

MINUTES — AUGUST 11, 2020
CITY OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH
VIRTUAL CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION

The Virtual Indian Rocks Beach Work Session was held on **TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2020.**

Mayor-Commissioner Kennedy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mayor-Commissioner Kennedy welcomed everyone to the August 11, 2020 Virtual Indian Rocks Beach City Commission Work Session on the Gulf Boulevard Visioning Study Plan convening pursuant to Executive Order No. 20-69, issued by the Office of Governor Ron DeSantis on March 20, 2020, and extended by Executive Orders 20-112, 20-114, 20-150, and 20-179, allowing local government bodies to conduct meetings of their governing boards without having a quorum of its members present physically or at any specific location, and utilizing communications media technology such as telephonic or video conferencing, as provided by Section 120.54(5)(b)2, Florida Statutes. Procedures for public comments will be explained by the Technology Moderator shortly.

PRESENT: Mayor-Commissioner Joanne Moston Kennedy, Vice Mayor-Commissioner Phillip J. Hanna, Commissioner Diane Flagg, Commissioner Edward G. Hoofnagle, Commissioner Joe McCall, and City Manager Brently Gregg Mims.

OTHERS PRESENT: City Attorney Randy D. Mora, City Clerk Deanne B. O'Reilly, MMC, and Planning Consultant Hetty C. Harmon, AICP.

FORWARD PINELLAS STAFF: Executive Director Whit Blanton, Principal Planner Christina Mendoza, and Technology Moderator Tina Jablon.

Technology Moderator Jablon explained the procedures for public comments.

1. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS.

Forward Pinellas Executive Director Whit Blanton introduced the IRB Gulf Boulevard Visioning Study Project and introduced Principal Planner Mendoza for the presentation.

2. GULF BOULEVARD VISIONING STUDY OVERVIEW.

- **OVERVIEW OF PROJECT PURPOSE AND PROCESS.**

Planner Mendoza stated the purpose of this meeting is to provide a brief overview of the visioning study reviews, the vision statement, the guiding principles, the recommendations developed from the process, and review the public comments that were received.

Today, Forward Pinellas is looking to the City Commission to provide direction to the Forward Pinellas Team to finalize the report based on the received public comments and any final comments received today.

The purpose of the Visioning Study was to develop a comprehensive vision for IRB, focusing on Gulf Boulevard that reflects the residents' goals and priorities. The study guides principles that reflect the input that Forward Pinellas received and the data gathered that the community could use to implement the vision statement they have developed.

The study was developed on a study conducted in 2009 by the University of South Florida entitled *Indian Rocks Beach Special Area Plan: A Vision for Growth and Development*.

When Forward Pinellas reviewed the USF Plan, they knew that they needed to create something a little more actionable grounded in current market reality.

In the beginning, the City approached Forward Pinellas and asked them to work with them to create a growth and redevelopment visioning study plan. They started the process by exploring topics such as thoughtful redevelopment, congestion reduction, and mixed-use development. What Forward Pinellas found from their outreach efforts with the public was more of a desire to preserve community character and form, small-scale redevelopment that fits within the community character and form, resiliency, and walkability are some buzz words they heard throughout the process.

Planner Mendoza stated she wanted to note that she was referring to the fact that the City was essential built-out when she mentioned redevelopment. There is very little vacant land, so that any new development would be redevelopment.

Forward Pinellas also learned that the City has budgetary and staff realities that need to be considered, so what resulted was creating a unique vision that was reflective of what the community desires. Through this process, everyone learned the vision that the community wanted was a little different than what the City initially thought it would be.

Forward Pinellas conducted three public workshops with an average of 30 plus participants, 15 plus stakeholder interviews, and five-plus group meetings. This extensive process was to seek consensus with the community to ensure that the developed vision is something that could be implemented and had support.

What resulted was the development of four key themes that were used to shape the vision for Indian Rocks Beach: economic vitality, community character, transportation and mobility, and quality of life & environmental protection.

