

The Board of County Commissioners of Citrus County, Florida, met in special session on the above date at the Fort Island Trail Park Facility, 12073 West Fort Island Trail, Crystal River, Florida, for the purpose of conducting a Goal Setting Workshop. The Chairman called the meeting to order. Commissioner Batchelor led in the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

Commissioners:	Josh Wooten, Chairman; Vicki Phillips, First Vice-Chairman; Roger Batchelor, Second Vice-Chairman, and Gary Bartell. Jim Fowler (Absent)
Attorney:	Robert B. Battista
Administrators:	Richard Wm. Wesch, and Kenneth E. Saunders, Jr., Assistant
Clerks:	Betty Strifler, Clerk, and Glenda Brown, Deputy Clerk

2004 GOAL SETTING WORKSHOP

The Commissioners discussed their goals for the upcoming year as follows:

COMMISSIONER BATCHELOR

- (1) Discuss the availability of grants for the installation of a sewer system in the Indian Water Subdivision north of Crystal River at the joint meeting between the Board and the Crystal River City Council on March 1, 2004.
- (2) Consider charging a daily fee to out of County visitors for using County boat ramps by installing gated systems similar to those used on toll roads, which would dispense a daily ticket. County residents could be issued an annual card to pass through the gate at no charge or a nominal fee.
- (3) Decide upon a location for a boat ramp at the Cross-Florida Barge Canal (Canal). The boat ramp on the north side of the Canal would cause a traffic problem and would be more accommodating to Levy County residents. Improvements should be made to the boat ramp on the south side because it would be less costly and there would be ample parking space.
- (4) Insist that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) review the water run off on US-19, which was causing pollution problems.
- (5) Complete the development of amenities at the Citronelle Park.

DISCUSSION

- The interlocal agreement with the cities regarding expansion of sewer systems was still in effect and did not have a cease to exist period.
- The Commissioners supported installation of a sewer system north of Crystal River.

- Appreciation was expressed to staff and others involved in constructing the canopy over the fishing pier at the Fort Island Trail Park.
- Staff was working with the office of Greenways and Trails for a boat ramp on the north side of the river, and with the Marine Patrol for a boat ramp on the south side of the Canal.
- Staff would update the Board at a future meeting on the progress of the boat ramp situation and other projects discussed by the Board today.
- Not all boat ramps warranted a gated system and user fees at this time, in particular those boat ramps on the east side of the County.
- The gated system and user fees should be tested at the busier boat ramps.
- Reserve the revenues from boat user fees to pay for maintenance, improvements, and development.
- There could be problems with different boat user fees charged to local residents and people from out of County.
- Boat ramp tickets or cards could be renewed annually at the tax collector's office.
- Funds that were budgeted in the Capital Improvement Program to make improvements to the boat ramp on the south side of the Canal had been postponed because of the proposal to build a boat ramp on the north side.
- Make a decision on whether to maintain the Fort Island Trail Park facility for meetings and public use, or demolish the building and use the area for additional automobile parking.
- Repairs were needed to the seawalls at the Fort Island Trail Park.
- The Board agreed that the FDOT should examine the water run off on US-19, and supported the completion of Citronelle Park. (9:36 A.M.)

Directive: Staff to make a recommendation to the Board concerning the future use and estimated costs of the building at the Fort Island Trail Park

COMMISSIONER BARTELL

- (1) Be pro-active in reducing water consumption because water reduction would be required within the next five years, through either conservation rates or some other mechanism.
- (2) Establish community standards for interchanges and land development in the event the Suncoast Parkway was built through Citrus County.
- (3) Hold a workshop with the Florida Turnpike Authority to discuss building the toll road more environmentally friendly to the community.
- (4) Establish community standards for commercial construction, especially concerning metal buildings.
- (5) Develop a master plan for storm water.
- (6) Establish a safeguard before purchasing property that would protect the taxpayers should the proposed Mike Hampton Foundation (Foundation) Sports Complex not come into fruition.
- (7) Explore the possibility of storing the Withlacoochee River floodwater on the east side of the County around the old limerock pits.

Mr. Wesch elaborated on the establishment of a safeguard for the purchase of property for the Sports Complex. He stated that the Foundation aspired to have the Sports Complex in the center of the County, and that staff had identified two parcels that met the acreage requirements, one off CR-491 behind the Merita Bread Store, and the other off CR-491 north behind the post office. He explained that the safeguard would be an escrow agreement, which would require the Foundation to deposit the purchase price of the property with a stipulation that should the master agreement, and the project be unsuccessful, the County would be entitled to withdraw that money to reimburse the citizenry for money expended on the property.

