

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD
AUGUST 28, 2007

1. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:39 p.m. Board members present were Chair Jason Hurley, Vice-Chair Jacque Daniels, Greg Hoover, Julie Aitken and Councilmember Starkey (arrived at 6:45 p.m.) Also present was Board Secretary Jenevia Edwards recording the meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: May 22, 2007

Ms. Aitken made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Daniels, to approve the minutes of May 22, 2007. In a voice vote, with Councilmember Starkey being absent, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 4-0)**

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Livestock-at-Large Issue

Chair Hurley spoke of the need for the Town to hire a contractor to pick up animals, and provided Boardmembers with a copy of the Town Code as it related to livestock at large. A lengthy discussion was devoted to the livestock at large issue, Article III of the Town Code and the need for a contractor. The consensus of the Board was that the Code was inaccurate, inadequate and not current. Vice-Chair Daniels asked if anyone aside from Boardmembers, had expressed an interest in locating a designated shelter. Ms. Aitken indicated that the outline in the Code was not enough. She commented that the livestock at large issue and the animal identification issue went hand-in-hand and questioned if there had been any feedback from Sergeant Themis. Ms. Aitken commented that because police officers were at a loss as to what to do with an animal on the loose, they often called farmers. Vice-Chair Daniels indicated there were no shelters as was mentioned in the Town Code. Chair Hurley explained that Sergeant Themis was supposed to check if there was an identification system in place, and to find out if a pamphlet or a computer program would be the direction for the Board to take in assisting the Police Department. He indicated that no information had been forthcoming from Sergeant Themis. Chair Hurley commented that there had also been discussion concerning the Town Code and the need to get a legitimate contract with someone who had a place to keep the animals. Vice-Chair Daniels commented that in order to pursue the issue there had to be more than a non-existent shelter because an animal could not be picked up with no designated shelter to place it. She suggested contacting Sergeant Themis again.

Councilmember Starkey referred to discussions at a previous meeting where it was reported that most of the police officers were usually familiar with the area as well as the owner of the animals. She asked if Sergeant Themis had shared this information with the Board, with Boardmembers responding in the negative. A lengthy discussion was devoted to the issue of identification of the animals, and the location of shelters. Councilmember Starkey indicated that there was a list already in place that was being used by the Police Department; however, the Board had sought to formalize the identification process. She indicated that she had sent an email to Sergeant Themis asking for an update on the identification issue but she had received no response. Vice-Chair Daniels commented that the Board could not move forward on the issue until feedback was received from Sergeant Themis. Councilmember Starkey indicated that she would continue to follow-up with Sergeant Themis on the both issues because she had asked for a summary of the presentation from the June meeting because she was not present. She added that she was interested in hearing Sergeant Themis' suggestion since she had heard the Board's input.

Discussion continued regarding the Town Code as it related to the shelter issue with Boardmembers commenting that the Code was ancient and should be amended. Mr. Hoover asked if the Town would be willing to set up a facility to hold animals as discussed by the Board. Vice-Chair Daniels explained that if the Town were to utilize the property that was used for hurricane turnout as an animal shelter, the property would not have to be paid for separately as it was already owned by the Town. She added that the Town would either have to get volunteers to pick up the animals or have a contract with a number of vendors. Ms. Aitken referred to a section of the Code which defined shelter as being "the operation of the person or firm designated by the Town to pick up and board any animal found at large."

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Vice-Chair Daniels stated that the Town was not contracted with any specific farms or farmers to pick up any animals before they could be taken to a designated place such as Robbins Lodge. Ms. Aitken reiterated the need for the livestock identification as well as the need for the Town to have a list of people who had contracted with the Town to perform the service of picking up the animal. She commented that the Town would have to be compensated by the owner for the cost to pick up the animal. Councilmember Starkey commented that a large animal doctor might be able to assist in identifying the animal within the area if he was familiar with the animal. Vice-Chair Daniels explained that there was no large animal veterinarian in Davie, except Dr. Kronk, who would touch a cow. She stated that other veterinarians in the area would not be able to assist in identification of the animals because they did not work on any animal but equine. Ms. Aitken stated that the farmers with the available space would not enter into a contract to pick up any animals at the “historic” rates listed in the Code.

