

**EQUESTRIAN TRAILS & FACILITIES & MIMS-SCOTTSMOOR COMMUNITY CENTER
REFERENDUM COMMITTEES**

**Appointed by the North Brevard Commission on Parks and Recreation (NBCPR)
Minutes of the Joint Meeting held January 28, 2004, 4:00 p.m.,
at the Mims/Scottsmoor Library**

Equestrian Trails & Facilities Members Present:

Jennifer Hill, Sabrina Jeffers, Dan Matrazzo, Donna McCone, Kay Miller, Mary Page, Winnie Woods

Members Absent: Cindy Carlton, Connie Carswell

Mims-Scottsmoor Community Members Present:

Lee Bird, Don Katrick, Lorene Shafer

Members Absent: Shelly Kipp, George Nolan

NBCPR Liaison Present: Gigi Henkel

Officials and County Staff Present:

Commissioner Truman Scarborough, Jr., District 1

Heather Lennon, Mims-Scottsmoor Library Director

Barbara Meyer, Bicycle, Pedestrian & Trails Coordinator

Charles S. Nelson, Parks & Recreation Director

Cheryl K. Page, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director

Terry A. Lane, North Area Parks Operations (NAPO) Interim Manager

Chuck Mays, Construction Coordinator

Betty J. Salter, NAPO Recreation Program Coordinator

Judy Inman, NAPO Administrative Secretary

Commissioner Scarborough welcomed everyone and asked all present to introduce themselves and state their interest in the projects.

Committee Members

- Lorene Shafer served on the Titusville Library Board for eight years and is interested in the library.
- Don Katrick is from Mims and is interested in both projects.
- Sabrina Jeffers is a horse owner and interested in the equestrian trails.
- Kay Miller is interested in equestrian trails.
- Mary Page has a small quarter-horse breeding facility in Mims and wants the trails used for equestrians only so there are no disasters.
- Winnie Woods is a horseback rider, interested in the equestrian trails.
- Dan Matrazzo is a bicyclist and is interested in the trails and hopes for equal sharing by various users.
- Jennifer Hill is interested in the equestrian trail.
- Donna McCone owns Lynswood Farms a hunter, jumper and breeding facility.
- Gigi Henkel is the liaison for North Brevard Commission on Parks and Recreation (NBCPR) for both committees, and is an equestrian.

County Staff: As listed above.

Citizens Present:

- James Nathan
- Carol Thompson—competitive distance rider.
- Esther Vulpius—interested in libraries and trails.

- Sunny Creel—interested in all of it.
- George Miller—owner of a small boarding barn in Holder Park, interested in equestrian trails and would like to work with all—bikes, four wheelers, etc.
- Rusty Gordon—daughter rides horses, and he is interested in the Rails-to-Trails program.
- Clarise Austin, executive director of Horse Sisters, a therapeutic riding program, is interested in a covered arena facility, open to public, wagons for trails, etc. for the public to use and also is for three or four groups of people that are interested in the trail.
- Mary High’s husband is a teacher, son-in-law is a competitive biker, and she is interested in horses and finding out about both projects.

Commissioner Scarborough reported the State is going to purchase the Mims to Maytown railway. The voter approved North Brevard Referendum list was distributed which includes the Mims-Scottsmoor Community Center at almost \$800,000 and Equestrian Trails & Facilities at \$230,000. Staff was waiting to see what happened with the sales tax referendum which would have impacted the project. Commissioner Scarborough stated he wants to bring discussion current to look at optimizing every dollar available. He used the example of the School Board allowing the County to put a surplus modular at Pinewood Elementary for a library in order to get the most of the money available. He also commented that equestrian and other users can have parallel trails.

Charles Nelson gave a historical perspective where in the summer of 2000 the NBCPR had televised meetings to discuss priorities for a Recreation Referendum. The original list was almost \$30 million which was brought down to what was affordable and supportable by the community. The Referendum was approved in four areas of the County, but not in the Cocoa-Rockledge area.