DISCUSSION

- A safeguard for the Sports Complex property must be in place to protect the interest of the public.
- The Sports Complex maintenance and operation agreement would be complicated and legal questions must be answered.
- The public should have access to the Sports Complex if public funds were expended to purchase the property that would be donated to build the facility.
- Look for other property options for the Sports Complex, such as trading properties; i.e., the Betz Farm.
- The Sports Complex Project was difficult due to the size, location of the land, and the responsibilities of different entities regarding construction and maintenance.
- Staff would meet with the Foundation next week, and if possible, prepare a presentation to the Board at the first meeting in March concerning the concepts and recommendations of the different entities.
- Unless the Sports Complex satisfied the needs for practice and playing fields, the Board would continue to receive phone calls from the four organized sports leagues competing for the same four practice and playing fields.
- The Parks and Recreation Master Plan should include all segments of recreational needs for all the population, and not concentrate solely on organized sports.
- Staff had made contacts and was waiting for a response from the state regarding a trade for a 28-acre parcel of property on SR-44, west of the new Wal-Mart site in Inverness for some property in Lecanto.
- The County had been generous in providing good parks for the citizens, but local government could not donate land for every request from organized sports leagues.
- Before the Board made a commitment to purchase the property, the Foundation should appear before the Board again with their expectations and envisions for the operations of this facility.
- Extract components from the Parks and Recreation Budget 5-year Capital Improvement Program and present them to the Foundation as to the County's desires for part of the Sports Complex.
- Lake restoration would go far in restoring floodwater on the east side of the County.
- Request staff to give a presentation on the establishment of a storm water master plan.
- The Commissioners supported community standards for the Suncoast Parkway.

- Contact the Rolling Oaks Utilities regarding their success and ideas for water conservation.
- Begin water conservation education through the media, flyers, website, etc.

(10:15 A.M.)

The Chairman recessed the meeting and reconvened at 10:42 A.M.

COMMISSIONER PHILLIPS

- (1) Re-evaluate the master plan for the Central Ridge Park for future expansion and move forward in the construction of park amenities, such as walking trails and a pavilion.
- (2) Develop specific definitions in the Land Development Code (LDC) regarding junkyard conditions and code enforcement violations.
- (3) Work on the problems of overgrown grass and rodents in vacant or abandoned lots, particularly in densely populated subdivisions.
- (4) Explore the use of reflective paint or other illuminative material on signposts to increase nighttime visibility on major roadways and intersections.
- (5) Re-evaluate programs to provide better transportation for the elderly, particularly transportation to doctors' offices.
- (6) Locate a County owned facility that the Veterans Coalition, Young Marines, and other organizations could use for meetings and other needs, such as storage of items for the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation.

Mr. Wesch responded to Commissioner Phillips' question regarding the Administrative Regulation for landscaping by stating that it had been a success, with the exception of a few problems with individual entities, which staff had addressed. He added that a landowner had expressed interest in expanding the landscaping on the CR-486 Road Widening Project from Forest Ridge Boulevard to Annapolis, which staff hoped would be the new standard for roadway construction.

DISCUSSION

- Support was expressed for the master plan for parks, and for code enforcement violations regarding junkyards and overgrown grass.
- Examine the option, expense, and maintenance of solar powered lighting for visibility at intersections.
- Set a policy and limit the visibility signs to only major intersections and collector roadways.
- Commissioner Phillips was commended for her concerns and efforts with the veterans' issues.
- Consider using the climate controlled building off Arlington Street to accommodate storage for some organizations, and examine whether the Public Defender and State Attorney could purge some of the records they were storing in that building.
- The Young Marines had expressed interest in the Boy Scout property (McGregor Smith Scout Reservation).

Mrs. Strifler responded to a question regarding storage retention by explaining that the Clerk retained original court records, and that state rules for record management required a long retention period for felony case files after the appeals period. She stated that those records were kept in the historic courthouse and were permanently transferred from paper to microfilm after the appeals process time. She further stated that she was not familiar with the retention requirements of the State Attorney or Public Defender.

In response to Commissioner Phillips' request to update the Board on code enforcement, Mr. Battista replied that new Code Enforcement Board (CEB) procedures would be proposed to the Board. He advised that CEB procedures would be eliminated from the LDC and would become part of the County Code, and that there would be a section entitled "Nuisances", which would include maintenance of structures, define noise, litter, junkyard conditions, etc.

