

MINUTES of CAUCUS MEETING

Caucus Room, Belize City Council

10:00 a.m.

October 27th, 2021

Present:

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| 1. His Worship Bernard Wagner | Mayor |
| 2. Mr. Allan Pollard Jr. | Deputy Mayor |
| 3. Mr. Albert Vaughan | Councilor |
| 4. Mr. Javier Castellanos | Councilor |
| 5. Mr. Micah Goodin | Councilor |
| 6. Mrs. Stephanie Hamilton | Councilor |
| 7. Mr. Edmund Kwan | Councilor |
| 8. Mr. Michael Novelo | Councilor |
| 9. Ms. Natasha Pipersburgh | Councilor |
| 10. Ms. Deannie Requeña | Councilor |

Mr. Eluide Miller

Manager, Office of the Mayor

Attending Virtually via Zoom:

Ms. Rosalie Perez

Acting City Administrator/Sr. Finance Manager

Ms. Kaya Cattouse

Councilor

The **City Administrator**, Mrs. Stephanie Lindo-Garbutt is on validated sick leave at the time of the meeting.

Mayor Wagner called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m.

Mayor Wagner highlighted the importance of punctuality in leadership and encouraged all Councilors to look at punctuality as being an important component of professionalism.

- 1.0 Mayor Wagner led all in attendance in reciting the Belize National Prayer.

2.0 Ratification of September 27th, 2021 Minutes

- 2.1 Councilor Pipersburgh moved for the ratification of the September 27th, 2021 minutes of the meeting. Seconded by Councilor Novelo.

3.0 Matters arising from Minutes

- 3.1 (4.1) Mayor noted that two (2) prosecutors have been hired and two (2) remains to be brought into the Municipal Court in an effort to increase effectiveness and efficiency within the department. Mayor Wagner also noted the challenges being faced in the MIS Department. Mayor Wagner highlighted the loss of Mr. Cardona and stated the impact still being felt given the current status of the Department. Mayor Wagner noted that Mr. Ramclam and Mr. Gibson were brought in after Mr. Cardona's resignation. This was not fruitful as Mr. Gibson also tendered his resignation and Mr. Ramclam was unable to perform in the role given the lack of experience. Mayor Wagner shared that representatives of NEO Systems were brought in to do an analysis of the entire management system and is working on a proposal for a dual control network system, which will ensure that the Council is operating at a high level. Mayor Wagner noted that Mr. Gibson has been brought back in and stable internet connection has been restored since.

Mayor reiterated the need for young, motivated and innovative individuals who want to ensure change. Mayor Wagner noted that it is his intention to get the MIS Department back to where it was in the days of Mr. Rene Cardona.

- 3.2 (4.12) Deputy Mayor Pollard Jr. noted that he got the opportunity to meet with Mr. Ortiz Caso, who is tasked with envisioning new ideas for the ever-developing Quintana Roo State. Deputy Mayor Pollard Jr. noted that he would be doing consultancy work to bring the Belize City Beach Project to fruition. Deputy Mayor Pollard Jr. shared that Mr. Caso has committed to visit Belize in the coming weeks.
- 3.3 (6.6) Mayor Wagner asked the Senior Finance Manager, Ms. Rosalie Perez to give an update on the fiscal position of the Council. Ms. Perez noted that City Administrator is asking for all Councilors to be mindful of the Council's current fiscal position when proposing projects

