



City of Palm Coast Minutes COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING

City Hall
160 Lake Avenue
Palm Coast, FL 32164
www.palmcoastgov.com

Mayor David Alfin
Vice Mayor Ed Danko
Council Member Cathy Heighter
Council Member Nick Klufas
Council Member Theresa Pontieri

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

9:00 AM

COMMUNITY WING

City Staff

Denise Bevan, City Manager

Neysa Borkert, City Attorney

Kaley Cook, City Clerk

- Public Participation shall be in accordance with Section 286.0114 Florida Statutes.
- Other matters of concern may be discussed as determined by City Council.
- If you wish to obtain more information regarding the City Council's agenda, please contact the City Clerk's Office at 386-986-3713.
- In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons needing a reasonable accommodation to participate in any of these proceedings or meeting should contact the City Clerk at 386-986-3713, at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.
- City Council Meetings are streamed live on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/user/PalmCoastGovTV/live>.
- It is proper meeting etiquette to silence all electronic devices, including cell phones while meeting is in session.
- Any person who decides to appeal any decision of the City Council with respect to any matter considered at this meeting will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose, may need to hire a court reporter to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Alfin called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG AND A MOMENT OF SILENCE

C. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Kaley Cook called the roll. All members were present.

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public Participation shall be held in accordance with Section 286.0114 Florida Statutes. And pursuant to the City Council's Meeting Policies and Procedures:

- (1) Each speaker shall at the podium, provide their name and may speak for up to 3 minutes.
- (2) The Public may provide comments to the City Council relative to matters not on the agenda at the times indicated in this Agenda. Following any comments from the public, there may be discussion by the City Council.
- (3) When addressing the City Council on specific, enumerated Agenda items, speakers shall:
 - (a) direct all comments to the Mayor;
 - (b) make their comments concise and to the point;
 - (c) not speak more than once on the same subject;
 - (d) not, by speech or otherwise, delay or interrupt the proceedings or the peace of the City Council;
 - (e) obey the orders of the Mayor or the City Council; and
 - (f) not make any irrelevant, impertinent or slanderous comments while addressing the City Council; which pursuant to Council rules, shall be considered disorderly.
- (4) Any person who becomes disorderly or who fails to confine his or her comments to the identified subject or business, shall be cautioned by the Mayor and thereafter must conclude his or her remarks on the subject within the remaining designated time limit.

Any speaker failing to comply, as cautioned, shall be barred from making any additional comments during the meeting and may be removed, as necessary, for the remainder of the meeting.

Members of the public may make comments during the public comment portion of the meeting. Please be advised that public comment will only be permitted during the public comment portions of the agenda at the times indicated by the Chair during the meeting.

Mayor Alfin provided the rules and procedures of public comment.

Andrew Blanco discussed the Code of Ordinances regarding single family residential districts. Mr. Blanco discussed Oxford Houses and shared concerns for 33 Pope Lane. Mr. Blanco urged City Council to act without delay.

Peter Johnson discussed day rate use of parks and provided suggestions. Mr. Johnson provided a response to Council comments from prior City Council meetings.

Joe Runac spoke about an application for a cellphone tower at 7 Clubhouse Drive and was not in favor of the location.

Celia Pugliese, long-time resident of Palm Coast supported the comments of Mr. Runac. Ms. Pugliese spoke about a special exception, the location of the tower, lot types, traffic on Florida Park Drive, and traffic calming islands.

Jeffrey Seib wanted to address flow of information from the City to the residents. Mr. Seib spoke about a trusting relationship between the people and the government, planning and development, and provided suggestions on getting information to residents.

Janice Reed spoke about monies used to advertise Palm Harbor Golf Course and stated that the lack of advertising of other City amenities. Ms. Reed provided a response to prior Council comments.

Richard Hamilton had a question about the consent agenda.

Mayor Alfin recommended that Mr. Hamilton wait until the Consent agenda and comment on the item at the designated time.

Vice Mayor Danko shared conversations that occurred with local golf course owners and encouraged Council members to talk to the business owners.

Council Member Pontieri discussed finding a balance of providing an affordable alternative for some of our retirement community and ensuring we are not undercutting private businesses. Council Member Pontieri spoke about resident comments and shared about the importance of completing a comment card so that Council Members may reach out regarding the comments.

Council Member Klufas shared about the City's transformation of the golf course into something that adds value to the area. Council Member Klufas extended thanks to staff who have turned the facility around.

E. MINUTES

- 1. MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL:
OCTOBER 3, 2023, BUSINESS MEETING
OCTOBER 10, 2023, WORKSHOP MEETING
OCTOBER 10, 2023, SPECIAL WORKSHOP MEETING**

Motion by Vice Mayor Danko, seconded by Council Member Pontieri, to approve the October 3, 2023, Business Meeting Minutes.

Motion by Vice Mayor Danko, seconded by Council Member Pontieri, to approve the October 10, 2023, Workshop Meeting Minutes.

Motion by Vice Mayor Danko, seconded by Council Member Heigher, to approve the October 10, 2023, Special Workshop Meeting Minutes.

