

**DUNEDIN, FLORIDA**  
**MINUTES OF THE CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**  
**FEBRUARY 6, 2025**  
**CITY HALL, 737 LOUDEN AVENUE**  
**6:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT**

**City Commission:** Mayor Maureen “Moe” Freaney, Vice Mayor Jeff Gow, Commissioners Tom Dugard, Steven Sandbergen (via Zoom), and Robert Walker

**Also Present:** City Attorney Jennifer Cowan, City Clerk Rebecca Schlichter, Deputy City Manager Jorge Quintas, CRA/Economic Development Director Robert Ironsmith, Community Development Director George Kinney, Parks & Recreation Director Vince Gizzi, Communications Director Sue Burness, Strategy & Sustainability Manager Nicole Delfino and approximately ten people in the audience.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Freaney called the February 6, 2025, Regular Commission Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**INVOCATION AND THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

City Attorney Cowan gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1. PRESENTATIONS**

**1.a. Toronto Blue Jays Welcome Back Proclamation**

Commissioner Sandbergen, the City’s liaison to the Toronto Blue Jays, commented on the importance of the Blue Jays to the City of Dunedin.

It is much more than just a baseball program. There are not many functions in the City where they are not a sponsor or host. Their commitment to the schools, the Little League, and the high school baseball team is something he thought there could never be a price tag on.

They have given the City the exposure to 41 million fans in Canada that has only one baseball team, and that is Dunedin’s baseball team with the Toronto Blue Jays.

Years ago, there was a financial impact study on what Spring Training means to Dunedin from a Ph.D. out of FSU; however, he thought he could sum it up better by saying to go downtown on game day and try to find an ice cream cone, a seat at the bars, or a seat at the restaurants, and you will see how much the Toronto Blue Jays mean to this community.

It has been over thirty years since that World Series win, and he has been lucky enough to be in Mr. Shapiro’s office and see the trophies, so let’s bring another World Series to Toronto.

He thanked Mr. Nelson, Mr. Shapiro, Mr. Shuber, Mr. Woak, Mr. Pat Skunda, and Mr. Wilson who have all been good to him, and he is aware what they have done for the City since day one.

Commissioner Walker read the proclamation welcoming back the Toronto Blue Jays to Spring Training in Dunedin and encouraging all citizens of Dunedin to catch the Blue Jays fever and cheer on our “home team” as they begin their journey toward another championship season.

Shelby Nelson, Toronto Blue Jays Vice President of Florida Operations, accepted the proclamation and commented:

He thanked the leadership and all departments in the City of Dunedin, as well as everyone who helped during and after the hurricanes.

Upcoming is the Blue Jays’ 49<sup>th</sup> Opening Day in Dunedin, which is part of the fabric of the Toronto Blue Jays organization. It is his 17<sup>th</sup> year in the City.

He recognized and thanked Parks & Recreation Director Gizzi, who has been a great partner of the Blue Jays for many years. He had a huge impact in keeping the Blue Jays in Dunedin, for everything that has happened here for the Blue Jays and the whole City. He invited Mr. Gizzi to throw the first pitch for game two on February 25<sup>th</sup>.

The Welcome Back Blue Jays event is on Saturday, February 15, 2025. The event is free to everyone with free hot dogs, games, local businesses in attendance, face painting, and many other activities.

Opening day is on February 22, 2025, vs. the Yankees, which is almost sold out. Last year was the best Spring Training ever with over 100,000 people going through the gates. They are excited for what this year has in store.

Mayor Freaney and the Commissioners expressed they were looking forward to this season with excitement, and they expressed their love for the Blue Jays and the Canadian visitors to the City each year.

### **CITIZEN INPUT**

Mayor Freaney advised now was the time for anyone in the audience who wished to speak on a topic that is not already on the agenda.

John Ghidiu of 1426 Alamo Lane commented:

According to the meeting, agenda speakers are given a full three minutes to speak; this is a great agenda item and gives residents an opportunity to communicate directly with the Mayor and City Commissioners. It signals open communication, transparency, and trust between the City officials and residents.

