

DOWNTOWN URBAN PARKS REFERENDUM COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of the Downtown Urban Parks Referendum Committee Meeting, appointed by the North Brevard Commission on Parks & Recreation (NBCPR), held Monday, June 7, 2004, 5:30 p.m., in the Brevard Room at the Brevard County Government Complex North in Titusville, Florida.

Members Present

Sondra Ball, Vice Chair
Linda Fliss
Jackie Gregory
Paul Nydam
Dee Whited
Courtney Harris (Ex-Officio, City)

Members Absent

Greg Aker
George Mosakowski, Chairman
Ron Bobay (Ex-Officio, County)

County Staff Present

Charles S. Nelson, Parks & Recreation Director
Cheryl K. Page, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director
Terry A. Lane, Interim North Area Parks Operations Manager
Judy Inman, Administrative Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:44 p.m. by Vice Chair Sondra Ball.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of June 16, 2003, meeting were approved at the motion by Linda Fliss, seconded Dee Whited.

AYE: Ball, Fliss, Gregory, Nydam, Whited

NAY: None Carried 5-0

III. STAFF REPORTS—None

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Courtney Harris, redevelopment specialist, started with the City of Titusville three months ago. She reported she reviewed the minutes, looked at the parking lot design, and spoke with engineering regarding the need to redo curb lines. The Titusville Area Chamber of Commerce uses the area for events, which businesses love, but don't like the parking lot being taken up. In the plan presented by Ms. Harris, the vendors' market is near Julia Street, which could be closed off for large events, and continues the theme from the Commons area. The City is working with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to redo U.S. 1. Because of extending the Commons to the area, the two-way entrance needs to be removed which loses some parking spaces. There are 47 spaces in the new design. When U.S. 1 is redone, the master plan for downtown redevelopment will include other provisions for parking so this will not be the only parking area. Also when redoing U.S. 1, on-street handicap parking will be provided. In this design there are pavers between landscape islands for walking through. The additional landscaping will take away the look of a block for parking. The plan will make the Julia Street area an

activity generator. After design approval, Ms. Harris will want to get a cost estimate because it will cost more than \$50,000. Ms. Harris will then look for funding sources such as CRA (Community Redevelopment Agency), TIF (Tax Increment Financing), or grant funding

In response to inquiries from Linda Fliss regarding lights, benches and disabled parking, Ms. Harris indicated lights are within landscape islands and along Washington Avenue. Benches would be done with construction of the permanent shade structures in the vendors' market. Two additional disabled parking spaces could be added to the existing two. Mr. Nelson commented that two spaces meets code, but the community has a greater need.

Ms. Harris reported she has met with some individuals regarding the Pritchard House and would want the shade structures and parking lot to be designed to compliment the activities at Pritchard House.

Chuck Nelson reported the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has authorized the department to seek two additional appraisals of the house to actively pursue acquisition of the house. The house is not part of this project and because there isn't money for purchase, the County is looking at commercial paper which would be paid over a period of time by North Area Parks Operations.

In response to an inquiry from Sondra Ball, Ms. Harris reported the family has been living on the bottom floor and the City wants to work with the County to get the house restored, which the owner wants to be for public use, like a living museum.

Mr. Nelson announced the County received a letter from the City stating they are no longer considering a business structure on the parking lot. Usage would be for events, rather than an ongoing downtown business.

Ms. Harris reported she is researching other cities that have public markets, where the city rents out tables very inexpensively, like \$15 per day with a vendor's license application.

In response to an inquiry from Sondra Ball, Ms. Harris reported that expansion of the parking into the Pritchard property would require retention for stormwater requirements. The additional 1,000 square feet allowed has been used in the design. Mr. Nelson indicated that because it is a historical restoration, he would like to see the space remain green to keep the feeling of a large yard which could be used for weddings, etc.

In response to inquiries from Dee Whited regarding vendors and reduction in parking spaces, Ms. Harris noted Julia Street can be closed for large events. Only 14 spaces would be taken away. The downtown master plan being created will have other public parking. Smaller scattered parking lots look better than a large one. Jackie Gregory noted the parking lot is not even close to being full during the week.

Ms. Harris commented that people have always parked close to businesses in Titusville, but with growth, there is the need to make parking as least inconvenient as possible. She noted the need to improve parking at the Courthouse as well.

At Sondra Ball's request, Ms. Harris explained the photos of the shade structures which would be made of wood to match the Pritchard House. Linda Fliss noted there are new composite materials that last forever and asked if the structures would be safe from destruction by vagrants. Ms. Harris responded they are just four poles and shade. Benches near them would be a concern. In response to an inquiry by Paul Nydam, Ms. Harris indicated the permanent structures would have to meet code for hurricanes.

