

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD
JANUARY 26, 2010

1. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:44 p.m. Board members present were Chair Julie Aitken, Vice-Chair Jason Hurley, Tony Burzo and Sam Scott. Also present was Board Secretary Jenevia Edwards recording the meeting. Jacque Daniels was absent.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: September 22, 2009

Vice-Chair Hurley made a motion, seconded by Tony Burzo, to approve the minutes of September 22, 2009. In a voice vote, with Ms. Daniels being absent, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 4-0)**

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Revisit Farmer's Market Proposal

Dr. Scott advised that prior to June 2009 a draft proposal was submitted to the Open Space Advisory Committee regarding the Battens property. The proposal included items relating to an urban farmers market with containerized planting of fruits and vegetables with a farmers village market. Dr. Scott explained that arguments regarding soil contamination, and in order to satisfy the concern of public access, the University of Florida's environmental area being contacted. He commented that there were individuals who were interested in the making the property "children friendly" by integrating what was know as a Kids Agricultural User. Dr. Scott explained that the different items that would be implemented would be an urban farming setting, a children's museum and a tropical tea garden with the main building being the focal part of the project.

Following the submission of the proposal, Dr. Scott indicated that the institute was contacted by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and asked to formulate a regional proposal to seek funding to develop two farmers market and four roadside stands in Florida and Alabama. Dr. Scott explained that he generated a proposal which was submitted to Agricultural Marketing Service; AMS approved the proposal and designated \$100,000 for the North South Institute. He added that the budget had since been revisited and the decision was made by the institute to establish one of the farmers market in South Florida instead of establishing all of them in North Central Florida. Dr. Scott explained that there was a cluster of farmer's markets in North Central Florida, a roadside stand in Geneva, Alabama, one in Dale County, two inside Alachua County, one in Archer and another in Gainesville thus creating a regional network. He advised that the institute was also asked if it was interested in promoting a program called – "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" established through the National Resource Conservation Services (NRCS).

Dr. Scott explained that although a decision had not been made concerning the proposal, he had met with Park and Recreation Director Dennis Andresky and his associate. During the meeting Mr. Andresky asked about the implications of financial benefits and the taxes. Dr. Scott explained that the institute with which he was associated is a 501c3 organization and any proceeds from the project would not be allocated to any private benefit nor go towards the operation or the administration of the institute. He added that the proceeds would be plowback into the farmers market for upgrades and maintenance of the facility. Dr. Scott explained that there would be a vendor's fee because in any farmers market there would be a variety of vendors.

Dr. Scott commented that he had evaluated 47 farmers market in New York for the Hefier International Foundation and Kellog (USDA), and from his experience working with farmers markets, he knew that there would be a number of people wanting to sell meat and with the type of requirements such as a proper cooling facility, special handling and preparation, this is not something that he recommended. He added that the handling and preparation of meat required a skilled individual.

DAVIE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD
JANUARY 26, 2010

Chair Aitken asked if special licensing was required in order to handle meat. Dr. Scott explained that a food handler's permit was required for handling meat and registration was required through the USDA. He suggested seafood and organic eggs as alternatives to selling meat.

Regarding improvement and maintenance, Dr. Scott indicated that the institute would be responsible for all the maintenance and improvement. Dr. Scott added that in a setting of that nature it would not be wise to expect someone else to handle the maintenance and improvement. He indicated that the institute would handle the maintenance so that it did not become a cost or a burden to the Town; however the use of green space use and urban agriculture would be enhanced. Dr. Scott indicated that the irrigation was also discussed and he was informed that the water would have to be tested because of the old system with a well on the property. He added there was probably some contamination there but they had to be sure hence the need for testing. Dr. Scott mentioned that in some cases water could be derived from the public system. Also discussed was the septic system and the need for improvement to bathroom facilities because of public access. Agreement had been made in principle, to improve the facilities and bring them up to code.

Dr. Scott advised that the institute had applied to be able to use the facility to hold a symposium on February 10, 2010. He highlighted the demonstrations at the symposium and invited Boardmembers to attend. Dr. Scott commented that if a major event was being held on the property, port-a-potty would have to be brought in. Chair Aitken inquired if there was a sewer line already in the area; Dr. Scott responded in the affirmative.

Dr. Scott referred to seed capital which was a USDA project that had been approved and indicated that the site was one that could be used because the institute had authorization to develop at least two farmers market. He added that the agreement would be with the Town to develop the Davie area urban farms and farmers village market. Dr. Scott further explained that other partners would be considered and the property could become a signature spot for the Davie Area Land Trust to show the maintenance of open space and its use within an urban setting.

