

DAVIE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD
MARCH 9, 2011

1. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. Board members present were Chair Jason Hurley, Vice-Chair Dave Parrish, Julie Aitken, Sam Scott and Scott Weinstein. Also present was Board Secretary Jenevia Campbell recording the meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: January 12, 2011

Vice-Chair Parrish made a motion, seconded by Ms. Aitken, to approve the minutes of January 12, 2011. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 5-0)**

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Sunny Lake Bird Sanctuary

This item was discussed later in the meeting.

3.2 Discussion on Battens Farm and Van Kirk Property

Dr. Scott referred to the theft at the Battens property which was causing major problems, however, in spite of those issues progress was being made on both projects very well. He indicated that the North South Institute was associated with three projects in Davie one of which was located at Flamingo Road and Orange Drive. This project was now ninety percent operational and the farmers were in place.

Dr. Scott explained that the Institute in its work in Davie discovered that there were 95 acres of agricultural land under production supporting 125 small farm families. He stated that based on a multiplied effect, the institute recognized that there was an annual contribution of approximately \$4.6 million of agricultural produce employment and economic activity contributed to Broward County. Dr. Scott indicated that that was significant and the Town of Davie should be commended for their employment plan in getting people back to work. He added that one of the targets of the institute was to see that there was approximately 175 small farm families being placed on about 200 acres in Davie.

Dr. Scott did not believe that this idea was unrealistic because if the Van Kirk property was included along with other properties that were being brought in by the private sector, this could mean that by the middle of this year there could be 200 acres under vegetable production in Broward County that did not have an extension officer. He added that there was a waiting list of 17 farmers who were asking for properties.

Dr. Scott highlighted the preparation of the Van Kirk property and the amount of farmers involved which included one female. He indicated that there was an increase in the number of female, especially those in the nursing profession, who were getting into agriculture as a "side" job. Dr. Scott expressed the need for equipment, and indicated that there was discussion with individuals regarding the acquisition of those equipment. He added that substantial planting on the Van Kirk property would begin in the middle of May.

Dr. Scott advised that there was more progress being made on the Battens property than on Van Kirk project. He indicated that the institute continued to receive request for vendors and this might reach the stage when the question was asked if the property had the capacity to do the work listed in the proposal.

Regarding the community garden and irrigation work, Dr. Scott explained that representatives from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) were involved with the institute in planning this exercise. He added that there was an application to perform micro/drip irrigation as well as plans for hydroponic planting. Dr. Scott advised that there had been discussion to have Vice-Chair Parrish assist with nursery issues involved on the property.

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A lengthy discussion ensued concerning ongoing work at Battens property inside the building, with Dr. Scott informing the Board of the theft of a number of items, with the layout of the building making it susceptible to theft from every angle. The minor work on the inside had been completed and everything possible was being done to make sure that on opening day the institute would be able to demonstrate the spirit of what it wanted to do as a community.

Dr. Scott commented that based on the feedback from the public, and in recognition of the work by the former owner and what the town wanted to do, it was appropriate to name the property "Battens Farmers Market and Davie Agro Tourism Center". He added that this would provide a branding different from other farmers market around, and would be a signature property building on what previously existed. The Batten's family would have to be consulted for their approval to use their name and to affirm that there would be no liability associated with them.

Discussion continued concerning the vendors and ideas for a number of food items which included seafood. Dr. Scott indicated there were plans to open the farmers market in the last week of April with a great mix of items available. The picnic area would also be opened to accommodate a lunch crowd.

The Urban Farming Initiative Task Force and the Town was commended by Dr. Scott for the excellent job in allowing the institute to execute the Batten's Farm program and also tying it into the Van Kirk property, thus allowing for local supplies. He added that the property located at Flamingo Road and Orange Drive would also be providing local produce. Dr. Scott commented on having an interest in backyard gardening and suggested to the Board if they were aware of anyone interested in participating in the farmers market venture to have them contact him.

A lengthy discussion commenced concerning the vandalism issue which was discussed at a task force meeting, having security presence on the Batten's property, fencing the property and a recent incident of vandalism.

Dr. Scott spoke of ATV activity and the evidence at Batten's and commented that folks who rode ATV's for recreational activities should be more respectful of other people's property. Ms. Aitken reiterated the need for security presence at Batten's.