- 3.4 Mayor Wagner asked Ms. Perez if the motions being presented have been quantified in order to establish feasibility. Mayor Wagner shared that the motions being tabled are in the neighborhood of \$30,000 and asked Ms. Perez if the approval of these motions would impact the Council's ability to meet their obligations. Mayor Wagner noted that the Council has made great efforts to assist the Council in reassigning funds air marked for capital projects to meet the Council's operational expenses throughout the pandemic. Mayor Wagner noted that despite these efforts, it is now being said that \$30,000 is too much for the Council to allocate for projects geared towards the residents of the city.
- 3.5 (11.7) Councilor Novelo noted that a meeting would be held with the Undertakers and Builders to get their respective lists together in order to work towards the establishment of the register. This is in an effort to comply with new regulations set out by the Council.
- 3.6 (5.1) Councilor Castellanos shared that he met with the Valuation Manager, Mr. Troy Smith and stated that they are working on a plan to make the Michael Finnegan Market more sustainable.
- 3.7 Mayor Wagner noted plans to make the Conch Shell Bay Fish Market more formalized than it is given recent developments and concerns brought forward by vendors.
- 3.8 Mayor Wagner reiterated the importance of the proposed new Garbage Fee Structure for the collection of residential garbage in Belize City and stated that this matter will be tabled at the next meeting of the Council.
- 4.0 Announcements by Mayor**
- 4.1 Mayor Wagner shared developments in relation to the EU funded E-Transit Pilot Project, which is to be rolled out in the upcoming year. Mayor Wagner noted that this would be rolled out in two phases, an electric bus system for Belize City as well as another which will see runs from Belize City to Benque in order to establish how these busses will operate in more rural settings. Mayor Wagner shared elements of the budget shared and noted that the Ministry of Transport plans to have at least seventeen (17) operational electric busses by 2024.

- 4.1.2 Mayor Wagner noted that this would allow for the provision of a reliable transport system while being environmentally responsible. Mayor Wagner encouraged all Councilors to support this project, as it will directly benefit the residents of the city through the promotion of a smart, inclusive and resilient municipality.
- 4.1.3 Several Councilors commended Mayor Wagner for taking the lead in ensuring this initiative comes to fruition in the upcoming year.
- 4.1.4 Councilor Castellanos stated that this will certainly benefits the residents of the city given the current cries for a reliable transport system.
- 4.1.5 Councilor Goodin shared that the successful rolling out of this pilot project will certainly set Belize City apart as one of the leading municipalities in the region.
- 4.1.6 Mayor Wagner shared that this would allow for the Council to form a Corporation where the Council will own 51% in order to leverage existing busses and procuring additional ones. Mayor Wagner shared that the UNDP Representative guaranteed that the busses would be handed over to the Belize City Council by the third quarter of 2022.
- 4.2 Mayor Wagner noted developments in reference to the Parking Meter Pilot Project to be rolled out in the Digi Park area in Belize City and shared images of the meters currently being programmed. Mayor Wagner reiterated the need for adequate enforcement with the implementation of this project.
- 4.3 Mayor Wagner noted the need for more enforcement by the Traffic Department to ensure and promote compliance with the established regulations.
- 4.4 Mayor Wagner shared that all Mayors from across Belize will be participating in the Healthy People, Healthy Cities initiative being undertaken by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. This initiative promotes sports, healthy living and the limiting of non-communicable diseases. Mayor Wagner noted through these interventions, the Belize City Council is now recognized regionally and internationally.

- 4.5 Mayor Wagner shared elements of the Trade License Reform, which is well under way. Mayor Wagner reminded Councilors that this new reform is predictable, administratively efficient, transparent and objective. Mayor Wagner outlined several key elements of the proposed reform including;
- the publishing of fees by economic zone
 - ability to apply online
 - ability for applicant to declare productive space
 - the Belize City Zone Map
 - new Trade License Rate
 - the Economic Zone Matrix
- 4.6 Mayor Wagner noted that this new regime comes into effect starting January 2022 for trade applicants and announced that existing businesses will be grandfathered in over the next three (3) years.
- 4.7 Mayor Wagner shared that each zone carries a different cost per square foot depending on elements such as access to utilities, access to roads and the level of traffic. Mayor Wagner highlighted that this new zoning will allow for more development in those areas that are currently undeveloped.
- 4.8 Councilor Novelo noted the lack of cutting of Parks and Playgrounds comes as a result of the decrease in the Cutting Crew attached to the Sanitation Department. Councilor Novelo noted that the Cemetery Department does not have its own cutting tools and thus it relies on the assistance of the Sanitation Department.
- 4.9 Councilor Castellanos raised concerns over the lack of follow up on motions passed in the Caucus. Councilor Castellanos noted the need for respective Managers and Directors to present to the Caucus on a regular basis to show where the Council as a measure to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.
- 4.10 Deputy Mayor Pollard Jr. stated that the Works Department is in need of key tools necessary to get works done. Deputy Mayor Pollard Jr. stated that the Council has been responsible despite being in opposition over the first three (3) years of their term. Deputy Mayor Pollard Jr. noted that the Council has always tempered spending. Despite this, the Council's Administration must understand that there is a mandate to fulfill. Deputy Mayor Pollard Jr. noted that his vision for the Works Department is to be efficient in their undertakings.