A lengthy discussion was devoted to the identification, auction and boarding issue. Vice-Chair Daniels indicated that the Code was outdated and was no longer appropriate for today. Following continuing discussion on the definition of boarding and impounding, Boardmembers concluded that the Code was not being implemented because the Mayor was probably not aware of its existence. Councilmember Starkey commented that she would discuss the issue with Code Enforcement Official Danny Stallone and Police Chief John George to see if any agreements had been entered into by the Town. She indicated that she would also contact Sergeant Themis to discuss the issue. Councilmember Starkey suggested that Boardmembers contact other equestrian areas to see what was available.

Councilmember Starkey indicated that the corral at Robbins Lodge was destroyed during Hurricane Wilma; however, the Town had elected not to have it repaired due to budgetary issues. She believed that the corral should be repaired and used as a holding area for animals. Vice-Chair /Daniels asked what was the plan for hurricane turnout if the fence was not repaired. Councilmember Starkey responded that the fence was repaired, it was the corral that was not repaired and the Town did not intend to have the corral repaired. Chair Hurley commented that the best solution was for the Town to contract with someone to deal with the issue of picking up the animals and holding them until the owners were found. Vice-Chair Daniels briefly discussed the liability issue as it related to illness and injuries when the animal was in the contractor’s possession. A brief discussion ensued regarding animals that were not claimed by the owner with Vice-Chair Daniels referring to Friends Ranch which was a charitable organization that took in abandoned horses. Vice-Chair Daniels commenting that she would check with the SPCA to see what they had in place for abandoned horses.

3.2 Volunteer List of Individuals for Animal Holding Areas

Vice-Chair Daniels commented that the Board could not move forward with the volunteer list until the livestock at large issue was resolved. Chair Hurley stated that impound should be defined, as well as reasonable timeframe and reasonable fees, and see if staff or Mayor Truex can get someone willing to contract with. He indicated that would be willing to help on a volunteer basis; however, he had no experience with cows. Vice-Chair Daniels explained that there were farmers with the experience who would be willing to volunteers. She added that the individual who would be called to assist with a horse could not be called for a cow.

Councilmember Starkey advised that she would contact Mr. Stallone and Chief George to see if they knew of anything on the books and if there was any information available, she would have Ms. Edwards forward it to Boardmembers.

3.3 Animal Identification

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

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3.4 Review of Town Code

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

4. OLD BUSINESS

Chair Hurley referred to discussions regarding the equestrian signs and trail connecting signs and the letter that he had written to Urban Forrester Tim Lee offering the Board's support of the proposed ordinance. He spoke of the letter on the lighting issue that Ms. Aitken was preparing to forward to staff. Ms. Aitken indicated that she understood from the Site Plan Committee that the Town was working on an ordinance concerning the lighting issue.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the lighting issue with Councilmember Starkey referring to a number of cities where the lights were not as bright as they were in Davie. Ms. Aitken spoke of model dark sky ordinances and suggested that this could be modified to fit the Town. She indicated that she had attempted to draft an ordinance; however, the technicality of the lighting issue was beyond her understanding. Councilmember Starkey suggested placing this item on the agenda for the September meeting and she would try to have a representative from the Engineering Department attend the meeting to discuss it. Chair Hurley suggested sending a request to staff asking for a written progress report on their intent with the drafting of the lighting ordinance.

Ms. Aitken referred to information concerning the draft carcass removal ordinance which had been forwarded to Councilmember Luis and inquired if Councilmember Luis had made the presentation to the Town Council. Chair Hurley advised that he was not sure but he would contact Councilmember Luis.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Councilmember Starkey indicated that the Town was purchasing Batten's Farm as part of a grant and open space. She explained that many people would like the location to continue as a fresh produce market and in order for that to be facilitated, it would have to go out for a bid. Councilmember Starkey referred to some of the properties purchased by the Town and commented that she noticed there was a great lag between property purchase closing and the time the properties were utilized. She spoke of the conditions of a particular property due to lack of maintenance and indicated that she did not want to see a repeat at the Batten's location.

