



MINUTES

Thursday, May 16, 2013

JOINT WORK SESSION FORT MYERS BEACH TOWN COUNCIL AND

**Cultural & Environmental Learning Center Advisory Board
TOWN HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
2523 ESTERO BOULEVARD
FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA 33931**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Mandel called to order the May 16, 2013 Joint Meeting of the Fort Myers Beach Town Council and the Cultural and Environmental Learning Center Advisory Board at 10:00 a.m. Present along with Mayor Mandel: Vice Mayor Kosinski, Council Members Andre, List, and Raymond; CELCAB Members present were: Chair Hill, and CELCAB Members Wolf, Smith, Simpson, Werner and Weslow; and Ex-Officio Member Grace; CELCAB Member Spuhler was excused. Also Present: Town Manager Stewart, and Town Clerk Mayher.

(Continuation of the April 22, 2013 Joint Town Council and CELCAB Meeting.)

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. VIVIA FLORIDA 500 EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE-PLANNING AND FUNDING

Chair Hill indicated that both Town Council and CELCAB were interested in moving this item forward.

Town Manager Stewart stated he would blend another Agenda item [archeological services] into this item. He reported the Town was moving towards using the archeological services of Southeastern Archeology Research, Inc. (SEARCH) to assist in organizing a conference the Town was hoping to have at the Mound House site. He noted the Viva Florida 500 had a 2-year cycle and the Town had about a 12-month window. He indicated that in addition to utilizing SEARCH that the Town wanted to determine what CELCAB would like to see happen and accomplish regarding Viva Florida 500.

Chair Hill revealed that she had hoped the conference would further reinforce the notion that the Town was developing a history museum, and that the Town had a very unique archeological site which would be ideal for a Viva Florida 500 conference. She added that the timing of the opening of the Mound House could coincide with the conference; and that the Mound House would help the Town become a cultural destination. She also hoped that SEARCH would prepare a proposal regarding the conference, and that Council would approve any necessary funding for a conference initiative. She pointed out that SEARCH was already looking into the disaster preparedness plan and the management plan for the Mound House. She noted the positive aspects of a conference for both the Mound House and the Town.

Mayor Mandel mentioned how positive it would be if the conference coincided with the opening of the Mound House; and suggested the conference could be *international* with possibly scholars from Spain in attendance. He added that the conference could be used as a model for future conferences to be held during the off-season. He indicated his hope that the Town would include a request for funding of the conference in the Town's marketing proposal to the TDC. He questioned if the TDC was placing any advertisements in archeological-type magazines now. He asked when was the next opportunity to request funding from the TDC.

Town Manager Stewart reported the TDC just completed the review of applications for FY2013-14; however, the marketing applications had not been done yet.

Mayor Mandel asked if the Town could still submit an application.

Town Manager Stewart explained his belief that the restrictions on marketing programs required that the funds spent had to be spent at least 50 miles away from the local area.

Discussion ensued concerning the marketing of the Mound House 50 miles away from Fort Myers Beach.

Mayor Mandel questioned if the Town could request funding from TDC for the work completed by SEARCH.

Town Manager Stewart reported he would look into the matter. He explained how the Florida League of Cities held the Annual Municipal Achievement Awards; and that this year in recognition of the Viva Florida 500 they decided to modify their categories to be built around history and historical programs. He noted his belief that the Mound House would qualify to submit an application in October to the Florida League of Cities; and that he would work with CELCAB on this matter. He asked if Council would be interested in supporting the submission of the application.

Consensus of Council approved that the Town Manager should move forward with preparing the application for the Florida League of Cities Annual Municipal Achievement Awards as presented.

Town Manager Stewart reported at the next CELCAB meeting that he would provide the Board with all the necessary information on the application.

IV. GRANTS

Town Manager Stewart reported that staff had contact Ms. Rogers with the State and learned of two deadlines for the Town:

- 1) Encumbrance deadline – currently June 30th; Town Manager completed and forwarded a form to the State requesting for an extension [maximum extension was 120 days] and he believed it would be approved; he reported the RFQ was out and the final date for the RFQ was June 4th and he reviewed the selection and approval process for the RFQ.
- 2) Construction deadline – currently April 2014

Chair Hill asked if there were any new grant applications in the ‘pipeline’.

Town Manager Stewart noted there was an existing grant with the State which the Town modified last year; gave a brief synopsis of the existing grants for the Mound House; and that there were no new grants in the ‘pipeline’ at this time.

Chair Hill asked if staff believed the grant currently approved would cover all of the essential elements to effectively open the Mound House.

Town Manager Stewart stated he could not be confident until the bids were received.

Discussion was held concerning the existing grant funding; cultural facility grant opportunities; consideration to be given for the Town to pursue general program support grants; and grants from Arts Place which were for capital when it was tied to the economic development of an area.

