

CUYLER PARK REFERENDUM COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Cuyler Park Referendum Committee, appointed by the North Brevard Commission on Parks and Recreation, an advisory board, held Monday, June 18, 2001, at 6 p.m., at the Cuyler Park Annex.

Members Present

Dwight Seigler, Chairman
Juanita Barton, Vice Chairman
Shawn Harris
Deborah Rodwell
Corine Saunders

County Staff Present

Charles S. Nelson, Parks & Recreation Director
Greg Minor, Special Projects Coordinator IV
Cheryl Page, North Area Parks Operations Manager
Judy Inman, Administrative Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER

Charles Nelson called the meeting to order at about 7:10 p.m.

II. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN & VICE CHAIRMAN

Mr. Nelson opened the floor for nominations for chairman. Only one nomination was made.

Nomination by Deborah Rodwell, seconded by Juanita Barton for Dwight Seigler to serve as chairman for the Cuyler Park Referendum Committee.

AYE: Barton, Rodwell, Saunders, Seigler

NAY: None

Carried: 4-0

The gavel was given to Chairman Seigler who opened the floor for nominations for vice chairman.

Juanita Barton suggested having a facilitator rather than a vice chairman. Mr. Nelson suggested that could be an additional role, but a vice chairman was needed in the event the chairman was not present.

Nomination by Corine Saunders, seconded by Deborah Rodwell for Juanita Barton to serve as vice chairperson for the Cuyler Park Referendum Committee.

AYE: Barton, Rodwell, Saunders, Seigler

NAY: None

Carried: 4-0

III. MISSION STATEMENT & COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

Mrs. Page presented a sample mission statement format presented to the North Brevard Commission on Parks and Recreation (NBCPR) adapted for this committee, announced that the committee serves under the Sunshine Law, noted minutes are not verbatim, and the committee will make recommendations to the NBCPR. (See attached.) The NBCPR appointed the committee at their June 14, 2001, meeting. Dr. Ron Bobay will be the liaison for the NBCPR but was unable to attend tonight due to schedule conflict. Dr. Bobay is the liaison because Cuyler

Park is on School Board property, but the recently acquired property to the north is owned by the Board of County Commissioners.

IV. DISCUSSION OF PROJECT

Juanita Barton inquired of the process for making recommendations regarding additional renovations or changes to existing facility. Mr. Nelson indicated the committee could make those recommendations and then he reviewed what can and cannot be done with Referendum dollars. He noted there are some limitations as to how far a committee can deviate from the stated Referendum project components. Had there been a decision not to acquire the land, then the whole Referendum could have been contested. (The land has been acquired.) Had the owner decided not to sell, it would have been a different case. To the extent possible, the designated items should be completed, then other things can be determined. This project has \$70,000 allocated. After it is known how much is needed for the other projects, there may be some re-allocations made by the Board of County Commissioners, based on recommendations from the area advisory boards. Any money collected under the Referendum must go to recreation projects.

Mr. Nelson continued, now that the land has been acquired, the committee will be discussing where to go from there. Perhaps a sidewalk would be necessary to get from the land acquired to an existing structure. Referendum dollars could be spent for that because it is adjacent to and part of it.

Juanita Barton inquired if the committee is working with two sets of rules. Mr. Nelson indicated that because the County owns the property now, it gives a stronger ability to deal with anything that happens on that property. If the committee decides to do something on the part of Cuyler Park owned by the School Board and a certain threshold in the agreement with the School Board is tripped, it may be necessary to go to the School Board and ask to make such improvements.

In response to an inquiry from Chairman Seigler, Mr. Nelson reported the purchase was \$38,000 plus closing costs which brought the final cost to around \$41,000. Chairman Seigler noted that only leaves about \$29,000 of which little will remain after asbestos check and cleanup of the property. Mr. Nelson indicated staff is looking at about \$10,000 for actual removal of the three buildings. Mr. Nelson suggested one of the roles of the committee should be is to look at what the future of the property is going to be.

Chairman Seigler noted most projects will probably attempt to spend all that is allocated to them and therefore it could be many years before more money is available. Mr. Nelson agreed that the common desire is to try to do the best job possible with the money allocated which he thinks will be seen. Staff's job is to monitor that at least so staff can advise how that is proceeding. The advisory board may agree that some additional improvement is necessary at a site, just as the committee may decide to do something not previously anticipated. Because the land acquisition didn't cost as much as was expected, there is extra money for the project.

Mr. Nelson suggested the real role of the committee in this project is what will the long-range uses be and see where that fits in how the Referendum dollars become available. Staff will attempt to get grants for some projects which may create additional money to be available throughout the entire system. Mr. Nelson reported the bonds have been sold and will start earning interest. Mr. Nelson stated this project has the advantage of having access to

Community Development Block Grant funding. Ms. Barton indicated that is already allocated for the next few years.