Pass

Motion made to approve by Vice Mayor Danko and seconded by Council Member Pontieri

Approved - 5 - Mayor David Alfin, Vice Mayor Ed Danko, Council Member Nick Klufas, Council Member Theresa Pontieri, Council Member Cathy Heigher

F. PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- 2. PROCLAMATION - OCTOBER 2023 AS DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH**

Council Member Klufas presented the Proclamation to members of the Flagler County Schools Transition Program.

3. PROCLAMATION - OCTOBER 2023 AS ADOPT A DOG MONTH

Council Member Pontieri presented the Proclamation to members of the Flagler County Humane Society.

A member of Flagler County Humane Society shared thanks for the Proclamation.

4. PROCLAMATION - THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 15, 2023, AS CELEBRATE BABIES WEEK

Council Member Pontieri presented the Proclamation to Richard Fay.

Mr. Fay shared thanks and comments.

5. PROCLAMATION - THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 27, 2023, AS MOBILITY WEEK

Council Member Heighter presented the Proclamation to Maeven Rogers, Chief Sustainability & Resiliency Officer.

Ms. Rogers shared about upcoming Mobility Week events.

6. PROCLAMATION - OCTOBER 27, 2023, AS TEMPLE BETH SHALOM FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION DAY

Mayor Alfin presented the Proclamation to members of Temple Beth Shalom.

A representative of Temple Beth Shalom shared thanks and goals for the future.

7. PROCLAMATION - OCTOBER 28, 2023, AS FOUNDERS DAY

Mayor Alfin presented the Proclamation to members of the Flagler County Historical Society.

A representative of the Flagler County Historical Society shared information about the history of Palm Coast and Temple Beth Shalom and shared about an upcoming Founders Day event.

Mayor Alfin shared about comments from Senator Rick Scott.

8. PRESENTATION - PARKS MASTER PLAN DRAFT REPORT

Brittany McDermott, Deputy Director of Parks & Recreation, opened the item.

Art Thatcher, Project Manager for BerryDunn, presented the topic to Council. Topics presented included: highlight of project phases, survey methods,

summary of key survey findings, park access, trail assessment, goals and timeframe, top ten action, low scoring components, capital costs, grant opportunities, and implementation guidelines.

City Council held discussion on the following topics: current draft and next steps in the process, sports tourism, prioritization of maintenance of fields, financial plan, land annexation and looking for opportunities to add greenspace and fields, which parks will receive priority for improvements, concession stand at Holland Park, potential addition of safety equipment, coverings for water fountains, and support for adding greenspace.

Mayor Alfin stated that he studied the results of the study carefully and noted that the survey is for residents that live and play here today. Mayor Alfin suggested an addendum to address what amenities will look like for future residents.

Council Member Pontieri asked about the current draft.

Ms. McDermott provided information about the current draft and process.

G. ORDINANCES FIRST READ

9. ORDINANCE 2023-XX A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT FROM COUNTY DESIGNATION OF RESIDENTIAL LOW DENSITY AND COMMERCIAL-LOW INTENSITY TO CITY DESIGNATION OF RESIDENTIAL AND MIXED-USE WITH SITE SPECIFIC POLICY TO LIMIT DEVELOPMENT ON 62.3+/- ACRES

Attorney Nix read the title into the record.

Items 9 and 10 were presented together.

Ray Tyner, Deputy Chief Development Officer, provided a background of the item.

City Clerk Kaley Cook administered the oath to those testifying in the item.

Attorney Nix called for any ex parte communication.

Jose Papa, Senior Planner, presented the following topics: background, current zoning map, proposed Future Land Use Map amendment, environmental impact analysis, findings, and recommendation.

Bill Hoover, Senior Planner, presented the following topics: existing zoning map, proposed zoning map, zoning development standards, five review criteria, staff analysis based on the Land Development Code, subdivision master plan, public participation, next steps, and recommendation.

City Council held discussion on the following topics: determination of compatibility, buffer locations, and height and completeness of the wall.

Mr. Hoover provided a response to Council questions.

Ms. Nix provided a response of the current matter for City Council's consideration.

Mr. Chiumento shared ongoing discussion efforts between the parties as to how to better accommodate the surrounding neighbor's concerns and designs.

Public Comment:

John Duncan read a letter from Mr. Bayer, who represents Polo Club West.

Bonnie (no last name provided), resident of Polo Club West, discussed an additional property that has not been discussed and shared safety concerns.

Celia Pugliese, shared support for the residents of Polo Club West. Ms. Pugliese discussed equestrian acres, cell phone towers, and preservation of what residents have bought.

Christine Krauss spoke about a lack of participation because of work and requested that the next meeting for the topic to be a night meeting. Ms. Krauss spoke about a one-acre lot, fencing, and buffers.

Laura Biddle, Vice President of the HOA for Polo Club West, discussed changes that the community is willing to make and shared concern for a one-acre lot and compatibility of the project.

Stacy Duncan spoke about a conservation area behind Secretariat Lane. Ms. Duncan also shared those earlier comments regarding two attendees at the public meetings were speaking on behalf of the neighborhood.

Richard Hamilton discussed what items are before Council today for consideration, shared about a Sun Trail Project, and a gap that will need to be considered in the area.

