

The Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Panama City Beach, Florida, held on January 5, 2016.

ROLL

MAYOR GAYLE F. OBERST

COUNCILORS:  
JOHN REICHARD  
RICK RUSSELL  
JOSIE STRANGE  
KEITH CURRY

CITY MANAGER:  
MARIO GISBERT  
CITY CLERK:  
DIANE FOWLER  
ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY:  
AMY MYERS

Mayor Oberst called the Special Meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. with all of the Council, the City Manager, City Clerk and Assistant City Attorney present.

**ITEM 1 ORDINANCE 1379, SPECIAL EVENTS ORDINANCE, 2<sup>ND</sup> READING, PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION.** Ms. Myers read Ordinance 1379 by title. Mayor Oberst reminded about the Three Minute Speaking Rule and that forms were on the table for those who wished to speak. Mr. Gisbert explained that this was the same Ordinance as adopted last year, merely streamlined and worded differently to be more understandable. He said the intent was not to deny any Special Event but to ensure that the event was a success. He stated three permits had already been issued. Mayor Oberst said Staff crafted this Ordinance to make it as open and specific as possible and she asked if there were any questions.

Councilwoman Strange asked if beach weddings would have to apply for a Special Events permit. Mr. Gisbert explained that a beach wedding set at a hotel with sufficient parking and facilities to prevent it from being a nuisance to the area would not be a Special Event. However, a beach wedding held at a single-family home that did not coordinate with their neighbors for extra parking, and 300 people attended would become a Special Event. If a pattern was established with one home constantly rented for weddings but unable to accommodate the weddings that were invited, it would become a Special Event.

Councilwoman Strange asked what three permits had already been approved under the prior Ordinance. Mr. Gisbert said one was for the Bennetts and another at the Holiday Inn. He could not recall the third. He said the Bennetts were having a concert within a fence on the sandy beach, and the Holiday Inn was having two basketball courts on the beach within a fence. No alcohol would be permitted with either event on the sandy beach. Councilwoman Strange asked him to email her the information on the third permit and he replied he would do so.

Councilman Russell said basically this was rewriting the Ordinance to make it very clear what could and could not be done. Mr. Gisbert replied affirmatively. Councilman Reichard said the City would also not treat a wedding on the sandy beach in the same manner as a large concert on the sandy beach, in fairness to both events. The Mayor opened the floor for audience comments.

Ms. Misty Curtis, Celebration Place, said her main concern was parking as she had many beach access weddings and was concerned about not being able to park in the right-of-way after 5 P.M. She questioned where parking was available. Mr. Gisbert replied that she was confusing two different Ordinances, as another Ordinance related to prohibiting parking in the right-of-way after dark. He said with Ms. Curtis being a wedding event planner, it would be her responsibility to coordinate where the wedding party parked because she was providing that service. There were several places where public parking was available, such as the end of Churchwell Boulevard and the end of Richard Jackson Boulevard. Typically, a wedding occurred with most guests staying at one hotel or one condo, one general location which would have parking. However, if she was organizing a wedding at a beach access which had no parking, it would be her responsibility to address the parking. She asked for suggestions. Councilman Reichard asked about using a shuttle. Mr. Gisbert offered to meet with her to discuss various options. Ms. Curtis asked if the twenty-day limit to apply for a permit would also apply to smaller weddings as she occasionally had brides fly in at the spur of the moment. Mr. Gisbert explained why the City required the time frames, in order to organize Staff to work the event. He added that if they contacted her the day before for the wedding, it would not be a 200 person wedding and would not qualify as a Special Event. Discussion ensued concerning parking on Oleander and Ms. Curtis said the guests then parked on Front Beach Road which was the problem. Shuttles could be used and Mr. Gisbert added that arrangements could be made with local businesses, but that would be the responsibility of the wedding organizer. He assured Ms. Curtis she would not need to permit a wedding unless it created a parking issue in the location.

Councilwoman Strange asked about the County regulations. She asked if Ms. Curtis had asked the County for their guidelines. Ms. Curtis said no but she would like to do weddings all over the beach. Mr. Gisbert said resorts had adequate parking and Ms. Curtis stated she was more likely to have weddings at beach accesses where there were no nearby public parking lots. Mayor Oberst said she needed to consider the neighbors on Oleander, for instance, that needed access to their own driveway.

Mayor Oberst said the City Manager had the right to deny an event, but reasons must be given. She added that if the applicant objected to the denial, the appeal would come to the City Council.

Councilman Reichard asked about pop-up events. Mr. Gisbert explained how an unexpected event could become a pop-up event and a nuisance to the area. Councilman Reichard questioned about the right of free people to assemble and Ms. Myers that this Ordinance, while acknowledging that right, also acknowledged the right of the neighbors to be protected from nuisances created by that gathering. The City had the right and obligation to protect the neighborhood. The Mayor called for further questions or comments.

Ms. Genese Hatcher spoke at length about comments concerning her houses on Oleander. Mr. Gisbert said he specifically did not mention any specific houses on Oleander. He said there were locations on the beach where numerous weddings occurred. Ms. Hatcher said she felt she was being discriminated against because of the witch-hunt by Mr. Hector Solis. She stated there was not a problem with parking on Oleander and this was causing a negativity toward weddings. Mr. Gisbert said if the weddings in her houses were a problem to her neighbors, it would become an issue. Ms. Hatcher mentioned calls to the Police Department by neighbors which she considered harassment and their abusing the system. Mr. Gisbert explained the differences between Bid-A-Wee residents parking on Front Beach Road and cars from Oleander parking on Front Beach Road. Ms. Hatcher said it was discrimination against her and her houses with the numerous times Oleander was mentioned.

Mayor Oberst said Oleander was mentioned because that road was on the Council members' minds and the other section from Celadon west, two sections whose zoning was changed in December to allow short term rentals. She added that those two sections were the locations where the City received the most calls. The Council respected Ms. Hatcher's right to make a living but other people had rights also and the object was for parking to be provided for the event. Ms. Hatcher asked about parking on Front Beach Road being prohibited. Mr. Gisbert said parking would be allowed on Front Beach Road provided there was not a "no parking" sign and until dark as defined in the new Ordinance.

Mr. Neel Bennett said this meant working with your neighbors and communicating with them when an event was occurring. He said it was upsetting when a truck came into their parking lot, a wedding party exited and used their parking lot for the beach access. He said they loved hosting weddings as his facility had ample parking and restrooms. He encouraged Ms. Hatcher to talk with the business owners.

**Councilman Curry made the motion to approve Ordinance 1379. Second was by Councilman Reichard.** The Mayor called for further comments; there were none. **The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote recorded as follows:**

<b>Councilman Reichard</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Russell</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilwoman Strange</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilman Curry</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Oberst</b>	<b>Aye</b>

With nothing further, the meeting was adjourned at 9:42 A.M.

READ AND APPROVED this 11th of February, 2016.

**IN THE EVENT OF A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE FOREGOING MINUTES AND A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF THESE MINUTES, THE FOREGOING MINUTES SHALL CONTROL.**

  
Mayor

ATTEST:

  
City Clerk

Special Meeting  
January 5, 2016