Chairman Seigler noted the reluctance of some to tax themselves for a Referendum which entails \$15,000,000. Now that the property has been purchased, what is going to be done with it. Mr. Nelson explained the other side of that is if the County had just said they wanted to buy \$50,000,000 and not tell how it would be spent, then this meeting would not be held because most people would not have been comfortable enough voting for it. Therefore the specific projects were listed.

Juanita Barton noted this community did not do pre-planning as was done in other communities, therefore it is now necessary to catch up to find funds to do what is needed to be done. Ms. Barton suggested that rather than being concerned about dollars at this stage, to instead come up with some concrete plans of what is wanted, then go out and find the resources. She also reminded the committee there is a broader community out there whose resources can be tapped. In response to Ms. Barton's inquiry, Mr. Nelson indicated there was no restriction on that. Ms. Barton proposed doing the post planning, have staff come up with a dollar figure, then find out who else needs to sit at the table to bring the other needed dollars in. Ms. Barton stated all the dollars may not come from Parks and Recreation or the Referendum.

Chairman Seigler questioned why other dollars need to be found when there is the Referendum. Mr. Nelson explained the Referendum dollars were allocated, right or wrong, and dollars can't be taken from another project. Mr. Nelson agreed with Ms. Barton's suggestion for a plan of what is wanted because there will be some windows of opportunity for resources, whether from the Referendum or other sources. A plan would make it possible to give the information at the right time to the right people. The dilemma is that it would be extremely difficult at this early stage to go into any of those other projects and say the money needs to go to another project without having those committees actually meet.

Mr. Seigler agreed with Ms. Barton's idea to have a plan when there is money available from the Referendum or somewhere else. Mr. Nelson indicated he is probably overly cautious because there are 14 other committees to deal with and they may feel the same way—that they didn't get enough money to do what they want to do. Mr. Nelson stated he will probably be facing that issue as well and they will hear the same speech. The process needs to be further along and the projects are further defined. Other committees will go through a similar process. The committees will be kept apprized of what is going on. Parks and Recreation doesn't have a bias as to who should get the most money. It comes down to, is what the Referendum information says being done? The greatest danger would be to not do what was said would be done. That's not to say more may not be done based on other resources which might be found.

Mr. Nelson stated one thing that he would like to see and senses there is probably agreement, is that the structures need to go so they don't become a community liability further than what they are. Calls are being received from County Code Enforcement because of Ms. Barton's group's efforts to clean up. The other thing which will be done and will not be charged to the project, will be for the maintenance staff begin to clean up the site. The fence between the two properties can be removed now that it is a part of the park. It was noted the pond is now a low grass area or depression. That way it will be easier to see what the site looks like.

Shawn Harris arrived about this time.

Ms. Barton asked to write on the flip chart and stated the need for a sequence of things needed and the following was arrived at:

1. Plans
2. Prioritize
3. Parks & Recreation make cost estimates in order to find money
4. Action plan (suggested later by Mr. Nelson)

In response to an inquiry from Ms. Barton regarding frequency of meetings, Mr. Nelson indicated the committee can meet as often as they wish in order to accomplish their task. Ms. Barton noted the need for this committee to go a little faster than others because this project did not have the benefit of pre-planning.

Shawn Harris inquired if the information this committee is preparing will go before the Parks and Recreation Commission and then on to the County which staff agreed was true. Mr. Harris stated the chairman or vice chairman needs to attend commission meetings when this project will be discussed.

Ms. Barton suggested the committee come up with ways to bring dollars into the community, with grants being an excellent way to do it. Organizations such as the college and hospital have dollars which could be spent in this community. She suggested a visioning workshop be held to come up with a basic plan, then prioritize what really, really is wanted and what the committee would like to have. Mrs. Page noted this was advertised as a public meeting. Ms. Barton suggested also putting flyers in the churches.

Shawn Harris reported he met with Commissioner Scarborough a couple of months ago regarding long-term goals of Parks and Recreation and asked if Parks and Recreation has a five-year plan or is a part of the County's Comprehensive Plan in this particular area. That information is needed so the committee knows what the County is planning to develop in the area. That will give the committee the direction in which to go.

Mr. Nelson responded the County's Capital Improvement Plan has parks projects, but for the most part they are the Referendum projects. A project that could potentially impact this area is the County is looking to acquire 10 acres near Pinewood Elementary School that could potentially in the future have a community center. The community center is not funded to be constructed at this time, but rather land acquisition, a softball field, a soccer field, a 40x60 pavilion, a playground, restroom and parking are in the Referendum project.

