

**JOINT TOWN HALL MEETING**  
**Tuesday, April 18, 2022**  
**5:30 p.m.**

The County Commission and City Commission met in a joint town hall meeting on April 18, 2022, at the WFSU Studios located at 1600 Red Barber Plaza, Tallahassee, Florida. Present were: Vice-Chair Nick Maddox, County Commissioners Brian Welch, Rick Minor, Carolyn Cummings, and Kristin Dozier, Mayor John E. Dailey, and City Commissioners Jeremy Matlow, Curtis Richardson, and Diane Williams-Cox. Also present was Board Secretary Beryl H. Wood. Chairman Bill Proctor, County Commissioner Jimbo Jackson, and City Commissioner Jack Porter were not in attendance.

The meeting was hosted by The Village Square.

Christine White, Executive Director of The Village Square, opened the town hall meeting.

Kim Kelling, Director of Content & Community Partnerships, WFSU Public Media, introduced the County Commissioners and City Commissioners in attendance at the meeting.

Skip Foster, President of Hammerhead Communications, served as moderator of the meeting. Mr. Foster introduced Supervisor of Elections Mark Earley, who provided a review of key dates and processes for the 2022 primary and general elections, including vote by mail, drop boxes, and early voting deadlines.

City Commissioner Matlow commented that the Chamber of Commerce was a client of Mr. Foster's and inquired if there would be any bias in the questions posed at the meeting.

- Mr. Foster replied there would be no bias and that the questions had been vetted.

*Mr. Foster introduced the first topic, civility.*

County Commissioner Welch provided comments regarding the amount of hard work and passion that is required to run for office and serve in office. He mentioned that he had apologized to Chairman Proctor for statements made on a sensitive issue. He stated that elected officials owe it to the citizens to uphold the highest standards of cordiality, collegiality, and respect.

City Commissioner Matlow discussed the importance of treating each other with respect. He noted that it was not uncivil to deliberate and have opposing opinions. He noted that it was important to commit to an open dialogue.

County Commissioner Cummings shared that civility starts with us. She commented that it is important to move forward to address the present issues facing Leon County and Tallahassee.

Vice-Chair Maddox noted that it is important to focus on the issues, rather than personalities. Although commissioners may not agree on the issues, each point of view is important and should be respected.

Mayor Dailey stated that the citizens of Tallahassee expect their elected officials to set an example. He noted that the City allows public comments throughout the course of their meetings. He stated that he starts the meetings with the reminder that it is everyone's responsibility to uphold the civility pledge.

County Commissioner Dozier discussed how the last two years have been the most challenging. She commented on Robert's Rules of Order. She discussed the importance of civility and getting the process right in the beginning to engage the public effectively and efficiently to get business done.

City Commissioner Richardson stated that citizens expect their elected officials to be civil and to focus on the issues that are important to them, such as job creation, education, the housing crisis, and violent crime.

County Commissioner Minor stated that civility has been challenged. He shared they need to focus on the issues and the merits of an idea, seek out the facts, and listen to the people they work for.

City Commissioner Williams-Cox stated she was not interested in going backwards and that you should treat people like you want to be treated. The public wants less talk and more action. It is important to stop talking and get back to business.

*Mr. Foster introduced the second topic. He asked for a specific time when a commissioner changed his or her mind on a situation.*

County Commissioner Dozier recalled the neighborhood she grew up in, the Miccosukee Co-op, which disagreed with the idea of mandatory garbage collection. After hearing from other communities, the decision was made to give people a choice.

County Commissioner Minor commented on Blueprint's \$20 million funding project for Doak Campbell Stadium. He initially supported the proposal. However, he received numerous comments from the public, which overwhelmingly were not in support of funding the project. He stated that at the end of the day we must listen to the people we work for.

County Commissioner Welch commented on the Blueprint item. He stated the importance of processing the information that is provided by staff and the public to determine what is best for the community. He was initially supportive of the funding for Doak Campbell Stadium, but subsequent review and analysis changed his mind.

Mayor Dailey recalled his time on the County Commission and the gun show loophole ordinance proposed by Commissioner Lindley. He also reflected on the establishment of the Children's Services Council.

