

MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP
March 18, 2013

The City Commission met this date in a special workshop session in the Commission Chambers. A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 6 PM, with the following in attendance.

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| Mayor | : | John B. Arnold, Jr. |
| Commissioners | : | Heyward H. Strong, Jr. |
| | : | Diane Kelley |
| | : | Kay Hamilton |
| | : | Joe Morgan |
| City Clerk | : | Tammy Johnson |
| Recorder | : | Beth Millsaps |

Others in Attendance: Mike Griffin (Bay Beacon), Clark (Tom) Browning IV, Clark Browning V

1. UPCOMING MEETING

Mayor Arnold said that Comm. Strong has a conflict with the Thursday meeting the time will need to be 3 PM instead of 6:30 PM or next week possible Tuesday or Thursday next week at 6 PM will check with Bruce Bowman. City clerk will let everyone know by tomorrow.

Upcoming Meeting

1. CITY CHARTER STUDY

Mayor Arnold said his rationale for change in article 4 section 2 of the existing charter which indicate each Commissioner will be assigned a portion in managing the city, and 2 and 3 says each Commissioner will supervise departments doing the hiring and firing whatever is necessary. Mayor Arnold said in 1921 and the time frame up to World War II this worked but in this day and age it is not practical, we must change that part of the charter bring it up to now how we are organized today or how we feel it should be organized, that is the minimum for the Commission to do if nothing else. He feels our charter needs to be updated to maximize the services to our residents.

City Charter Study

Mayor Arnold said his concept is to have the Commission have oversight to see that the various departments have the necessary resources, such as personal, money, vehicles, they need to operate to do the job. Mayor Arnold said in the past we have had Commissioner who wanted to supervise and be on the job and that caused conflict with the organization department of public works. He said we had many employees who didn't know who they were working for the department head or the Commissioner or straw boss. He feels things need to be clear up to quantify so no conflict, historically many cities in the state have gone to council/city manager form of government versus the commission because commission is not the most practical. Mayor Arnold said especially deal with primarily retired people that do have to time but no real expertise that they bring to the duties, one thing we lack is younger representation on the commission. He said younger people are working and they do not have the time to devote if you want to go with what the charter says.

Comm. Hamilton agreed saying that with the Sunshine laws it is hard for Commissioners to know what each one is doing, there is no CEO to run the city so that everything runs efficiently, it is just not a smart way to run a business. Comm. Hamilton said each Commissioner is responsible for certain departments when they might not have any expertise in that type of business at all. She said with the city manager/city council form of government the city manager would be the CEO, the boss. Comm. Hamilton said the city manager's are trained professionals for their positions. Comm. Hamilton said with the city manager/council government over 900 cities in Florida changed from Commission to city manager/council, there is not reason to reinvent the wheel when there is a system outline that is a proven success. Mayor Arnold said there is no focal point. He is not advocating the ISP (Institute of Senior Professionals) recommendations but it would give some guidelines and ideas.

Comm. Kelley said that city departments don't always have the personnel or resources to fulfill the requests of every Commissioner. She said it is a system that leads to territory issues because one department head may have known one Commissioner longer. She said the department heads want to please everyone so it is hard to set priorities. Comm. Kelley said that under Florida's Sunshine law it is difficult for Commissioners to coordinate one another's requests and priorities except during regular Commission meetings.

Comm. Morgan said that he is listening but that he is happy with the flexibility that the current charter allows, he said if you have a problem with a certain department then go to the department head and talk to them. He said there is a lot of value with the Commission form of government. Comm. Morgan said is it that we do not delegate enough authority to do what is needed, then look to redelegate? We can do that in our current charter. The current charter allows a lot of flexibility.

Comm. Strong said he is against changing the form of government, he said we are elected to take care of the people of Valparaiso and that he hasn't had the problems that the Mayor and Commissioners Kelley and Hamilton are speaking about. He said if they thought the

government needed to be changed then to quantize the reasons not just generalize. Comm. Strong said he has never heard of any complaints from residents or from city workers about the current form of government. He said under the Commission form of government Valparaiso is doing better than most of the similar size cities. He said our taxes are lower and our overhead is lower than anywhere else. Comm. Strong said that the individual department heads have the authority to run their departments and to program budget money where they feel it is necessary. Comm. Strong again asked to specifically quantize the gains they think a new form of government would produce. Comm. Strong said if you can't make it more cost effective than what you have then leave it alone. Comm. Hamilton said it would be more efficient.

Mr. Clark Browning, 227 South Bayshore Drive, said that he thinks to hire a city manager is a costly idea. He said that would cost more money than the city has and that the Commission has always ran things before. Mr. Browning also said if they couldn't get the job done in monthly meetings then the answer might be to have meetings more often. Mayor Arnold said in the world as it is today there is not as much volunteerism as there once was, the younger people do not have time to participate and he feels if we could get professional management running the city we would be better off. Comm. Hamilton also said that a professional manager would be qualified to write grants because we are losing money on missed grants. Comm. Strong said he thought that was Mr. Scott's job, he said when he was in the interview process that he was trained in writing grants. Comm. Hamilton said with his other duties he doesn't have time to concentrate on just grants, he also does code enforcement and permitting. Comm. Morgan asked why he was doing permitting, why not have that responsibility to someone else so that Mr. Scott would have more time for grant writing. Mayor Arnold said that Mr. Scott was the only one bringing money in. Mrs. Johnson said that she and her department also bring money in with bill payments, cemetery lots, etc. Mayor Arnold said that the Commissioners are so bogged down in the day to day that they are not able to look into the future. Comm. Strong said eh would like to hear form the department heads what they think of our existing government.

Mayor Arnold said it needed to be decided if we want to go any further with looking at government change, it is hard to get anything like this passed in an election on a referendum if two Commissioners are against it. Mr. Terry Griffin, 253 Grandview, said a city charter study is what should be done, look at all of it good and bad see what is working and what is not. Comm. Morgan suggested having another workshop to look at the forms of government a side by side comparison, there a hundreds of government forms out there but look at say two at a time, take the time to look at them and educate the Commission on what else there might be. Comm. Kelley said she didn't think it was a bad thing but she didn't like the idea if it meant stringing the time out so that it would not be possible to be on ballot for 2014, it feels somewhat like a delay tactic. Comm. Hamilton said she didn't think they need to study all forms of government, the only two that would be considered were the city manager and strong mayor. Comm. Hamilton offered to bring in power point presentation outlining the pros and cons of each of the three alternative forms city government, commission form, strong mayor form and city manager form. Mayor Arnold said that he would be willing to write a "straw man" version of a possible change to the city charter so that the Commissioners could discuss it. Mayor Arnold said at the next workshop we needed to move forward not rehash the same information.

Mayor Arnold announced there would be a city charter workshop on April 1st at 6 PM where the Commission would look at the pros and cons of the three forms of government and move forward.

Adjourn

ADJOURN

With there being no further business of the Commission the meeting adjourned at 7:23 PM.

John B. Arnold, Jr.
Mayor

Heyward H. Strong
Chair, VCA

ATTEST:

Tammy Johnson, CMC

City Clerk

March 18, 2013

***The DVD labeled March 18, 2013 contains the audio and video of this meeting and will be kept as a permanent part of these minutes. ***