Finally, concerning a community garden, Dr. Scott commented that containerized farming could be established, and this could become a community garden for people who were interested in establishing backyard gardening with training sessions being offered. Dr. Scott commented that a community garden would have to be holistically managed.

A brief discussion ensued regarding programs with Dr. Scott explaining that the institute had partnered with the Kiwanis Club, and for two summers they ran a program "Learning In The Sun" which accommodated approximately 40 children who were taught about agriculture and farming. Dr. Scott indicated that the institute also partnered with the Boys and Girls Club.

Chair Aitken inquired if it was accurate that a not-for-profit institution could secure a lease through the Town. Dr. Scott responded in the affirmative and explained that the institution would go into a partnership to lease half an acre. Chair Aitken indicated that the Broward County Property Appraiser's Office was reviewing properties owned by municipalities that were being leased, and might be subject to property tax. She hoped that in the lease agreement there would be a provision that the lessee would be responsible for the property tax, if any.

Chair Aitken commented that whatever recommendation the Board was making it had to ensure that there was public access, especially because bond funds was involved. Dr. Scott indicated that the proposal was designed to make sure that all requirements were met.

Joyce Steward indicated that she had seen the proposal before and realized that it would take some time to be reviewed. She explained that she has been trying to get a farmers market established in Davie and it was shameful that municipalities like the City of Sunrise has had a farmers market for years and Davie was doing nothing, yet it was the agricultural area. Ms. Steward commented that the City of Fort Pierce has had a successful farmers market for many years and she visits on a regular basis. She commented that there were between 50 and 70 vendors and the market was open from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays only.

DAVIE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD
JANUARY 26, 2010

Ms. Steward explained that the individual who founded the farmers market as a 501c3 organization was in the process of writing a book, and had provided information to her that she was willing to pass on. She had no desire to be part of the establishment or operation of the farmers market, she would just be happy to see one established in Davie. Ms. Steward added that Davie was far behind the times in not having a farmers market, and it would take someone who was willing to do the work it entailed in the establishment and maintaining of the business; and she believed that Dr. Scott or one of his associates would be willing to step forward.

Dr. Scott advised that on February 11th the North South Institute was having a clinic at the Long Key Nature Center titled "Developing Local Food Network". He added that there would be four speakers in attendance who would be discussing farmers market, community supported agriculture, developing and operating commercial kitchen and roadside stand. Dr. Scott mentioned that Dr. Nancy Rowe who was responsible for operating a community supported agricultural operation would also be in attendance.

A brief discussion ensued regarding organic produce, with Ms. Steward commenting that there were farmers markets in Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood who sold organic produce. Dr. Scott indicated that there was also a farmers market on Las Olas Boulevard that was open on Sundays. Chair Aitken asked about the days of operation when the farmers market was established. In responding, Dr. Scott indicated that the plan was to have the farmers market open daily with a menu to cater to a lunch crowd.

Chair Aitken suggested that the Board recommend that the farmers market proposal be approved subject to public access and to assure that the bond money criterion is met, as well as the property tax implication to make sure that there would be no cost to the Town. Mr. Burzo indicated that he had not reviewed the proposal, but the idea appeared to be sound.

Vice-Chair Hurley made a motion, suggesting that the Town seriously consider the Battens property for a farmers market, to go forward and take a closer look at the proposal, have a joint meeting with the Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC), maybe OSAC members can meet with the Agricultural Advisory Board at the next board meeting which would allow this board to review the proposal at that time. Further, follow-up on the present motion, both Boards to review the proposal jointly, believing that the Town could proceed with the proposal.

Chair Aitken questioned if the recommendation was for Council to generically review the farmers market and at the same time this Board should meet with OSAC to make a more specific recommendation on the proposal. Vice-Chair Hurley responded in the affirmative. The motion was seconded by Mr. Burzo, who commented that he favored the sound of the proposal, although extensive, it outlined the benefit to the Town. In a voice vote, with Ms. Daniels being absent, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 4-0)**

Dr. Scott indicated that he would provide a copy of the proposal to Boardmembers. Mr. Burzo reiterated that the ideas and concepts seemed great; however he was not comfortable voting either for or against the proposal because he had not seen it.

Chair Aitken asked if OSAC had made any recommendation on the proposal. Ms. Steward responded in the negative, stating that there had not been anything to make a decision on, although there had been discussions about Battens property, and there were also a lot of ideas as to what residents would like to see at the site. Chair Aitken inquired if OSAC would be interested in having a joint meeting with the Agricultural Advisory Board to focus on the proposal. Ms. Steward responded in the affirmative and explained that OSAC would like to see some type of direction for the Battens property because it was greatly missed by everyone. She commented that it was a shame that the property was not being used because it would deteriorate. Ms. Steward provided the date of the upcoming OSAC meeting in response to Chair Aitken's question and added that the Committee now met every month.