*Mr. Foster introduced the third topic, the balance of growth and environment.*

City Commissioner Richardson shared that Tallahassee has been his home for the last 50 years. He stated that Tallahassee is growing and has to grow. The growth must be balanced with preserving the environment. He commented on the solar farm by the airport.

City Commissioner Matlow stated that the balance needs to be reset. He reflected on the development of Welaunee Plantation and felt it was railroaded through. He stated they need to hit the brakes and see how they want the City to grow. He shared how citizens want to be heard.

Vice-Chair Maddox stated this is one of the biggest issues that will be tackled over the next 10 years, as it affects every other issue. We have to be creative on how we move forward. He

discussed resources, transportation, infrastructure, and the Comp Plan. He commented on how the population of the City is growing.

County Commissioner Dozier commented on the Comp Plan and thinking long term about the community. She addressed Welaunee and the process for approval. She discussed smart and responsible growth.

*Mr. Foster introduced the fourth topic, affordable housing.*

City Commissioner Williams-Cox stated that the City Commission has been working very hard on affordable housing. She stated that it is important to define what “affordable” is, as what is affordable for some may not be affordable for others. She was proud to announce they have more affordable housing options now than ever in the past. She mentioned refurbishing hotels and office buildings for housing. She also discussed food insecurity.

County Commissioner Cummings stated that the lack of affordable housing is a major concern. She stated that over the last year the County has held workshops to focus on affordable housing.

*The WFSU media broadcast of the town hall meeting concluded at 6:25 p.m.*

*The town hall meeting resumed at 6:28 p.m.*

*Mr. Foster continued with the affordable housing topic, to be followed by a question and answer session.*

Mayor Dailey stated that affordable housing is a priority that requires a lot of work and planning to ensure it is done successfully. He pointed out that the City and County work very well together and recalled the workshop they recently had to discuss the future of affordable housing. He commented on the addition of 1700 units of affordable housing and the conversion of old motels into single family rentals or condos. He shared that they are creative and heading in the right direction.

City Commissioner Matlow spoke about the active role the public sector has in developing affordable housing. He shared that he would like to put more money into low-income housing.

City Commissioner Richardson discussed the housing crisis. He commented on allowing unused hotels for low-income housing. He discussed the funding for community grant land programs to build homes that are affordable for residents. He stated that there is inclusionary housing in Welaunee. He reflected on the growing homeless population and ways to combat it. He also discussed economic development, creating jobs, and helping local businesses grow.

County Commissioner Dozier shared they have made a lot of progress in recent years, and that the plans for affordable housing have gained traction. She commented on the need for the public sector to encourage and incentivize affordable housing. She commented on the need to add jobs.

City Commissioner Williams-Cox shared the contributions by the City and County to Orange Avenue apartments to help fund affordable housing. She commented on the Doak Campbell Stadium renovation project which will provide job opportunities for minority and women-owned businesses.

*Mr. Foster introduced the next topic, the impact of the Amazon Fulfillment Center.*

County Commissioner Cummings shared she was excited about Amazon being a part of Tallahassee. She stated that the economic impact will be good for the County and that she looked forward to the creation of jobs from the facility.

City Commissioner Matlow stated that having Amazon in Leon County is a tremendous win. He shared that Amazon is changing the face of retail. He stated they needed to look at targeted industries and focus on raising wages for the people who live here.

County Commissioner Minor expressed that Amazon is a tremendous opportunity. He shared his desire for tech companies to come to Tallahassee. He spoke about the opportunities at Tallahassee Community College, which provides courses and certifications to build skills for tech workers.

County Commissioner Welch expressed that Amazon is a big deal for our community. He discussed the importance of showing that Leon County is open to economic development. He commented on providing jobs, creating a great economy, and providing more investment at the airport.

Vice-Chair Maddox talked about the investment Amazon is making. He cited Amazon's tuition assistance program and the opportunity for advancement.

City Commissioner Richardson commented on the investment that they have made in attracting Amazon and Danfoss Turbocor to the community. He discussed the effect on the community to reduce crime and homelessness. He emphasized the commitment to grow the private sector. He shared how the community has grown and the importance of promoting the City and County to bring business to the area.