Paul Fur, future resident of Polo Club West, wanted Council to consider what the applicant is going to do, to think about the future and natural preservation.

Peter Johnson discussed the five review criteria as outlined by the Land Development Code (LDC). Mr. Johnson stated that the city does not share the intent of rezoning and changes to the LDC.

Mayor Alfin asked the applicant to address the one-acre parcel.

Mr. Chiumento shared a response regarding the parcel discussed and compatibility of the project.

Council Member Pontieri shared considerations for compatibility, issue with the change to 7 dwelling units per acre, commercial designation, buffers, and looked to the applicant to make the project more compatible.

Council Member Heighter encouraged City Council to consider the position of the residents of Polo Club West. Council Member Heighter stated that the applicant should work with the residents to try and work it out if possible.

Council Member Klufas agreed with most of the comments and discussed the technicalities of compatibility and land rights.

Mayor Alfin discussed security, municipal boundaries, and a future plan for a trail system.

Mr. Tyner shared staff's position on compatibility, and the history of the project.

Council Member Pontieri asked for details of the County zoning designation.

Mr. Papa provided a response.

Pass

Motion made to approve by Vice Mayor Danko and seconded by Council Member Klufas

Approved - 5 - Mayor David Alfin, Vice Mayor Ed Danko, Council Member Nick Klufas, Council Member Theresa Pontieri, Council Member Cathy Heighter

10. ORDINANCE 2023-XX OLD KINGS VILLAGE REZONING - APPLICATION NO. 5506

Attorney Nix read the title into the record.

Council Member Pontieri spoke about a memorandum to Mr. Tyner, which was included within the agenda packet which discussed traffic impacts and asked for the basis of the traffic study.

Mr. Tyner provided a response on how a traffic study is determined.

Public Comment:

Christine Krauss asked if the commercial has the same uses as it did previously.

Mr. Tyner provided a response on permissible uses.

Council Member Pontieri asked if there is a different designation that can be used in order to make it more compatible to what was previously approved by Flagler County.

Mr. Tyner responded that staff finds General Commercial (Com-2) compatible and provided details of the review.

John Duncan spoke about a 1-acre lot in the northeast corner and proposed access points.

Peter Johnson spoke about the requirements for residents to obtain permits and the difference for applicant developments. Mr. Johnson discussed a disconnect between the City's information and accurate information.

Mayor Alfin provided a recommendation to connect with staff on the process.

Laura Biddle, resident of Polo Club West, asked how a resident can change the commercial designation. Ms. Biddle shared that as a homeowner she does not want to see Com-2 and asked how, as a homeowner, can she make that happen.

Council Member Pontieri asked for details to be provided to Ms. Biddle.

Ms. Nix provided a response regarding the application, commercial zoning designation, and City Council's decision to be made on the matter at hand.

Council Member Pontieri provided objections to Com-2 and found Com-1 more appropriate. Council Member Pontieri proposed that the item be tabled to allow the parties time to discuss, or that the item be denied based on the Com-2 use.

Mayor Alfin asked Council Member Pontieri to provide her rationale on the commercial designation.

Council Member Pontieri provided a response on prohibitable uses and original intent of the project.

Council Member Klufas asked what items would be included in the prohibited uses list.

City Council held discussion on permissible uses of Com-1 and Com-2.

Mr. Chiumento provided a response on uses and upcoming steps for the item.

Pass

Motion made to approve by Vice Mayor Danko and seconded by Council Member Klufas

Approved - 4 - Mayor David Alfin, Vice Mayor Ed Danko, Council Member Nick Klufas, Council Member Cathy Heighter

Denied - 1 - Council Member Theresa Pontieri

H. RESOLUTIONS

11. RESOLUTION 2023-127 APPROVING A MASTER SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH FLORIDA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR SMALL BUSINESS CONSULTING SERVICES

Attorney Nix read the title into the record.

Jason DeLorenzo, Chief of Staff, opened the item.

Eunice Choi, Regional Director of the University of Central Florida Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Hal Thayer, Associate Director of SBDC, and Michael Oppenheim, a certified business consultant, presented the topics to Council.

Topics presented included: information about the program, the SBDC network, mission and vision, services provided, training, research and consulting tools, success stories, Flagler County clients working with the Florida SBDC at UCF, client services summary, consulting client breakdown, 2022 economic impact data, and recognition and honors.

City Council held discussion on the following topics: collaboration with other universities, prior similar services, this item as a new line item in the Economic Development Budget, and support for SBDC.

Ms. Choi provided a response to Council questions.

Public Comment:

Celia Pugliese, long-time resident of Palm Coast, recommended an assessment of the benefits to small businesses to see how successful they are to the investment.

Greg Blose, President and CEO of the Palm Coast - Flagler Regional Chamber, shared support for the SBDC and shared about small businesses in Palm Coast.