Mr. Nelson reported the Equestrian Trails & Facilities project was intended to be land acquisition, probably adjacent to some of the holdings of the Water Management District, as a jumping off point for accessing a much larger area. The Mims-Scottsmoor Community Center was not part of the Equestrian program but was to acquire enough land and build a community center later. An 18,000 square foot community center costs about \$2,000,000. The site selected for the community center was a 10-acre tract across the street from the from Pinewood Elementary School and the library. Staff went through the appraisal process, contacted the owner, but couldn’t pay what the owner wanted to sell the property for. Sometimes, out of disappointment comes opportunity. Since the project is no longer tied to that site, there is the opportunity to look at possibly seeing if the two projects could be coordinated and acquire 40-50 acres adjacent to the railroad where land costs less. Things can come together in a much larger, positive way. That is why the committees are meeting together today. There is the potential to merge the two committees in the future as a single committee. Barbara Meyer will present information on the Maytown trail, an old railroad right of way which runs from Titusville to Sanford. If land can be acquired near or adjacent to the Maytown trail, there is the potential to accommodate the need for a community center and equestrian type of things and even use the trail to get to State holdings.

Barbara Meyer, Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Coordinator for Brevard County, reported that for the past 15 years, the County has been attempting to acquire the Mims to Maytown trail corridor. Two years ago Brevard County teamed together with Volusia County and the Regional Planning Council and put a successful grant package together which is ranked second in State and in the top five in the entire country. It now extends from Garden Street to Enterprise, and a spur to New Smyrna, has added 15 miles. The exciting thing is the potential for a regional trail and the East Coast Greenway, which answers the challenge of working around government lands. This trail also could be part of the State River Trail for the St. Johns River which is in the conceptual stage from Jacksonville to

Indian River County. This has required a lot of background and legal work with the railroad, Brevard and Volusia Counties and DEP. The railroad has indicated it is willing to sell the land to Brevard, Volusia and DEP. The appraisals are finished which was labor intensive due to parcel analysis and disputes with Miami Holding Corp. The appraisals are being put together. It is hoped the offer will be made to the railroad in January.

Ms. Meyer continued that it is a beautiful corridor and once purchased, Brevard County will be the land manager, with the land owned by DEP. The Historical Commission is willing to put up plaques for this historic area. The corridor is 35 to 40 miles with 15 to 16 miles in Brevard. Portions will be paved. If the trail is only for one user group, there would not be enough use and it would fail. There could be an 8 to 10 foot paved trail, a separation of narrow hiking trail, then equestrian trail. The Brevard MPO recently awarded another trail head. Commissioner Scarborough reported one of top issues of the MPO is this type of trail, where normally roads are highest interest. Congressman Mica wants to do the trail. Tom Feeney will be contacted. With the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council and congressmen supporting the project, things will run easier. Ms. Meyer stated that this being a significant State and regional trail would open up funding sources.

Lorene Shafer inquired if the railroad will remove the rails. Ms. Meyer responded, the intent would be to remove rails but leave pieces for historic purposes. It has not yet been worked out who will take the rails out, but she would guess the railroad will want them. The County would design the facilities.

In response to Sabrina Jeffers' inquiry, Ms. Meyer stated that access points would continue at railroad crossovers. Commissioner Scarborough noted this is why it would be good for the two committees to meet as a group to make major decisions, and then perhaps meet as sub-committees for separate interests. Ms. Jeffers noted the current access points are in more urban areas and was assured those issues will be looked at. Mr. Nelson stated trail heads will be provided in the design details. The placement of trail heads is in the committee's purview.

Mr. Nelson distributed maps which staff has used in looking for a potential 40-acre site. He asked that people not be concerned if they see their property, as it is only the beginning of the process to identify lands, basically from SR 46 up to the County line.

