



MINUTES

**FORT MYERS BEACH TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
2523 ESTERO BOULEVARD
FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA 33931**

WORKSESSION

AGENDA

November 19, 2009

6:30 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kiker called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. Joining Mayor Kiker in Council Chambers was Vice Mayor Acken, Council members Babcock, Raymond and List along with Interim Town Manager Jack Green. Participating as well by conference phone was Bob Romig and Bill (~~last name unknown~~).

Peebles

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Pledge of allegiance led by Mayor Kiker.

III. TOPICS DISCUSSION FOR JOINT SESSION BETWEEN TOWN COUNCIL AND BOCC

- A. Estero Boulevard – Mayor Kiker
- B. Beach Nourishment – Councilmember List
- C. Partnership on Environmental Issues – Councilmember Babcock
- D. Public Transportation Issues: Dedicated Lanes, Trolleys, San Carlos Boulevard, Matanzas Pass Bridge – Councilmember Raymond

Interim Town Manager Green reviewed the packet of materials provided to Council noting assistance with the format from staff for each Council member's topic. Mayor Kiker spoke regarding the BOCC's commitment of 5 million dollars over a 5 year period being spent on Fort Myers Beach as well as the 1.5 million dollar commitment for 2010 to be spent on Estero Boulevard. He wanted to make sure a follow up letter went out to the BOCC which would include a list of short term projects such as

finishing the paving of Estero Boulevard, identifying the trolley pull offs and attempting to locate the trolley stop covers the County has stored as well as a review and thank you to the Commissioners.

Councilmember Raymond noted the MPO meeting to be held on November 20 for a review and update on potential projects for the stimulus money. Councilmember Raymond indicated Fort Myers Beach was #18 in line for 4.5 million dollars marked for bike paths, sidewalks and trolley pull offs. He stated at the MPO meeting he was going to push the County to move forward on this and attempt to get the Town moved further up the list, noting if the Town completed the right of way survey and had a design completed it could be possible to see the money in the spring.

A discussion ensued regarding the 4.5 million and whether that money was for the spot improvements along Estero Boulevard or for the 5 year long range design. Council agreed to have Councilmember Raymond get a definitive answer regarding the discussed 4.5 million and what fund those monies would be coming from. Councilmember Raymond stated this year would be the first year the Estero Boulevard Master Design Plan would be attached to the MPO Master Plan.

(Those participating by phone left the meeting due to difficulties in hearing the conversation. Staff offered to send them a DVD of the work session.)

Council began discussion on the Public Transportation issues with Councilmember Raymond noting they did well last year and wanted to impress upon the BOCC that the Town was prepared. A dedicated trolley lane from Summerlin across the bridge to Times Square was deemed to be an important issue along with the proposed development for San Carlos Island. Councilmember Raymond indicated the Town was at the #7 spot on the stimulus money list for work on the Matanzas Pass Bridge, with the Town once again needing design work completed. A strategy was discussed on how Councilmember Raymond would present the issues concerning the positioning of the Town on the stimulus money lists, reminding the BOCC about the 4.5 million in reserves money, the 4.5 million in stimulus funds and the 3.5 million per mile promised for Estero Boulevard along with the right of way survey being completed in 2010 as well as the start of the engineering and positioning on the 5 year CIP, trolleys, upgrades and the Matanzas bridge.

Council continued on to the next topic of Environmental Issues with Councilmember Babcock stating he wanted to review some of the critical environmental issues to the island. Councilmember Babcock discussed his plan for presenting his portion of the program, such as off shore drilling, growth development and doing what is right for the water shed. Councilmember Babcock wanted to build off of things that are concerns for the island, such as the use of the pump out boat, derelict boats, and real time air tracking for air traffic issues over the island.

Beach Nourishment was next with the items discussed encompassing:

- Whether there had been any official notification from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection that can confirm that State funding would be

in place through the end of 2010 and if State funding was not available would Town, County and Federal funds be sufficient to cover the project costs.

- Would Lee County BOCC consider voluntary participation by private property owners under the provisions of the vegetation management plan developed by Town staff, and would it meet our Comprehensive Plan requirements.
- Clarification on whether there was an easement percentage breakdown below which the project would not go forward.
- Data from their consulting firm from property owners if there were reasons by they did not agree to the easement
- Are there any alternate designs that would be considered for immediate resolution.
- Request for a project breakdown of total costs for items such as vegetation installation, sand placement and groin construction.

Council felt they needed to get the position from BOCC and discuss policy with them with Interim Town Manager Green stating the State had been questioning the County on their intentions as the State wanted to reprogram the money. Councilmember List was asked to take the subject of Beach Nourishment before the BOCC.

Interim Town Manager Green asked Council to prepare an outline of their topics to send to the County. Mayor Kiker suggested a meeting for Council to run through their presentations before attending the joint BOCC meeting, with December 3rd at 9:00 a.m. slated for the run through.

Recess: no time noted Reconvene at 8 p.m.

IV. DISCUSSION ON THE MOUND HOUSE

Interim Town Manager Jack Green stated he and Theresa Schober attempted to select some of the issues with the Mound House property that were of a higher priority, noting parking, intensity and the pier size, use and configuration. Mr. Green also indicated changes to the project as permitted would have an impact, noting the fact the dingy dock took 2 ½ years to implement.

Ms. Schober provided Council with 3 general categories of choices.

- Not to change anything, which would entail a 6 month process of advertising, going through the bidding process, placing on Council Agenda for selection, going through the contracting process, beginning construction to substantial completion.

Mr. Green stated this was a discussion for landscaping not the shell exhibit or the house as those were different tracks.