Pass

Motion made to approve by Vice Mayor Danko and seconded by Council Member Klufas

Approved - 5 - Mayor David Alfin, Vice Mayor Ed Danko, Council Member Nick Klufas, Council Member Theresa Pontieri, Council Member Cathy Heigher

I. CONSENT

Council Member Pontieri discussed a request she made to the public at a prior City Council meeting, asking anyone who applied for a Cultural Arts Grant to reach out to City Council to express their financial needs, and shared about the response received. Council Member discussed the current award process and asked for the actual need for the grant to be reviewed in the future.

Mayor Alfin spoke about the detailed utility information and asked Ms. Bevan to reach out to each City Council member to invite them to tour or receive enough information to understand how these items work together.

Public Comment:

Denise Garcia, President of the Garden Club of Palm Coast, spoke about funds, festival, and the Cultural Arts Grants.

Celia Pugliese thanked the Mayor for his request during public comment. Additionally, Ms. Pugliese spoke about items 14, 15, and 19 on the consent agenda.

Ms. Bevan provided the details of item 15.

Ms. Johnston provided a response on the restrictive covenants for item 19.

Richard Hamilton spoke about cultural arts grants and commented on the difficulty of choosing between groups for the Cultural Arts Grants. Mr. Hamilton supported having a good look at the criteria and consideration of allocating additional dollars to the grants.

12. **RESOLUTION 2023-126 APPROVING A MASTER PRICE AGREEMENT WITH ALFA LAVAL, INC., FOR THE PURCHASE OF SIX COPLASTIC STOP GATES TO REPLACE EXISTING METAL STOP GATES AT WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT 1**
13. **RESOLUTION 2023-124 APPROVING PIGGYBACKING THE ATLANTIC PIPE SERVICES, LLC CONTRACT WITH THE CITY OF SOUTH DAYTONA, FLORIDA FOR SEWER MAIN REHABILITATION AS NEEDED**
14. **RESOLUTION 2023-125 APPROVING PIGGYBACKING THE ATLANTIC PIPE SERVICES, LLC CONTRACT WITH VOLUSIA COUNTY, FLORIDA FOR MANHOLE REHABILITATION AS NEEDED**
15. **RESOLUTION 2023-123 APPROVING A MASTER PRICE AGREEMENT WITH PROMOTIONAL DESIGNS, INC., FOR CITYWIDE CUSTOM LOGO APPAREL**
16. **RESOLUTION 2023-128 EXCEPTION TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) COST FEASIBILITY LIMIT**
17. **RESOLUTION 2023-129 APPROVING A CONTRACT WITH MIE, INC., FOR CITY HALL INTERIOR MODIFICATIONS**
18. **RESOLUTION 2023-130 APPROVING THE CULTURAL ART GRANTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024**
19. **RESOLUTION 2023-132 APPROVING AN AMENDMENT AND PARTIAL RELEASE OF RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS**
20. **RESOLUTION 2023-131 PARKS & RECREATION FEE STRUCTURE**

Pass

Motion made to be adopted on consent by Vice Mayor Danko and seconded by Council Member Pontieri

Approved - 5 - Mayor David Alfin, Vice Mayor Ed Danko, Council Member Nick Klufas, Council Member Theresa Pontieri, Council Member Cathy Heigher

J. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Remainder of Public Comments is limited to three (3) minutes each.

George Mayo spoke about a previous County Commission meeting and an article related to phishing attempts, which has been attached to these minutes. Mr. Mayor looked for assurances that staff is aware of such attempts. Additionally, Mr. Mayor shared traffic concerns for emergency vehicles.

Ed Fuller thanked City Council, City Services, Utilities, Fire, Flagler County Sheriff for the response given to the weather event the week prior.

Marion Petruzzi, Neighborhood Watch Leader and resident spokesperson for the R section, shared concerns from residents regarding Ralph Carter Park regarding lighting and noise at the park and asked for the removal or redirection of the high-powered lights away from residents' homes. The resident provided photos of the lighting which have been attached to these minutes.

K. DISCUSSION BY CITY COUNCIL OF MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Vice Mayor Danko discussed the lighting at Ralph Carter Park and asked Ms. Bevan if there is any solution to make this work for everyone.

Ms. Bevan shared about solutions and conversations thus far.

Vice Mayor Danko asked if there are any lights that can be turned off immediately.

Jason DeLorenzo, Chief of Staff, shared about the provider of the lighting system, evaluation from the engineer, and balancing the safety and use of the fields

Mayor Alfin asked Vice Mayor Danko to share the information that he has received during the Comprehensive Plan study.

Vice Mayor Danko echoed the comments on the emergency response on recent weather events.

Council Member Pontieri echoed thanks to staff, shared her weekly follow up on Ralph Carter Park, and shared about an upcoming event with Kiwanis Club.

Mayor Alfin provided a response to public comment on the requirements of phishing training.

Council Member Heigher thanked Ms. Petruzzi and stated that the lighting and traffic at Ralph Carter Park needs to be addressed sooner rather than later.

Council Member Klufas extended thanks to everyone who reached out regarding his absence at a prior Council Meeting, shared about Food Truck Tuesday, and discussed manhole covers.

L. DISCUSSION BY CITY ATTORNEY OF MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

There were none.

M. DISCUSSION BY CITY MANAGER OF MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

21. REPORTING OF EMERGENCY AND SOLE SOURCE PURCHASES FOR SEPTEMBER 2023

Ms. Bevan shared about the emergency and sole source purchases for September 2023.