ECONOMIC VITALITY — VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The community's economic vitality depends on the strategies that brings new businesses to the community and provide similar programs that support and provide sustainable resources to existing businesses. According to Forward Pinellas' economic research, an estimated 43.3% of local businesses within the City have between one to four employees. Because many local businesses within the community are small, it is important to identify and eliminate any business retention barriers and recruitment.

Creating a business-friendly environment can also be achieved by creating commercial areas to serve as a destination to residents and visitors.

It was important to assess economic vitality to identify what uses the community wanted in IRB. Forward Pinellas identified a desire within the community for a smaller-format grocery store, and the Narrows and Uptown were the highest potential areas for that use. The community also expressed an interest in additional restaurants, and the Narrows could likely support additional restaurant development.

ECONOMIC VITALITY — CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

NEAR TERM (1-2 YEARS)

- Conduct a future analysis to identify the potential impact of vacation rentals on the local economy. The City is currently inventorying the location of short-term vacation rentals.
- Partner with organizations and develop programs that provide information and professional networking opportunities for small businesses.
- Work to identify potential challenges to the start-up of small businesses.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER: VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The community character of the community is unique and special to its visitors and residents. The City has expressed a desire to explore opportunities to preserve its historic resources and maintain its identity while encouraging small-scale strategic development. Creating a successful small-scale commercial area has various elements that make it a desirable place to be. Many of these elements are regulated within the community's land development plan.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER: CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

NEAR TERM (1-2 YEARS):

- Work on updating the land development code to provide additional clarity.
- Develop a summary table of zoning districts and work to simplify the shared parking matrix.

- Add elements to the land development code to encourage a pedestrian-scale environment, such as reducing or waiving setback requirements to provide incentives to locate parking to the building's rear or off-site.
- Make parking requirements more flexible by simplifying the shared-parking standards and allow adjacent on-street parking spaces to count toward on-site parking requirements.

MID-TERM (2-4 YEARS)

- Determine if and where the City would like mixed-use development as it would require development incentives and community support.
- Consider the implementation of a historic preservation strategy to preserve the historic resources. As part of this effort, the community should consider a historic preservation strategy.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY: VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

It is important to the City that it remains a safe place that can be easily accessed through multiple modes of transportation. The essence of the small-town beach community is one that is walkable and bikeable. Creating a pedestrian-friendly community promotes overall health and well-being and improves connectivity, and can reduce congestion.

There are strategies that the community could consider that would not only potentially reduce congestion but would improve safety overall. It is important to note that incorporating some of these recommendations can be costly; however, it may provide a valuable return on investment by reducing overall congestion and the increase safety. The community has expressed an interest in exploring the option of offering a free circulator service within the City. This option would potentially reduce parking needs and congestion. The community has also identified concern over visibility and safety, notably bicycle and pedestrian safety. There are several strategies to improve visibility, such as reducing the height of vegetation that could impact visibility and the improvement of pedestrian scale and overhead lighting.

To address safety concerns, the community could also increase the enforcement of existing traffic laws and launch an educational campaign to raise the awareness of bicycle and pedestrian safety laws.

Currently, the community is actively taking part in Forward Pinellas Safe Street Pinellas effort, which Mayor-Commissioner Kennedy is currently an Ambassador of the program. The community has also identified a concern that there is insufficient parking within the City. One strategy to determine if parking is needed and where it is needed would be for the community to conduct a parking study. The study would provide the community's information to assess their parking needs better and determine parking demands, inventory, and occupancy at key peak times during the day.

NEAR TERM (1-2 YEARS):

- Issue an RFI from circulator service providers to gauge interest and find out potential costs.
- Incorporate elements to improve pedestrian visibility.
- Conduct a parking study.
- Launch an educational campaign or engage in the Safe Streets Pinellas effort to raise awareness of bicycle and pedestrian safety laws.

