

DAVIE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD
MAY 24, 2005

1. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m. Board members present were Vice-Chair Julie Aitken, Dr. Rick Bruns (arrived 6:48 p.m.), Jacque Daniels and Councilmember Susan Starkey. Also present was Board Secretary Jenevia Edwards recording the meeting.

Councilmember Starkey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Daniels to nominate Vice-Chair Aitken as interim Chair until there was a full board in place. In a voice vote, with Dr. Bruns being absent, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 3-0)**

Councilmember Starkey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Daniels, to reconsider her motion of appointing Ms. Aitken as Interim Chair since Dr. Bruns was present. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 4-0)**

2. SELECTION OF CHAIR

Vice-Chair Aitken nominated Dr. Bruns as Chair. Dr. Bruns declined. Ms. Daniels nominated Ms. Aitken as Chair, seconded by Dr. Bruns. As there were no other nominations, the nominations were closed. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 4-0)**

3. SELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Councilmember Starkey nominated Dr. Bruns as Vice-Chair, seconded by Ms. Daniels. As there were no other nominations, the nominations were closed. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 4-0)**

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 22, 2005

Later in the meeting, Vice-Chair Bruns made a motion, seconded by Ms. Daniels, to approve the minutes of March 22, 2005. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 4-0)**

6.1 The Board discussed several issues which included nurseries, and the appointment of an additional person to make a full Board. Councilmember Starkey hoped that the Town could offer some assistance to nursery owners because the Town was losing them. There was discussion concerning the Town Council's appointment of a new board member; however, the Board was unsure as to when the appointment would take place.

Vice-Chair Bruns asked when was the anticipated time for the non-profit status of the Land Trust Group. Chair Aitken indicated that with the 501C3, the non-profit status could be tentative. Councilmember Starkey commented that the process for acquiring the status could take one year. Chair Aitken added that the Land Trust could work in conjunction with the Town if the bond issue went through.

There was lengthy discussion concerning the high price of land with Councilmember Starkey commenting that with the price of land being so high, Council had decided to look at other revenue for acquisition and for building the infrastructures of the parks that were acquired. Councilmember Starkey indicated that revenue would be acquired through matched funds of either the Florida Communities Trust or the Broward County Land Preservation Advisory Board. She commented that \$2 million from the County was allocated to the purchase of the Farm Park and the Town was looking at funds from the bond issue and the State's bond funds, if available, to make up the difference of the total cost of \$12 million. Councilmember Starkey explained that if the necessary funds were not acquired through bond funds, the Town would be in a difficult situation because it would not be able to afford the property. She added that

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Councilmember Paul was working with Representative Ryan and his family to ensure that the Town would be able to purchase the property with bond funds.

Councilmember Starkey referred to east Davie and commented that because the area had been without parks for many years, it was critical that careful scrutiny be given as to how the bond money was disbursed. She referred to former Councilmember Geri Clark's efforts that resulted in the acquisition of Potter Park/PAL building followed by Betty Booth Roberts Park. Councilmember Starkey indicated that with the recent acquisition of Sunny Lakes, there were plans to place an equestrian bridge in the area.

Chair Aitken asked whether the Berman Preserve belonged to Davie or if it was private. Councilmember Starkey indicated that it was private; however, there were some existing problems and the attorney for Berman Preserve was working with Town Attorney Monroe Kiar to eliminate the existing problems, finalize the agreements and sign the documents. As soon as the documents were signed, the property would belong to the Town. There was a lengthy discussion regarding mitigation, acreage, units per acre, density, wetlands and the proposed development near the Turnpike. Vice-Chair Bruns asked if the land for the proposed development belonged to Bergeron. Councilmember Starkey responded that it was the McCall's project that was being turned into warehouses. Chair Aitken commented that allowing the developer more density would not benefit the Town. Councilmember Starkey explained that the issue with the project was due to the amount of wetlands on the property. She added that the majority of Council wanted to have as much wetland and water retention on the site and indicated that there was an ongoing negotiation between the developer and Town regarding less density, less units, and better configuration of the units on the property.