- 4.11 Councilor Requeña seconded the sentiments shared by Councilor Castellanos.
- 4.12 Mayor Wagner noted that it is the job of the City Administrator to follow up on motions passed and to delegate to respective managers. Mayor Wagner shared that managers must be evaluated on their performance and their ability to offer resolutions. Mayor Wagner expressed concerns over the amount of outstanding property tax arrears and stated that he will personally review all evaluations of managers going forward.
- 4.13 Councilors Cattouse commended Councilor Goodin for the job done by the Sanitation Department despite current staffing constraints. Councilor Cattouse reiterated the sentiments shared by Deputy Mayor Pollard Jr. in relation to motions brought forward being discouraged by Administration due to financial constraints.
- 5.0 Presentation: Parking Meters – Mr. Ivar Medina & Aaron Briceño of Parking Solutions Ltd.**
- 5.1 Mr. Briceño and Mr. Medina thanked Mayor and Councilors for giving them the opportunity for making a presentation. They noted that they are desirous of partnering with the Belize City Council to improve on the lack of parking and traffic congestion within Belize.
- 5.2 Mr. Briceño noted that this would allow for business to be conducted more efficiently.
- 5.3 Mr. Briceño introduced different meter modules, which cover different amounts of parking spaces. Mr. Briceño noted that these are the most ideal meters given the lack of reliable Internet connectivity and debit card systems in place.
- 5.4 Mr. Briceño noted that Parking Solutions would cover all the charges associated with the installation and monitoring of the parking meters.

- 5.5 Mr. Briceño highlighted that the software ensure proper data collection, which will be made available to the Council for auditing purposes. Mr. Briceño highlighted that the Meters allow for the usage of prepaid cards. Mr. Briceño noted that this is being carried out in Belmopan, Corozal Town, Orange Walk Town and San Ignacio/Santa Elena Town in an effort to create a one-network system for parking meters across Belize.
- 5.6 Mr. Briceño highlighted proposed time and rates to be charged and noted that these can be changed if needs be.
\$1.00 per 20-minute intervals
\$3.00 per hourly intervals
- 5.7 Mayor Wagner inquired how does the pricing structure compare regionally and internationally. Mayor Wagner suggested that it would be beneficial for a cost analysis to be done of key areas, which can utilize this proposed parking meter structure.
- 5.8 Councilor Vaughan expressed his support for this initiative and suggested that this be rolled out in the area of Publics Supermarket.
- 5.9 Mr. Briceño noted that the Company is asking for provisional permission to utilize Queen Street as a Pilot for this project.
- 5.10 Mayor Wagner noted that the Council is willing to give the provision permission if the Company is able to get written approval from the Ministry of Transport for the rolling out of the Pilot Project.
- 5.11 Mr. Briceño and Mr. Medina thanked the Council for allowing them to make a presentation.
- 5.12 Councilor Vaughan moved a motion to approve for Parking Solutions Ltd. to carry out a Pilot for Parking Meters utilizing the parking spaces available on Queen Street, Belize City. Seconded by Councilor Goodin. **MOTION PASSED.**

- 6.0 Presentation: Charlie Burton Park – Mr. G. Michael Reid**
- 6.1 Mr. Reid thanked all for allowing him to make a presentation.
- 6.2 Mayor Wagner thanked Mr. Reid for his contribution to the community through the various programs carried out by the Charlie Burton Foundation.
- 6.3 Mr. Reid noted his intention to have the area they have developed to be declared as a park. The Foundation has sustained the park over the years as a place for kids to meet.
- 6.4 Mr. Reid noted that the Foundation also does after school programs as well to assist in guiding the kids in the area.
- 6.5 Mr. Reid highlighted the members of the Foundation.
- 6.6 Mayor Wagner questioned if there is any booth at the park that would allow for a resident to start a small business inside the park.
- 6.7 Mr. Reid shared that there is no booth in the park but noted that the Foundation is desirous of having more economic activity inside the park.
- 6.8 Mr. Reid requested the assistance of the Council in organizing sporting events for the community inside the park once the Covid-19 cases decrease.
- 6.9 Mayor Wagner and the Council committed to partnering with the Foundation to increase collaboration going forward. Mayor Wagner noted that the Council could request for the Belize Telecommunications Limited to assist in the establishment of Wi-Fi connections at the Park. Mayor Wagner tasked Councilor Hamilton to assist in the establishment of the booths at the Park and encouraged Councilor Requeña to work with the Public Relations Department to organize a ceremony with the Foundation to officially announce the establishment of the Park.
- 6.10 Mayor Wagner shared the Smart City Park Project undertaken in the Armadillo Street area and committed to declaring the area as a Park and in collaborating in the future.