MID-TERM (2-4 YEARS):

- Incorporate curb space for rideshare services, which reduces parking needs, and consider creating an e-scooter policy.
- Install bike-friendly city signs to reinforce the lower speed limit on Gulf Boulevard and increase enforcement. The City should also incorporate radar speed feedback signs to track speeding and patterned or textured crosswalks to lower speed. It should also integrate shared lane markings along the Gulf Boulevard corridor or keep the paved shoulder and reinforce signage to increase safety and protect bicyclists.
- Consider incorporating pedestrian enhancements such as sidewalks within the commercial areas as needed to address gaps and provide enhanced multimodal connectivity.
- Incorporate additional bike parking, create bike parking incentives, and consider including a bike valet service at events. The land development codes could be modified to require bike parking as part of the approval process for new projects.

LONG TERM (4+ YEARS):

- Offer incentives, parking in-lieu fees, and parking reductions for developments that include additional bicycle parking or covered trolley/transit stops. The City should also consider providing wayfinding signage to potential shared parking locations and points of interest.

QUALITY OF LIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The City has a vested interest in preserving open space and green space throughout the community and continues beautification efforts to preserve these natural amenities. Parks and open space contribute to the community's small-town character and form and promotes an active, healthy lifestyle. Park and open space can also play a key role in mitigating the effects of climate change.

Besides preserving open space, the community is concerned with resiliency and adaption to climate change impacts. As a community on a barrier island, the City is particularly susceptible to the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise.

QUALITY OF LIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS.

NEAR TERM (1-2 YEARS):

- To improve resiliency, it is highly recommended that the City update its Stormwater Master Plan to ensure they are providing enhanced stormwater and drainage infrastructure. The City is also in the process of the undergrounding/hardening of infrastructure, and the community should investigate methods of floodproofing underground utilities.
- Encourage the use of floodproofing methods, with techniques such as dry floodproofing and wet floodproofing and the methods must be compliant with FEMA.

MID-TERM (2-4 YEARS):

- To improve resiliency, it is highly recommended that the City model for sea-level rise and storm surge to protect potential impacts in the future. To plan for the projected impacts of climate change countermeasures, it is highly recommended that the community incorporate countermeasures into capital improvement planning.
- There are strategies that the community could incorporate to preserve open space, such as purchase or transfer of development rights. The community should consider the use of green infrastructure planning to identify the community's ecological assets and preserve them. The community should also consider identifying indicators to measure and ensure ecosystem health over a period of time.

Planner Mendoza stated in February 2020, the Gulf Boulevard Visioning Study Plan was posted to the City's website for public comments. Many of the received comments were minor, such as small learning changes and clarification items, which can be easily addressed.

Planner Mendoza reviewed the more significant comments that were reviewed and sought direction from the City Commission regarding how the City and community would like for Forward Pinellas to finalize the report.

- *Further exploration of mixed-use consideration in the Business District Triangle Overlay Zone, particularly regarding mixed-use with residential.*
 - The land development codes currently allows residential but must be combined with commercial.

Planner Mendoza stated that the way it is worded in the City Code is confusing, thus reflecting the need to update the City Code to provide clarity.

- *Further research into the potential incorporation of a unified public art within the community.*

- Forward Pinellas could research other examples within the region, such as the Pinellas County Cultural Affairs Department, Public Art and Design and Art Program.
- *Short-term vacation rental impacts must be included in the visioning study, particularly for the retail market study.*
 - The City is currently inventorying short-term vacation rentals.

Planner Mendoza stated due to data limitations, Forward Pinellas was unable to accurately depict the impact of short-term vacation rentals on the community. However, the City is currently inventorying short-term vacation rentals. Forward Pinellas encourages the City to consider conducting further analysis to assess their local impact.

- *Further exploration of grant opportunities for small businesses.*
 - Business grants are available through the CARES Act for COVID-19 related issues. The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners has approved additional funding to develop new business assistance programs. Details and the application launch date will be announced once the program is finalized.
- *Need to balance competing desires — growth and development vs. protection and preservation.*
 - The visioning study provides a balance between these interests.

Planner Mendoza stated one of the main goals of the visioning plan was to strike a balance. For example, Forward Pinellas encouraged the incorporation of a pedestrian-friendly environment by incorporating elements in the land development codes, such as reducing setbacks and incorporating public safety enhancements and streetscaping while at the same time keeping the City's height limits the same. This ensures consistency with the surrounding context and maintains the community character and form.