Vice-Chair Bruns remarked on the one unit per acre theory and asked for an explanation as to why it was not logical. Chair Aitken explained that allowance had to be made for retention of ground water, lakes, roads and easements.

Councilmember Starkey commented that from the standpoint of the bond issue, the Town had to be cognizant that it was trying to achieve more parks in the east side and more open space. She added that it was important to get the developer to dedicate conservation easements and easements for trails to connect Berman Park to Sunny Lakes, across the bridge to the east side and hopefully be connected to the next park. There was brief discussion regarding the dangers to riders on the street with Councilmember Starkey commenting that the connection of the park areas would create a safer environment for riders. Councilmember Starkey indicated that the Town was looking into utilizing more Florida Power and Light easements to connect parks and trails to provide access.

Councilmember Starkey commented that the Town was moving forward with the bond issue by allowing residents to choose; however, there was opposition from Vice-Mayor Hubert who expressed concern that low-income families would not be able to afford additional taxes. With escalating property values and the increase in taxes, Vice-Mayor Hubert feared that residents in the low income bracket, particularly those in mobile home communities would be assessed by their property owners and would be required to pay a big "chunk." Vice-Mayor Hubert's concern over affordable housing was the reason she had asked that there be a lot of education to explain the financial impact to the homeowners. Chair Aitken commented that Council had to take a neutral position on the issue because the residents had the right to make their decision. Councilmember Starkey explained that Councilmember Paul wanted the bond issue to be placed on the ballot to allow residents the right to choose. She indicated that it was a controversial issue with a lot of variations. Councilmember Starkey indicated that Council could not advocate for the bond issue; however, the Board could take the position in support of the bond issue. Chair Aitken suggested having further discussions on the issue at the next Board meeting. Vice-Chair Bruns indicated that he would like to hear from both sides concerning the issue. Councilmember Starkey explained that the Town was required to provide the public with information as to the purpose of the bond, the benefits and the cost. She indicated that the Board would be able to move forward with its decision with more information. Ms. Daniels indicated that she understood that the basic principle for

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the Board was to do as much as possible towards maintaining rural character and an equestrian lifestyle and encouraging that to be a priority for the Town and should be the basis when the Board looked at the bond issue.

Councilmember Starkey advised that she had met with the Mayor of Gainesville, who was also with the Trust for Public Lands, was willing to assist the Town with providing outreach information to various communities. She indicated that the Trust for Public Lands would be identifying lands that Council might be interested in identifying these properties so that they could possibly acquire the properties and keep them that if the bond passed these properties would be available for the Town in the future. Councilmember Starkey commented that she was not sure how many properties were identified as each Councilmember would be meeting with the land trust representatives individually pertaining to their district. Chair Aitken indicated that she would provide a copy of all the agriculturally classified land in the Davie area.

Ms. Daniels asked about the status of a property on the southeast corner of 58th Avenue and Stirling Road. Chair Aitken indicated that she would get the information and provide it to the Board.

Councilmember Starkey asked that the Board assist the Town in identifying certain parcels that might fit as a trail connector or a pocket park. She indicated that the property next to Town Hall would be a good acquisition for the Town and could be used to enhance the rodeo arena.

Chair Aitken referred to Vice-Mayor Hubert's concern, and expressed the opinion that mobile homes were not affordable housing unless the occupant of the mobile home owned the land that the mobile home was on. She added that owners were paying mortgage on a depreciating asset and it was a rip-off. Councilmember Starkey explained that she had spoken to many residents in an attempt to place them into the Town's housing program and the reason given by many of them for not wanting to move was that they would not be able to keep their pets nor would they have a place to plant their flowers. Following a brief discussion on the issue, it was the consensus that these owners needed to be educated in finance. Councilmember Starkey commented that everything had been done by the Town to move these residents to Habitat homes but to no avail.