Ms. Bevan shared the sentiments on the emergency response to recent weather events and asked Fire Chief Berryhill to share thoughts.

Kyle Berryhill provided an update on the response to a tornado last week.

N. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:41 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by: Kaley Cook, CMC, FCRM
City Clerk*

Attachment to Minutes of the City Council



**STADIUM LIGHTS FROM RALPH CARTER PARK ILLUMINATING ENTIRE
AREA/PROPERTIES / HOMES IN THE R SECTION**



**RESIDENTS ENTIRE HOME ILLUMINATED BY STADIUM LIGHTING
FROM RALPH CARTER PARK**

APR 30 2003 10:00 PM



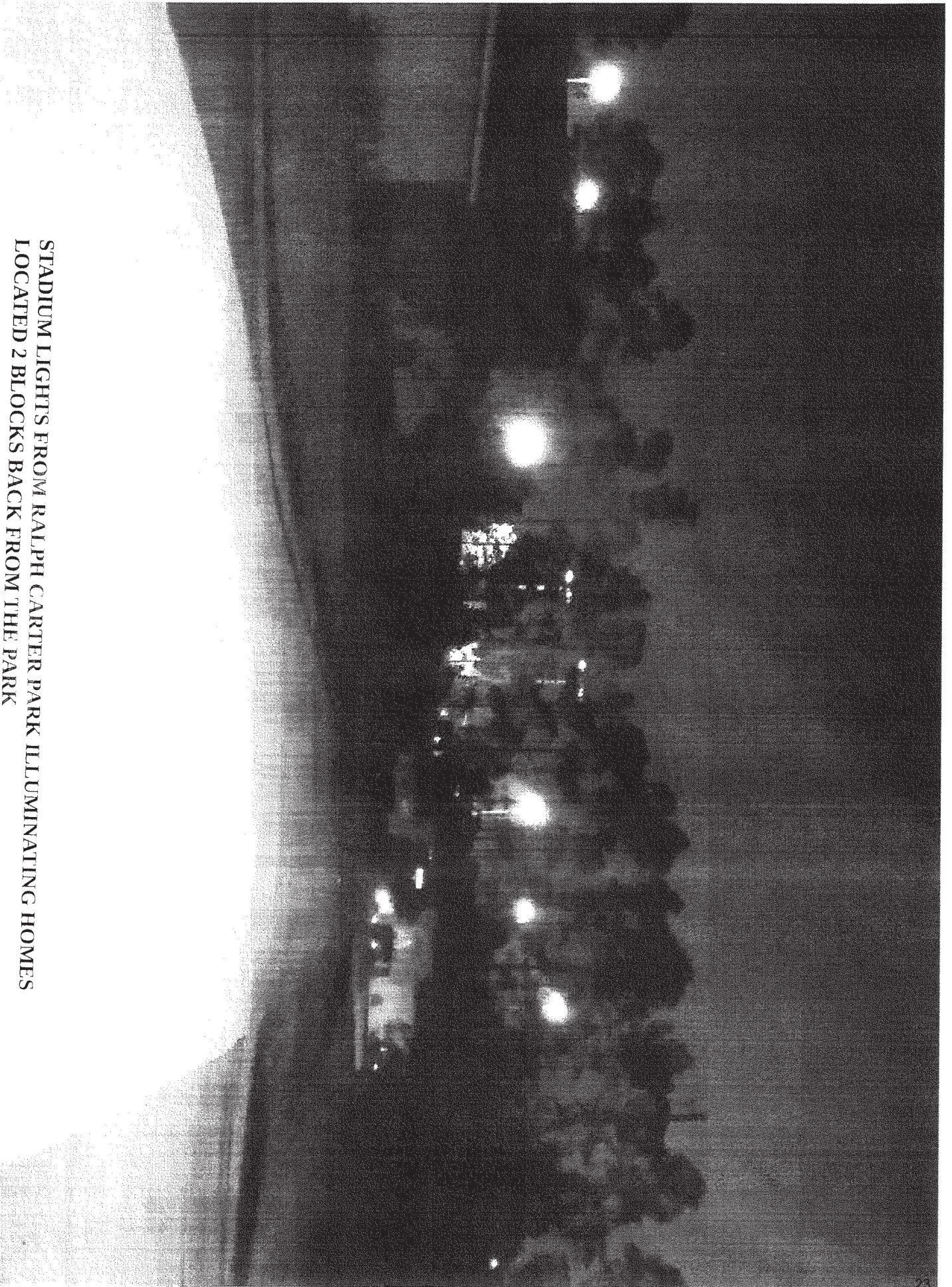
**STADIUM LIGHTS FROM RALPH CARTER PARK ILLUMINATING HOMES/BEDROOMS
OF ALL RESIDENTS LIVING ADJACENT TO THE PARK**



