

# City of Fort Lauderdale

*City Hall  
100 North Andrews Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
[www.fortlauderdale.gov](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov)*



## Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday, January 22, 2019**

**1:30 PM**

**City Commission Conference Room**

## **City Commission Conference Meeting**

***FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION***

***DEAN J. TRANTALIS Mayor - Commissioner  
BEN SORENSEN Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District IV  
HEATHER MORAITIS Commissioner - District I  
STEVEN GLASSMAN Commissioner - District II  
ROBERT L. McKINZIE Commissioner - District III***

***CHRIS LAGERBLOOM, City Manager  
JOHN HERBST, City Auditor  
JEFFREY A. MODARELLI, City Clerk  
ALAIN E. BOILEAU, City Attorney***

## CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trantalis called the Commission Conference Meeting to order at 1:39 p.m.

## ROLL CALL

**Present:** Commissioner Heather Moraitis, Commissioner Steven Glassman, Commissioner Robert L. McKinzie, Vice Mayor Ben Sorensen and Mayor Dean J. Trantalis

## QUORUM ESTABLISHED

**Also Present:** City Manager Chris Lagerbloom, City Clerk Jeffrey A. Modarelli, City Attorney Alain E. Boileau, City Auditor John Herbst, and Sergeant at Arms Heather Lee

## CITY COMMISSION REPORTS

### ***Members of the Commission announced recent and upcoming events and matters of interest.***

Commissioner Moraitis commented on addressing vehicles blocking nearby intersections along Commercial Boulevard and Oakland Park Boulevard during intracoastal bridge openings. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed Staff would address these locations. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding possible solutions and similar situations near railroad crossings.

Commissioner Moraitis suggested discussions with the Transportation Management Association (TMA) regarding utilizing electric cart vehicles as a local transportation option, commenting on the possibility of federal grant funding.

Commissioner Moraitis discussed her upcoming attendance at the upcoming Central Wastewater Region Large User Advisory Board Meeting. Further comment and discussion ensued on the topics to be discussed, capital improvements and ongoing rate studies.

Commissioner Glassman commented on the upcoming Resiliency Public Workshop Meeting. Comment and discussion ensued on the format and the role of Staff. Mayor Trantalis noted it is an opportunity to inform residents about actions addressing resiliency related topics.

Commissioner Glassman commented on the desire of District II residents to assist those impacted by the federal government shutdown. City Manager Lagerbloom discussed Staff's ability and Broward County taking the lead. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner McKinzie commented on the success of Martin Luther King Day Jr. (MLK) events, participation and Staff efforts. He suggested Staff work with the Nova Southeastern University Museum (Museum) for access to street frontage and utilities during MLK events. Commissioner McKinzie said that this would also ensure young people's exposure to the Museum's exhibits and culture.

In response to Commissioner McKinzie's comments regarding the need to inform residents about the savings associated with the proposed Charter amendments on the March 12, 2019 ballot, it was confirmed this would be an important educational aspect for residents.

Vice Mayor Sorensen commented on the success of the Commission's Goal Setting Sessions. He also discussed the opening of the Community Court, thanking all those who contributed. Vice Mayor Sorensen discussed his ongoing efforts regarding Affordable Housing, homelessness and educating residents about the upcoming Parks Bond and Public Safety Facilities Bond (Bonds). He also confirmed the upcoming SE 17th Street Mobility Working Group is scheduled for January 29, 2019.

Vice Mayor Sorensen discussed plastic bags, their impact on the environment and the successful efforts of other major cities to address this issue. He commented on litigation in Florida cities to address state level preemption.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding preemption, City Attorney Alain Boileau commented on details relating to state exemption, expounding on the uniqueness of the City of Coral Gables and their efforts regarding associated litigation. City Attorney Boileau commented on Miami-Dade County cities that enacted plastic bags bans prior to January 1, 2016, expounding on details regarding litigation and the delegation of legislative authority. He said implementing a plastic bag ban would result in litigation which could ultimately be decided by the Florida Supreme Court. City Attorney Boileau commented on the ability to regulate vendor and contractor's use of polystyrene products (Styrofoam) during municipal events, stating that this would not apply to plastic bags.

Mayor Trantalis concurred with Vice Mayor Sorensen's position on this topic, recommending waiting for a decision from the Third District Court of Appeals prior to moving forward with a municipal ban on plastic bags. Further comment and discussion ensued. City Attorney Boileau confirmed that he would monitor this matter and report back to the Commission.

City Auditor John Herbst discussed the National Center for Policy Analysis' examination of "before and after" following implementation of bans on plastic bags by businesses, explaining the economic impact. Further discussion and comment ensued.

Mayor Trantalis discussed his attendance at the Museum of Discovery and Science's (Museum) event entitled *Museums for All*, a program initiated to reduce the admission cost, allowing low-income families to experience everything the Museum has to offer. He discussed his attendance and details related to an educational program for disadvantaged children coordinated with Staff of the *Hamilton* production, expounding on details and thanking all involved for their efforts.

Mayor Trantalis commented on setting up an Arts Advisory Board and future opportunities. Further comment and discussion ensued. Commissioner Glassman concurred with establishing an Arts Advisory Board. Mayor Trantalis requested this topic be scheduled for an upcoming Conference Meeting.