City Commissioner Williams-Cox reflected on the health care provided to Amazon's employees, noting that access to health care is even more important than \$15 an hour. She pointed out that the Governor did not expand the Medicaid option.

*Mr. Foster introduced the next topic, Blueprint and the Doak Campbell Stadium funding issue.*

City Commissioner Richardson spoke about the infrastructures needs for the community to grow and the initial Blueprint 2000 Plan. He noted that the Blueprint projects have been successfully and timely completed.

City Commissioner Matlow commented that Blueprint has a great history, such as Cascades Park. He expressed his concerns with Sunshine Law accountability.

County Commissioner Cummings stated they are charged with the responsibility to protect the public trust and finances. We must be transparent and accountable. We must also follow the proper process and procedures. She supported the funding for Doak Campbell Stadium for the economic development that would follow. She noted the previous funding for TCC and the FAMU stadium.

Mayor Dailey noted that Blueprint is working and shared why he supported the Doak Campbell Stadium funding project. He shared how College Town is growing and being developed. This takes private and public investment.

County Commissioner Dozier commented on Blueprint being the gold standard and how it has worked very well. She shared the tremendous efforts and strides Blueprint has made to assist different programs with infrastructure and development. She shared her opposition to the Doak Campbell Stadium funding project and how she was proud to stand with the community.

Vice-Chair Maddox shared his stance on the Doak Campbell Stadium project and the need to move forward to focus on how to make it benefit the community. He stated they have had the conversations, the vote has been taken, and they should respect those that opposed this project. He discussed steps to move the community forward.

*Mr. Foster introduced the next topic, technology in Tallahassee.*

County Commissioner Dozer credited the local tech communities for their insight, and cited Launch Tally, which highlights the tech firms in the community. She discussed ways to connect with new talent, the opportunities that are here, and building training programs.

County Commissioner Maddox discussed the positive impact of Leon Works, which targets a technical career path. He stated that a lot more could go into advancing technical career paths. Not all kids want to attend the traditional 4-year university and could make outstanding technical career choices.

*Mr. Foster introduced the next topic, the vision for the airport.*

Mayor Dailey commented on the airport improvements. He stated they are heading in the right direction and are dedicated to representing the universities and business community. He noted there are incredible opportunities for shipping and manufacturing.

County Commissioner Welch shared his support for the airport expansion, and noted the opportunities that the airport creates, such as Amazon and Tesla.

County Commissioner Dozier shared that there have been missed opportunities at the airport. She expressed the need for a deep dive and was concerned with the lack of industrial space.

City Commissioner Richardson stated they are moving forward with widening Capital Circle to have more traffic access to the airport. He shared there are hundreds of acres around the airport, but the infrastructure must be in place so that there are shovel-ready spaces available to compete with other airports.

*Mr. Foster introduced the next topic, building trust with the younger generation of voters and future public servants.*

City Commissioner Williams-Cox shared that the younger generation is watching how the adults conduct business and handle themselves, but that the adults are not acting like adults. She stated the need to be more positive. She also reflected on the need for accessibility so that all voices can be heard.

Vice-Chair Maddox stated that young people are reading the paper, watching television, and see what goes on. He noted they have to humanize elected officials, understanding they are not perfect, but try to be the best they can.

Commissioner Cummings discussed the school system, which educates students on citizenship. She shared the vision of the Children's Services Council and the establishment of the Council on the Status of Men and Boys. She commented on the Anatomy of a Homicide, high school dropouts, and programs to engage the youth.

Commissioner Welch spoke about high school kids that get experience in the classroom by discussing government issues in mock meetings. They are the future. He encouraged substitute teaching.

Commissioner Minor spoke on building trust with young people and understanding where they are coming from. He noted concerns with food insecurity. He discussed going to classes to talk to kids. He addressed the value of internships with the County and City.

The town hall meeting ended at 7:30 p.m.

ATTEST:



BY: Bill Proctor  
Bill Proctor, Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners

BY: Gwendolyn Marshall Knight  
Gwendolyn Marshall Knight, Clerk of Court  
& Comptroller, Leon County, Florida