A lengthy discussion was devoted to the Batten's Farm issue with Councilmember Starkey asking for this Board's support to facilitate a Request for Proposal for vendors interested in the operation of a green market on a level of the City of Pompano Beach. Discussion ensued regarding the size of the property and Councilmember Starkey was not sure of the size; however, she hoped that with the Board's input, the transition would be "good" and the property would not sit vacant. Councilmember Starkey suggested that Boardmembers put "feelers" out to try to find people who were interested in a green market. Several suggestions were made concerning the green market which included having a lessee to oversee the market.

Councilmember Starkey explained about the connection of trails behind the property which would allow easy access into other areas nearby. She indicated that there might be individuals who would be interested in planting vegetables to sell in the green market, adding that there would have to be regulations concerning the type of fertilizer used. Councilmember Starkey questioned if the Board would be willing to support the green market issue. She indicated that she would like to move forward with the green market idea before someone came up with the idea of placing a basketball court on the site.

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A lengthy discussion followed regarding the open space issue and what was considered passive with Councilmember Starkey referring to the discussion of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting that she attended recently where the criteria for bond purchase was overlooked. Councilmember Starkey stated that the Board might want to support and endorse what open space criteria would be for the bond for “passive.” Ms. Aitken made reference to the wording of the bond as it related to “passive.” Chair Hurley commented that he did not believe bond money could be spent on anything other than what it was allotted for. There was further discussion on the bond issue with no real determination being made.

Councilmember Starkey questioned whether the Board was receptive to the Batten’s Farm concept with Vice-Chair Daniels responding that the Board’s concept was always maintaining the rural character of the Town. She stated that if someone would make a motion, she would second it. Ms. Aitken suggested that Councilmember Starkey make the motion since she had the ideas.

Councilmember Starkey made a motion that the Board propose that a Request for Proposal be sent out to solicit interests for vendors who would be interested in vegetable, produce, and homemade breads and things of that nature as a green market similar to what Battens was currently operating as.

Ms. Aitken asked for clarification as it pertained to leasing of the property. Councilmember Starkey commented that someone would have to be in charge of the property. Ms. Aitken suggested that that the property should be managed by someone who would not close off the recreational trail. She indicated that there should be a proviso that the property would not be leased completely as a commercial entity. Chair Hurley asked if the entire property would be leased or only the warehouse portion. Councilmember Starkey indicated that it would be just the warehouse portion of the property. Mr. Hoover suggested that a sketch of the property was needed to be able to see the layout of the property for each person who was interested in having a food plot. Councilmember Starkey indicated that once the solicitation of the proposal was received, the location of the site could be downloaded.

Ms. Aitken asked about the bond issue and thought that the Open Space Advisory Committee was handling it and questioned how the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee became involved. Councilmember Starkey explained that the Parks and Recreation Department wanted a press box and it was not possible with the Town’s budget, so they thought it could be purchased from the open space bond.

Councilmember Starkey made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Daniels, that the Town should solicit bids for open space green market vendors for Battens. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 5-0)**

Councilmember Starkey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Aitken, that the Town would offer food plots for growing fruits and vegetables and flowers on the acreage behind Batten’s Farm warehouse to the Town residents, organic in nature and that there would also be a trail around for connectivity for recreational purposes. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 5-0)**

Discussion continued on the bond issue with Councilmember Starkey presenting information she had received from a member of the Open Space Advisory Committee. Boardmembers discussed the distribution of bond money and the bond criteria as it related to “passive” with the Boardmembers commenting that the criteria could not be changed in midstream. Councilmember Starkey indicated that based on the criteria, the bond money could not be used to purchase gears or a press box. She commented that she favored parks and recreation and would do everything to support their programs, but not in an area that was designated for passive. Chair Hurley asked for a copy of the language that was placed on the ballot. Councilmember Starkey indicated that she was not in possession of it.

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Ms. Aitken made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Daniels, that the Town Council strictly adhere to the language as written in the bond referendum, the language that the people voted for. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 5-0)**

Ms. Aitken made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Starkey, recommending that Council limit the expenditures to the amenities that were related to only passive recreational uses and activities as opposed to active recreational activities. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 5-0)**

6. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Following a brief discussion, the following items were suggested for the September meeting:

- Light Containment Issue
- Review Livestock-at-Large Ordinance
- Request for Proposal - Batten Farm Property

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 8:30 p.m.

Date Approved

Chair/Board Member