

DAVIE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD
APRIL 16, 2012

1. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. Board members present were: Chair Jason Hurley, Vice-Chair Dave J. Parrish, Julie Aitken, Sam Scott (arrived at 6:50 p.m.), and Scott Weinstein. Also present was Board Secretary Janet Gale recording the meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: January 11, 2012
February 14, 2012

Ms. Aitken indicated that a correction needed to be made to the February 14, 2012, minutes. On page three, the last paragraph before New Business, should read: Ms. Aitken, as well as other Board members were aware that other people were concerned that the people participating should not be profiting from the gardens, but she did not want to create onerous rules. Board members agreed with the change.

Chair Hurley referenced the last sentence of the next-to-last paragraph of page one. He understood Mr. Lemack to say that the Town had probably contributed approximately \$50,000 to restore the facility to the condition it was in when the contract had been signed before the vandalism incident. Again, Board members had agreed with the change.

Chair Hurley provided the correct spelling for Dennis Deveaugh which had been misspelled on the January 11, 2012, minutes.

Ms. Aitken made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weinstein, to approve both sets of minutes subject to the changes as noted. In a voice vote, with Mr. Scott being absent, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 4-0)**

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Follow-up on Van Kirk Property Taxes

Mr. Weinstein understood that if the lease consisted of the words, “up to 55 acres,” then the remaining unplanted acreage would still belong to the Town and have its municipal tax benefits. Ms. Aitken responded that she did not know what the group had applied for with the property appraiser. Mr. Weinstein indicated that it gave the group a little “wobble room” if in fact they only leased up to 55 acres.

Ms. Aitken advised of the recent changes that were made in the law involving the Value Adjustment Board and pending petitions. It now required a “good faith” payment from the petitioner if a hearing was excessively delayed.

Chair Hurley suggested deferring further discussion on this item until Dr. Scott was present to see if he had information to add.

3.2 Farm Park Update

Mr. Weinstein advised that an annual meeting of The Friends of the Farm Park was set for Monday, April 30th, and all Agricultural Advisory Board members were invited. He provided details of the agenda. As one of the agenda items was to form sub-committees, Ms. Aitken suggested that one of those sub-committees examine the legal issues of future projects for the purpose of tax exemptions. Mr. Weinstein responded that he would make that proposal at the meeting.

A brief discussion ensued regarding a PowerPoint presentation which was planned to be shown at the meeting. Board members encouraged expanding the advertising or promotion of the April 30th meeting.

Vice-Chair Parrish suggested contacting the adjacent homeowners’ associations for their participation and input on the project. He recalled the negative response from the neighborhood when a fire station was proposed in an effort to improve a faster response time.

Dr. Scott apologized for being late and asked that the Approval of Minutes be reconsidered as he had a serious correction to be made.

Ms. Aitken made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weinstein, to revisit the January 11th and February 14th Approval of Minutes. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 5-0)**

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In the February 14th minutes, page two, first paragraph, the last sentence should read: He stated that the down payment for the two greenhouses amounted to \$1,930. The purpose for the greenhouses were to teach children how to grow seeds and plant vegetables

Ms. Aitken made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weinstein, to approve the additional amendment to the February 14, 2012, minutes. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 5-0)**

3.1 Discussion on this item was resumed as Dr. Scott was present.

Chair Hurley asked Dr. Scott if he had heard anything new regarding the Van Kirk property and the tax issues. Dr. Scott responded negatively as he was waiting for responses.

Ms. Aitken asked if Dr. Scott had made an application for the agricultural classification. Dr. Scott responded that he presumed the Town was supposed to do that. He spoke of the organization he was associated with and of its goals and objectives. Dr. Scott thanked Messrs. Weinstein and Parrish for helping to improve conditions on a recent project.

Regarding the tax situation at Van Kirk, Mr. Weinstein asked Dr. Scott to confirm that the lease was for “up to 55 acres.” Mr. Weinstein believed that the remaining acreage would belong to the Town and not be taxed the same as the leased land.