The Board discussed the acquisition of properties that were sold if the property tax was not paid for two years and saw this as a way for the Town to acquire properties for a pocket park. Councilmember Starkey indicated that the Town had sent a letter to the Broward County Property Appraiser's Office asking that the Town have the first right and first refusal on all properties that were in that category, and information on these properties were supposed to be forwarded to Mr. Kiar. Ms. Daniels asked if Mr. Kiar had been notified of any of these properties. Councilmember Starkey responded in the negative.

Councilmember Starkey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Daniels, that the Board ask that the Town Council or the Town Attorney's Office check on the scattered and sheeted properties that became available through the Tax Collector, and put in a letter that the Town was interested in the right of first refusal. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 4-0)**

5. OLD BUSINESS

5.1 Farm Park

Chair Aitken shared information she received from Grant Specialist Colleen Ryan on how the Town could receive a grant to purchase the Farm Park. She indicated that the main issue was advocacy and with the ten discretionary points that the Grant Board had, they could award a grant if they wanted. Ms. Ryan would like the Board to write a letter to each of the Grant Boardmembers responsible for making a decision on the grant that the Town had applied for and to Governor Jeb Bush. Chair Aitken suggested that this Board bring ideas to the next meeting which would be incorporated into the letter. She explained that letters had been received from organizations and individuals supporting the Farm Park. Chair Aitken indicated that Ms. Ryan gave her pointers on items that should be included in the

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letter and this information would be forwarded to the Board Secretary by email to be forwarded to Boardmembers.

Councilmember Starkey highlighted past experience in seeking grants and provided information regarding the discretionary points. A brief discussion ensued concerning the different entities that could write letters in support of the Farm Park with Dr. Bruns suggesting that a form letter could be distributed to homeowners' associations and civic organizations. Councilmember Starkey referred to a text amendment that needed to be passed and staff had been dragging their feet on it, adding that this was important and would give the Town five extra points once it was passed by the DCA. Councilmember Starkey indicated that all grants were affected and reiterated that the five additional points would be helpful.

Following a brief discussion regarding letters of support for the Farm Park, Councilmember Starkey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Daniels, that the Board send a letter to Tallahassee in support of the Farm Park. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 4-0)**

Councilmember Starkey indicated that she would ask Ms. Ryan to draft a letter based on the Board's philosophies. Chair Aitken commented that the draft letter could be emailed to Ms. Edwards who would distribute it among Boardmembers, and at the upcoming meeting, all the ideas from the Boardmembers would be merged together into one letter. Councilmember Starkey suggested that a copy of the letter be sent to Town Administrator Chris Kovanes and Ms. Ryan.

Councilmember Starkey distributed brochures on Equine Best Management practices and suggested that they be sent to all equestrian users that participated in the hurricane turnout. Ms. Daniels commented that she would distribute the brochures through Dr. Kronk's office. Chair Aitken indicated that owners should be aware that the Best Management Practices (BMP) applied to one horse in a backyard or to a commercial horse farm. Councilmember Starkey explained that although there was support of agricultural and rural lifestyle, it was important to implement BMP's for the preservation of the quality of life and water quality and the environment in the future. She added that educating the horse community and equestrians on BMP's and pending BMP's for nurseries, would affect the overall water quality particularly the C-11 Canal which was the Everglades.

Chair Aitken commented that it was in the best interest of everyone involved to comply with the BMP's on a voluntary basis because if there was no voluntary adherence to these practices, there was the possibility of an ordinance being put in place to create mandatory compliance. Councilmember Starkey indicated that a common sense approach to BMP's would help to eliminate the phosphorus in the Everglades.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 Property in East Davie

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

7. COMMENTS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS

There were no comments or suggestions.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no objections and no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Date Approved

Chair/Board Member