7.0 Presentation: Town Cash Lottery – Mr. Marvin Mora & Mr. Curtis Swasey

- 7.1 Mr. Mora thanked Mayor Wagner and the Council for allowing him to make a presentation. The proposal looks at the opportunity that can be yielded from the culture that exists in Belize as it relates to the lottery games in place.
- 7.2 Mr. Mora shared the overview of the proposed game entitled “Town Cash Lottery”. The ultimate game of Belize Horizon Gaming Company is for nationwide rollout of this game starting with Belize City.
- 7.3 The proposed market size for each district is 20% of respective population. This would provide entertainment as well as opportunities for residents to win up to \$100,000.00 at each drawing.
- 7.4 The game gives the buyer of a \$2.00 ticket the opportunity to win one of twelve weekly monetary prizes ranging from \$50,000.00 to \$300,000.00. There will be three drawing dates, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.
- 7.5 Mr. Mora presented the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the proposal.
- 7.6 Mr. Mora requested for the Council’s participation in using the collection points to sell and redeem tickets. In addition, the proposed MOU would include the sharing of 20% of the profits to the Council. The Council would provide a ticket to any resident who clears their property taxes.
- 7.7 Mr. Mora thanked the Councilors for the opportunity to make the presentation.
- 7.8 Mayor Wagner noted that the Council would have to do its due diligence in ensuring the principals of the company are in a financial position to take on project. Mayor Wagner requested for the principals to send a correspondence to the Council outlining the expectations of the city as a stakeholder in this initiative. The Council will then do its due diligence.

Councilor Hamilton was excused from the meeting at 1:20 p.m.

8.0 Notices

- 8.1 No notices were tabled.

9.0 Petitions

- 9.1 Councilor Novelo tabled a petition from Supt. Marciano Mejia of the Belize Police Department for the Council's collaboration in the rehabilitation of the Police Booth in the Jane Usher area. Supt. Mejia is requesting for the Council to cover the cost of the installation and usage of water services for the Police Booth as well as the bathroom at the back. Councilor Novelo noted that the Precinct has committed to ensuring that the booth is manned all day long to ensure the security of the meter.
- 9.2 Councilor Vaughan suggested for the Council to assist by covering the cost of the installation of the meter and for Deputy Mayor Allan Pollard Jr. to assist in getting the Belize Water Services Limited to commit to covering the cost of the service.
- 9.3 Councilor Novelo moved a motion for the Council assist the Belize Police Department, Eastern Division by covering the cost of the installation of water meter at the Police Booth in the Jane Usher area, Precinct 2. **MOTION PASSED.** Deputy Mayor Pollard Jr. committed to requesting for BWS to cover the cost of the water services thereafter.
- 9.4 Councilor Novelo tabled a concern of a resident who wants to raise chickens with City limits. Councilor Novelo noted that resident is requesting a letter from the Council to give permission to raise these chickens in her area in order to access funding needed for a proposed community project.
- 9.5 Councilor Vaughan suggested that the resident write to the Council outlining the request.
- 9.6 Councilor Castellanos shared a correspondence sent by the President of the First Stop Taxi Owners Cooperative and moved a motion for the Council to contribute \$500.00 to assist with the Cooperative's upcoming Annual General Meeting being held on November 16th, 2021. Seconded by Councilor Goodin. **MOTION PASSED.**

- 9.7 Councilor Castellanos referenced a meeting with the National Sports Council and inquired if Deputy Mayor Pollard Jr. has received a letter from the City Administrator in relation to the digging of a drain next to the Michael Finnegan Market.
- 9.8 Councilor Castellanos requested for motions passed in Caucus to be followed up on and for respective Manager to be informed of decisions made.
- 9.10 Councilor Goodin petitioned for the hiring of additional manpower at the Sanitation Department. Councilor Goodin noted that six-eight percent of the employees of the Sanitation Department has been lost over the past couple months due to the passing of several employees and the phasing out of retirees.
- 9.11 Mayor Wagner requested for Councilor Goodin to meet with the City Administrator and the Human Resources Manager to try and resolve the matter in a timely manner given its urgency.

