

**WORKSHOP
APRIL 14, 2010**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present at the meeting were Mayor Paul, Vice-Mayor Starkey and Councilmembers Caletka, Hattan and Luis. Also present were Town Attorney Rayson, Town Administrator Shimun and Assistant Town Clerk Roig recording the meeting.

3. NEW TOWN HALL

Mark Engle, Chair of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), said this was a unique opportunity. Mr. Engle described the creation of the Downtown Master Plan, which established a vision for Davie's future. The new town hall had been identified as a priority in the Town's annual goal setting sessions. Mr. Engle said since the CRA could not build a town hall, they would help the Town achieve a new town hall by assisting in financing. In June 2009, the Council had directed the Town Administrator and Town Attorney to work with the CRA to develop an agreement based on the Master Plan.

Mr. Engle gave a PowerPoint presentation. He described changes to the Master Plan and noted they would not include underground drainage. He explained that the roadways on the east and south sides of the Huck Liles' property allowed access to parking, access to businesses along Davie Road and space to put drainage and power lines. The roads permitted businesses along Davie Road to redevelop according to the Master Plan. Mr. Engle showed conceptual renderings based on the Downtown Master Plan. Mr. Engle stated part of a compensation package the CRA was offering was a 30-foot right-of-way along the east and south sides of the Huck Liles' property.

Mr. Engle said the CRA had considered various sites for the new town hall, and he described how they had evaluated the various sites, and the site they preferred. Mr. Engle stated the CRA was willing to contribute \$4.2 million from the purchase of the existing town hall site and road right-of-ways, which would bring the cost of the improvements to \$5.8 million. He noted there would be no tax implications because the Town already owned the parking lot on which the new town hall would be built. The existing Town hall property would be put back on the tax rolls, resulting in a savings of approximately \$860,000. With the CRA's participation, Mr. Engle estimated the project would cost under \$5 million.

Mr. Engle stated in return for the purchase, the CRA would redevelop the town hall site and construct a 400-space parking garage; construct liner buildings around the garage, reserving 15,000 square feet for Mr. Bergeron's Rodeo Museum. Mr. Engle thought it might be possible to use the adjacent mobile home park land for a historical village.

Mr. Engle said the CRA was willing to provide a property if the town hall were located anywhere within the CRA, but they would protest moving town hall from downtown. The CRA was also willing to invest in a parking garage, provided this would help further development around town hall.

Mr. Bergeron said his main concern was building the town hall right up against the Bergeron Rodeo Grounds and tearing up a parking lot that was worth \$2 million. He also believed instead of demolishing, the adjacent buildings could be renovated for community. Mr. Bergeron thought it was important to consider the Town's identity, culture and heritage as they built a new town hall. He was interested in creating an Everglades Educational Center to create jobs and to educate "people from all over the world."

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Mayor Paul said it was her preference to have town hall downtown and she was concerned about taking property off the tax roll. She liked the CRA plan for its location, but with further modifications. Mayor Paul wanted the existing town hall saved, perhaps to serve as part of the museum about which Mr. Bergeron spoke. She reminded everyone that the building had a long history; it had been a community hall, the Chamber of Commerce and the Police station. Mayor Paul said it was a priority and the CRA had already agreed to set up a conservation easement on the Rodeo Grounds to ensure it was safe in perpetuity.

Mayor Paul believed the renovations and new roof would allow them to stay in the existing building for a few years. She wanted to know the occupancy of the shops and apartments at the Griffin Road locations. She did not feel this scenario worked and they must consider whether this concept had a future in Davie. Mayor Paul wondered if the parking garage would provide enough parking if they removed the surface parking. Her idea was to move the garage closer to Town hall, in between the shops and town hall.

Councilmember Caletka liked the CRA plan and agreed the town hall should be downtown. He felt building a town hall larger than they needed would allow room for a State representative's office. Councilmember Caletka did not want to assume that they would save the existing town hall, or that they would tear it down, and noted the health issues that the building's current condition was causing for employees. Councilmember Caletka wanted to go forward with the CRA proposal as presented.

Councilmember Hattan asked about Mr. Engle's suggestion regarding the trailer park property; Mr. Engle said this was not CRA property so it must be developed by someone else. He explained that redevelopment of the site had been in the Master Plan all along.

Vice-Mayor Starkey said the CRA had worked with Council regarding their concerns. She did not agree with locating the townhouses on the green space area to the east and preferred that the residential be located on Davie Road. Vice-Mayor Starkey also wanted the parking garage to be connected to town hall and the retail area. She said they had taken an interest in working with Mr. Bergeron and the pioneer families on the plan. Vice-Mayor Starkey stated she wanted a historical zoning district in the Town.

Vice-Mayor Starkey liked the idea of preserving the existing town hall facility. She said residents wanted the area to be improved, and perhaps a museum would attract more people. She did not feel that intense density and height were needed. Vice-Mayor Starkey thought the plan could be refined a bit further to incorporate some of the pioneer families' ideas. She wanted to hear that the CRA agreed to "support the preservation of a historical district, a conservation easement and that you will look strongly at supporting and encouraging and providing incentives even for a museum of that nature."

Mr. Engle stated they had already indicated support for a conservation easement. Regarding density, Mr. Engle stated, "You buy a property for \$4.2 million, you can't exactly develop just a single-story building on it." He added that the parking garage was needed for town hall and the surrounding businesses. Regarding "recreating this building" he pointed out that the building had problems, and he would need to see if this could be incorporated into the plan and if it worked with the parking garage. He was willing to work with the pioneer families as long as they were willing to work with the CRA.