Planner Mendoza stated Forward Pinellas also encouraged consideration of a historic preservation strategy, such as incentives and others, that the City could consider incorporating to preserve better landmark resources.

- *Concern over determining the “market area” for the visioning study.*
 - The consultant has made some edits to the market assessment to address these concerns.

Planner Mendoza stated there was concern over determining the market area for the visioning study. The consultant's analysis considered the existing spatial distribution of grocery stores and nearby competitors. The consultant's analysis indicated that most grocery stores in the area have roughly a three-minute drive time based on the competition distribution.

Due to Indian Rocks Beach's unique geography and its location on a barrier island, it is assumed that the locals would be willing to drive a little bit further to shop locally, and that is why it was determined to use the Indian Rocks Beach boundary.

- *Concern over the viability of economic vitality recommendations due to the pandemic.*
 - The visioning study's recommendations focus on small business support programs and streamlining the permitting process and the application process to make it easier for small businesses to get established.
- *An interest in a landmark preservation board, historic preservation plan, and/or incentive-based strategies.*
 - These recommendations could be included as the community desires. One approach the City could take is to focus on preserving the historic structures outlined in the City's historic walking tour created by the Florida Humanity Council as an initial first step. The visioning study currently includes various incentive programs that the City could explore further in implementation if it chooses to do so.
- *Review existing architectural guidelines and update.*
 - This could be addressed through updates to the land development codes during the implementation phase and could be included as a separate recommendation if the community so desires.
- *Evaluate conflicting recommendations and clarify items as needed.*
 - There will be tradeoffs to each recommendation, and they are not necessarily mutually exclusive and can be subjective.
- *Recommendations need more actionable statements.*
 - Recommendations were written to give the City as much flexibility as possible.
- *Desires to explore a possible circulator service within the City.*
 - Can recommend consideration of smaller, private operator.
- *Questionable community interest in a grocery store.*
 - Based on input received, the community has expressed interest.
- *E-Scooters are most likely not feasible in IRB with the narrow bike lanes.*
 - Given the speed limit and the size of the City, e-scooters could be a consideration. Under State law, they are allowed, and if the City wanted to prohibit e-scooters, they would have to adopt an ordinance banning them.

- *Mixed-use demand and feasibility need more detail to include a specific type of commercial business.*
 - The market assessment examined the market potential for different mixed-use types featuring ground-floor retail with a combination of residential, office, or VRBO uses above. A more in-depth analysis would likely require more specific site-level information to properly depict detailed market and risk factors, realistic estimates of acquisition, construction, and finance costs.

NEXT STEPS:

- The City Commission would be asked to take action on the visioning study providing direction to Forward Pinellas on how to complete the final report.
- Forward Pinellas would then incorporate comments into the final report based on the City Commission's direction.
- The City Commission would then determine the next steps toward implementation of the recommendations.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS.

John Pfanstiehl, 448 Harbor Drive South, stated would like to see IRB preserve the small-town feel by establishing historic zones, purchasing development rights, encouraging extensive remodeling for single-story homes, or significantly increase the impact fees or provide property tax breaks.

Angela Coccozza, 356 LaHacienda Drive, stated she has been a resident for 30 years. She has seen the storms affect the overhead utility lines, and stated she would like to see all utilities undergrounded.

City Manager Mims stated Phase I of the Gulf Boulevard Undergrounding of Utilities from Indian Shores to the intersection of Gulf Boulevard and Walsingham Road is estimated to be completed by October.

City Manager Mims stated the Board of County Commissioners agreed to allocate up to \$35 Million of its Penny IV funds to complete the undergrounding of utilities along Gulf Boulevard. From October 2020 to October 2025, the City has to be complete with Phase II. The City would start where it left off and go as far north as it can.

Ms. Coccozza asked what could be done with the short-term rentals on her block as they are disturbing the neighborhood.

Mayor-Commissioner Kennedy advised her to call the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office or the City's Code Enforcement Officer.

City Manager Mims stated the State has prohibited cities from limiting as to where short-term vacation rentals could be located.