Sondra Ball asked if plantings could provide a shaded area. Ms. Harris responded those are pretty and she will look at that. She would want to put planters throughout and to extend the pavers of the Commons Area. These elements will be included in the design.

It was confirmed there is not a landscape architect on either the City or County staff.

In response to an inquiry from Ms. Ball regarding the County and City working together on this project as a joint effort, Mr. Nelson indicated specific concerns could be addressed in an amendment to the existing inter-local agreement. Ms. Ball asked if it is basically the job of the City to design and oversee construction. Mr. Nelson responded that usually the County does the up front work and then goes to the City, but in this case the City is doing the up-front work which is fine. Release of the \$50,000 would have to have concurrence by this Committee and ultimately the BOCC by agreement.

Paul Nydam inquired if this can be classified as a park. Mr. Nelson explained that the original discussion for downtown was called a Promenade which was much broader and grander than this. The North Brevard Commission on Parks and Recreation (NBCPR) took a piece of the picture, due to cost, which was to be softening of the parking lot with landscaping, so there would be a nice amenity downtown, even though it would not have recreational features, it would be more of a green space than a big parking lot.

Jackie Gregory inquired who came up with the idea of a market. Mr. Nelson noted that after purchase by the City, it was seen as the opportunity for downtown events. The City can do what the CRA would like since they have purchased it, and want to bring the downtown area back to life.

Ms. Gregory inquired about Centennial Park property. Ms. Harris explained a developer wants to build a structure next to the stormwater park and that structure will have bottom floor retail and the rest will be residential. They need a portion of the fire station property for their stormwater requirements which could be combined with the Eckerds' pond instead of tiny ponds downtown. Ms. Gregory inquired if that property is to be sold to a private developer. Ms. Harris responded yes, negotiations for sale are in progress, but the fire station and Centennial Park are being kept for future development. Onsite retention is required for development projects.

Linda Fliss inquired if most of the stores downtown are in agreement with the vendor space. Ms. Harris responded she hasn't discussed it with them. At one time there was discussion of keeping the whole parking lot and closing Julia Street for the vendors' market, but property owners on Julia Street were not in favor of that. The new owner of the hair shop however likes the idea of the vendors' area. Ms. Fliss noted the need to get 100% approval. Ms. Harris reported Nora Drown is

organizing the Historic Titusville Association really well. They are the sounding board for the CRA of what the community is looking for. The downtown merchants have been very supportive of every event Ms. Drown has organized and some of the businesses are staying open for the Friday night festival.

Paul Nydam asked if there is an aerial to show green space vs parking lot and what City Council desires. Ms. Harris responded the perimeter landscaping has been increased by five feet and there are four additional landscaped islands. There are also extra entrances with landscape islands. This keeps people from seeing a long expanse of asphalt. City Council definitely wants landscaping, and has concern of the flow, but want to keep a good amount of parking spaces. Delivery trucks also use Julia Street and the parking lot on east side.

Linda Fliss inquired when the project is proposed to begin. Ms. Harris responded that upon approval, she would have to take it to the vendors, Historic Titusville Association, find a landscape architect to help design the vendors' market area, and the CRA would have to figure out how to get funding to move the curbs.

In response in an inquiry from Sondra Ball, Ms. Harris stated she does not have a projection on the total cost because the concept hasn't been approved and it is not fully designed. She is looking for concept approval first. The project will probably have to be phased with parking first, then the vending area. The drainage pipe is too small and will need to be corrected. Approval of the concept is needed to coordinate with plans for U.S. 1.

Sondra Ball reported that she was on a Transformation team when the parking lot first came up years ago, and the thought was to get a long-term lease from SunTrust Bank, and use some of the Transformation funds from the City. At the time the cost factor for new water lines and landscaping was about \$20,000. There are two water meters there and City water would have to be used. Ms. Harris responded that the City is researching getting reuse lines in that area when digging for U.S. 1 to fix drainage. Jackie Gregory noted that Wes Hoaglund said no grass, only mulch and plant material so eventually when plants are established, very little water would be needed and maintenance would be cut drastically if there is no grass to mow. Ms. Harris responded the City created a downtown landscaping plan for the Commons and would like to use that same theme in other public areas downtown and create a landscaping ordinance for downtown.

In response to an inquiry from Paul Nydam, Ms. Harris indicated retention would not be needed because the area is already paved. Any additional paving would require retention.