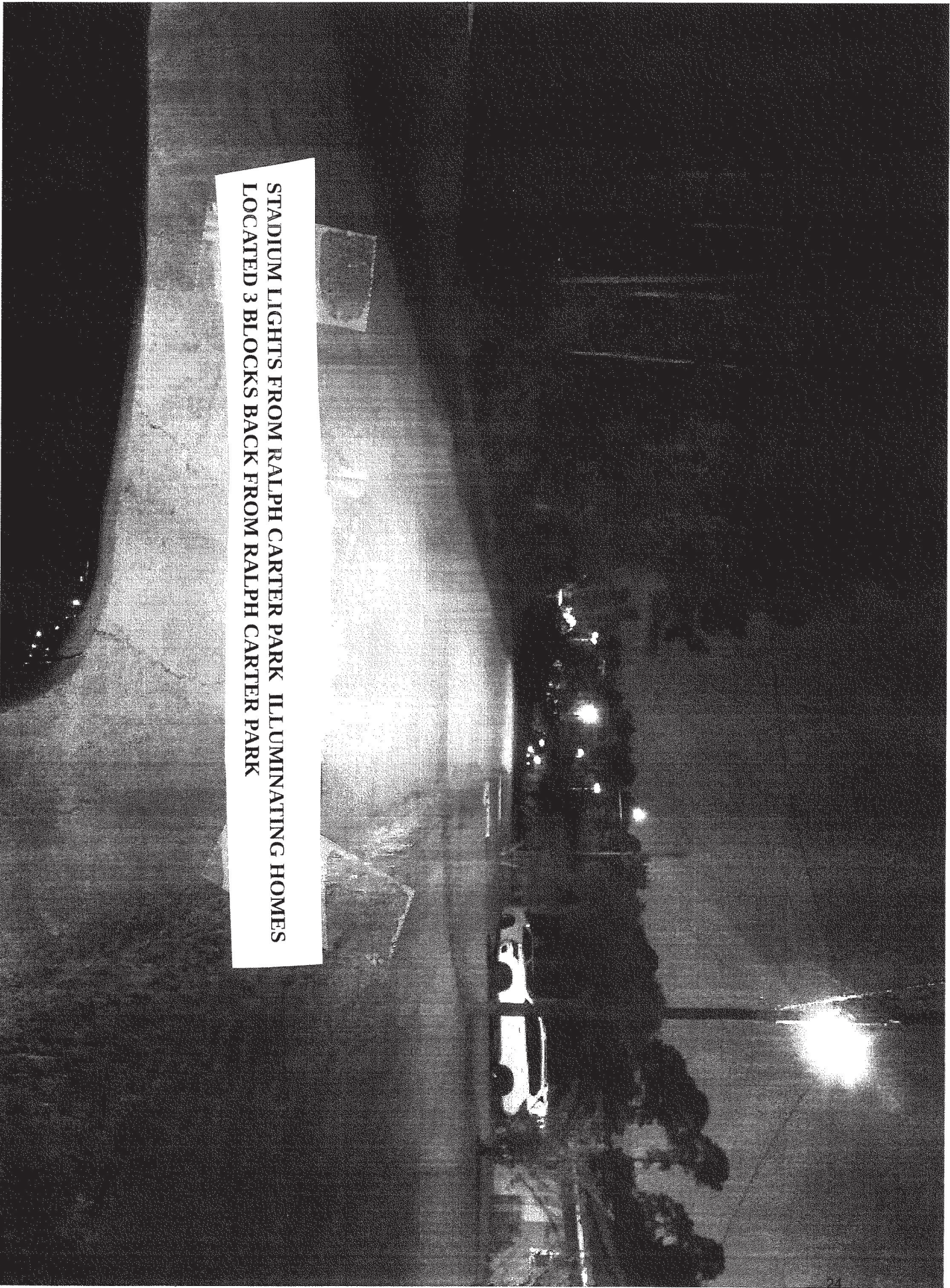
**RESIDENTS ENTIRE HOME ILLUMINATED BY STADIUM LIGHTING
FROM RALPH CARTER PARK**