Ms. Aitken made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weinstein, that the Board recommend that the Town Council consult with the North South Institute for both Van Kirk and Battens to place a residential trailer similar to the trailer at Robbins Park, with security, whether Town law enforcement, or a caretaker, whether it is a farmer associated with the farmers market, or a Town employee to live on the premises to stop the vandalism and theft.

In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 5-0)**

Dr. Scott asked Boardmembers if they became aware of used store fixtures being sold to let him know. Ms. Aitken mentioned an auction that was being held in Dania. Mr. Weinstein inquired if Dr. Scott had an unlimited budget or if he was seeking donations. Dr. Scott responded that his budget was very limited and donations were welcome.

3.3 Further Discussion on Report from Task Force

Vice-Chair Parrish advised that Janette Smith, Chair of the Urban Farming Initiative Task Force presented two options before the Town Council and the option to sunset the task force was chosen. He indicated that issues that were left pending by the task force would be assigned to other boards.

Chair Hurley referred to the confusion of a recommendation by the task force and asked if this was resolved. Ms. Aitken responded that corrections were made at the last task force meeting.

Following a brief discussion on how the issues pending from the task force would be disseminated, Mr. Weinstein suggested that clarification of this issue could be discussed under new

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business at the next Board meeting. Boardmembers expressed concern over the items left pending by the task force and suggested that this should be discussed further at the next Board meeting.

4. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding Sunny Lake Bird Sanctuary with Vice-Chair Parrish highlighting the bid process, the purpose and the amount of the bid. He indicated that he spoke with the construction company that offered the lowest bid and was told that the Town did not have the funds to proceed with the project and was attempting to do as much in-house work as possible. Vice-Chair Parrish added that he spoke with Landscape Inspector, Joseph Jimenez and was informed that the Town did not have enough capability in house to perform the necessary tasks.

Chair Hurley suggested that this item be added to the agenda for the upcoming meeting in the hopes of having someone from Town staff provide the correct information.

Discussion continued on the Sunny Lake issue with the questions being asked whether the Town went over budget or the project went out for bid without the necessary funds. There was also the question as to whether the project could be completed in phases. The Board was seeking an answer as to what went wrong with the original tree removal.

Dr. Scott referred to the mitigation plan for the Van Kirk property and indicated that the institute had a one year lease. He added that not much progress could be made in such a short time and questioned whether the plan for the Van Kirk property could be amended to include agriculture as a part of the wetland park.

Discussion continued regarding acreage which also included Florida Power and Light easement, with Dr. Scott commenting that considering the funds that had been invested on the property it would not be beneficial to “scrap” the project in a year.

Chair Hurley asked that Program Manager Phillip Holste be invited to the next meeting so that he could provide the Board with information concerning the Van Kirk property. He asked that this information be provided prior to the meeting to allow Boardmembers time to review the information and prepare questions.

Mr. Weinstein apologized to Dr. Scott and asked if he had been reappointed to the Board with Dr. Scott responding in the affirmative. He expressed concern about issues that Dr. Scott was involved with as a member of this Board. Dr. Scott indicated that he would abstain from any vote where there would be a conflict of interest.

Discussion ensued regarding the purchase of the Arrowhead Golf Course from the Department of Transportation. He indicated that there was a Request for Proposal to vendors interested in operating the property as a golf course. Vice-Chair Parrish spoke about the landscaping which was installed inadequately and the trees that were planted too deep, several of which were dead and a number of them being in decline. He added that this was a serious issue which would not fix itself. Acreage and mitigation issues were discussed, as well as the purchase of a number of adjacent properties by the Florida Department of Transportation which were renovated and re-landscaped.

There was a lengthy discussion as to how to remedy the problem with Vice-Chair Parrish indicating that he would be willing to offer his services to the Town. Dr. Scott questioned if this issue came under the purview of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Vice-Chair Parrish commented that that Board might not have been aware of the problem.

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Discussion continued regarding maintenance of the property with Vice-Chair Parrish explained that a survey should be carried out on the trees, grade the trees. Vice-Chair Parris stated that the Town should be given a quote as to the cost to fix the problem. The consensus was that the Town got a bad deal on purchasing this property.

Vice-Chair Parrish made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weinstein that Urban Forrester, Tim Lee be invited to the next meeting to discuss the Arrowhead issue. 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 April meeting:

- Sunny Lake Bird Sanctuary
- Proposed Plan for the Van Kirk Property
- Arrowhead Golf Course

7. COMMENTS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS

There were no comments and/or suggestion.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no objections and no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Date Approved

Chair/Board Member