DAVIE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD
JANUARY 26, 2010

Mr. Burzo made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Hurley, that the Agricultural Advisory Board meet with OSAC to review the proposal given by the North South Institute and decide on making a recommendation for the Battens Farm site jointly with the Open Space Advisory Committee. In a voice vote, with Ms. Daniels being absent, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 4-0)**

Vice-Chair Hurley withdrew his motion.

Mr. Burzo made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Hurley, that the Agricultural Advisory Board attend a joint meeting on February 22nd at Robbins Lodge with OSAC, to make a final joint proposal on the farmers market proposal of Dr. Scott. In a voice vote, with Ms. Daniels being absent, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 4-0)**

Dr. Scott advised that he would provide a copy of the proposal to Ms. Edwards for distribution to Boardmembers.

3.2 Exemptions for Licenses for Farm Vehicles on Local Roads

Vice-Chair Hurley advised of incidents along Flamingo Road involving individuals who were issued citation for traffic while using agricultural vehicles. He indicated that agricultural vehicles are exempt from traffic violations under Florida Statutes.

Following a lengthy discussion on the issue, Chair Aitken highlighted a number of the statutes as they related to farm vehicles.

Vice-Chair Hurley suggested that a letter be drafted, a copy should be sent to the Town Administrator Gary Shimun and Police Chief Patrick Lynn stating that pursuant to this Board's goal of promoting the rural lifestyle as set forth in the Charter amendment, this Board recommends that Chief Lynn contact the State Patrol and clarify what was in the law.

Discussion continued regarding licensing with Chair Aitken stating that licenses was not required for farm vehicles. Chair Aitken indicated that she would be willing to match the citations with the statutes to be forwarded with the letter. Mr. Burzo suggested that the letter should be generic, stating no names, but state that there were Florida Highway Patrol officers along Flamingo Road, issuing citations to operators of farm vehicles, and the Town was seeking support in making FHP aware of the oversight relating the citations. Chair Aitken indicated that she has already brought the issue to Mayor Judy Paul's attention who and Mayor Paul advised her to send a letter of recommendation to her and she would forward it to the appropriate individual.

Mr. Burzo made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Hurley, for Chair Aitken to draft a more detailed letter and request that the Town take whatever action is necessary to alert FHP. In a voice vote, with Ms. Daniels being absent, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 4-0)**

3.3 Broward County Proposed Water Restrictions

There was a brief discussion concerning the water restrictions with Mr. Burzo advising that there was a final vote and the Broward County water restriction was not permanent. Mr. Burzo explained that the Florida Nursery Growers and Landscape Association and the University of Florida tried to educate the County on the issue with scientific data and extensive studies to show that in eastern Broward the soil was more sandy, it did not retain enough water and two days of water was insufficient for plant live to thrive. However, the County still voted on making the restriction permanent. Chair Aitken inquired about nurseries with Mr. Burzo responding that commercial nurseries had different set of guidelines, but they were also restricted, but the restriction involved all residential properties.

Mr. Burzo explained the issue was economic; the County did not want to increase its water distribution and infrastructure but they did not separate between people using municipal water and wells. The restriction was a blanket issue.

DAVIE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD
JANUARY 26, 2010

In response to Chair Aitken's inquiry if there was anything that could be done at this stage, Mr. Burzo pointed out that representatives from Tallahassee and Orlando spoke to the County Commissioners, but their decision was already made.

Dr. Scott inquired if there was any compromise for individuals with sandy soil who increased fertilization to water four days instead of two. Mr. Burzo commented that the ordinance was not written in the manner. He added that it would be interesting to see how strict the enforcement is.

4. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to be discussed.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Scott commented that lately many of the County parks were closed on Tuesdays, it did not make any sense and was an inconvenience to many people who used the parks for exercise. Mr. Burzo explained that in closing the parks the County indicated that they saved \$1,000,000 annually.

Discussion continued regarding park closures and days off without pay which was instituted by the County as a means of saving money. The consensus was that some of the actions did not make sense.

6. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

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

- Batten's Farm: Urban Farming and Community Gardens Proposal
- Outcome of Farm Vehicle Exemptions

7. COMMENTS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS

There were no comments and/or suggestions made.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no objections and no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Date Approved

Chair/Board Member