

City of Fort Lauderdale



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

1:30 PM

City Hall is closed to the public.

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP

Workshop can be accessed:

<https://fortlauderdale.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

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FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION

DEAN J. TRANTALIS Mayor

STEVEN GLASSMAN Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District II

HEATHER MORAITIS Commissioner - District I

ROBERT L. McKINZIE Commissioner - District III

BEN SORENSEN Commissioner - District IV

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 meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commission Members Present: Commissioner Heather Moraitis (participating telephonically), Commissioner Steven Glassman (participating telephonically), Vice Mayor Robert L. McKinzie (participating telephonically), Commissioner Ben Sorensen (participating telephonically) and Mayor Dean J. Trantalis

QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Also present: City Manager Chris Lagerbloom, City Clerk Jeffrey A. Modarelli, City Attorney Alain E. Boileau and City Auditor John Herbst (participated telephonically)

OLD/NEW BUSINESS**BUS-2** [20-0339](#)

COVID-19 Update

City Manager Lagerbloom explained details regarding the impact of COVID-19, stating that hospitals are at approximately fifty percent (50%) capacity. The State of Florida has set up a field hospital located at 1515 West Commercial Boulevard (Field Hospital). Though not yet open, the current mission of the Field Hospital is to address the needs of patients with low-level COVID-19 symptoms. Further comment and discussion ensued on the evolving nature of its intended use. There have been six (6) individuals testing positive for COVID-19 in the Police Department and one (1) in the Fire Department. Public Works infrastructure projects continue to move forward.

City Manager Lagerbloom requested Commission input regarding current COVID-19 related restrictions. Mayor Trantalis requested input from each Commissioner.

Commissioner Moraitis commented on the timeline and types of businesses for reopening and related details. She discussed reopening outdoor facilities, including restricted hours for exercise activities at beaches while adhering to social distancing requirements. Commissioner Moraitis commented on Marine Industry, hotels, real estate and limited restaurant operations.

Vice Mayor Glassman concurred with Commissioner Moraitis' comments regarding reopening outdoor activities. He commented on the need for COVID-19 testing, trace contacting and other factors to determine a reopening date and individuals who could return to work. Vice Mayor Glassman noted the need to have a concrete plan in place for reopening, citing examples and expounding on related safety measures. Commercial and non-commercial building management should decide what amenities to reopen and associated safety measures.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding the status of the proposed COVID-19 testing facility at the *War Memorial Auditorium*, City Manager Lagerbloom provided an update regarding the testing capacity of Cleveland Clinic at this location. City Manager Lagerbloom recommended supporting the Florida Department of Health drive-up and walk-up facility testing site at *Reverend Samuel Delevoe Memorial Park*. Further comment ensued on the type of testing available and related details, including the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Mayor Trantalis commented on the importance of testing and urged continued efforts to institute and maximize testing. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed ongoing efforts to pursue COVID-19 testing and related goals. He will continue to provide the Commission with updates.

Commissioner McKinzie commented on his perspective, noting the need to test all individuals before sending large numbers of people back into the community.

Commissioner Sorensen concurred with Commissioner McKinzie's perspective, commenting on modeling evaluation metrics projecting May 3, 2020 as the COVID-19 peak date. He confirmed his agreement to continue aggressive efforts addressing the current COVID-19 situation.

Commissioner Sorensen requested clarification and feedback on recreational boating and fueling in marinas. City Attorney Alain Boileau explained details related to the Governor's *Executive Orders*. Marine fueling is permitted for the six (6) exceptions and does not include recreational boating. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding this topic and details related to the *Broward County Emergency Order* and the spirit of the *Governor's Safer-at-Home Executive Order*.

Mayor Trantalis commented on the ability to address essential services

and restrictions unique to the City when the *Executive Orders* end. Further comment and discussion ensued on the City reducing gatherings on the water and addressing related social distancing requirements on boats by closing boat ramps.

Mayor Trantalis confirmed the need for a wait-and-see policy to address the COVID-19 situation.

City Manager Lagerbloom said the cities of Fort Lauderdale, Oakland Park, and Wilton Manors are partnering with *Feeding South Florida* to host a COVID-19 drive-thru food give-away distribution event on Friday, April 17, from 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. at Mills Pond Park, located at 2201 NW 9 Avenue in Fort Lauderdale. Food distribution will occur on a first-come, first-serve basis to the first 1,000 vehicles. He explained this effort is being coordinated through the Division of Neighbor Support, expounding on volunteer details. This food giveaway distribution is planned weekly.

City Manager Lagerbloom recommended developing a process to begin convening Advisory Board and Committee meetings virtually, expounding on related details and acknowledging the quasi-judicial nature of some Boards and Committees.

Vice Mayor Glassman concurred with this recommendation, inquiring about best practices. City Attorney Boileau confirmed a procedure had been developed, including a video component for these virtual meetings. He expounded on the handling of quasi-judicial matters to allow input and questions from the applicants and the public.