Sondra Ball mentioned the possibility of a gazebo by the Pritchard House, which Linda Fliss said would work well for weddings. Ms. Harris indicated she could look at access from the parking lot to the Pritchard House.

In response the inquiries from Ms. Ball, Ms. Harris indicated that if the Pritchard House is purchased the area would be looked at as one piece, and the existing established palm trees and existing oak tree would be kept. The oak trees on U.S. 1 will be removed, but not the ones by the Pritchard House.

Paul Nydam asked about the motion at the last meeting for gazebo in SE corner of drawing S/W-3. Mr. Nelson stated this group is back to the drawing board, and while a gazebo may be desired, that may not be the best place for it. Mr. Nelson stated that there has been a transition. It has been a pleasure working with Ms. Harris because there has been more communication on this project in the last three months, than in the previous three years. Softening with landscaping and better use of the parking lot is what the NBCPR talked about to get it on the Referendum ballot. Mr. Nelson continued by saying he believes that what Ms. Harris is asking the Committee for is if they like the concept, rather than specifics.

Motion by Paul Nydam, seconded by Dee Whited to abandon the old concept plan and start fresh with the City of Titusville on this plan.

AYE: Ball, Fliss, Gregory, Nydam, Whited

NAY: None

Carried 5-0

In response to an inquiry from Mr. Nydam, Ted Beck agreed this is consistent with the idea the NBCPR had which is to improve the parking lot for theater patrons and beautify downtown. Mr. Nelson noted one caveat in terms of the concept is there was no discussion of a vendor's market at that time, but making it safe and lighted was indeed the concept. The addition of the vendor's market and extension of the Commons can be discussed.

Ms. Harris stated that if the Committee likes the concept of the vendor's market area and the parking plan, next would be to go to the design of the vendor's market.

Linda Floss reviewed that the desire is to have the eye travel the whole area with a flow rather than being choppy—from parking lot, to trees, to Pritchard House.

Ms. Harris stated that the details of continuity from the Pritchard House to the vendor's market will be addressed in design of the shade structures and with the landscape architect.

Sondra Ball inquired if the Committee will be able to see plans as they move forward and noted the need to keep weeds from growing between bricks which is an eyesore. Ms. Harris suggested that stamped concrete or other means could be used to avoid weeds. Linda Fliss noted it might be less money to use crete rather than pavers.

In response to an inquiry from Ms. Ball, Ms. Harris reported FDOT will take out the oaks along U.S. 1 as they are causing infrastructure problems, but the oaks in the Commons area will be saved.

Motion by Paul Nydam, seconded by Linda Fliss to approve the conceptual plan presented this evening.
AYE: Ball, Fliss, Gregory, Nydam, Whited
NAY: None **Carried 5-0**

Discussion prior to vote included:

- Possibility of temporary shading for the vendors' area (Whited).
- More landscaping (Gregory). Ms. Harris noted the size of islands is almost doubled and there are four more, and the perimeter landscaping is expanded by an additional five feet. Mr. Nelson noted this plan has less asphalt than currently exists.
- More details are needed (Gregory). Mr. Nelson noted the need for approval before getting more specifics. From a personal perspective, he believes there needs to be water in an urban setting. Ms. Harris needs to be sure this is the general direction and suggestions for details of landscaping and benches can be made later.
- Mr. Nelson stated that before the dollars can be released, it must go into the agreement, so the concept plan will be part of that. The Committee must be comfortable before the NBCPR will recommend it to the BOCC.
- Jackie Gregory stated she didn't want to seem argumentative, but in her mind the Committee had a concept worked out, and now it's all changed so she needs some time to examine it. Ms. Harris noted the existing curbing is poorly designed as it makes one go in the wrong direction, the existing drainage is too small, and the area needs resurfacing, so why not redesign now.
- Ted Beck reported every Referendum project has started with a conceptual plan which is improved on in future meetings.

- Closing Julia Street for events is a good idea (Whited).
- Covered vendors' area could serve another purpose such as shelter on a rainy night (Fliss). Ms. Harris cautioned about benches under the structures so there is area for tables for vendors and other events.

Sondra Ball thanked Courtney Harris for all her work and noted it is exciting to see it moving ahead. Mr. Nelson also thanked Ms. Harris for her work and inquired of the time line. Ms. Harris stated it might have to be tabled to next month's CRA meeting, then it can go into design. She stated she has heard the Committee's concerns and can come back with a rough sketch in 90 to 120 days.

V. NEW BUSINESS--None

VI. PUBLIC INPUT--None

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7 p.m. at the motion by Paul Nydam, seconded by Linda Fliss.

Respectfully submitted.

Sondra Ball, Vice Chair

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