

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR WORKSHOP MEETING
CITY COUNCIL
BOCA RATON, FLORIDA
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2009
*1:30 PM

*The Workshop Meeting of the City Council of the City of Boca Raton, Florida was called to order by Mayor Susan Whelchel at 2:22 p.m.

ATTENDING THE MEETING WERE:

Mayor Susan Whelchel
Deputy Mayor Susan Haynie
Council Member Anthony Majhess
Council Member Michael Mullaugh
Council Member Constance Scott

Also attending the meeting were:

City Manager Leif J. Ahnell
City Attorney Diana Grub Frieser
City Clerk Susan Saxton

PROCLAMATION:

2010 Census

Pedro Guillarte, representing the Census Bureau, accepted the proclamation.

1. BOARD INTERVIEWS:

There were no positions advertised.

2. PUBLIC REQUESTS:

Lenore Wachtel referred to the topic of sandwich signs, which was discussed during the previous CRA (Community Redevelopment Agency) meeting, and suggested signage could be produced locally on a competitive basis instead of obtaining same from an out-of-state vendor. She then opined on a proposal to convert the City's public schools to charter schools and encouraged Council to think it over carefully before a lot of staff time was spent on researching same.

Susan Sosin advised that she wanted the current downtown library to remain open while the new library is being constructed.

Betty Cash, representing Friends of the Library, explained that her group reviewed the alternatives (Options A-D) for the downtown library, which were presented at the Tentative Budget meeting of September 14, 2009; a letter had been provided to Council, outlining their suggestions and recommendations regarding same. There followed a summary of that letter, which included support for use of the existing library site and keeping the current library open as much as possible during construction. Regarding Options C and D, Ms. Cash referred to a report from approximately nine years ago, related to the library's existing wiring, electrical, plumbing and air conditioning systems, and she questioned whether Council had enough information to make a decision as to what systems could or could not be retained. She suggested that Council take time to obtain a more current review of the existing library's infrastructure; another suggestion related to an Option E, as proposed by the Friends of the Library, to build the largest library possible on the existing site and the adjacent site. Last of all, Ms. Cash stated that the Friends of the Library and the Library Advisory Board worked very hard over the last six to eight months and deserved to be involved in the design and construction phases of the new downtown library.

Mayor Whelchel responded to Ms. Cash's comments. In response to comments and queries from Council, Mr. Ahnell clarified Options C and D. Specifically, Option C called for renovating and expanding the current library with the library closing during construction; Option D provided for renovating and expanding the current library with the library remaining open during construction, which would result in an additional estimated cost of

\$250,000 and delay completion by another six months. In addition, Option C called for replacing everything; Option D would replace only those items/systems that could not be used and should be replaced. In response to additional questions from Council, Mr. Ahnell advised that the City's contractor recently conducted an assessment of the library building over the last couple of months; however, at some point the City would need to hire an architect to review the layout of the library and determine what will and won't work. He also clarified that both options could run into more costs and delays while neither option had a greater potential to keep the library open during construction. It was also noted that the less money needed to spend on infrastructure, the more money would be available for square footage. Much discussion continued between the City Manager and Council, during which time several suggestions surfaced including having "an independent owner's representative at the table" who would report to the City; scheduling public charrettes to obtain input as to the library design; and keeping lines of communication open between all parties. The City Manager took everything under advisement and indicated that he would return to Council with more information.

Betty Grinnan asked for clarification as to whether Council was rejecting Options A and B and choosing Option C or D. Advising that she was aware of the costs and delays involved, Ms. Grinnan declared that Friends of the Library and the Library Advisory Board would not give in on keeping the existing library open during construction. Referring to Options C and D, she then asked for additional details related to ceiling heights, interior walls, and a new roof for the second story. Ms. Grinnan concluded her comments and questions by: 1) confirming with the City Manager that staff now had enough structural information to issue an RFP for an architect, without requiring another consultant to review the structure, 2) commenting on the suggestion of an owner's representative, 3) commenting on what appeared to be an internal staff report from two years ago regarding the library, and 4) stating that Friends of the Library want to be involved in the design and construction of the library.

Lynne Novick, a member of the Downtown Boca Raton Advisory Committee, spoke to the downtown spine presentation provided by staff and advocated having Ray Gindroz, specifically, of Urban Design Associates (UDA) host public charrettes in connection with same. She suggested that the City shouldn't rush to spend \$3 million on constructing the pedestrian spine, particularly behind Sanborn Square from Palmetto Park Road to Mizner Park, opining that there were not any vendors, merchants, or attractions in that area – in short, nothing to look at but the park. In conclusion, she advocated obtaining Mr. Grindoz' opinion regarding the spine.

