Village Clerk Kelly Toth called the roll at which time Councilman Rosenthal sought clarification on the bid amount. Motion passed 5-0.

Village Manager Greg Oravec stated he would send the letter of intent before the July 21 midnight deadline. He also commented that the parking lot was just a temporary solution, until the citizens

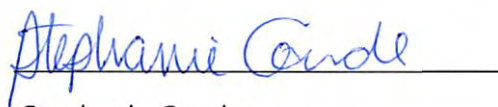
could assist with preparing a master plan for the property and that options could include a public/private partnership, or another project with a competitive local bid process.

Councilman Gregg addressed the public in opposition clarifying that the Council was only authorizing the letter of intent and that they were not committing any funds but inviting negotiation.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Mark Gregg made a motion to adjourn. Councilman David Webb seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

Approved by Council August 19, 2021.



Stephanie Conde
Deputy Village Clerk