

TOWN OF LAUDERDALE-BY-THE-SEA

TOWN COMMISSION

WORKSHOP

MINUTES

Town Commission Meeting Room

4501 Ocean Drive

Tuesday, December 16, 2008

6:02 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER, MAYOR ROSEANN MINNET

Mayor Minnet called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Also present were Vice Mayor Jerry McIntee, Commissioner Jim Silverstone, Commissioner Stuart Dodd, Commissioner Birute Ann Clotey, Town Attorney Daniel L. Abbott, Town Manager Esther Colon, Town Clerk June White, and Senior Office Specialist Nekisha Smith.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

3. ITEMS OF DISCUSSION:

The Commission chose to take public comments prior to Commission discussion.

a. Lifeguards on the Beach

Frank Herrmann believed government had a responsibility to protect and provide citizens minimum assistance with everyday living such as streets, roads and schools. Mr. Herrmann did not feel lifeguard services were necessary.

Lawrence Wick felt it was not the requirement of any community to tell people rip tides were present and or that they should not go in the water at night. He did not believe it was affordable to hire lifeguards. Mr. Wick believed money would be better spent on police officers at traffic lights.

Cristi Furth thought there was not enough information in the back up to base a decision.

Joe McMannis, president of the United States Lifesaving Association encouraged the presence of lifeguards on the beach. He felt it encouraged tourism as it provided safety. Mr. McManus stated that

lifeguards were bonafide emergency rescue. Mr. McManus handed out information to the Town Clerk as part of record.

Robert Finch encouraged prevention. He felt it was cost effective to have a small beach patrol.

Gerry Falconer provided information regarding beach safety awareness. He believed the life of an individual was greatly enhanced by the protection offered to them.

Charles Gissman thought the best way to protect was to prevent. He believed people stopped learning CPR because a 911 world had been created. Mr. Gissman felt education was the key.

Evelyn Wisner stated that as a tourist, she did not listen to the news; she just jumped into the water. Ms. Wisner stated that she would rather swim where a lifeguard was available.

There were no more speakers.

Commissioner Clotey stated it would cost over \$700,000 to provide lifeguards in the central part of Town on weekends and holidays only, with a cost of roughly \$232 per household as a special assessment. She indicated that many residents did not want to pay for lifeguard services. Commissioner Clotey stated that the people had to decide on whether to have lifeguards or not as it would be the people who would pay for them.

Commissioner Dodd felt that a survey on the weather conditions when the drownings occurred would aid in positioning safety personnel. Commissioner Dodd wanted more ATV patrol on weekends with those on the ATV's to have basic training in water rescue; not classified as professional lifeguards.

Vice Mayor McIntee stated that the Town of Lauderdale-By-the-Sea did not have the population to support lifeguards and compared it to Deerfield Beach who had 20 times our population which in turn supported the costs. He pointed out that the last 3 drownings were not due to rip currents; 1 died from exhaustion.

Commissioner Silverstone said that statistics showed there were about 5 drownings a year. He said 11 lifeguard stations would be required to cover the beach at a cost of approximately \$1.4 to \$1.5 million as proposed by the City of Pompano Beach. He said with ATV patrol and provided beach safety information the Town had reached a good medium

in addressing risk factors. He leaned toward improvement.

Mayor Minnet preferred the use of preventive signage and placement of lifeguards near the pier and the portals. Mayor Minnet believed that as policy makers the Commission needed to consider all the criteria and weigh the cost and legal interventions to prevent drownings. She felt the Commission must look at local evidence and criteria to make the decisions. Mayor Minnet believed it was important to protect the citizens of the Town and that the residents should not have to bear the responsibility.

Attorney Abbott stated that governments did not have a duty to provide lifeguard protection for natural bodies of water. He stated that the Town could become liable if the Town misled people into thinking lifeguard protection was available when it was not.

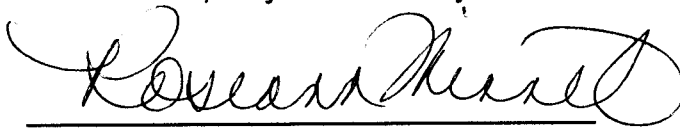
Vice Mayor McIntee stated that posts were being painted that would be placed along the beach which contained numbers that marked the location. He advised that when a person placed an emergency call they would provide the number on the post which would give the specific location to emergency personnel.

Commissioner Silverstone referred to Florida Statutes 380.276 (6) that stated the Town should not be held liable whether safety signs were posted or not. Commissioner Clotey suggested large signs that stated "No Swimming - Rip Current Area".

Mr. McManus advised that rip currents were not always fixed; there were small traveling currents in addition that could be anywhere along the beach. He pointed out that lifeguards were able to identify a rip current.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Mayor McIntee made a motion to adjourn. With no further business before the Commission, Mayor Minnet adjourned the meeting at 6:50 PM



Mayor Roseann Minnet

ATTEST:


Town Clerk, June White

1/15/09
Date