Mr. Harris indicated he had read that and that is why he asked that particular question because he wants to make sure the committee isn't spinning their wheels coming up with plans when there is something else going on they don't know about. He had heard about Pinewood, but didn't know the plans.

Mr. Nelson indicated conceptually the size of the property is known and the types of improvements, but there isn't a detailed plan of how that will fit on the site. At this point, the County is in the land acquisition stage and the site may change. Those things are fluid right now until the land is in hand. South of Cuyler there is the Chain of Lakes project which is primarily

soccer, baseball/softball in a recreation complex setting versus being a community based setting as is Cuyler, even though Cuyler may have some of the same elements. Mr. Nelson agreed with Mr. Harris that it is necessary to look at the big picture to know what is happening around the area. The improvements here would be considered more of a community based, residential base. People will have to drive to those other parks because there isn't a big population in the immediate area.

Mr. Harris stated that hearing "community based" gives the committee some type of parameter. Mr. Harris indicated the second thing he wanted to make sure is that as these things are developed, the committee needs to know what is going on. Mr. Nelson announced staff will be doing a monthly newsletter of all the projects that gives highlights and there will also be information on the County webpage that also updates the information bi-weekly. This is to keep the information flowing to the greatest extent possible. Mr. Nelson welcomed calls to staff when needed. Mr. Nelson stated that one thing he might approach a little differently is to add an action plan (listed above).

Ms. Barton inquired about a time line. Mr. Nelson noted the committee had run out of time for this meeting, but at the next meeting that could be laid out. The most immediate action is the committee's agreement to proceed with the demolition which needs to be bid. Staff believes at this point demolition will be less than \$10,000 to raze the three houses. There is some asbestos which tends to drive the cost up. Mr. Nelson noted that once the County owns the property, they have to meet a higher standard than homeowners which results in spending more money. The demolition would be less if those requirements didn't have to be met. A wet demolition will be done to keep the dust down and any asbestos from becoming friable. The irony is it is basically in the floor tile.

Ms. Barton noted the community has demolition dollars as a part of the 20/20 Visioning Projects and asked if that could be used. Mr. Nelson stated he didn't know the answer to that question. One question is the political side where the committee would have to deal with the community and would they see the substitution of that money as being positive or negative. The second question, which probably should come first, is, would that program allow the buildings to be demolished if owned by government. Mr. Nelson stated he could find the answer. Ms. Barton explained there are several houses on the list but one of the hold ups is the legal standing for demolition. Some of the dollars have been sitting there for quite a while and probably by the next time the County gets to the place where all the paperwork is in order, there will probably be additional funding for those. In response to an inquiry from Mr. Harris, Ms. Barton explained the demolition program and the funding comes from a federal program.

In response to a comment from Mr. Nelson regarding the time spent in using the money, Ms. Barton agreed that the funding might go away if not spend in time. She also stated that unfortunately the next time funding is requested, much won't be given if it wasn't used the first time.

Corine Saunders noted there are four houses to be torn down and all the paperwork is completed, and yet they are still waiting for the demolition. Ms. Barton indicated she is not referring to the voluntary project, but there is money for involuntary projects. Ms. Saunders stated she prefers using Parks and Recreation dollars. Mr. Nelson indicated he will do the background and even if the project proceeded, an internal transfer could be done later.

Shawn Harris offered a motion to instruct Parks and Recreation staff to inquire if it is feasible to use demolition money towards the Cuyler Referendum project which he subsequently withdrew because staff can make the inquiries without a motion.

Shawn Harris made a motion, seconded by Corine Saunders, for Parks and Recreation to proceed with the demolition of the three buildings on the property.

AYE: Barton, Harris, Rodwell, Saunders, Seigler

NAY: None

Carried 5-0

Mr. Nelson stated staff will do the research on the other funding sources and will begin to schedule the cleanup of the rest of the site. Staff will let the committee know when they are ready to start.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT–None

VI. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Mrs. Page observed Monday was the best meeting day when she was calling the committee and suggested the committee discuss what is best.

Chairman Seigler suggested meeting with the East Mims Progressive Civic League. Mrs. Page noted the Sunshine requirements. Mr. Nelson clarified that the committee can report to the civic league what happened in the meeting, but the committee can't discuss the project outside of a committee meeting.

It was decided to meet on Mondays. Ms. Barton suggested more than an hour will be required for initial planning meetings. Mrs. Page suggested meeting before the civic league meeting to begin discussion and continue on into the civic league meeting where there is a larger audience. It was determined the next meeting will be on July 16, at 6 p.m.

VII. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:15 at the motion by Juanita Barton, seconded by Corine Saunders.

Respectfully submitted,

Dwight Seigler, Chairman

jbi