Rick McFall, 408 Harbor Drive North, stated a parking study was prepared in conjunction with the USF Study and feels that is something that could be adapted to the current study. He stated e-scooters are an issue if used on the beach and on the sidewalks. Motorists are confused about what goes on up and down Gulf Boulevard as bikers and e-scooters are riding the wrong way, not using the bike lanes, and so forth.

Mr. McFall stated the concept of short-term vacation rentals has had a significant impact on the City.

Mayor-Commissioner Kennedy stated the City is going to continue to fight for home rule. She encouraged everyone who is having issues with short-term vacation rentals to contact their Florida Legislators.

Executive Director Blanton stated in order to carve out properly designated bike lanes on Gulf Boulevard, mark, and assign them, the City needs to either decide to acquire more right-of-way, which would be extremely expensively, or narrow the width of the existing travel lanes to something like 10 feet. The City has been clear in its unwillingness to do that for various reasons. Their report acknowledges that, and that is a policy decision that the City Commission is making. The City could adopt an ordinance to ban bicycle riding from sidewalks in certain areas. The City is not required to allow bicycles to use sidewalks. They are legally allowed to do unless there is an ordinance contrary. He thinks in a community like Indian Rocks Beach, that is not recommended because so many people are not comfortable riding adjacent to cars moving 30 mph or faster. He thinks the City would want to encourage bike riding. So, Forward Pinellas is recommending the City focus more on improving the messaging about safety. He suggested working on educational efforts and partnering with the sheriff's office to issue some warnings rather than citations reminding people of the laws. He suggested using some creative signage and markings to remind people to go the speed limit and their responsibilities as pedestrians and bicyclists. Motorists often disrespect bicyclists and pedestrians, and bicyclists and pedestrians also do not always follow the law. Unless the City is willing to invest in infrastructure, the City is left with education, encouragement, and enforcement as their best options.

David Ardman, 351 LaHacienda Drive, asked if any other beach communities prohibit bicycles on their sidewalks.

Mr. Blanton stated the city of St. Petersburg restricts bicycles from the sidewalks in their downtown area. But, he is not aware of any other city that has banned bikes from sidewalks in the Pinellas County area.

City Attorney Mora stated that generally speaking, Chapter 316, Florida Statutes, addresses vehicle traffic and alike states that bikes are to be treated as pedestrians on sidewalks with proper yielding and the alike.

Mr. Blanton stated from their data and research, a sidewalk is the least safe place to ride. A bicyclist will get hit more often on a sidewalk than riding on a bicycle lane or in the street.

Daryl Frahn, 317-10th Avenue, thanked the City Commission for incorporating most of Action 2000, Inc.'s comments and recommendations into the visioning study and thanked the City Commission for including the focus on preservation and updating and clarifying some of the zoning.

Robert Coccozza, 356 LaHacienda Drive, expressed concern with beach parking on 7th Avenue, 8th Avenue, and 9th Avenue.

John Ashby, 513 Hidden Harbour Drive, stated short-term vacation rentals are clearly a challenge that everyone is trying to work through. As the City looks through some of the options for short-term vacation rentals, does the City have the capability of levying some separate excise or value-added tax? If it does, could it be set at a point where it would not encourage short-term vacation rentals?

City Attorney Mora stated he wanted to ensure this dialogue continues that the City Commission and the public focus on proposals at issue. But as it relates to the City starting some kind of tax, the taxing power tied to the constitutional powers that each city has, there is no specific power beyond the ad valorem to have for something like this. This kind of inquiry has come up in the past. The City collects a business tax fee, which is collected for short-term vacation rentals. Some cities have a fee, separate from that business tax fee, that is usually tied to the administrative cost of facilitating some kind of City bureaucracy that involves inspections or special vacation rental certification and alike. This City Commission, for roughly three years, carefully considered several approaches and defined explicitly at that time to go with the business tax receipt only. The City has implemented an ordinance for residents and property owners to register and identify designated responsible parties alike, and Code Enforcement has taken measures to implement that.

