

JEFFREY K. BARTON
Clerk to the Board



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BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND

CITY COUNCIL OF VERO BEACH

JANUARY 11, 2011

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January 11, 2011

**JOINT MEETING OF BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AND
VERO BEACH CITY COUNCIL
JANUARY 11, 2011**

The Board of County Commissioners of Indian River County, Florida, met in Joint Session at the County Administration Complex, 1800 27th Street, Building B, Room B1-501, Vero Beach, Florida, on Tuesday, January 11, 2011. Present from the County were Chairman Bob Solari, Vice Chairman Gary C. Wheeler, Commissioners Wesley S. Davis, Joseph E. Flescher, and Peter D. O'Bryan. Also present were County Attorney Alan S. Polackwich, Sr., County Administrator Joseph A. Baird, Assistant County Administrator Michael Zito, Management and Budget Director Jason Brown, and Deputy Clerk Leona Adair Allen.

Present from the City of Vero Beach were Mayor Jay Kramer, Vice Mayor Pilar Turner, Interim City Manager Monte Falls, and City Councilmembers Brian Heady, Craig Fletcher, Tracy Carroll, City Attorney Charles Vitunac, and City Clerk Tammy Vock.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Solari called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF INDIAN RIVER COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

Chairman Solari requested introductions from the Board of County Commissioners and staff.

3. INTRODUCTION OF CITY OF VERO BEACH CITY COUNCIL AND STAFF

Mayor Jay Kramer requested introductions from his City Council and staff.

4. DISCUSSION: POSSIBLE EXCHANGE OF CITY OWNED AND COUNTY OWNED PROPERTIES AT THE FORM DODGERTOWN COMPLEX

4.A. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Community Development Planning Director Stan Boling conveyed that this meeting is to discuss the possible exchange of City owned and County owned properties at the Vero Beach Sports Village, formerly known as Dodgertown.

4.B. PRESENTATION BY CRAIG CALLAN, VICE PRESIDENT, VERO BEACH SPORTS VILLAGE

Vice President of Minor League Baseball (MiLB) Craig Callan stressed the urgency of moving forward quickly to enable MiLB to put together quotes and bids and accomplish a productive spring schedule as planned. He relayed his President's message that MiLB wants to

bring the facility back to being a premier multi-sports facility. He presented the plans MiLB has set to achieve success.

4.C. PRESENTATION BY CITY OF VERO BEACH

Interim City Manager Monte Falls presented an aerial map displaying the history of parcels exchanged since 1990 at the Vero Beach Sports Village between the City, the Los Angeles Dodgers and the County. Today's focus was the exchange of parcels between the City of Vero Beach and the County involving the baseball cloverleaf parcels, the heart-shaped pond, and the parking parcels. Through a slideshow (photos on file), he presented three possible configurations for improving the parcels involved in this exchange. After his presentation, he responded to questions from the Board and County Attorney.

4.D. PRESENTATION BY INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

County Attorney Alan S. Polackwich made two observations: 1) the City and the County desire an end result that will work for the public, and 2) the County has more challenges maintaining the many uses of their property, such as baseball fields, a hotel, administration buildings, access to the north, than the property owned by the City.

Director of Public Works Chris Mora displayed an aerial map to further discuss advantages and disadvantages of the different configurations presented by Mr. Callan, and laid out two different alternatives, stating that staff preferred a configuration that would provide some open space for expansion. He responded to questions regarding parking, the parking layout, access to and from the fields, additional cost for improvements, and the advantage of having one pond versus two.

Management and Budget Director Jason Brown briefly discussed an estimated capital improvement cost of \$3.1 million (slideshow on file) for the facility lease agreement and the MiLB proposed improvements. He displayed a breakdown of cost from inception through

November 30, 2010 at \$22 million, plus the new improvements, for an estimated overall total of \$23.2 million.

Commissioner Davis sought clarification from Director Brown that no ad valorem tax dollars have been or will be used for future improvements. Director Brown made it clear that they do not attempt to burden the taxpayer with these costs. The majority of the debt services were coming from other revenue sources.

