

**TOWN OF DAVIE
WORKSHOP MEETING
APRIL 28, 2005**

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m. and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present at the meeting were Mayor Truex, Vice-Mayor Hubert, Councilmember Crowley, Councilmember Paul, Councilmember Starkey, Town Administrator Kovanes and Town Attorney Kiar.

Mr. Kovanes advised that Councilmember Starkey would need to leave early. Councilmember Starkey explained that she would leave early but needed to hear the residents' comments. She explained that no preconceived decisions had been made and that all residents' opinions were important. However, Council still had the right to make final decisions without residents' input on park matters.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis Andresky provided background information on the need for the workshop and advised that the budget for 2005 and 2006 was status quo. He indicated that he might be requesting additional conditions to facilitate expansion of programs. Mr. Andresky stated that last year, he was directed to try to make adult programs nearly self-sufficient and youth sports programs more reflective of the Town's costs. He advised that a fee increase was approved in November and that there had been discussion on the operation of the Town's programs versus other cities' programs. He indicated that numerous people had contacted him with questions on fees and how the programs were run.

Mayor Truex questioned the options with regard to running sports programs. Mr. Andresky indicated that the Town used in-house staff, however, some cities used outside agencies, such as Optimist Clubs, Little Leagues and parent organized groups. He explained that these programs operated the same way and that the cities provided the facilities, electricity, field preparation and concession stands for fund raising with minimal use of city staff. Mr. Andresky added that the organizations handled registrations, fee collection, ordering of supplies and uniforms, and everything needed to run the program. He advised that with in-house staff, the Town had more control over programs and residents appreciated the quality, fairness and control of the Town's sports programs. Mr. Andresky stated that cities using outside programs appeared to be happy with them as they felt the programs worked well and that a lot of burden was taken off the city. He advised that generally, these cities did not express concerns with the programs. Mr. Andresky stated that some residents who had experience with such programs would air their concerns at the workshop.

Councilmember Crowley asked Mr. Andresky if he had run any numbers on costs to the Town for in-house programs as opposed to an outside operation. Mr. Andresky responded that going with an outside organization would save money by eliminating four or five staff positions; however, the Town would need to keep in-house staff to maintain the parks and two sports-related liaisons. He indicated that he had not calculated costs but could work on this during the meeting. Councilmember Crowley asked what cities Mr. Andresky had spoken with and whether they conducted user surveys. Mr. Andresky indicated he had spoken with staff in Tamarac, Plantation, Cooper City and Ft. Lauderdale.

The meeting was opened for comments and questions from residents or Councilmembers.

Doug Notman stated that he served on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) for five years and served as a baseball and soccer coach for seven years. He indicated that Davie coaches and residents were opposed to any changes in the present programs and any volunteer programs or any elimination of any Town staff from the sports programs. Mr. Notman indicated that he would submit a petition to Council signed by approximately 700 residents voicing objection to any outside organizations. He indicated that the PRAB had voted twice in unanimous opposition to elimination of Town staff and stated that there was no interest in a volunteer program of any kind. Mr. Notman felt residents were not interested in soliciting sponsors for the Town's teams, particularly after residents already paid a fee to the Town, as this was double taxation. He added that parents were not interested in being required to work the concession stands, as it was difficult to get parents to volunteer. He stated that Optimist programs did not have the accountability that the Town currently had, and that if they had a problem, they had to go to a

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City Commissioner who was usually unavailable. Mr. Notman added that with the Town's current program, there was accountability by an elected official, and coach, parent and spectator problems were handled by staff with 99% of problems solved expeditiously and fairly.

Michael Bartlett, a member of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and a coach, indicated that the program had been running smoothly and that the Town staff resolved not only parent, coach and spectator problems but also handled scheduling problems immediately. He was opposed to any change in the sports programs and indicated that the Town should be honoring the Town staff instead of looking to remove some of their jobs.

Councilmember Starkey indicated that she had been approached by a number of people and felt some seemed confused on the intent of this workshop. The workshop was not trying to outsource the sports programs, but instead to gather opinions on how to make the sports programs work better. Councilmember Starkey was hopeful that those attending would give some recommendations.

Vice-Mayor Hubert indicated that she was confused, as she understood the meeting was to be either about keeping the program in-house or considering an outside source. She felt from all indications of the residents, no one wanted an outsourced program.

Mayor Truex advised that it was a suggestion that other systems be considered. He added that Council did not vote at workshop meetings but typically, gave direction to staff to either prepare something to be voted on or not. Mayor Truex wanted to know if anyone on Council saw any reason to go ahead with the meeting.

Those attending wanted to know why Councilmember Crowley wanted to see the numbers. Councilmember Crowley responded that he wanted to see the numbers since he felt that if a figure of \$10 million could be saved by the Town then it should be considered.

Councilmember Paul indicated that she was also confused after listening to Councilmember Starkey. She stated that when she came to the meeting, she knew that most of the Town was not interested in using outside organizations for its sports programs. In addition, when she looked at the figures she did not see any reason to go to an outside source. Councilmember Paul was opposed to an outside source for the sports programs and asked for an indication from residents as to who would be interested in an outside source with no one responding. Some residents indicated they also understood that this workshop was about outsourcing the program. Councilmember Starkey indicated that the meeting was not about outsourcing but instead about making the sports program better.

Vice-Mayor Hubert felt that the adult softball program should be self-supporting since all members worked. She felt the Town should not have to subsidize this program but should only have to assist on the children's sports programs.