10.0 Questions

- 10.1 No questions were tabled.

11.0 Presentation of Reports from Councilors

- 11.1 Councilor Vaughan noted that a lot of efforts have been made by the Traffic Department to increase enforcement across the City. Councilor Vaughan noted that several parking spaces for disabled residents have been gazette in recent weeks. Councilor Vaughan encouraged all Councilors to report any traffic infractions they may witness.
- 11.2 Councilor Pipersburgh shared an update/report from the Municipal Court Manager. Councilor Pipersburgh noted tentative date (November 26th, 2021) set for the Urban Garden to be placed in the Trinity School compound. Councilor Pipersburgh invited Mr. Fritz of the Programs Department to provide an update.

- 11.3 Mr. Fritz gave an update on the Technical Steering Committee and the Child Advisory Body. The mandate of the Committee is to create a work plan to carry out in the City. This will be created with the input of consultants.
- 11.4 Mayor Wagner commended Mr. Fritz for the work he has done since joining the Council in working towards the goal of being a child friendly municipality.
- 11.5 Councilor Vaughan commended the CEMO Department for their quick response in resolving issues experienced with the onset of recent floods.

12.0 Motions by Councilors

- 12.1 Councilor Castellanos moved a motion for a monetary donation of \$3,000.00 towards the twelve (12) days of Christmas initiative. The objective is to impact the lives of twelve (12) persons the twelve (12) days leading up to Christmas. Each Councilor would be able to recommend a person they find deserving of being a recipient. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Pollard Jr. **MOTION PASSED.**
- 12.2 Councilor Goodin moved a motion for the Council to donate the cash prize structure of \$10,000.00 for the Micah Goodin Christmas Cup. This will be a one-day football tournament held at the MCC Grounds, which will allow for youths of the City to showcase their talents and engage with their respective communities. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Pollard Jr. **MOTION PASSED.**
- 12.3 Councilor Goodin noted that the games will be live streamed and he has consulted with the Ministry of Health for clearance.
- 12.4 Councilor Goodin moved a motion to approve for the Council to make a contribution to the budget for the Pickstock Cleanup Initiative. This initiative will incur labour costs of \$46,600 of which the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) will contribute \$31,600 and the Belize City Council is to cover the remaining \$15,000. Seconded by Councilor Kwan. **MOTION PASSED.**
- 12.5 Councilor Novelo inquired if the Council will be getting value for its money in contributing the funds for works to be done in the specified area.

- 12.6 Mayor Wagner shared that these projects have been looked at as an opportunity to give residents of the respective communities an opportunity to have some sort of employment.
- 12.7 Councilor Vaughan noted that given the shortages being faced by the Sanitation Department, he is in support of the proposed contribution of \$15,000 to the initiative and suggested that this be used as an opportunity to catch up on cleanup works to be done in the constituency.
- 12.8 Deputy Mayor Allan Pollard Jr. seconded the sentiments of Councilor Vaughan.
- 12.9 Councilor Novelo moved a motion for the adoption of the second roundabout on the Phillip Goldson Highway coming into Belize City by the Oasis of Hope Ministries. Seconded by Councilor Goodin. **MOTION PASSED.**
- 12.10 Councilor Novelo moved a motion for the leasing of the Pier One location to Mr. Daniel Hilton to establish the “Lil Italy” Restaurant under the condition that the applicant satisfied all due diligence protocol of the Council. Councilor Novelo shared the business plan, budget and a video recording showcasing the proposed renovations. Councilor Novelo noted that Mr. Hilton would incur all cost of rehabilitating the pier and the infrastructure with consideration for future offset. Seconded by Councilor Goodin. **MOTION PASSED.** The principal is to meet with the Council to discuss the terms of the agreement.
- 12.11.1 Councilor Castellanos commended the idea presented and expressed his support for the proposed project.
- 12.11.2 Councilor Goodin expressed his support for the proposed project and highlighted it creates a new ambience for the park.
- 12.11.3 Deputy Pollard Jr. suggested for the investor to be brought to revisit the conditions of the agreement in order for the Council to table its concerns.
- 12.11.4 Councilor Goodin expressed that adequate due diligence has been done and he believes the Council should proceed in granting the approval.