Mr. Blanton stated in looking at mixed-use development, some sort of revenue stream is critical to ensure that the City can subsidize the more expensive and less profitable portions of mixed-use development. Their analysis and market study looked at mixed-use in Indian Rocks Beach to have a residential component. It is challenging to do mixed-use that does not have that consistent revenue stream. Certainly, the market is strong for those kinds of rental products. That has presented some concern to them, the community, and the City Commission because the vacation rental industry has affected Indian Rocks Beach and other Pinellas County communities. It is difficult to untangle these issues when the City is thinking about redevelopment and mixed-use. They acknowledged this in the report, and

for that reason, they have provided some guidance on how to consider mixed-use going forward and in what locations to consider mixed-use.

Rachael (LNU), 373 LaHacienda Drive, stated it was mentioned this evening briefly about a grocery store in Indian Rocks Beach and asked about the parking and how the traffic would influence the area.

Mr. Blanton stated the type of grocery store they looked at was not a standard large-scale Publix. It was more of a specialty grocer that provided a smaller footprint in terms of square footage and catered to the local market instead of a draw of, say, three to five miles.

Mr. Blanton stated concerning parking and other congestion producing effects that would depend on the grocery store's scale and size. For instance, if its size, scale, and offerings meet existing demand, it would draw people from a larger market area.

CITY COMMISSION COMMENTS:

COMMISSIONER HOOFNAGLE

- Thanked Forward Pinellas for the work that they did and for getting the community together.
- Thanked Action 2000, Inc., for the assistance with the retail market study that was done.
- He stated when the residents envisioned the City's development, did the residents want more people in cars.
- He asked what the community could do to encourage redevelopment without overloading density in terms of cars and interaction between cars and people.
- He would like to emphasize the extent to which the development efforts encourage pedestrian, bicycle, and other forms of friendly transportation that does not involve cars, and he thinks that is a good thing.
- He stated e-scooters are very dangerous, especially for a community with Indian Rocks Beach's demographic profile, where a slip and fall could become a life-changing event. He would not want the City affiliated in any way with a scooter program. He is not in support of a scooter program.
- He stated the preservation board that was discussed needs to be balanced with the real-life implications of redevelopment and property rights. He supports preservation. He thinks it should be done voluntarily, not involuntarily.
- He believes that the retail market study that was done inaccurately measures the market share potential. He thinks it was unrealistic to use the island municipal boundaries. He understands that was a decision that was taken upon consultation with experts in the field. He had been informed, and he disagreed with them that was probably not the right way to do that. It perhaps gives a misleading picture of a small-scale grocery store's viability, which does not include something that Mr. Blanton mentioned, like the Belleair Market, which is a much smaller format than

what was described in the retail market study. He does believe, and he agrees with Mr. Blanton that something of that scale may be viable. However, the small-format grocery, which was described in the retail study, was unrealistic.

- The City Commission had heard a lot of comments about short-term vacation rentals and parking. He hopes that when the land development codes are redeveloped, the City does their best to encourage parking to be off Gulf Boulevard. He understands now what the front setbacks do by making it a parking lot. He stated having people back onto Gulf Boulevard is not ideal for traffic circulation and pedestrian safety.
- He stated to the extent that mixed-use development encourages additional short-term vacation rentals, he would not support mixed-use and would do his best to stop it. He is hopeful that the City would not generate additional short-term vacation rental activities, except if it is centered in the commercial district, then it is appropriate. However, if it hinges upon residential neighborhoods, then it is inappropriate.