Mr. Wesch asked the Board if they would be interested in developing ordinance violations by land use classifications, for example, different standards for rural residential versus densely populated residential areas. The Commissioners thought this suggestion had merit; however, they felt there should still be basic minimum standards and specific definitions.

The Board thought staff made the right decision in transferring the Code Enforcement Section to the Public Safety Department (DPS), and praised DPS Director Charles Polisenio for the tremendous improvements. (11:18 A.M.)

COMMISSIONER WOOTEN

- (1) Direct staff to explore the possibility of providing central water and sewer for the east side of the County if the residents were willing to pay for the system.
- (2) Form a citizens' solid waste working group, and begin discussions on solid waste disposal options.
- (3) Direct staff to give a presentation regarding the current solid waste program, revenues, projections for future expansion, etc., and to consider the inclusion of up to four bags in the \$2 landfill fee.
- (4) Direct staff to schedule a PowerPoint presentation on the next phase of road widening and road improvement projects, the effects of those projects on the 25-Year Master Plan, and staff's projections for financing and prioritizing future road projects.
- (5) Continue landscaping roadways and medians.
- (6) Establish higher standards for commercial construction and require nice façades on metal buildings.
- (7) Institute an energy conservation plan for County offices; e.g., turn off lights when leaving offices and buildings.

DISCUSSION

- There being no excess money in the General Fund, the only way to fund more central water and sewer services would be through special assessment (MSBU or MSTU) programs.
- The Board should inform property owners that the County would be willing to facilitate the central water and sewer services, even though there was not a funding source.
- There would be more support from the Board if the property owners requested a central water and sewer system, and if they were willing to pay for the project through a special assessment.
- Consider accepting smaller private water systems from residents willing to donate those systems to the County.
- Offers to donate water systems to the County were typically systems that had not been maintained; therefore, it would be a tremendous expense to upgrade those systems, and the costs would be levied against the users of those systems.
- Contact the Florida Governmental Utility Authority (FGUA) regarding the inventory of all private water systems that could be integrated into the County's water system, or that the FGUA could acquire, and bring the information back to the Board.
- The \$2 landfill fee should be inclusive of the first four bags of garbage.
- Staff already had direction to explore waste disposal options, such as a transfer station, and would provide information to the Board within six weeks.
- Staff would update the Board on March 9 regarding the number of people going to the landfill, the revenue source, and information on the \$2 landfill fee.
- The Board should delay forming a citizen's solid waste working group until after staff had given a presentation on waste disposal.
- Staff would deliver higher commercial building standards in a cost efficient manner.

Commissioner Wooten informed the Board that he attended the Withlacoochee River Planning Council (WRPC) meeting, and that the WRPC voted unanimously to hold a public workshop and invite the Tampa Bay region to provide information and discuss the benefits of the National Estuary Program.

Commissioner Batchelor stated that the County had purchased the Holden property in Inverness for development of a business park and airport runway expansion. He asked if any progress had been made toward that development. Mr. Wesch advised that the County was working in conjunction with the City of Inverness on upgrading and converting the sewage treatment plant into a reuse facility, which would make the spray field acreage available for development of a business park. He added that due to the approximate cost of \$4 million, the City of Inverness was also researching grant opportunities.

Mr. Wesch responded to Commissioner Wooten's questions regarding the property adjoining the Crystal River Airport that was once proposed for the Ryan Steakhouse. He reported that staff had received fund commitments from both federal and state agencies, which could be used for acquisition of that property; however, the property

owners were demanding an exorbitant purchase price. He added that the major purpose for acquiring the property would be for runway protection zones. He added that the property could also be used for airport expansion and certain limited uses, such as parking. (11:49 A.M.)

PUBLIC COMMENT

☛ Joyce Valentino asked if there were any plans for expansion and improvements to the Floral City Library. The Chairman instructed Mr. Wesch to discuss the issue with Ms. Valentino afterward.

Mrs. Valentino agreed that there should be improvements to the boat ramps, and thought that taxpayers' dollars would be better spent on additional parking space rather than maintaining the building at the Fort Island Trail Park. She was concerned about the water runoff on US-19, and the roadway issues relating to the Suncoast Parkway. Concerning the boat user fees, she recommended that the County only charge out of County visitors and not local residents. She mentioned that the Duvall Island Boat Ramp was very dangerous and was a great liability to the County. She supported the community standards goals, conservation of water consumption and education, tightening the LDC regarding neighborhood junkyards, and was happy about the negotiations for the veterans' clinic facility.