City Attorney Boileau said the *City's Emergency Declaration* expires on April 16, 2020, confirming he is drafting a new *Emergency Declaration* with recommendations that include virtual Board and Committee Meetings and citing examples. He confirmed two (2) Pension Board Meetings went forward due to necessary investment decisions resulting from a volatile stock market.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding Boards and Committees which do not have quasi-judicial items, City Attorney Boileau confirmed this would be at the direction of the Commission. Commissioner Sorensen and Commissioner Moraitis concurred that these meetings should go forward.

City Manager Lagerbloom explained there has been an in-depth review of City finances to ensure proper decisions are made moving forward. He has prepared a detailed Commission memo anticipated to be sent out tomorrow. City Manager Lagerbloom expounded on the details of

this memo, commenting on the strong financial position of the City entering into the COVID-19 pandemic. He explained details related to reducing expenses, using reserves and the diverse nature of revenue streams, citing examples, stating the impact on finances would be manageable. City Manager Lagerbloom said he would provide a line-item report, commenting on related details.

City Manager Lagerbloom provided an update on Staffing, confirming there has not been a reduction in the level of service for critical services. He noted the evolving nature of the COVID-19 situation and the cohesive working relationship with other Broward County municipalities, citing examples.

Vice Mayor Glassman thanked City Manager and Staff for their efforts. He commented on numerous inquiries from residents regarding rental assistance, noting the limited amount of funds available. City Manager Lagerbloom said approximately 150 to 160 applications for rental assistance had been received. These applications are currently being processed and would be funded from the *State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) Program* allocation. There are ongoing discussions with Staff to use *First Time-Home Buyers Program* funding for rental assistance in addition to other revenue streams to meet the demand.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding rental assistance, Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager, explained *SHIP Program* details, including income requirements prior employment lay-offs. Each household could receive up to \$5,000 in rental assistance over three (3) months. Landlords are paid once per month, and the lease must be current. The family must be income qualified based on the number of individuals per household.

In response to Vice Mayor Glassman's questions regarding Staff assisting residents with paper unemployment application claims, City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed, noting Staff had been directing residents to Career Source Broward regarding unemployment questions.

Vice Mayor Glassman noted the City does not meet *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)* population criteria for federal assistance. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed lobbyists for the City are aggressively working to address aid at the State and Federal levels, including grants. The City meets Broward County size criteria from entitlements. Further comment and discussion ensued on other funding pools at the State and Federal levels. City Manager Lagerbloom requested Vice Mayor Glassman email specific

opportunities he would like addressed.

Vice Mayor Glassman suggested that due to the shut-down of businesses, this is an opportune time to address infrastructure construction projects, including the *Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) State Road A1A Streetscape Project*. City Manager Lagerbloom concurred, noting the delay has been due to the inability to meet competitive procurement and committee evaluation requirements. He confirmed these would be moving forward.

Commissioner Moraitis asked about a project on Northeast 32nd and 33rd Streets in the Galt Ocean Mile area of District I scheduled to begin in early May 2020. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed he would confer with Staff and email Commissioner Moraitis a status update on the project.

In response to Commissioner Moraitis' question, City Attorney Boileau explained forthcoming updates to the City's *Emergency Declaration (Declaration)*, including the implementation of virtual Advisory Board and Committee Meetings. Further comment and discussion ensued on the expiration dates of the *City Declaration*, *County Emergency Orders* and *Governor Executive Orders*. Further comment ensued.

City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed not all Advisory Board and Committees would be required to meet virtually, i.e., the *LauderTrail Working Group*. City Attorney Boileau concurred, noting Board and Committee Meetings would occur to the extent necessary to ensure the Commission and Staff's ability to conduct business, expounding on related on details. Comment and discussion ensued on a May 15, 2020 date to begin reopening. Mayor Trantalis confirmed the City is following direction from the Governor's Office.

Commissioner Moraitis inquired about Vacation Rentals. The enforcement responsibility and guidelines of Vacation Rentals under Governor DeSantis' applicable *Executive Order (Executive Order)* is the responsibility of the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR). City Attorney Boileau explained details regarding enforcement options under Florida Statute Chapter 252 per the *Executive Order*. Neighbors should be advised to contact Code Enforcement regarding Vacation Rental concerns, explaining details and the process. Further comment and discussion ensued on this topic and actions allowed under and prior to the issuance of the *Executive Order*. Legal recourse is only available with the owner of the vacation rental property, not the renter. City Attorney Boileau confirmed he would

provide a short written summary of this topic.

Commissioner Moraitis inquired about providing water bill relief to residents during the COVID-19 situation. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed a reduction in water bills would not be possible due to water utility bond funding. He noted numerous requests for relief or deferral of other types of fees, citing examples.