Dr. Scott spoke of the potential for cultivating the 55 acres and unfortunately, he estimated that approximately only 20- to 23 acres had potential. Dr. Scott would be meeting with the farmers the next day to see what they wanted to do with the property. They had put in a considerable investment which included clearing the land, an analytical assessment would be made on the property, and a decision would be made about the project.

Ms. Aitken recalled that this Board had taken action to avoid tax problems some time ago when it recommended that before any more agricultural contracts were made, that it be brought before this Board first in order to research any issues. Chair Hurley indicated that that subject was the discussion item 3.3 in this agenda.

Chair Hurley pointed out why it would be practical for the Board to have the opportunity to review the leases and how it would make it easier for the farmers to be successful. Dr. Scott agreed that Chair Hurley made a fair observation; however, in all his years of operation, he had never received so much press. He indicated that the kind of press North/South Institute was going to get hit with, was something he did not want to deal with. Dr. Scott stated that his relationship at the federal level did not afford him “to be outing brushfires like that.” He spoke of the issues and allegations he had been confronted with due to Battens Farm.

Board members asked if the application for the agricultural exemption had been submitted to the Property Appraiser’s Office. Dr. Scott commented that it should have been submitted, but he did not know if it had.

Mr. Weinstein wondered if it would be beneficial to look at the Van Kirk lease. Board members believed it would be a good idea. Ms. Gale was asked to email a pdf form of the temporary land use agreement to the Board members for the next meeting. Ms. Aitken recommended that a copy of the application for the agricultural classification that was made by the Town for the Van Kirk 55 acres also be provided for the Boards review for the next meeting. A brief discussion ensued regarding the deadline for the application and when the decisions would be revealed to the applicants. Jason Curtis, Agricultural Analyst at Broward County Property Appraiser’s Office, advised that notices regarding agricultural exemptions needed to be responded to by July 1st each year.

3.3 Agricultural Leases, Staff to Review with Agricultural Advisory Board

Chair Hurley recalled that at the last meeting (March 14, 2012), the Board had recommended that with any leases between the Town and agricultural operators, that the lease come before this Board for input.

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The Board reaffirmed its previous motion of the following language to be sent to Council: To recommend that future agricultural leases be brought to the Agricultural Advisory Board for input and recommendations prior to execution of the lease.

4. OLD BUSINESS

4.1 Review Actions Taken at Last Meeting

This was done through the course of the meeting.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Aitken advised that at a multi-use horse trail generally located near SW 38th Street and Flamingo Road, the Police Department installed signage with their phone number on the greenway that it was private property. Also, boulders were placed there blocking the trail with no trespassing signs. Ms. Aitken knew this to be public property and that if the homeowners' association wished to fence in and install no trespassing signs for their private lake, that would be permissible. The Florida Greenways multi-purpose trail was for public use and was a commitment made by developer to be provided to the Town. ~~The trail sign had also been removed.~~ Ms. Aitken provided photos of the signage and the obstruction which had been placed at the trail's access. She commented that a trail sign should be placed at that location.

Mr. Weinstein made a motion, seconded by Mr. Parrish, that a letter from this Board be sent to the Police Department, Mayor and Council, South Florida Trail Riders, members of the Open Space Committee, the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and the Town Administrator. Ms. Aitken agreed to draft the letter to be sent to Ms. Gale and then forwarded to Board members. If there were any changes to be made, the letter would be discussed at the next meeting. If there were no changes to be made, the letter would be moved forward. In a voice vote, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 5-0)**

Dr. Scott advised that additional documentation such as an aerial and the property identification number, or recorded deed restrictions be added to the letter. The Board agreed the more, the better.

6. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Those items would be: 1) follow-up on the property taxes at Van Kirk; 2) Mr. Weinstein would give an account on the Friends of the Farm Park annual meeting; 3) further discussion on the attempted closing of the public trail.

7. COMMENTS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS

Chair Hurley reminded Board members that there would be the selection of a chairperson and a vice-chairperson included at the next meeting.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Aitken made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Weinstein. All voted in favor of adjourning at 8:10 p.m. **(Motion carried 5-0)**

Date Approved: _____

Chair/Board Member