Vice-Mayor Starkey said the CRA told Council they work with them on the density issue, but the plan showed townhouses. Mr. Engle said this had been approved by Council in 2006 as a conceptual plan; it had nothing to do with town hall. Mayor Paul said this could be addressed at a later time. She wanted the CRA's commitment to incorporate the museum concept and to retain or replicate the existing town hall on this spot. Mr. Engle said the CRA would discuss this at their next meeting. Mayor Paul stated the CRA would be provided a recording of the meeting to hear the specifics.

Councilmember Luis said most people in District 4 liked the buildings on Nob Hill Road but he saw problems with them. He advised they should come up with two or three sites and get public input.

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Councilmember Luis asked Mr. Engle if they would consider moving town hall farther from the arena. Mr. Engle said there was no other place to build it and the parking garage was needed with development around it. He thought this was a logical place to build Town hall and saw no negative impact on the arena.

Councilmember Luis asked Mr. Bergeron what commitment the Town could expect from him for building the museum he had described. Mr. Bergeron said he would match funds put up by the Town and the CRA, and he suggested \$1 million. Mr. Bergeron noted the trouble the construction industry was currently in, which he felt would last a long time. He said tourism was still doing well and Davie had history and culture. Mr. Bergeron stated that they did not need to build townhomes and condominiums; they could preserve their identity and create an economy. He suggested the new town hall could be built on the southern end of the rodeo grounds and avoid destroying \$5 million worth of buildings that could be a community center and a world class museum.

Mr. Shimun asked Mr. Bergeron if he “would be okay with us using some of the vacant property back here for the Town hall, then.” Mr. Bergeron said, “I think we could consider that if we can all work things out, sure.” Mr. Bergeron said they had a contiguous historic district with the rodeo grounds, the Woman’s Club and the Town hall.

Since Mr. Bergeron had suggested this new idea, Mayor Paul said the CRA should discuss this at their next meeting. Mr. Bergeron was willing to discuss this with the CRA.

Mr. Engle explained that the purpose of the CRA was to use tax increment funding and invest in infrastructure. This was tax money, but the only purpose for which it could be used was infrastructure. Mr. Engle thought it curious that they had been working on this plan for five years and had never heard an offer regarding the rodeo grounds property. Council’s consensus had been to move forward with their idea, and Mr. Bergeron “steps up, throws another idea out there that’s never been there to completely delay where we are.” Mr. Engle thought this was a delaying tactic. Vice-Mayor Starkey did not think this had been done to sabotage the plan.

Mr. Bergeron said he had been trying to meet with the CRA for “years and years...there’s never a meeting, they never call me.”

Councilmember Caletka said no one on Council had ever suggested using the green space for development. He appreciated the offer from Mr. Bergeron, but for Councilmember Caletka, it was “not an option.” He wanted to leave the space as the Master Plan indicated.

Mayor Paul said the CRA should consider all of the suggestions and they would “keep moving forward with other options that may or may not work out.” She felt that “having the compromise plan and saving this and working towards the museum and working towards the historical district...that is the direction we should be moving in right now.” She agreed with Councilmember Luis that public meetings should be held to get the residents’ opinion on where they wanted the new Town hall built, but she was concerned that the residents’ preference would be a site that was “economically unreasonable.” Mr. Shimun agreed they should hold public meetings, and Mr. Engle could present the top three possibilities. Mayor Paul suggested showing the public the CRA’s plan, the Foreman property and the site at Orange Drive and Griffin Road.

Councilmember Hattan asked if the CRA plan was “going to go the way it is now, with the new Town hall, or are you saying that you’re going to keep this building and forget the new Town hall?” Mayor Paul said they would build a new Town hall but this building would be retained. Mr. Engle stated, “But if this stays, why would we buy it; the point of us buying it was to redevelop it and put it back on the tax rolls.” “If that’s what you’re saying, we’ll have to see if that can be incorporated in the buildings that go around the park, but you’re still going to need a parking garage.”

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For the public meeting, Vice-Mayor Starkey suggested presenting the CRA proposed site, the property on Orange Drive and Davie Road and the downtown Davie site. Councilmember Caletka agreed with Mayor Paul’s choices.

Councilmember Luis did not believe the current Town hall could be renovated. For the public meeting, he suggested the current site, with the new Town hall in the other location, the corner of Orange Drive and Davie Road and the Foreman property.

Mayor Paul wanted to bring something to the attention of the CRA. She said the Davie Veterinary Clinic had no intention of selling for as long as the veterinarians were there. The doctors had expressed to Mayor Paul that they were very concerned seeing everything around them being torn down and had made it very clear to her that they had no desire to sell their property. They had also informed Mayor Paul that when the CRA had torn down an adjacent building, they had encroached on the veterinary clinic property and ripped out two feet of parking pavement and backstops. This had created a serious problem and the doctors wanted the CRA to repair it. Redevelopment Administrator Will Allen explained that the CRA owned where part of the Veterinary Clinic driveway was located and they intended to sod and fence the area.

Ms. Tula Amana remarked that there was no “wow factor” on the proposed plan. Based on the Master Plan, Ms. Amana said she had always envisioned a spectacular Town hall and she felt it should include a cultural center. She suggested the Town hall should be a Green building that could attract federal funds.

Ms. Amana envisioned a “humongous cultural center coming into the corner of Davie Road and Orange Drive with elaborate gardens...an indoor stage with meeting rooms...an outdoor stage for the concerts...” Town hall could be located next to this, right on Orange Drive, with the parking garage in the rear. Ms. Amana explained that when Hallandale redeveloped, they had moved buildings they wanted to preserve and this could be done with the existing Town hall. Ms. Amana distributed possible designs for a parking garage. She said revenue could be realized from income from the cultural center, and they could charge for parking.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss and no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Approved _____

Mayor/Councilmember

Town Clerk