He is concerned that this agenda item is not managed consistently. On November 7<sup>th</sup> the first speaker spoke for 3:41 and was not stopped, but the third speaker was abruptly cut off at 3 minutes and commented that the other speaker was not cut off, giving the impression the Commission seemed to play favorites. He is sure it is not the case, but it gives the appearance of favoring some speakers over others.

At the November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting a speaker asked when the clock starts, and they were told when the speaker is asked for his or her name, which sometimes occurs before the speaker even gets to the lectern.

At the last meeting, the speaker was allowed to speak for 3:51 and the third speaker spoke over 3 minutes.

His suggestion for a remedy is simple. Don't start the clock until the speaker actually begins speaking on topic, not when asked to give name and address or when they greet the Commissioners or organize their notes.

The agenda states speakers should limit all comments to a maximum of 3 minutes; let's give each speaker 3 full minutes.

Next, be consistent with the 3-minute rule; don't allow some to speak 4 or 5 minutes and others cut off at 3.

The 3-minute buzzer is not very loud and nervous speakers do not always hear it. His suggestion is for the City Clerk to say they have 15 seconds to wrap up at the 2:45 time. Make it very clear time is up with a very distinct buzzer; to help move that forward, he is donating a buzzer to the City of Dunedin.

He does not envy the job of the Commission in balancing time, topics, and fairness; please choose fairness over all else.

An eComment was submitted by June Shymkiw:

*I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank Christine Nestor of Parks and Recreation for all her help and support she gave me in regards to the bench in honor of my husband, Jerry that was lost during the hurricane. And a very special thank you to Kelly Edwards for locating the bench last Sunday. I know it's only a bench and so many people have lost so much more due to the storms, but this bench has brought so much comfort and peace to me and my family. Thank you again, June Shymkiw*

Hearing and seeing no one else wishing to speak, Mayor Freaney moved to the next agenda item.

## **2. ACTION ITEMS**

### **2.a. Former City Hall Design Criteria Renderings for Park**

#### Staff Presentation

CRA/Economic Development Director Ironsmith introduced Jonathan Toner with Terra Tectonics Design Group and thereafter referred to the PowerPoint – Former City Hall Design Criteria Renderings – 542 Main Street attached to the staffing memo.

#### Repurposing of Former City Hall

Building was vacated upon completion of new City Hall. It had a rich history as the Dunedin Library and City Hall for many years.

Engineering Study – Building is structurally obsolete. Not cost-effective to repurpose building for occupancy

Demolition and asbestos abatement followed

Repurposing as a pocket park - Consistent with Downtown East End Plan (DEEP) recommendations

#### Community Engagement and Commission Input

February 7, 2023 – City Commission workshop repurposing

August 28, 2023 – Begin demolition, asbestos abatement, sod and irrigation

March 18, 2024 – Mason Blau & Assoc./Terra Tectonics design contract awarded

October 2, 2024 – Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee presentation

November 6, 2024 – Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee presentation

#### Potential Site Elements

Updated wayfinding

Public restrooms

Central space for 'artistic expression'

'Nod to history'

Incorporate existing brick

Reuse of City Hall elements

More shade

More seating

Strategic use of lighting and power

Arrival statement

Unique hardscape design

Water feature

#### Terra Tectonics Design Group, Inc.

Develop new concept from potential site elements previously identified

Prepare landscape and hardscape design  
Prepare tree survey and tree preservation plan  
No water feature due to tree canopy and tree litter  
Include perimeter sidewalk pavers as an add alternate in future bid

Final Site Plan (Page 7)

Schematic Site Plan – Phase 2

The actual plan is about 30% less than the original floor plan

Phase 1 – No Restroom

Renderings (Pages 9 – 13)

View from Main Street

Internal View from Entry Looking Northeast

View from Grant Street

Internal View Looking Southeast to Intersection of Main St. and Grant Street

Night Lighting View from Entry Looking Northeast

Mr. Ironsmith explained:

There is no increase in brick as far as coming into City Hall as to what exists today.