Commissioner Phillips replied to her question regarding airboat noise by stating that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC) were addressing that issue. She stated that the County ordinance adequately addressed airboat noise; however, enforcement of the ordinance was the responsibility of the Sheriff and the Marine Patrol.

Mrs. Valentino suggested that the County meet with all the responsible agencies, delegate a task force, and increase fees to resolve the airboat noise problem.

She also stated that she had received many complaints concerning the increase in landfill fees, and suggested that the County eliminate the \$2 fee and reduce the annual landfill fee.

☛ Mike Gudis stated that he thought the Brown School would be the solution for accommodating all the veterans' facilities and storage needs for the Toys for Tots Program. He also stated that it was important to include an indoor swimming pool in the plans for the new Sports Complex. He added that he hoped the citizens were aware of the issues discussed this morning.

☛ Jim MacIntosh said that he was disappointed that the Board had not set strategic goals, such as aesthetics and requiring better setbacks for businesses. He spoke in opposition to the toll road coming through the County. He mentioned that there were not any parks in the center of the County and that the park in Holder, which had been clear-cut, was unfinished and did not have walking trails, benches, picnic tables, or a gazebo.

He stated that there were millions of dollars in grants for the gulf and lakes regions; however, the center of the County received nothing. He added that he hoped the legislature or the federal government would recognize that there were environmental areas in the Central Ridge area that could be used for wildlife corridors, conservation, and parks.

☛ Sam Lyons cautioned the Board to examine the expense involved in the installation of gated systems at boat ramps and to determine that it would not cost more to implement than the County would collect in fees. He recommended using the Fort Island Trail Park building for other uses, such as for tourism and as an entry point for the canoe and kayak trail. He suggested using rip-rap when replacing the seawall. He asked the Board to look at the big picture concerning the boat ramp on the Canal. He felt it would be a waste of money to extend the existing boat ramp, and recommended building a boat ramp on the other side of the Canal that had more acreage, plenty of space for parking, and adjoined industrial land, which would be a potential for other uses, such as a restaurant or marina.

He added that the water consumption goal was 150 gallons per person per day, and stressed the importance of water conservation and developing education programs. He talked about commercial construction, and stated that the façade of commercial buildings should reflect the character of the community. He stated that he hoped the County would explore every avenue before purchasing property for the Sports Complex, and stated that the Foundation should present a business plan that included operating expenses. He proposed that some of the sports organizations collaborate and buy County property to build ball fields because the County could not continue to donate land.

He said that the County must decide whether to contain or transport the waste out of the County, and that in his opinion, the waste should be transported out of the County. He was glad that the County was progressing with the National Estuary Program for the protection of the coastlines. He advised that the Withlacoochee River Basin Board (WRBB) had done some research, and would be a participant and could offer assistance with this program.

☛ Tom Davis stated that he would be very pleased if the Board would resolve to protect the Crystal River Airport, and expressed great respect to staff for actively safeguarding airport operations. He wanted the County to stand firm in not allowing obstruction and interference on properties surrounding the airport. He mentioned that expansion was very limited; however, additional land was needed for airport vehicle parking. He specified his goals for the Crystal River Airport this year, which were more hangars and additional ramp space.

☛ Mike Gudis asked the Board to consider another alternative for protecting the taxpayers in the purchase of land for the Sports Complex by asking the Foundation to deposit an option amount, which would be less than the purchase price, if it were agreeable to the property owners. He requested that the Board not discourage the Foundation in their offer to build this facility.

Commissioner Bartell clarified that the property owner already had a contract to sell and was interested in selling to the County. He advised that the option proposed by Mr. Gudis had already been explored. He added that the size of the property was 160 acres; however, the Foundation had asked for 75 to 100 acres.

Mr. Gudis further requested that the Board not double usage rates in order to reduce water consumption.

☛ Jimmy Brooks thanked the Board for the discussion concerning water resource issues. He stated that the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) had a great partnership with the County, and looked forward to the continued relationship in the future. The Chairman thanked Mr. Brooks and SWFWMD for their cooperation and assistance.

The Chairman mentioned some dilapidated houses, an unfinished condominium project, and garbage on the road coming into Citrus County from Dunnellon. He stated that he had met with the mayor of Dunnellon and the Southwest Dunnellon Civic Association about cleaning up that corridor. He requested that staff research the condominium project and find out the reason it had been allowed to remain in an unfinished state for so many years, and if the land was available and suitable for building a boat ramp. Mr. Wesch stated that staff would research his request.

There being no other business to come before the Board, the Chairman adjourned the meeting. (12 24 P.M.)

ATTEST: _____, Clerk _____, Chairman