Mayor Truex asked if there was any reason to spend further time on pursuing outside organizations for the sports program; residents and Council indicated that there was none. Council asked if anyone wanted to speak in favor of changing programs. No one spoke.

Mayor Truex wanted to know the procedure with regard to fees charged by the Town. Mr. Andresky indicated that every three to five years, fees were examined and advised that the last fee increase was in 2004.

Steve Leiter felt if fees were analyzed six months ago, and if shortfalls were still indicated, then the fees should be adjusted accordingly to cover those shortfalls.

Mayor Truex indicated that Mr. Andresky would not be changing fees unless asked to do so by Council through the Town Administrator's Office. He advised that to this point, this had not been done. Mr. Andresky explained that the costs the Town would have to charge to break even would be too high. Not everyone used the facilities and possibly those who did so should pay more. He stated that the Town did not charge the highest or lowest fees, but seemed to be right in line with other municipalities.

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Mr. Leiter indicated that the concession stands were one way to help reduce some of the Town's costs; however, he felt the concession stands were not being run efficiently enough.

Jim Futch stated he served on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and Airport Advisory Board. He stated that the coaches and the PRAB had voted to encourage a girls' softball program called Rising Stars within the Town. Approximately 800 young men and 200 young women played softball in Davie. Mr. Futch expressed concern that only two fields had pitchers' mounds. Since the Rising Stars programs made approximately \$150,000 to \$200,000 on their events from vendors and entry fees, he felt the Town should benefit more from this program, particularly since no one else could use the fields when Rising Stars held an event. He stated that this could help pay for additional fields, add pitchers mounds, and possibly help offset the Town's costs on sports programs.

Richie Allen, a supporter of the Rising Stars program, felt with the increased field usage by Rising Stars, they should give more to the Town. He stated that the Town would be fiscally irresponsible if it did not analyze the numbers. Mr. Allen believed the parents of the children involved in Davie sports programs would not be opposed to paying more money since the Town's programs were so good. He felt each parent should be given a cost breakdown of where monies were spent, such as referee expenses, insurance, field maintenance, etc. and added that the Town should have coach clinics. He stated that advertising should be done by Town businesses that could place signs on fields to help subsidize costs. He spoke of national advertising and of other cities that used Pepsi and Coke as sole vendors and received monies which helped subsidize their sports programs. Mr. Allen suggested advertising by other sources such as suppliers of bats, baseball gloves, sports equipment or any other business that might want to advertise on Davie fields.

Michael Budwig indicated that he had a son who played in Cooper City and two sons who played in Davie. He felt the programs in Davie were far better than Cooper City and hoped the Town would not change the sports program.

Marshall Gillery, a Davie resident and a coach for the girls' softball team, expressed appreciation to Town staff for the job they did and believed that since the Rising Stars program came to Davie, the interest in girls' softball doubled. He stated that the tournaments held by Rising Stars appeared to be bringing in money to Town businesses and asked to see numbers on this. Mr. Gillery did not believe there were only two mounds because of the girls' teams and objected to the implication being made that the mounds were not there due to Rising Stars. He believed that the girls' programs helped girls in the community.

Lawrence Reed, a former member of Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, spoke of his experiences in Dade County and indicated that the mission should be to provide recreation to the Town's children. He advised that in Miami, the Optimist paid for use of fields and concession stands and were limited on field usage. Mr. Reed did not believe this would work well in Davie. He felt that skills acquired by children for future use in sports would be established in the upper levels of school and the sports programs should not be used for this.

Ross McKinnes, a Davie resident with two daughters in Town programs, was happy with the sports programs and felt the Police Athletic League (PAL) program was working. He felt the Rising Stars program was a good program and was supportive of other programs for the Town's children.

Joe Rimondi, a resident of Davie and Director of PAL, indicated that the PAL program needed volunteers not only by parents but older residents of Davie. He described the types of services being offered by PAL.

Randy Cox felt Davie had the finest park facilities in Broward and advised that children were going to other cities to play because they were being supported by those cities. He felt there needed to be more participation from PAL children in Davie programs. Mr. Cox was willing to pay more in order to help support children in Davie and keep them in the Town's programs. He felt the Rising Stars program

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should pay more to the Town to give parents with two or more children a break on the cost, so their children were not kept out of the programs due to high fees.

Ms. Pohan-Ferrari stated that she had three daughters and one who played for Gold Coast Hurricanes. She advised that Rising Stars and Gold Coast Hurricanes were two separate teams and explained the differences in the two organizations. Ms. Pohan-Ferrari advised that one of the teams had a coach whose company paid for uniforms for traveling teams and the Rising Stars only rented the Town fields twice a year. She stated that all other fees were paid to the Town. During the fall program, Gold Coast Hurricanes paid \$4,000 to the Town and summer league registration was \$7,200. Ms. Pohan-Ferrari further indicated that the Gold Coast Hurricanes team paid their fees to the Town.

Richard Herman thanked the Town staff for their excellent work. He pointed out that staff sometimes worked as security and chased off people who did not appear to belong. Mr. Herman added that staff looked out for children on the fields.

Councilmember Paul thanked staff and was glad to hear they were doing a good job. Councilmember Crowley also thanked staff. Vice-Mayor Hubert suggested a luncheon be given to the staff for the good work they have done.

Mr. Kovanes thanked the residents for their input, ideas and support and indicated that they could contact any of the Councilmembers with further concerns. Mayor Truex indicated that residents should feel free to e-mail him at any time with any concerns.

As there was no further business to discuss, and no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Approved _____

Mayor/Councilmember

Town Clerk