Ms. Schober indicated that included in landscaping was roadways, circulation flow, path networks, ADA compliance, vegetation and interruptive signage. It

was also indicated that in this package the TDC has funded 95% of the elements resulting in a quicker time line.

- Alternate 2, having the recommendation of staff, since Council was interested in getting the exhibits open and the house open as quickly as possible had a level of improvements needed that would benefit those exhibits opening. Those entail ADA compliance for parking and providing pathways from those ADA spaces to the entrances to spaces. This option would remove the pier from consideration as well as the parking along Connecticut Street and do a minimum of parking along the back access road with a handicap space in that location. Selecting this option provides Council with the ability to move forward on the property yet gives them time during the work to make decisions on other aspects of improvements such as parking at 216 Connecticut.

- Alternate 3 shows scratching the project completely and beginning anew. Significant revisions to the site plan including interpretations of the parking, walkways, and landscaping would affect the time line along with modifications of permits.

Ms. Schober reminded Council that changing things means changing construction documents as well as modifying the permits.

A discussion ensued regarding funding possibilities and the amounts needed for the house, pier and museum portions.

Mayor Kiker posed the question of moving the funds for the pier to the house and museum if the project could be completed in a year. Ms. Schober cautioned Council noting the funding for the pier was beach and shoreline dollars and felt it was a long shot to be able to move the money for use on the house.

Councilmember Babcock wanted to focus on getting the house open and the landscaping done, noting there were restrictions on putting in an observation deck and questioning the required time line on that construction.

Interim Town Manager Green stated they were required to put in a way to observe wildlife. Councilmember Raymond asked if a boardwalk could substitute for an observation pier with Councilmember Babcock noting the Mangroves growing from the shore line in the rip rap nearly made it impossible for a boardwalk.

Councilmember Babcock also discussed visiting the property and was going to take another look using Google Earth, since after visiting the property he felt the observation pier may not be as offensive to adjoining property owners as he had initially thought.

Ms. Schober stated if Council changed the size and scale of the pier but left it in the same location revising the concept would take less time than if the pier was moved to a different location partly due to the sea grass survey that was required, and the mapping of the mangroves.

Mayor Kiker then began a discussion on the dollars to size of project, questioning the need for the property to be taken to the scope indicated, with increasing

salary and benefits, future visitor numbers, affect on the neighborhood and the risk involved in the project 5 years from now.

Mr. Green indicated the Ad Hoc Committee's report was not the staff's plan and did not necessarily endorse that plan. The Ad Hoc Committee noted in their plan if Council chose to make money on the property than their suggestion was what was needed to be done. Mr. Green noted if Council chose to not approve that process then what was being looked at was more a park with a passive aspect.

Councilmember Babcock felt the only risk was if it were too successful. He felt the bottom line was whether it was going to be opened or not, noting he thought it was a good investment for the Town and was frustrated that Council could not move ahead focusing for now on the landscaping.

Vice Mayor Acken stated what he heard from the residents was the intensity of use and did not feel the pier itself was an issue but the intensity of those coming to the pier and suggested installing speed bumps to control the traffic. Vice Mayor Acken noted he would love to see a world class museum on the island, but wanted to do what would benefit the islanders and neighbors the most which would be to see it open as a passive park as promised in the past. The intensity of use and revenue stream could come in the future he stated, but for the short term finish the landscaping and get it open.

Councilmember Raymond felt his biggest problem was intensity and noted he did not look at the property as a park but as a museum. He felt Council needed to take into consideration quiet zones, and felt 50,000 people would affect residents enjoyment of their homes. Councilmember Raymond felt Mound House was an asset to the Town but its location presented problems with intensity and parking.

Councilmember List voiced her love for the Mound House but also felt the intensity issues were a problem.

Councilmember Babcock wanted Council to focus on one issue with intensity, parking, special events, traffic and security needing to be addressed.

Mayor Kiker addressed the possibility that the intensity could be limited to a seasonal issue. Mayor Kiker addressed staff wanting to see a plan from them.

Mr. Green stated the Ad Hoc Committee report was given by the previous Town Manager to generate revenue, so if direction from Council was to minimize intensity then it was a very different set of directions which develops and prepares an entirely different plan. Mr. Green indicated it could be as simple as minimal staffing and minimal hours of operation with the greatest expense in maintenance but with no revenue at the low impact plan.

Vice Mayor Acken felt there was no reason to derail the 2007 plan with Mayor Kiker disagreeing. Discussion continued between using the property for a park or a museum with Councilmember Raymond again stating the property was not a good location for a park.

Mayor Kiker asked Mr. Green for a low impact plan. Mr. Green and Ms. Schober asked Council what their idea of low impact was so they could put together an outline for Council's consideration.

Discussion continued on everything from parking to the pier to security and landscaping with Council not coming to a consensus on any of the issues.

Mayor Kiker then worked on getting a consensus by moving forward in moving funds to complete the construction on the house as well as initiate rezoning on 216 Connecticut.

Vice Mayor Acken felt the museum should come when it could come, but it was necessary to finish the landscaping and get it open as a park.

Interim Town Manager Jack Green gave a recap, indicating they would be going forward with what was already started to ask the TDC to reprogram some of the funds from the pier to the house as well as reenergizing the 216 master plan to be able to begin the rezoning. Mr. Green then asked for clarification on option 2, as to whether Council did or did not want them to move forward on the landscaping, with the answer being no.

Worksession was adjourned with no time noted.

Adopted 1-4-10 With/Without changes. Motion by LIST/Babcock
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Vote: 5-0


Michelle D. Mayher, Town Clerk

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