County Administrator Joseph Baird wanted to clarify that the \$3.1 million was not included in the bond issue, and said most likely the \$.01 cent sales tax would be used.

5. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS AND COUNCILMEMBERS

Mr. Callan responded to several questions posed by Vice Chairman Wheeler who wanted to know the significance of keeping the heart-shaped pond, versus having more parking spaces in that area. He pointed out that the Board was trying to do something economical and beneficial, and he wanted MiLB to look at the value of having a heart-shaped pond versus the value of adding parking spaces in that area. Mr. Callan agreed with Vice Chairman Wheeler, and stated that if this was the “deal breaker” MiLB would not have an issue, should there not be a heart-shaped pond.

There was additional questioning posed to Mr. Callan by the Board and City Council seeking further in-depth information regarding parking, retaining, or moving the pond, and the possibility of having a three-field cloverleaf configuration opposed to four, to allow open space for parking, and the distance to the fields from the intended parking areas.

6. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC

Chairman Solari opened the floor to the public.

Rene Renzi, Waverly Place, wanted to know if it was true that the Los Angeles Dodgers were still owners of a road at the Sports Village. She was advised by Attorney Polackwich that the issue was resolved prior to it being printed in the newspaper.

Listed below are names of those who addressed the Board and City Council expressing the importance of supporting MiLB, a year-round facility, putting “heads-in-beds”, and making a huge impact on the community:

Bruce Fremming, MiLB Umpire

Amy Selby, Springhill Suites Marriot Hotel, Director of Sales

Vicki Hahn, former Director of Sales at Dodgertown, an independent sales consultant

The Chairman called for a break at 10:45 a.m. and reconvened the meeting at 10:55 a.m., with all members present.

After the break the following people addressed this issue requesting the Board to move forward approving the property exchange.

Ken Day, 1846 21st Avenue

Jennifer Bates, Representative of Holiday Inn, Hampton Inn, and Country Inn Suites

Susan Hunt, Director of Tourism

Rick Shelby, Treasure Coast Sports Commission

Commissioner O’Bryan read statistics provided by Mr. Shelby relaying the positive impact to hotels and restaurants since MiLB has come into the County. Commissioner O’Bryan wanted to make a decision today, and supported moving forward immediately.

7. COMMISSION AND COUNCIL ACTION

Chairman Solari opened the floor to the Board.

Commissioner Davis learned from Administrator Baird that staff wanted to accommodate a good facility and support the concept. Their only concern was space being tight.

Director Mora suggested moving the boundary line on the pond between the City property and the County property 100 feet to the west to allow for a spacious walkway; they could then look at the pond configuration, which most likely would be larger. This would give them enough property to keep the facility nice, and allow for the 250 feet of length needed for the fields.

Interim City Manager Monte Falls failed to see what shifting the boundary line 100 feet would accomplish, and wanted to know if they were talking about relocating the pond, or wanting to create more space for additional facilities. He wondered if someone could share information about the plans for the area to the north.

Questioning continued by Commissioner Davis to the Councilmembers. He was seeking another alternative. He understood that the pond was necessary for water retention, but he did not feel that taking three acres and turning it into a pond was the right decision, when everyone stated at today's meeting that the area would be more valuable as parking space.

Discussion continued whereby the City Council expressed having no problem with moving the boundary line and making the best use of the land; however, some Councilmembers did not feel they had the authority to make that decision due to the Tenant Lease Agreement with MiLB.

Councilmember Craig Fletcher personally wanted the land made into a 6-hole golf course as it was in the past. He questioned whether County staff was wanting 60 feet or otherwise, and was disturbed to learn that although the City consented to giving the County 60 feet, it was still not enough, and the County was asking for more footage.

A lengthy discussion continued between the Board and City Council to negotiate the amount of footage involved in this matter.

Vice Chairman Wheeler stated he looked at this as an economic development plan for the County of Indian River of which Vero Beach is a part, and he wanted a commitment now to make it work, with or without the 100 feet. He feared MiLB may leave the County.