The restroom in the background has received comment; it is a graphic placeholder. The restrooms were to be in the budget for the following year (upcoming budget cycle). It would have to be architecturally fitting in with the downtown. They had to be sure of the location; there is a well site just to the west of this property, and the structure needs to be a certain distance from that well site. They also wanted to take advantage of the existing utilities.

The pergola shown is a gathering place where there could be a small venue; it is not Pioneer Park. It is more of a respite type of area.

Phase II Restroom

ADA accessible 2-seat restroom to fit scale of park

Ample secured storage for supplies, Wi-Fi equipment, and electrical

Standing seam metal roof. Exterior cladding options exist for aesthetic customization with materials and colors

Location chosen to exploit existing underground utilities and maximize distance from City production well

To be funded at a later date

Restroom/Storage – Elevation & Floor Plan (Page 15)

The restroom is an important element staff wants to put in the budget for next year. It would have more architectural features than shown in the graphic.

PHASE 1 – Cost Estimate

- \$268,363 Earthwork, Site Improvements, Landscaping, and Irrigation
- \$115,477 Permitting, Insurance & Bonds, Contractor General Conditions
- \$383,840 Total, Phase 1

Phase 2 – Cost Estimate

- \$600,000 Restroom, Site Prep and Utilities
- TBD - Public Art

Overall Funds

Budget: \$300,000 CRA

\$300,000 Penny

Bathrooms: 2026

Public Art: Possible Grants

Available Budget: \$475,000 (approximately)

Next Steps

Revise design based on input and direction from Commission and preparation of construction bid documents

Prepare electrical design based on approved site plan for security lighting, strategic placement of power for programmed uses of the park, and to serve the restroom's electrical needs

Timeline: Bid documents finalization (2 months)

Bidding and award of contract (2 months)

Construction estimate (4 - 6 months)

Completion target (Oct 1st to Dec 1st)

Commission Questions

Vice Mayor Gow asked about the vision for the use of the park in a year, for example on any given weekend.

Mr. Ironsmith thought the people who would occupy that space on a daily basis, not during special events, would be those going for a bite to eat and sitting on the wall or a small gathering, even a small wedding taking pictures. He sees it as part of the east end respite, i.e. shade, taking a break, use the restroom, checking phones, etc. It is different from Pioneer Park, which is a more active format that coincides with special events. Staff wanted to be sure to be sensitive to the trees and overall green and landscaped area.

Jonathan H. Toner, RLA, ISA, Terra Tectonics Design Group, Inc. in response to the question from Vice Mayor Gow, explained about alternative pavers under the pergola different from the designated pavers approved by the City of Dunedin in the other areas. The new paver is very hard and heavy and made for an area designated for a small venue and something such as an acoustical guitar performance or a small outdoor theater performance. It is going on top of the existing slab of the City Hall building; taking out the slab could potentially do damage to the Oak Tree. It will be flush with the other brick; everything is ADA-accessible.

Vice Mayor Gow inquired about the restrooms being public; he asked if two stalls for each are enough, especially with special events.

Mr. Ironsmith explained they did want to be sensitive to not dominating this area with a big building. For special events, portables can be brought in. He thought for this lower key area that will be well-used, it is okay. Mr. Toner referred back to the site plan and noted the limited space and the Oak Tree; they are trying to stay out of that area with construction, and the current size is as big as they would want to build. Also, the existing utilities are right at that location.

It was clarified that the proposed restrooms are where the restrooms in the former City Hall were located; the plumbing is already there. Mr. Ironsmith summarized the issues of the Oak Tree, 100' separation from the well site, and not to dominate the area with the structure.

In response to the question from Vice Mayor Gow, Mr. Toner pointed out the area of the brick that was the old foundation and explained about the existing slab and the proposed pavers.

Vice Mayor Gow expressed concern regarding too much brick in terms of having natural beauty and grass. It was explained they are utilizing the existing ramp from Main Street; the two brick walls are existing that will be rebuilt and refinished, which leads to the existing slab they are going up and over. The restroom being in that location, putting brick on top of the slab raises it about five inches, so the restroom is about two feet above the sidewalk where there has to be an ADA ramp from Grant Street up to the slab. That is the walkway on the upper right where there is an existing sidewalk, but it ends up basically at the bathroom that will be taken out.