Town Manager Stewart discussed the signage at Newton House; his request for staff to validate the amount of funds remaining in the grant; his request for staff to decide which of the recommended signs might conflict with the current sign ordinance; and the arbor-type entrance sign which the Board could petition Council to authorize that particular feature.

Chair Hill explained that CELCAB had exhaustively looked into the signage and the lettering, and they had already recommended to Council their choices.

Town Manager Stewart stated he would provide to Council and CELCAB a report on where there might be conflicts with the recommended signage and the Town’s sign code.

Chair Hill asked if there were any remaining funds for the signage.

Town Manager Stewart reported that according to Town records the funds allocated for the Newton House were expended; however, the TDC has informed the Town there were funds remaining, and that staff would resolve the issue.

V. PROFESSIONAL ON-GOING ARCHEOLOGICAL SERVICES – THEIR ROLE AND FUTURE FUNDING

Town Manager Stewart gave a brief synopsis on the work done under the former Parks & Recreation Director; the contractual services and annual cost; and the re-working the original draft of a Work Plan. He expressed his belief that he would have information to bring back to CELCAB and Council on this matter.

Discussion was held concerning a timeline for the draft Work Plan, and approval by Council.

Mayor Mandel asked if they could place the issue on the June 17th Council Agenda and then pull the item if it was not ready in time.

Discussion was held regarding placing the issue on the June 17th Council Agenda; and it was determined that the item would not be placed on the June 17th Council Agenda since CELCAB would not have sufficient time for review.

Chair Hill asked if the Town Manager was comfortable with an August date for Council approval and would it give SEARCH sufficient time with respect to planning a conference.

Town Manager Stewart stated he would contact SEARCH to obtain feedback on the issue.

Mayor Mandel suggested CELCAB could begin thinking about the conference.

VI. LONG-RANGE PLANNING FOR MOUND HOUSE AND SEVEN SEAS

Town Manager Stewart explained there were currently several elements that would be dealt with at the Mound House (i.e. final phases of developmental portion of Mound House and Seven Seas). He noted the next phase would be the operational phase; the expectation for the operation to evolve; and the heavy reliance on volunteers. He noted the importance of reaching out to people, bringing in volunteers, and keeping the volunteers involved.

Chair Hill agreed with the Town Manager's comments relating to the importance of the volunteers; however, she expressed her wish to see both staff and Council consider professional leadership before an operational plan went into effect. She discussed the significance of having leadership of a history museum with vision and direction; and the advantages of having someone to put an operational plan in place well in advance of the opening of the Mound House (i.e. rate structure, membership fees, marketing plan, sponsorships, etc.). She encouraged the Council approve hiring a knowledgeable museum staff person.

Ms. Smith concurred with the need for long-range planning; however, she stated she did not want the Mound House to become a 'dynasty'. She noted the dedication of the Mound House volunteers. She explained that she would like to wait and see what evolved at the Mound House, but it was important to have someone in charge of the Mound House.

Council Member Raymond asked if Staff Liaison McBride was at the Mound House.

Town Manager Stewart responded in the affirmative.

Council Member Raymond questioned what her job description was at this time.

Town Manager Stewart reported her job description included that she was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Mound House.

Discussion was held concerning staff job descriptions as they related to the Mound House and Newton House.

Mayor Mandel suggested Council receive an organizational plan; and that CELCAB prepare a description of an organizational plan for what they would like to see at the Mound House.

Discussion ensued regarding the funds already expended on the Mound House and Newton House by the State of Florida Communities Trust and the Town; and the need for future planning to be prepared when the museum opened to the public.

Mayor Mandel recapped that the Town Manager would bring back organizational ideas to the Council that they would consider during the budget process; and he asked for CELCAB to give the Council an 18-month forecast of what they think might happen at the Mound House (i.e. projected attendance, types of promotion, etc.).

Discussion was held concerning previous research completed to determine data such as but not limited the projected attendance necessary to make the Mound House sustainable; and the potential use of professional management at the Mound House.

VII. POSSIBLE MERGE OF “FRIENDS OF THE MOUND HOUSE” WITH TOWN

Chair Hill explained there had been on-going discussions over the past few years with the Friends of the Mound House and CELCAB about the issue. She noted her view that once the operation plan goes into effect where there was a membership program then the matter could be tabled until there was a long-term and on-going operation plan. She described the willingness of people to donate to a 501(3)(c) over a municipality. She discussed her belief that the matter should be discussed further at a later date.

Discussion was held concerning what was happening at the Mound House (i.e. the kayak shed, etc.); and Council’s support of the Mound House.

Ms. Simpson noted that the Town did not formulate the Friends of the Mound House which was formed in 2006. She pointed out how the Friends had a mission and raised funds for the Mound House.

Town Clerk Mayher noted CELCAB would not meet in May and requested they decide on a date for the next meeting.

Chair Hill reported the next meeting of CELCAB would be on June 27th.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Adopted _____ With/Without changes. Motion by _____

Vote: _____

Michelle D. Mayher, Town Clerk

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