In response to Commissioner Moraitis' question regarding rental abatement for tenants at Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport (FXE), City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) guidance, stating a sixty (60) day deferral is allowed. He commented on a tentative schedule to bring this item before the Commission. Further comment ensued. City Attorney Boileau confirmed deferral agreements are being drafted for each lease, expounding on details. A tenant would have to request a deferment under its lease. City Attorney confirmed the opportunity for a deferral had been communicated to FXE tenants.

Commissioner Moraitis discussed interior renovations displacing residents in the Galt Ocean Mile area due to restrictions contained in the *Executive Order*. City Attorney Boileau confirmed a broad interpretation of this topic in the *Executive Order*, expounding on details. Commissioner Moraitis commented on allowing residents to remain while interior renovations are being completed. Mayor Trantalis commented on the ability to address these concerns on a case-by-case basis and related details. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding FXE being eligible to participate in the *CARES Act* funding, City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed he would advise. Rufus James, Manager of FXE, explained FXE had applied for \$157,000 based upon a formula. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed he would provide additional details.

BUS-1 [20-0338](#)

Discussion - Proposed United States Courthouse in Fort Lauderdale

City Manager Lagerbloom briefly reviewed the four (4) sites the United States General Services Administration (GSA) is currently considering for a Federal Courthouse: 1) *The Hudson Site* bounded by the Tarpon River, Southeast Fourth Avenue, Southeast 11th Street and Southeast Third Avenue; 2) *The Tri-Rail Site* bounded by Northwest 22nd Avenue, Northwest 21st Terrace and West Broward Boulevard; 3) *County Courthouse Site* bounded by South New River Drive East, Southeast First Avenue and the Broward County Jail; and 4) *North Tri-Rail Site* bounded by Power Line Road, Cypress Creek Station Railroad Tracks and Northwest 57th Court.

City Manager Lagerbloom explained the Commission has the option to provide input to GSA, and this discussion is the forum to provide feedback. The GSA will continue its engagement with the public as the procurement process moves forward.

As a member of the Federal Courthouse Task Force, Mayor Trantalis provided an additional frame of reference on this topic. He explained the criteria provided by the Judges that make a site desirable, including the need to address parking. Funding for the Federal Courthouse only includes funding for fifty (50) parking spaces for Federal Courthouse Judges and staff, and additional parking is needed for the public.

Mayor Trantalis provided additional background. An additional site located near Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway and *Brightline Train* is under discussion and being considered by GSA, expounding on related details.

Mayor Trantalis commented on available parking at the *County Courthouse Site* and the ease of access to the adjacent Broward County Jail. The Federal Courthouse located at this site would complete the State and County Judicial Complex. Mayor Trantalis commented on discussions with Broward County regarding its potential plans for this site.

Mayor Trantalis discussed aspects of the *Hudson Site*, including affordability and its downtown area location.

Mayor Trantalis said the two (2) *Tri-Rail Sites* were selected due to their location, noting the lack of adequate parking.

Commissioner Moraitis commented on her support of *The Hudson Site*.

Commissioner Sorensen commented on his perspective and shared input from the Downtown Civic Association and surrounding homeowner associations, recommending a site in the downtown area. He shared input from residents in these associations, urging a downtown site. He expounded on details related to this topic.

Mayor Trantalis discussed providing feedback to the GSA and details related to the *County Courthouse Site*.

Commissioner Sorensen discussed conversations with GSA and the desire for Commission feedback on the sites. He confirmed his support

of *The Hudson Site and the County Courthouse Site*. Mayor Trantalis and Vice Mayor Glassman concurred, confirming both *Tri-Rail Sites* should be eliminated.

In response to Vice Mayor Glassman's question regarding parking at the *County Courthouse Site*, Mayor Trantalis explained adequate public parking options and related details. Further comment ensued.

Commissioner Sorensen shared additional input from residents and downtown area homeowners associations regarding the four (4) sites.

In response to City Manager Lagerbloom, Mayor Trantalis confirmed there is a Commission consensus recommending the *Hudson Site* and *the County Courthouse Site* that should be communicated to the GSA. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed he would prepare correspondence to the GSA.

Mayor Trantalis confirmed the Commission would reconvene should there be any significant developments related to the current COVID-19 situation to update the public and the stay-at-home policy.

Mayor Trantalis thanked members of the Commission for their efforts in keeping the community informed. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed a Commission Regular Meeting via video and teleconference on Tuesday, April 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. No Commission Conference Meeting is scheduled for that date. A Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board Meeting is scheduled on Tuesday, April 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. or soon thereafter. Mayor Trantalis said there would be an opportunity at the end of the April 21, 2020 Commission Regular Meeting for members of the Commission to discuss additional items. Further comment and discussion ensued on resuming a normal Commission Meeting schedule.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 3:17 p.m.