

CAUSEWAY IMPROVEMENTS REFERENDUM COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Causeway Improvements Referendum Committee, appointed by the North Brevard Commission on Parks and Recreation, an advisory board, held Monday, June 9, 2003, at 6:00 p.m., at the Brevard Room.

Members Present

Eric Dirschka, Chairman
Jiji Connolly
Paul Nydam
Laurilee Thompson
Dorn Whitmore
Maureen Wright
Ted Beck, Ex-Officio (NBCPR)
Rich Votapka, Ex-Officio (City)

Members Absent

Kathy Keen
Captain Mickey Otwell

A&E Present

Woody Rice, Honeycutt and Associates

County Staff Present

Charles S. Nelson, Parks & Recreation Director
Cheryl K. Page, North Area Parks Operations Manager
Chuck Mays, Construction Coordinator
Jill Hill, Recreation Leader

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Eric Dirschka called the meeting to order at approximately 6:08 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the September 24, 2001, meeting were approved with changes at the motion by Paul Nydam, seconded by Jiji Connolly. In the last paragraph on page 2, Ted Beck's and Woody Rice's statements reading "an impervious parking area" were corrected to read "a pervious parking area."

AYE: Dirschka, Connolly, Nydam, Thompson, Whitmore, Wright.

NAY: None

Carried: 6-0

III. STAFF REPORTS - None

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Chuck Nelson reported that the project had been placed on hold due to the Max Brewer Bridge. He stated the existing bridge has significant problems and needs to be replaced. Mr. Nelson added that an effort began a couple of years ago to replace the bridge with a high-rise bridge. The high-rise bridge does not require any moveable span and boats can pass under the bridge. Mr. Nelson then reintroduced Woody Rice with Honeycutt & Associates to review what the Committee had discussed at the last meeting and what they might look at in the future.

Woody Rice showed the Committee the current conditions of the area and reviewed what the Committee had discussed at their previous meeting. Mr. Rice then showed the Committee some future possibilities for the park with regard to green space and landscaping. Dorn Whitmore inquired if the existing restrooms would remain. Woody Rice stated they would and additional facilities could be added after the bridge comes in.

Chuck Nelson expressed to the Committee that this project has been discussed for some time now even before the referendum. He added that a lot of information regarding this project has evolved over time and stressed the importance of this Committee. Mr. Nelson stated staff wanted to bring the Committee back up to speed with the project, and due to the bridge, the elements will remain the same but how the end result is accomplished may differ. Chuck Nelson stated he will be discussing what he currently understands to be happening with the bridge and how that will impact this project. Woody Rice stated he believes the only other element that was added at the last meeting was the pavilion on the peninsula.

Dorn Whitmore inquired if this project would be the entire causeway out to the Wildlife Refuge. Chuck Nelson responded the project is split up into phases and the funding available is for the first phase.

Chuck Nelson stated he spoke with John Denninghoff with County Engineering today regarding the bridge. Mr. Nelson stated the design phase for the bridge is about to begin. He added that the bridge is intended to come across on the south side of the causeway. He added it will have to clear 65 feet at the channel and will be a high-rise bridge. Mr. Nelson stated a federal agency would like to see the whole causeway taken out because of environmental reasons. He added he believed that possibility is remote. Mr. Nelson suggested that the Committee look at the causeway in conjunction with the updated bridge information. Chairman Dirschka inquired how the Committee could plan until there was a final determination on the bridge. Chuck Nelson replied that it is important for the Committee to have their ideas together so they may be incorporated with the bridge. Chairman Dirschka stated he believed the causeway should be designed in conjunction with the bridge. Rich Votapka added that there is currently no funding for the bridge.

Jiji Connolly inquired how much money is needed to fund the bridge. Rich Votapka stated approximately 20 million dollars. Chuck Nelson then distributed diagrams of what the bridge might look like. Mr. Nelson added Parks & Recreation will recommend that the old bridge be refurbished for recreational use rather than tearing it down. Mr. Nelson recommended the Committee send Woody Rice on a mission to ascertain where the alignment of the bridge will be and come back with a concept plan in about a month. Mr. Nelson would like Mr. Rice to consider the elements that have been previously described and anything that may have been added this evening.

Maureen Wright inquired if it is possible that the access to the causeway could disappear. Chuck Nelson stated that the State does allow recreational access particularly when it has been designed as part of the original project.

Cheryl Page commented that the overflow boat parking is an issue. Laurilee Thompson inquired if the shoulder could be widened to accommodate the parking. Chuck Nelson stated a possible way to approach this would be to give Mr. Rice some guidance as to what the Committee would

or would not like to see regarding additional parking. Dorn Whitmore added there is a continual parking problem. Chuck Nelson added that the final site plan for Marina Park will incorporate better and more adequate launching capacity. Cheryl Page stated that a grant has been applied for to repair the docks or ramps at Parrish Park. She added these improvements will attract people to that area. Mrs. Page advised that this is separate from this Committee but she wanted to give the information to the Committee.