COMMISSIONER FLAGG

- Thanked the citizens and the business owners who came to the work sessions and put together the visioning plan. The City is so fortunate to have so many interested and involved citizens who care about the City. She thanked Forward Pinellas for putting all the comments and ideas together into a visioning plan.
- She stated the resounding response from almost everybody was a desire to preserve and protect the community's small-town values while facing population growth, increased rental properties, and overcrowding of City streets and the beach.
- She is sorry if there was a misunderstanding that the City Commission was doing this to promote growth and development, nothing could be further from the truth. There is nothing in this study that recommends increasing higher, larger or taller building heights.
- She is very much in favor of re-establishing the summary table for zoning districts to include allowable uses, like setbacks, height, parking. It could be a helpful tool to anyone wanting to invest in the City in the future and also easy for residents to understand.
- She recommended the architectural guideline change for future residential and commercial projects to keep more in line with the small-town character. She would defer to the City Manager and the Planning Consultant to determine its feasibility and how the City Commission would recommend updating the land development codes.
- She stated Gulf Boulevard is a major thoroughfare. It will never be congestion-free, but the City has to work on making it safer and more manageable. The City has already established some things, like keeping the speed limit down, changed the pedestrian medians to traffic calming medians, and provided more signage.
- She stated the City is a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly community. Pedestrian and bicycle education is a task and challenge for both the City and the County.

- She stated as the City is in the process of undergrounding utilities on Gulf Boulevard, it would be an excellent opportunity for the City to think about green space.
- She stated for economic vitality, it just makes cents that the City's growth opportunities would be in the Downtown Business District. Of course, the exception would be the one parcel between 23rd and 24th Avenue, which would be a mixed-use project.
- She recommended a review and update of the Business District Triangle Overlay Zone, which should be consistent with the City's small-town character. The study mentioned a small community grocery store, and perhaps it could be a dine-in so that it would appeal to residents and tourists. Instead of driving, they could go by bike or walk, that might be something to consider.
- She stated the City should meet with its downtown business partners to see what planning they think would enhance their businesses and encourage new businesses in that area and ways to manage the parking in the downtown area.
- She stated ideally, the Business District Triangle could become a walkable and bike-friendly thriving downtown that would serve the community well if the City could work more with that area.
- She stated the community character is just sensible growth and development in the downtown area. If the City focuses on small-town characteristics, businesses, maybe B&Bs, highlight the City's museum and Chic-A-Si Park as amenities. The Plein-Aire Cottage Artists have championed the cottages through their documentary and paintings, highlighting the quite feel for Indian Rocks Beach that the community now thinks is so special.
- The City should not pursue a historic preservation committee. Perhaps, if Action 2000, Inc., and the museum wanted to look at incentives, that would be in tandem with what the cottage property owners wish to. It would have to be something that the cottage property owners would feel comfortable with going forward.
- She would like to pursue "branding" because IRB is a quaint coastal community. She stated supposed the City can come up with signage emphasizing that the community is pedestrian and bicycle-friendly. In that case, she thinks that is a theme that she would like to see consistent throughout the community.
- She stated the City might be able to have more frequent stops trolley/bus stops if the City thought it demanded that during peak season and peak times.
- She stated the mention of private transporters interested her, and perhaps the City could pursue that.
- She stated the City does need to consider parking restrictions and noted the City Commission is addressing parking issues at this time.
- She stated she would like to encourage the City to review the Stormwater Master Plan. She said Public Services does an excellent job of handling the storm drain issues. From time to time, the City Commission does receive updates on the improvements and a review of costs as part of the budget process.
- She stated the City probably has more green space with its beach accesses and parks than most beach communities. She would like to take care of what the City

- has and suggested not buying any large parcels that would put a demand on taxpayers that the City does not need.
- She would like the City to continue to work with Action 2000, Inc., on street scenes and aesthetics because they have done an excellent job contributing to some excellent street landscaping project. She hopes the City could pursue that in the future with Action 2000, Inc.
 - Thanked Action 2000, Inc., for the donation of \$25,000 toward this study and is very grateful for that.

COMMISSIONER MCCALL

- He stated it had been a tough year for IRB businesses as Forward Pinellas mentioned that 50% of IRB businesses employ one to four employees, which is about as small a business a person can have. He would like to discuss what the City can do to help the small businesses survive and anything the City can do to streamline the process to make it a little bit easier to get the doors open and generate revenue. This is a personal investment for them. The community loves its small businesses and local businesses.
- He agrees with Commissioner Flagg regarding preservation. Anything that the City could do to help the community's cottages leads to the community's quaintness, which everyone loves about Indian Rocks Beach.
- He stated the City has been proactive with the short-term vacation rentals by passing an ordinance and enforcing that ordinance.
- He stated Phase I of the Gulf Boulevard Undergrounding of Utilities Project will be completed in October.