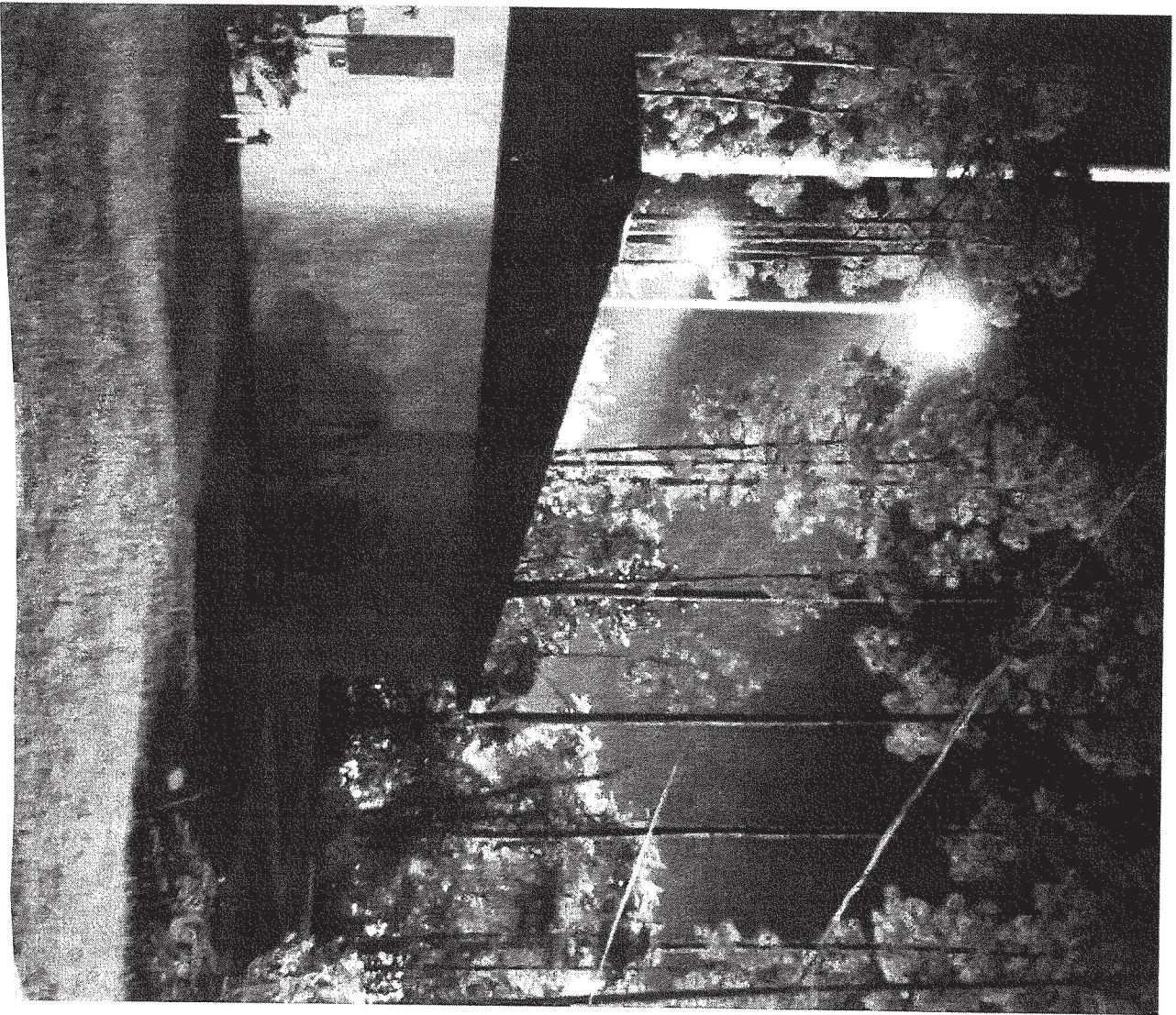
**RESIDENTS ENTIRE HOME ILLUMINATED BY STADIUM LIGHTING
FROM RALPH CARTER PARK**



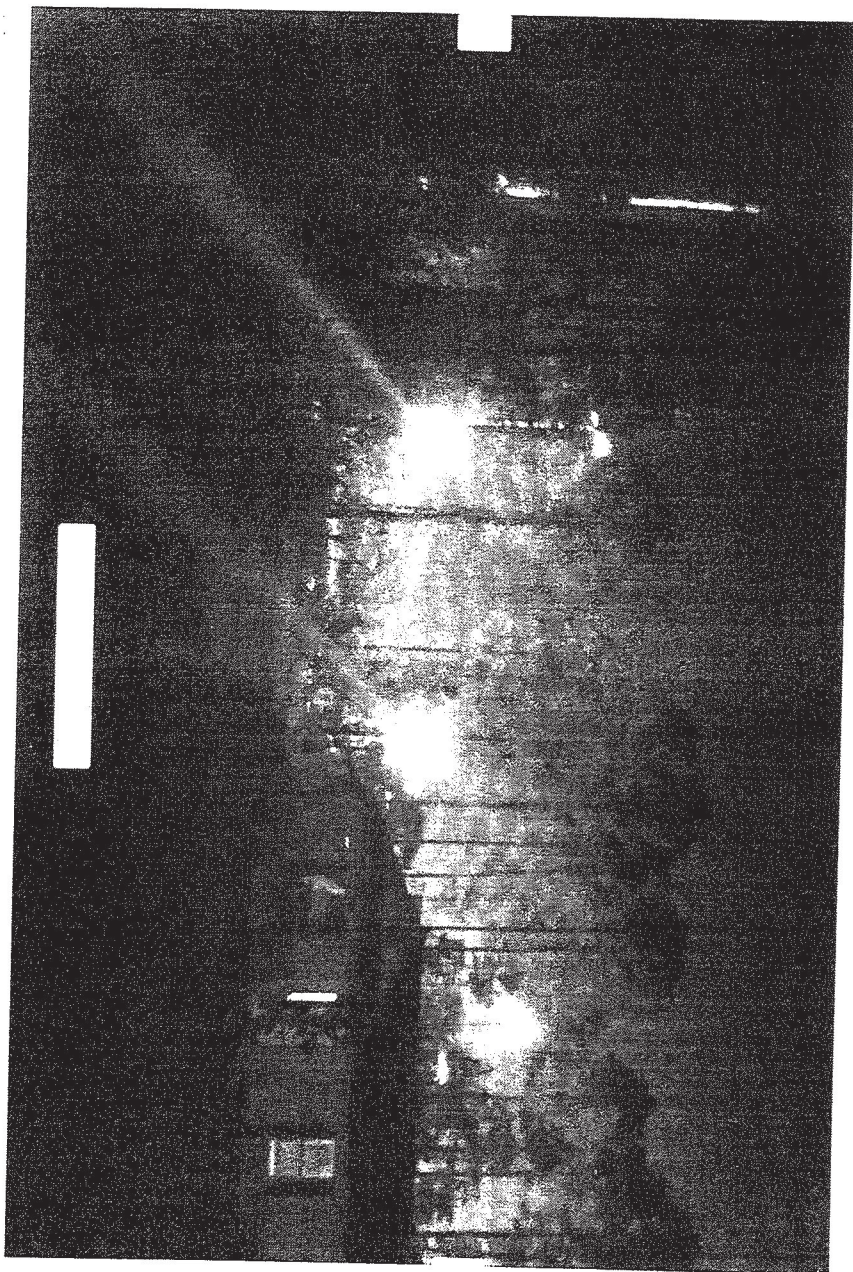
STADIUM LIGHTS FROM RALPH CARTER PARK ILLUMINATING HOMES
LOCATED 2 BLOCKS BACK FROM THE PARK