- 12.11.5 Mayor Wagner highlighted the due diligence protocols of the Council that must be complied with at all times in order to protect the interest of the Council. Mayor Wagner noted that the estimate is a bit vague but noted that he has no objection of the proposed project as long as it complies with the Council's parking regulations. Mayor Wagner reiterated that the establishment must tie into the master plan for the park to satisfy the requirements of a sustainable child friendly space.
- 12.12 Councilor Novelo moved a motion to lease the Memorial Diner at the Memorial Park to Mr. Rene Castillo for the establishment of a restaurant named "Seafood Lover" for a period of three (3) years. Seconded by Councilor Goodin. **MOTION PASSED.**
- 12.13 Councilor Novelo moved a motion for the rental of one (1) Kiosk at the Memorial Park to Mr. Angelo Saldivar for a period of two (2) years for the establishment of a pizza business. Seconded by Councilor Castellanos. **MOTION PASSED.**
- 12.14 Councilor Novelo moved a motion for the rental of one Kiosk at the Memorial Park to Ms. Diana Gabriela Interiano for the establishment of a Spa and Therapy Business for a period of two (2) years. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Pollard Jr. **MOTION PASSED.**
- 12.15 Councilor Novelo moved a motion for the adoption of the Home Protector Park for a period of three (3) years. Seconded by Councilor Councilor Kwan. **MOTION PASSED.**
- 12.16 Councilor Vaughan moved a motion to name the street behind the Fred Westby Park to "Ma P" Street. Seconded by Councilor Requeña. **MOTION PASSED.**
- 12.17 Councilor Vaughan moved a motion to make traffic flow on the Yarborough Road to one way from the start of the junction with Cemetery Lane to its intersection with Albert Street West as indicated in the annexed maps. Seconded by Councilor Goodin. **MOTION PASSED.**

13.0 New Business

- 13.1 Councilor Requeña presented the budget by the Public Relations Department for Christmas 2021 and asked Councilors to weigh in on the budget and declare what items can be removed.
- 13.2 Councilor Vaughan noted that November 19th, 2021 is approaching and suggested that the Council engages NICH to collaborate on activities in the celebration of National Garifuna Settlement Day.
- 13.3 Mayor Wagner announced that the Belize Mayors' Association will be joining Mayor Mariano and the Dangriga Town Council on November 19th, 2021 in Dangriga Town in celebration of National Garifuna Settlement Day.

14.0 Submissions from City Planning Unit – Mr. Melvin Meyers

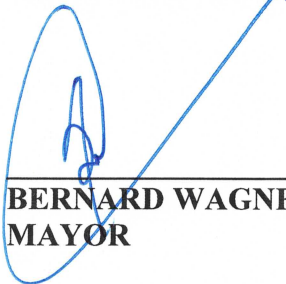
- 14.1 Mr. Meyers tabled a request by Ms. Thelma Audinett to open the street to allow access her property located at Parcel #1083 Custard Apple Street in Queen Square West Area. **MOTION PASSED.** The recommendation is for the Council to assist Ms. Audinett in removing parts of a fence to gain access.
- 14.2 Deputy Mayor Pollard Jr. noted that the Council has submitted a list of all projects which the Ministry of Infrastructural Development can assist the Council.
- 14.3 Mr. Meyers tabled a request by Ms. Lydia Bennet to acquire a portion of the reserve designated as Diana Dorado Street and Therese Garnett Street in the Saint Martin De Porres West Area. **MOTION DENIED.**

15.0 Other Business


- 15.1 No other business was tabled.

16.0 Adjournment

- 16.1 Councilor Novelo moved for the meeting to be adjourned. Seconded by Councilor Castellanos. The meeting was adjourned at 3:59 p.m.



BERNARD WAGNER
MAYOR



ROSALIE PEREZ
SENIOR FINANCE MANAGER
ACTING CITY ADMINISTRATOR



ANNEX

Traffic flow on the Yarborough Road: Map of Yarborough Road, Cemetery Lane and its intersection with Albert Street West