Dorn Whitmore inquired if it this Committee's responsibility or the Committee that is working on the bridge, when the high-rise bridge goes in, to gain access on the east side to the boat ramp and the Marine Patrol headquarters. Chuck Nelson replied it would be appropriate for this Committee to look at that because of the user prospective. Chuck Nelson stated because there is a high-rise going in that we need to change our way of thinking because there will be space under the new bridge for parking that you can't currently park in. He added with the addition of the bridge there will be areas that were not there before that can be designed into the park.

Chairman Dirschka stated he believed it is important to accommodate as much car and trailer parking areas as possible. He added it is also important to curb off the other areas so that the overflow parking is not pulling up on the landscaping. Chuck Nelson agreed.

Paul Nydam inquired if it is feasible to charge a user fee. Chuck Nelson stated the cost of collection often exceeds the revenue. Mr. Nelson stated you may get a spin off benefit of security out of it but you do not make a lot of revenue.

Dorn Whitmore stated his vision would be a seamless interface between the causeway and the Wildlife Refuge. He added the Refuge will have a conceptual plan by mid-June. He stated he would like to see perhaps some more walkways and more connectivity between Titusville and the refuge.

Woody Rice stated he would recommend viewing the refuge plans to have a good flow from the causeway to the Refuge.

Paul Nydam inquired if there was a design for a walkway on the bridge. Rich Votapka stated there is a four foot wide bike lane and possibly an observation deck. Mr. Nydam inquired if the walkway would be on the south side of the bridge. Mr. Nelson stated he believed it would.

Dorn Whitmore inquired about alternative sites to the causeway during shuttle launches. Chuck Nelson stated there is an attempt to spread it out some. He added currently there are no physical barriers and people can park anywhere. Mr. Nelson stated a design that formalizes some of the traffic patterns will give the ability to direct people. He added that Sand Point will have additional parking on the south side.

Chairman Dirschka inquired if the Marine Patrol property can be reconfigured. Woody Rice stated this is something that can be approached. Chuck Nelson stated if there is a design concept that has minimal impact, no impact, or maybe even a benefit, they may be receptive.

Ted Beck added that there is a lot of interest at the Federal, State, and County levels and he believed they may come up with some funding. He added that NASA may play a part in this

also. Rich Votapka stated there have been letters of support from NASA but no funding. Dorn Whitmore stated there are a number of grants available.

Rich Votapka stated that the problem is this bridge is not on the State system. He added this is a County-owned right of way. He stated that the City's portion of the relief bridge is a City-owned right of way. He stated the key would be if this would revert back to the State and the state assumed the right of way, it would be eligible for other additional funds through the Federal Highway Administration and the State. Discussion ensued regarding the bridge.

Paul Nydam inquired who funds the bridge tender positions. Rich Votapka stated the County does.

Dorn Whitmore inquired if the County has looked into partnering with FIND. Chuck Nelson stated the County has not. He added that it is a great source.

Chuck Nelson recommended asking the A & E to propose some ideas and the Committee would meet again on Monday, July 21, 2003, at 6:00 p.m.

Paul Nydam inquired where the materials to construct the new bridge would be placed during construction. Chuck Nelson stated he believed the best this Committee can hope to achieve at this point is a master plan that is functional and can be done. He stated he believes the materials would be placed on the causeway.

Motion by Paul Nydam, seconded by Laurilee Thompson, to create a concept plan to coordinate with the bridge layout, add additional parking, and access to Parrish Park-Titusville possibly through the Marine Patrol.

AYE: Dirschka, Connolly, Nydam, Thompson, Whitmore, Wright.

NAY: None

Carried: 6-0

Chuck Nelson stated he believes the bridge would have to be almost completed before the construction can begin. JiJi Connolly stated she would like to keep it simple. Rich Votapka requested clarification on Chuck Nelson's statement regarding completion of the bridge. Mr. Votapka inquired if it was completion of the design phase or construction of the bridge. Chuck Nelson stated the Committee will have to see what the plan looks like. Rich Votapka stated it will possibly be 10 years before the bridge is complete. Chairman Dirschka stated he believes the bridge and the causeway project should be combined and planned together. Chuck Nelson stated that the DOT does not like to have parks on the causeways.

Paul Nydam inquired if there is a time frame for spending the money. Chuck Nelson stated the bond is for 20 years, and added that the key is to not stop the planning process. Rich Votapka added that once the alignment is set, planning could begin. Mr. Votapka stated the Committee could work on the east side of the Marine Patrol building for now.

V. NEW BUSINESS - None

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

Wayne Wright stated that the bridge in New Smyrna is great. He added if anyone would have input on aesthetics. Chuck Nelson stated they will ask that question. Rich Votapka stated there

will be a public hearing and other public hearings that the Committee can attend and give their input and ask about the elements. He added DOT is the driving force behind the design. He added that the County is the driving force for the PD &E study and paid \$500,000 to get this in motion. Laurilee Thompson requested the Committee be notified when these public hearings are going to be held.

VII. ADJOURN

The next meeting date was set for Monday, July 21, 2003, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Dirschka
Chairman

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