STADIUM LIGHTS FROM RALPH CARTER PARK ILLUMINATING HOMES
LOCATED 3 BLOCKS BACK FROM RALPH CARTER PARK



**RESIDENTS ENTIRE HOME ILLUMINATED BY STADIUM LIGHTING
FROM RALPH CARTER PARK**



**RESIDENTS ENTIRE HOME ILLUMINATED BY STADIUM LIGHTING
FROM RALPH CARTER PARK**



Cyberscammers con Fla. city out of \$1.2M

Fort Lauderdale is trying to get its money back

Christopher Cann
USA TODAY

Scammers impersonating a construction company duped the Florida city of Fort Lauderdale out of \$1.2 million, sparking a police investigation.

The city paid the sum on Sept. 14 after receiving what was believed to be a legitimate bill from Moss Construction, a company that's building a new police station for the coastal city, north of Miami, Fort Lauderdale Police Department spokesperson Ali Adamson wrote in a statement.

The bill was discovered to be a scam within a day.

"We would like to take this time to remind our community to exercise caution when fulfilling payment requests and to stay vigilant and aware of potential scams," she said in a statement.

Adamson told USA TODAY the Fort Lauderdale Police Department is working with appropriate law enforcement agencies "to determine exactly what occurred," but she declined to provide additional details, including where the money was sent.

What is phishing?

The Federal Trade Commission defines phishing as an online scam that targets people, businesses and agencies through messages sent via email, text, or direct message that appear to be from a reputable source. Phishing messages commonly ask for personal identifying information that is then used to invade existing accounts.

In what is commonly called spear phishing, an attacker may use information about a company and its employees to make their messages even more persuasive and realistic, according to the U.K.-based National Cyber Security Centre.

Last year, there were more than 4.7 million recorded phishing attacks, according to the Anti-Phishing Working Group.

The city wants money back

Dean Trantalis, the mayor of Fort Lauderdale, has told news outlets the city is trying to get the money back.

The mayor told WSVN the scam "wasn't just an email, like, 'Hey, this is Moss Construction. Send me \$1.2 million,' it was followed up with full documentation, multiple paperwork."

"It's \$144 million, so they're in full construction mode, so it would've been consistent with the practice that we've been following," Trantalis told the outlet, referring to Moss' large building project.

Trantalis was unavailable to comment on Monday because he was out of town, said Scott Wyman, the mayor's chief of staff.

'Proactive measures' were in place after previous phishing scams

This is not the first attack on the city, but it is the first successful one.

In a statement to USA TODAY, Fort Lauderdale City Manager Greg Chavarria said the city has been targeted in the past by phishing scams and has "taken proactive measures to mitigate such risks." He did not provide details about the security practices previously established to protect against such scams.

Chavarria declined to provide "any specific comment" on the incident "for the time being."

"This incident is under an active investigation," the city manager wrote. "The Police Department is working with a variety of agencies and resources to get to the bottom of it."

He added, "This is an important re-

minder that anyone may become a victim of fraud and we all must do everything possible to protect ourselves."

Moss Construction in a statement to USA TODAY, said, "Malicious actors took advantage of our good name and publicly available information to attempt a scam."

"This is a fraud case that is being actively investigated by the City of Fort Lauderdale officials and police," the statement continued. "We refer all calls to the Fort Lauderdale Police Department."

How to avoid getting scammed

To avoid falling prey to a phishing scam, the Federal Trade Commission suggests that people use security software on their devices, update their cell-phone software as much as possible and back up data regularly.

If you've received an email that looks suspicious, check for typos and confirm the sender is who they claim to be. Some signs that should raise concerns are messages with a generic greeting, those that say your account is on hold because of a billing problem and messages that invite you to click on a link.

The FTC also advises people to report phishing scams at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.