COMMISSIONER HANNA

- He thanked Forward Pinellas for a beautiful job and stated a lot of work was done to prepare the visioning study plan.
- He stated people come to Indian Rocks Beach because of the small-town character charm, and a lot of people do not want to see that changed. It does not mean the City cannot augment or enhance it.
- He does not think the City could make a developer follow the City's architectural guidelines but could probably use them as a negotiation tool.
- He stated the more logical place for any new development to create a center of excellence in terms of a destination would be the Business District Triangle. The Business District Triangle has been down there for years, and it is the most likely place to generate businesses, restaurants, bicycling, and all kind of things can happen, and it is just across the bridge from the mainland.
- He stated mixed-use would be perfect in the Business District Triangle.
- He stated if a private company provided the circulator program, would the City have any liability, if any.
- He is all for preservation because that is part of the charm, which is a large part of the community's appeal.

MAYOR-COMMISSIONER KENNEDY

- She agrees with the updates to the land development codes.
- She stated because of the traffic congestion in the Business District Triangle, she would like to see sidewalks for safety concerns.
- She is working with Forward Pinellas Safe Streets on pedestrian safety.
- She stated there are close to 30 businesses in IRB, and because of the pandemic and the effects that this has caused on the businesses, she would like to have an open roundtable with the business community to see where they are at, what and if the City could not help, and if the City cannot help, and how could Pinellas County help through the CARES Act or other funding available through the State or Federal government. She stated most businesses that are open are struggling.
- She would like to resurrect the USF parking study if it can just be updated or if a new study needs to be done.
- She reiterated that the IRB feel of a small town is what the community wants to stay with, and the visioning study does not mention anything about the increase of building height in Indian Rocks Beach.
- She believes in mixed-use if built in the right zoning district, like commercial or business, but not residential.
- She stated the architectural and design guidelines need to be reviewed and applied to the buildings on Gulf Boulevard, not just in the Business District Overlay Zone.

CITY MANAGER MIMS

- Staff requests Forward Pinellas provide a final copy of the visioning plan for staff's review.
- Staff will come back to the City Commission on some plans to implement what staff can out of the study.
- *Preservation.* Since February, it has been made very clear from responses that there are not a majority of people in Indian Rocks Beach that are interested in a preservation ordinance. He stated the Historical Society and Action 2000, independently from the City, could research the options for preservation and then report back to the City Commission on their findings.
- *Parking Study.* Staff did a parking study in 2010, and the recommendations were somewhat vague. Within the last six years, 40 parking spaces were added in the Business District Triangle, 15 parking spaces were added where the new volleyball court is (old Solid Waste Building was located), and 18 parking spaces within the Holiday Inn Harbourside Parking Lot as per their PUD Development Agreement. The study recommended the businesses have shared parking agreements where people can park on other businesses' property.
- *Circulator.* If the City were to get into the circulator bus program, an RFP would be put out.
- *Short-Term Vacation Rentals.* There are 150 short-term vacation rentals in the residential areas that are impacting the residential areas. Staff is tracking short-term vacation rentals.

- *Meeting with Business Owners.* Set up a meeting with business owners to discuss parking issues or any other items they want to discuss. After the meeting, he will report back to the City Commission.
- Thanked Action 2000 for being involved like they always are.
- Thanked Forward Pinellas for their professional and hard work in preparing the Gulf Boulevard Visioning Study Plan.

Commissioner Hoofnagle asked if the City Manager could talk to the post office and explore whether or not there is a possibility to have a private parking facility off-hours.

City Manager Mims stated he would.

CONSENSUS OF THE CITY COMMISSION FOR FORWARD PINELLAS TO FINALIZE THE GULF BOULEVARD VISIONING STUDY PLAN.

10. ADJOURNMENT.

MOTION MADE BY COMMISSIONER HOOFNAGLE, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR-COMMISSIONER FLAGG, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:40 P.M. UNANIMOUS APPROVAL BY ACCLAMATION.

March 9, 2021
Date Approved

/DOR