It was clarified the "brick" is actually pavers, which are porous.

In response to a question, Deputy City Manager Quintas explained about the grading done in terms of the safety issues in an area of concern. Mr. Toner explained about the elements outside the restroom structure that would act as barriers for safety.

Vice Mayor Gow suggested evaluating the Grand Oak on Main Street that was to the right of the former City Hall prior to construction to determine the health of the tree.

Commissioner Sandbergen clarified with Mr. Toner the rendering of the Grand Oak is not the actual tree in response to the concerns that it showed limbs reaching to the ground and making sure that area is secure.

In response to the question from Commissioner Sandbergen regarding the Expression Wall, Strategy & Sustainability Manager Delfino explained in terms of an "artistic" wall, there was discussion of putting public art on this site; however, it is not structurally tied to anything being shown at this point. They are looking at something maybe in the grass area; it is very preliminary because public art follows a process with a Request for Proposal and so forth. There is no conceptual design or ideas at this point; the Art process will be followed when the project gets to that point. It will be something engaging and potentially interactive where people would want to take a photo.

Commissioner Sandbergen inquired if there were any reductions in parking spaces along Grant Street; Mr. Ironsmith advised there were not at this time.

Commissioner Walker clarified it is existing trees shown on the site plan.

In response to the question about the water feature, Mr. Ironsmith explained the concerns that it would be difficult to maintain. It could become a safety issue; with all the trees, it would continually have leaves that would interfere with pumps and maintenance.

Commissioner Dugard noted in the list of potential elements, there was no mention of a venue for small events/entertainment. Mr. Ironsmith explained there was some discussion on that idea and noted pocket parks are different and this was not designed for that; however, it was left open for that type of use. He acknowledged they are looking at having electrical capability in the pergola and lighting as part of the design. Mr. Toner noted the lighting in the entire design and also potentially free Wi-Fi capability.

Mayor Freaney asked about the restrooms being an important feature, and Mr. Ironsmith explained he thought it to be an important part of the East End, acknowledging there are pros and cons for restrooms; he also thought the businesses in the area appreciate it. Deputy City Manager Quintas noted the new technology being used in restrooms throughout the City being implemented with magnetic locks set on timers; also, in the Deep East End Plan (DEEP), it was indicated that there is a preference to have a restroom on the east end.

In response to the question from Mayor Freaney, Mr. Toner explained regarding how much of the old brick will be part of the new design that the walls of the ramp will be restored and rebuilt; the pavers are coming out until the sidewalk to the intersection will be replaced with the new paver type. With the construction being done, there is no reason to reuse the bricks if the City has the choice of the new paver type. Mr. Ironsmith advised sometimes the old brick is stored in case there is a situation where it will be needed.

Deputy City Manager Quintas advised in bidding the project, they will request bid alternates that would allow to replace the existing pavers that border the site along Main, Grant, and if possible Highland, similar to what was done in front of Casa Tina's. They will try to do that to the extent budgeted funding is available.

Discussion ensued regarding the type of brick and possible uses for the ones that will be salvaged. It was noted most of that brick is not suitable for roadways.

In response to the question from Mayor Freaney, it was noted that the plan is to leave the flag pole area and the sign and it can be relandscaped. Also, it was noted that the tree is stable and nothing is being done to change the condition.

#### Public Input

Mayor Freaney opened the item to public input.

Mike Short of 946 Highland Avenue commented:

He is frustrated about the lack of citizen input; he has attended multiple meetings and typically he would be the only citizen present.

Not installing bathrooms in the first phase is not a good idea from his perspective; clearly, there are other projects the City is choosing to fund through loan funds to get done. His perspective is to just go ahead and plan to do that now; there is no guarantee the costs presented today relative to the next phase will even be valid. It is second overhead to create a second project.

He is very frustrated with how slowly this has progressed. After attending multiple meetings, this is the first time he has seen a rendering and he did not know that there was any citizen input relative to the renderings.

The pergola is not really needed; clearly the site does not need more shade as there is plenty on the site. That is going to add expense and ongoing maintenance costs.