MOTION WAS MADE by Vice Chairman Wheeler, SECONDED by Commissioner Flescher, to approve the property exchange (land swap), with a commitment from both elected bodies agreeing to “whatever it takes to make it work”, for staff to move forward with MiLB.

Commissioner Flescher expressed the need to work together.

Commissioner O’Bryan proposed solving the problem at hand, now, by focusing on the property exchange because MiLB needed the fields to generate revenue for the County, and to focus on the improvements later.

The Chairman called a break for lunch at 11: 50 a.m. and he reconvened the meeting at 1:00 p.m., with all members present.

During the break City and County staff continued discussing this matter, and afterwards Administrator Baird announced that both parties found a common ground that they could reach. If the County kept the land boundary in the form of an easement, as it is now, it would leave up

to a third of the pond on City land, giving the County enough latitude to make a better complex. Administrator Baird felt it was a good compromise.

Questions were posed to Interim Manager Falls by City Council, seeking further clarification of what changes this meant to their proposed drawing that they originally voted upon. He confirmed that City staff agreed to the concept as Administrator Baird described.

Commissioner Flescher was concerned who would be responsible for the maintenance of the pond, which Administrator Baird believed would be the County's responsibility.

Upon learning that the parking parcel restrictions allowed only for green space and public parking use, Commissioner Davis expressed his concern that the County would be locked-in to those restrictions in the future, and he wanted a lot more flexibility. County Attorney Polackwich advised him that the lease restrictions would be amended.

MOTION WAS AMENDED by Vice Chairman Wheeler, SECONDED by Commissioner Flescher, to approve the property exchange, leaving up to one-third of the pond on City property, and to look for the most efficient use of that site.

Chairman Solari opposed the motion for three reasons: 1) the parking issues have not been adequately addressed to provide long-term usage of the Sports Village. It had been narrowed down to accommodate baseball for MiLB, but he believed no private business would want the facility without adequate parking; 2) they are spending over 1.2 million dollars for economic dollars, and no special analysis has been made that this is the best way to spend those economic development dollars; and 3) this is economic development dollars for one single company. He believed those dollars should be available for economic development throughout the County.

THE CHAIRMAN CALLED THE QUESTION and the Motion carried 3-2 (Commissioner O'Bryan and Chairman Solari opposed). The Board approved the property exchange, leaving up to one-third of the pond on City property, and to look for the most efficient use of that site.

Chairman Solari passed the gavel to Mayor Kramer.

MOTION WAS MADE by Councilmember Tracy Carroll, SECONDED by Vice Mayor Pilar Turner, to allow one-third of the lake to encroach on City property.

Discussion ensued by Mayor Kramer, requesting clarification on exactly what to vote on to move forward.

Council Member Heady clarified the motion to be the approval of the property exchange by City Council, as voted previously, and to include one-third of the pond to encroach on the City's property. He did not support the motion for similar reasons as stated by Chairman Solari in regards to the need for parking and the way economic development dollars are being dispersed for one business.

The Mayor CALLED THE QUESTION and the Motion carried 4-1, (Councilmember Brian Heady opposed). The City Council approved the land exchange, with one-third of the pond to encroach on the City's property.

Mayor Kramer passed the gavel to Chairman Solari.

Commissioner Davis continued his discussion regarding the removal of restrictions on the parking property. He wanted to give the property to the City unencumbered of any restrictions.

Chairman Solari suggested this item be placed on the Agenda for the January 18, 2011 Board of County Commission meeting, provided the appropriate documents have been signed and received from DT Commons, LLC, and MiLB; then the City would have time to decide if they want the land unencumbered.

8. ADJOURN

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

(Clerk's Note: Upon completion of the Joint Meeting with the City of Vero Beach, the Chairman called for a short break at 1:35 p.m., and he reconvened the Regular Board of County Commission Meeting at 1:40 p.m., with all members present.)

ATTEST:

Jeffrey K. Barton, Clerk

Bob Solari, Chairman

Minutes Approved: _____

LA/ms