Mayor Trantalis commented on the closure of NE 13th Street. Commissioner Glassman discussed input from nearby businesses and neighborhood associations regarding closing NE 13th Street for an event in March. City Manager Lagerbloom explained background details and information regarding modifications to the event, confirming it would return to the Commission for reconsideration on February 5, 2019. Commissioner Glassman discussed the need to inform nearby businesses and neighborhood associations impacted by upcoming events prior to approval. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed.

[19-0098](#)

Communications to the City Commission

**Citizens Committee of Recognition  
December 17, 2018**

***A copy of this communication is attached to these minutes.***

Commissioner Glassman commented on the Commission having

discretion to set categories. City Attorney Boileau confirmed the procedure. The Committee can make recommendations for Commission consideration. Further comment and discussion ensued on the Committee's recommendation.

## OLD/NEW BUSINESS

### BUS-1 [19-0103](#)

#### Update on Building Permit Process/ Land Management Software Implementation

Mayor Trantalis recognized Alfred Battle, Deputy Director of Sustainable Development. Mr. Battle introduced other members of the Department of Sustainable Development Staff who would be participating in the slide presentation: John Travers, Building Official, Department of Sustainable Development; and Andre Cross, Building Assistance Coordinator. He also acknowledged others who have contributed to the Accela Land Management Software Project (Accela Project) and input and effort from additional stakeholders.

John Travers, Building Official, Department of Sustainable Development (DSD), presented the slide presentation entitled *Update on Building Permit Process/Land Management Software Implementation*.

***A copy of the slide presentation entitle Update on Building Permit Process/ Land Management Software Implementation is attached to these minutes.***

Mr. Travers explained details regarding the building permitting process and inspections, the volume of permits, timelines and the introduction of new systems and upgrades to improve and streamline the customer service process/stakeholder experience, expounding on details related to these areas of service. He expounded on the new fee schedule for building permits and its advantages. Mr. Travers said that the Director of DSD will come back to the Commission to explain challenges encountered with the new fee system, allowing them to consider and address these items. Status Reports are generated on a weekly basis to monitor progress in each area of responsibility.

Mr. Travers discussed upcoming enhancements to the DSD website which will inform stakeholders about required documentation for residential and commercial permit applications. He confirmed the need to hire a Building Assistance Coordinator a/k/a *Concierge*.

Andre Cross, Building Assistance Coordinator, confirmed he is the liaison between stakeholders and the Building Official to address concerns related to the permitting process, expounding on details. Due to the high volume of projects, an additional Building Assistance Coordinator will be hired. Mr. Cross discussed the 30-day timeline goal for permitting, confirming all projects are treated equitably.

Commissioner McKinzie commented on Mr. Cross assisting stakeholder's navigation through the Building Services permitting process. In response to Commissioner McKinzie's question about challenges and how the Commission can assist, Mr. Cross commented on disciplines in the process taking additional time and improvements. Further comment and discussion ensued on previous challenges in the process and moving forward with the improved process.

Alfred Battle, Deputy Director of the Department of Sustainable Development, commented on the value of Mr. Cross, his role as Building Assistance Coordinator and hiring an additional person to meet customer service goals. Mr. Battle updated the Commission on details related to the Accela Project which replaces the current land management system. Many of the Accela Project's features will allow users to remotely access the permit process. DSD Staff will also be able to respond to permitting items online, allowing increased efficiency and the ability to concurrently review plans. He expounded on additional connectivity improvements and additional features.

In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's question, Mr. Battle confirmed Accela is being used in Tampa and Polk County, expounding on feedback and related details. Mr. Battle confirmed Accela's planned implementation is scheduled for April 2019. Further comment and discussion ensued on the land management system used in Pompano Beach and the City implementing Accela in a phased approach.

In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's question, Mr. Travers confirmed that Mr. Battle visited the City of Tampa, confirming shifting roles of Staff as a result of Accela. Mr. Battle said there would no Staff reduction, expounding on details. Mr. Travers confirmed the ability to address the submission of plans in the traditional manner would be maintained for those who are not digitally automated. This will require Staff to create an incoming process to digitally convert these items.

In response to Commissioner McKinzie's question, Mr. Travers explained the current procedure to notify customers when plans and permits move

through the process and are ready for payment. Accela's portals will allow all stakeholders to have access to the latest approved plans, revisions and related information. Further comment and discussion ensued on the intent of Accela to digitally manage the permitting process.

In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's question regarding the thirty percent increase in efficiency and a corresponding reduction in approval in days, Mr. Travers confirmed. He discussed other customer service alternatives for minor changes, noting it is dependent upon the complexity of the work. Commissioner McKinzie noted that timelines are tracked when plans are in DSD, noting that timelines are not tracked when plans leave DSD and return to the stakeholder for review.

Mr. Battle discussed the Accela platform and related learning curves, expounding on the status of technical items which are being addressed by Staff and the vendor prior to the April 2019 implementation date. This includes the conversion of existing data into the Accela system.

### **CITY MANAGER REPORTS**

City Manager Chris Lagerbloom discussed the new Las Olas Parking Garage located in the Central Beach Area, commenting that it is not driving anticipated usage with the closing of the nearby surface parking lot. He recommended a banner informing the public of its availability. The Commission concurred with this recommendation.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the Commission Conference Meeting at 3:09 p.m.