Tracy Short of 946 Highland Avenue commented:

This would be a perfect opportunity for Dunedin to live up to its pseudonym, which is "Dogedin." She did not think it was considered as any type of dog park. Many dogs walk this area. In Broward County, they have dog parks that are revenue-producing and sell a card for a year at \$25 to make sure dogs have their shots and are healthy and there is a locked gate to swipe into. She would have liked to have provided that input before getting to this point.

Hearing and seeing no one else wishing to speak, Mayor Freaney closed the public input.

#### Response to Public Input

Parks & Recreation Director Gizzi advised there is a leash law and dogs would be required to be on leash in the City parks. There is the Acheiva Dog Park, a private/public partnership with the City, and there are off-leash hours at Hammock Park. Personally, he did not see this as a good site for a dog park; there would have to be a fence, an entry and exit, and the grass would be an issue.

**MOTION:** Motion was made by Commissioner Walker and seconded by Commissioner Dugard to proceed with refined concept plan as discussed and directed.

Commission Comments

In response to the question from Commissioner Walker, Mr. Ironsmith explained the reason for the second phase for the restrooms are financial considerations with everything else going on after the hurricanes. The City Manager thought it was best to put it in the budget for next year, which begins in October.

Discussion ensued regarding the timing of the restrooms, with Deputy City Manager Quintas providing information on possibly expediting the restrooms with the Architectural Review Committee being involved in the process as well as the Building Department; he noted there are costs involved for consultants for design for the project. Discussion ensued, noting there are additional costs with a second project for project management, site mobilization, and so forth; there is some construction for the restrooms that is not within Phase I.

Commissioner Walker stated his motion was focused on moving this project forward; however, he would hope there could be a measure of feasibility on this just to decide switching from one solution to the other.

Commissioner Dugard commented regarding the pedestrian traffic flow from Main to Grant, which would be impeded to some extent by the location of the restrooms in this site plan. Should there be a delay in the restrooms, they have the opportunity to discover if it is a traffic flow wanted in terms of businesses.

Vice Mayor Gow concurs with the decision of going in the right direction as long as Phase 1 is on schedule; as far as whether Phase 2 can be expedited and can still be considered part of Phase 1, he noted there were concerns for the timeline set for Phase 1.

Mayor Freaney thought the motion was to move forward with Phase 1, and then as a complete aside, the Commission may give consensus to at least look at the feasibility of what could be done to look at the other aspect.

Deputy City Manager Quintas reviewed the direction of the Commission:

Given the budget constraints, he thought the direction to staff is if the Commission moves forward with the motion as is, that would direct the consultant to move forward with producing plans consistent with what is defined as Phase 1. Then, internally with City staff and without using a consultant or associated fee, they will look at the feasibility of what if they were to pursue a Phase 2 restroom pre-fab structure and engage the Architectural Review Committee to see if it is somehow possible to sequence such that the project could be incorporated either during construction or immediately following construction of Phase 1.

Mayor Freaney stated that was her understanding and determined that was the understanding of the other Commissioners.

Mr. Ironsmith noted the cost estimate and the budget would be a part of the determination, as well as the sequence and timing.

Commissioner Sandbergen stated he is in favor of moving forward with what was presented; it would be great to get the restrooms done, which he hoped for when the property was redeveloped.

Mayor Freaney reiterated her concern that Phase 1 was presented and she wanted to get it done, while at the same time being aware there will be many challenges at budget time. She wanted to

be careful and not get into a lot of extra expense with two phases; however, there are other projects that might be pushed into phases that would be worse.

**VOTE:** Motion carried unanimously.

**2.b. City Commission Preliminary Approval of Development Agreement Negotiations with Archway Partners for The Flats on Main Street project located at 1422 Carnation Drive**  
Staff Presentation

CRA/Economic Development Director Ironsmith advised:

Staff has been working with Archway on this affordable housing initiative on S.R.580 off of Carnation Drive.

There are various aspects that need to be initiated with this project:

- Density – A 50% increase
- Parkland Impact Fee waiver
- Public Art aspect reduction

These aspects are covered in the Land Development Code.

