

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD
MARCH 24, 2010

1. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:43 p.m. Board members present were Chair Julie Aitken (left at 7:15 p.m.), Vice-Chair Jason Hurley, Jacque Daniels, Dave Parrish and Sam Scott. Also present was Board Secretary Jenevia Edwards recording the meeting.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Batten's Farm: Urban Farming and Community Gardens Proposal

Chair Aitken advised that a joint meeting was held between the Open Space Advisory Committee and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board concerning the proposal relating to Batten's Farm. Dr. Scott indicated that he was happy to see what the Town was doing. He explained that Parks and Recreation Department has several small parcels and one of the proposals was trying to lease those parcels for agricultural use. Dr. Scott indicated that Batten's Farm project proposal was submitted to the Town almost a year ago concerning urban farming. The proposed project was a short term plan to develop activities that would allow for public access to include an agricultural museum, children's museum and containerized farming or gardening. For the long term, Dr. Scott explained that because of the existing structure, the concept could be a community kitchen and a farmers market with produce derived from smaller plots in and around Davie. He added that as an amendment to the proposal, Parks and Recreation Department was offered assistance to develop a community garden. Dr. Scott commented that by offering assistance to Parks and Recreation, he now found himself in a dilemma where he would not be able to participate in the FSA Equip Program through the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). He added that the program which would close at the end of March provided funding for micro irrigation, and raised beds to grow specialty vegetables.

Dr. Scott indicated that the North South Institute had funding for a farmers market and thought of channeling those funds into the development phase of the project which would not be a cost or burden to the Town. He explained that some of the issues that arose were public access, taxable property and the inuration of benefits. Dr. Scott indicated that the letter to the Parks and Recreation Department outlined the institute's understanding of a non-profit organization stating that the vendors would be responsible for paying their sales tax, and whatsoever value that was incurred, the operator of the property would use those funds for the maintenance of the property. He believed that a task force was being formed by the Town and hoped that it would come into fruition soon. Dr. Scott referred to a number of municipalities such as Marco Island, Pembroke Pines, Miramar that were establishing farmers markets. He added that the City of Plantation was reviewing which parks could be converted to establish a farmers market, and the Town of Davie that had more agriculture than any of the other municipalities did not have a farmers' market. Dr. Scott expressed optimism that there was a farmers' market in Davie's future and added that the institute was willing to partner with anyone based on ideas that were suggested.

Chair Aitken referred to the discussion at the February 22nd Open Space Advisory Committee meeting and suggested that this Board's recommendation to Council should mirror OSAC's recommendation. She believed that it was a good idea to have a special committee to oversee the Batten's Farm project and the Farm Park.

Vice-Chair Hurley made a motion to adopt a similar recommendation as to that forwarded by the Open Space Advisory Committee and Parks and Recreation, in that the Agricultural Advisory Board have a liaison to attend the task force meeting which will be rotated amongst the board representative.

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Ms. Daniels asked about the meeting schedule. Chair Aitken responded that the members of the task force was not yet appointed. Ms. Daniels asked for clarification of the motion. Vice-Chair Hurley suggested that the volunteers from this Board who were appointed to the task force rotate their attendance to the task force meeting. He added that it should not be the responsibility of one individual; however, there should be a representative from the board at those meetings to report back to the board and the burden would not fall on one person.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Daniels. In a voice vote, with Dr. Scott abstaining, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 4-1)**

3. OLD BUSINESS

3.1 Outcome of Farm Vehicle Exemptions

Chair Aitken highlighted the issues relating to the farm vehicle exemption. Mr. Parrish inquired if this was similar to the exemption being proposed by Tallahassee this year. Chair Aitken was not aware of the exemption. Mr. Parrish explained that farm vehicles were exempted by a number of counties within the State of Florida.

Following a lengthy discussion concerning farm vehicle exemptions, Chair Aitken indicated that Mayor Judy Paul and Police Chief Patrick Lynn were aware of the problems; however, to date there had been no resolution of the issues.

Chair Aitken asked about the issues in Tallahassee and whether it was something new. Mr. Parrish referred to the county Farm Bureau and explained that the issues that would be voted on related to farm buildings and vehicles which was similar to what was being discussed by the Board. He indicated that the purpose was to bring more awareness to the public as well as cities and municipalities. Mr. Parrish indicated that a police officer would not be aware of the exemptions. He referred to an article that discussed the issues to make more cities and municipalities aware of farm exemptions.

Chair Aitken spoke of a number of code amendments that the Board recommended that were passed by the Town Council. Mr. Parrish made reference to a number of rules and guidelines and an article as it related to nurserymen and the exemptions involved. Discussion continued on the issues with Chair Aitken asking for a copy of the article. Mr. Parrish indicated that he would provide a copy for distribution to the Board.

Following a brief discussion concerning resolution of the issue relating to traffic citation, Chair Aitken indicated that she had not received any feedback from the Mayor Paul or Chief Lynn. Ms. Daniels indicated that she would contact Mayor Paul to find out if there was any outcome regarding the citations that were issued.

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1 Alternative Meeting Date

Ms. Daniels explained that she would not be attend any future meetings on a Tuesday. She indicated that her option was to either resign or ask the Board to have the meeting on a different day. A brief discussion ensued with Boardmembers indicating that they were flexible to changing the day to Wednesday. Chair Aitken suggested the fourth Wednesday of the month. Ms. Daniels indicated that she would be able to attend on any Wednesday.

Ms. Daniels made a motion, seconded by Chair Aitken, to change the meeting to Wednesday and Ms. Edwards to find out which Wednesday would be available. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 5-0)**

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Dr. Scott advised that over the past three months the North South Institute had been receiving request from a number of individuals who expressed an interest doing agriculture. He added that there was a retired couple from France, residing in Davie and a former Florida Light and Power employee. These individuals were asking about the availability of vacant land that they could lease. Dr. Scott indicated that almost every week there was a request for land, and he was asking if any of the Boardmembers knew of anyone interested in leasing property for peri-urban or urban agriculture, from one to 20 acres. He added that the North South Institute would be interested in working with the owners to make the property available to farmers who were registered in the agricultural training program, established through the institute, to make sure of the wise and best use of the property.

Ms. Daniels commented that she received calls at the clinic on a regular basis from individuals seeking agricultural exemption for their property. Chair Aitken commented that Jason Curtis of the Broward County Property Appraiser's Office knew of individuals who were not interest in agriculture per se, but wanted to use the land to get the agricultural exemption.

Dr. Scott indicated that previously the institute would send the farmer out to work with the land owner; however, situations has forced the institute to adopt changes to centralize leasing arrangements and also to place individuals trained in agriculture to ensure that there were no problems. He indicated that so far the institute has not experienced any problems.

A lengthy discussion ensued with Boardmembers citing a number of locations they believed were potential properties for leasing. Chair Aitken advised that on the Broward County Property Appraiser's website there is a map and Dr. Scott would be able to locate the properties that that were cited. She added that going on the website would be easier than driving around to try to find each location.

5. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Following a brief discussion, the following item was suggested for the agenda for the upcoming meeting:

- o Follow-Up on Farm Vehicles Issue
- o Invite Manny Diez or Dennis Andresky to provide update on Battens issue
- o Agricultural Definitions status

Boardmembers Dave Parrish, Sam Scott, Vice-Chair Hurley and Jacque Daniels all viewed the DVD "The Sunshine Law in Plain English" which ran for 27 minutes. Chair Aitken had viewed the DVD at another board meeting.

6. COMMENTS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS

There were no comments and/or suggestions made.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

Date Approved

Chair/Board Member