In response to Ms. Novick's comments and questions, Mayor Whelchel clarified with Mr. Ahnell that staff's presentation regarding the spine is more of a beautification project and would not preclude having someone build the spine that has been envisioned. Responding to Council, Mr. Ahnell advised that, per the request of the CRA and Council, staff was making the same spine presentation to the Community Appearance Board (CAB), Planning & Zoning Board (P&Z), the Downtown Boca Raton Advisory Committee, and the public, as well as UDA. Essentially, Council Members opined on the spine and the spine beautification project; Mayor Whelchel stated she would like UDA's opinion as to whether the spine beautification was the best use of the \$3 million.

3. REVIEW OF REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

a. Questions relating to the agenda.

(Consent Agenda Item No. 3.a.2. - Annual Traffic Calming, Bus Shelters, Sidewalks and Minor Road Construction) Deputy Mayor Haynie questioned where the bus shelters would be located and what neighborhoods were on the list for traffic calming. She also noted that the award amount was different from the bid amount and asked for clarification. Mr. Ahnell indicated that he would come back to Council with this information.

(Consent Agenda Item No. 3.a.4. - Painting of Traffic Mast Arms) Deputy Mayor Haynie also requested clarification on the difference between the award amount and the bid amount for this item. Mr. Ahnell explained that there were two fiscal years involved, with the amounts coming from two accounts; those figures equaled the total award amount.

(Consent Agenda Item No. 3.c.1. - Personal Protective Equipment for Structural Fire Fighting) Deputy Mayor Haynie requested the status of the toxic pants issue. Mr. Ahnell advised that staff contacted a subsidiary of the CDC (Center for Disease Control) to review same and they determined there was nothing wrong with the pants. He added that this item related to different equipment.

Council Member Scott had no questions but indicated that staff did a great job on interlocal agreements and partnering with other municipalities in order to save money.

(Consent Agenda Item No. 3.h. - Resolution No. 135-2009 / Extending the term of the North Federal Highway Steering Committee) Council Member Majhess suggested making this an “open application process” to allow other people to apply to this committee. Following discussion, it was clarified that this resolution was extending the life of the committee with the existing category-specific members; however, there were currently one or two positions open at this time, providing an opportunity for other people to apply. At this point, Council requested a list of the members serving on the committee, as well as the current number of openings available.

(Consent Agenda Item No. 3.e.9. – Automobiles (Replacements)) Mayor Whelchel asked for clarification as to whether any of the vehicles to be purchased would be hybrids or electric. Mr. Ahnell replied in the negative, noting that these cars are for Police Services and advised that this item was being amended to purchase a total of 38 cars instead of 28, resulting in a higher cost.

4. FUTURE AGENDA MATTERS/ITEMS OF COUNCIL/PUBLIC CONCERN:

There were no items for consideration.

5. CITY MANAGER REPORTS:

The City Manager had no report at this time.

6. CITY ATTORNEY REPORTS:

The City Attorney had no report at this time.

7. MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBER REQUESTS AND REPORTS:

Deputy Mayor Haynie advised that at last week’s MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) meeting, they voted to accept the turnpike’s recommendation that the interchange be placed on Palmetto Park Road. Although no construction dollars have been programmed, they are moving forward with the design. A public meeting at the Embassy Suites is scheduled for the third week of October; she asked that staff confirm the date and time and place same on the City’s website. It was noted that the interchange would be for SunPass only. Responding to the Mayor, Ms. Haynie advised that construction may take place in the next five or seven years.

Council Member Scott reminded those present that the last jazz festival of the summer is scheduled for this Thursday night at 6:30pm at SE 1 Street and SE 1 Avenue, which is one block west of Chops Lobster Bar. The artist is Perry Joslin.

Council Member Majhess asked the City Manager to provide a targeted timeline between now and March in connection with a charrette related to the library. Mr. Ahnell explained the process, advising that once the architect is hired, a timeline can be created. Responding to additional queries from Mr. Majhess, Mr. Ahnell and Deputy City Manager George Brown provided information related to charrettes with UDA for the downtown. Mr. Brown advised that UDA was continuing to work on the design documents, which are to be 90% complete prior to the proposed public meetings. After input, final documents would be ready for the CRA and Council to adopt toward the end of the year.

At this time, Council Member Majhess requested a copy of the staff report regarding the library, as mentioned earlier by Ms. Grinnan.

The regular workshop meeting of the City Council of the City of Boca Raton, Florida, adjourned at approximately 3:43 p.m. on Monday, September 21, 2009.

Vanessa Hines, Assistant City Clerk