Since this project is requiring a Development Agreement, staff is seeking approval for negotiating a Development Agreement tonight.

City Attorney Cowan would be very much involved, as well as the attorney for Archway.

The development agreement would come back to the City Commission for review.

Dave Heaslip with Archway was present to answer any questions.

In addition, Community Development Director Kinney noted:

The development agreement is a fairly standard agreement, which usually proceeds Design Review. The Commission will see this over several different processes; first, the Development Agreement will go to the Local Planning Agency (LPA) in the form of an ordinance, and then the Design Review will come before the Commission in the form of an ordinance.

Questions for Staff

Commissioner Walker clarified with Mr. Ironsmith there are some time deadlines to keep the funding on track.

Mr. Heaslip advised:

The City has three very good incentives for affordable housing in its Code. There is the 50% Density Bonus; if that were not in the Code, this deal could not happen. The Parkland Fee Waiver is fantastic and then there is the reduction in the Public Art Impact Fee.

They have to close with the State on the tax credits by December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Ironsmith commented on being extremely fortunate to have received the 9% tax credits and to partner with the Pinellas County Housing Authority. He explained there have to be archeological surveys with this type of assistance; they also have to contact the travel chiefs to make sure there are no relics. There are many more layers than the City of Dunedin that is taking time.

Commissioner Dugard expressed his excitement for the staff putting this together; however, he had one concern with the location, which seems very tight. He is worried about safety issues and in particular fire safety with the entry and exit areas.

Mr. Heaslip explained the steps taken in terms of safety including for crime and environmental issues; they will have a full-time property manager on-site along with a maintenance person

during normal business hours. They will work with the Dunedin Fire Department on access to the property. A traffic impact analysis was done as well.

Mr. Ironsmith noted this is a three-story product and there are many trees on-site that will be retained, and they also have a nice community area designated.

Vice Mayor Gow inquired how far away a public transit stop is, and Mr. Kinney advised one is close on Main Street not far from Luekens.'

Commissioner Sandbergen voiced his support for this project.

#### Public Input

Mayor Freaney opened the item to public input. Hearing and seeing no one wishing to speak, Mayor Freaney closed the public input.

**MOTION:** Motion was made by Commissioner Dugard and seconded by Commissioner Walker to authorize the City Manager to pursue negotiations with the applicant relative to the entry into a Development Agreement for The Flats on Main Street, a proposed 78-unit affordable housing development located at 1422 Camation Drive.

#### Commission Comments

Commissioner Dugard commented regarding the City's affordable housing problem, noting there is only one Dunedin Firefighter who lives inside the City limits because of the affordability of housing. He thanked staff and the development corporation for finding a place for housing.

Commissioner Walker noted this is the second or third attempt to get to this point, and he thought this is something everyone will be very proud of.

Vice Mayor Gow also expressed excitement for this project and recognized the work by Mr. Ironsmith to move it forward. He agreed with the comments about the issue of affordable housing in the City and commented more are needed.

Commissioner Sandbergen and Mayor Freaney noted their support.

**VOTE:** Motion carried with Commissioners Sandbergen, Gow, Walker, Dugard, and Mayor Freaney voting aye. Voting nay: None.

### **2.c. The proposed agenda for the February 20, 2025, Commission Meeting**

Mayor Freaney asked for any changes in the proposed agenda.

**MOTION:** Motion was made by Commissioner Walker and seconded by Commissioner Dugard to approve the proposed agenda for the February 20, 2025, Commission Meeting.

**VOTE:** Motion carried unanimously.

## **2. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**


Vice Mayor Gow referred to the newspaper article this morning, noting the early start with House Bill 401 introduced to stop corporations from purchasing homes; there are pros and cons that need to be researched.

Commissioner Dugard gave kudos to City staff and to the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office for the extra attention to the Pinellas Trail. There seems to be a greater sense of safety on the Trail.

**ADJOURN MEETING**

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

**NOTE:** The meeting was completely recorded and the recording is in the official file.



Maureen "Moe" Freaney

Mayor

Attest:



Rebecca C. Schlichter

City Clerk