Mr. Nelson commented that wetlands have not been identified, but experience gives a good feel for that from the aerials. Commissioner Scarborough stated one of the options is to have the Mims-Scottsmoor Community Center next to the trail to have the capacity to have a facility like some in Orange County. The community needs to have all the options and to make that decision. There is an advantage cost wise, but there is also the potential for multiple use such as concessions. Those decisions need to be made before determining how much land to purchase and where. Mr. Nelson commented the biggest cost is for infrastructure which would be reduced by combining the two projects. Parks and Recreation has much more cost for providing a water system than private individuals and could spend up to \$45,000 just for a public drinking supply, which would be doubled if developing two sites. Also there is the potential of money from the MPO, State and federal land acquisition and land development grants which multiplies the money. The \$100,000 for land acquisition can be doubled with a grant. There was disappointment when the site across from the library couldn't be acquired, then the Maytown trail took off. The Equestrian project has grown from a place to off-load horses to the possibility of more amenities for equestrians.

Donna McCone asked how the decision is made. She is interested in identity for Mims and Scottsmoor, but questioned if the two committees would come to agreement in appropriating funds allocated for each project. She is disappointed the land is not available. She asked if common ground could be found if the two committees become one.

Commissioner Scarborough suggested people have the opportunity to talk to their neighbors about the new information received today and then call a meeting in a few weeks to decide if a joint committee should be formed. If the committees can't come to consensus, they can work separately.

Mr. Nelson gave an example of the referendum in Port St. John where three committees met together to decide how to use the money, and although it was contentious, they came together and did the right thing for the community. He thinks people want to do what is best for the community.

Mr. Nelson reviewed the Sunshine Law which the Committees are under. Minutes are recorded because all activities of the Committee must be done in public. Meetings must be advertized and public is welcome to attend. Committee members must not discuss anything outside of a public meeting with another Committee member that they may be faced with voting on. As a recommending body, the Committee recommendation will go to NBCPR and then to Board of County Commissioners. Only one committee's recommendation was overturned, which is a rare exception. Commissioner Scarborough stated that what the Committee decides will probably happen. Mr. Nelson reported there was a circumstance where the Titusville Pier Committee clearly had two sides, but were asked to keep working and ultimately achieved consensus. Consensus isn't everyone in agreement, but just about everybody got there and they were happy with it.

Mrs. Page noted that under the Sunshine Law, all Committee members are required to vote unless a financial conflict is stated. Mr. Nelson stated a committee member can't vote on selling their own land to the County, but there is not necessarily a conflict just because one works for a particular company.

Lorene Shafer asked if purchase of land is for a library and community center. Mr. Nelson stated that needs to be part of the discussion. The intention was to be next to the Library. In response to an inquiry from Ms. Shafer, Mr. Nelson stated upward of 40 acres is being looked at. Ms. Shafer noted the possibility of getting a donor for a tax break. Commissioner Scarborough stated there is not money in this Referendum for a library as that was not mandated by the electorate. It was in the sales tax referendum which did not pass. Equestrians have about a quarter of a million voted by the public. Mr. Nelson noted Commissioner Scarborough's efforts in the Port St. John area. The interchange extension will extend into land purchased for Fay Lake Wilderness Park and now the road project will buy some of it back. The Library could pay for the land when they are ready to build, but it could be master-planned into the site by Parks and Recreation.

Sabrina Jeffers inquired if the equestrian, community center and library would be incorporated. Mr. Nelson stated that he thinks that should be on the table and if it can be achieved, that would be great. Commissioner Scarborough restated there isn't money for a library at this time. It may happen, but there isn't money now because sales tax referendum didn't go through. It's okay to plan a place for it, but there won't be money to fund it initially. Commissioner Scarborough explained there is money in the bank for the two projects; there is money that Barbara Meyer has identified and federal money, but none for the library. Land could be set aside for the library. Gigi Henkel indicated it is best to plan for potential uses.

As to future meetings, it was established that third Mondays at 6:00 p.m. is good for most with the next meeting on February 16, 6:00 p.m., at the Mims-Scottsmoor Library.

A sign will be posted at the Mims-Scottsmoor Library announcing the vacancies on the Mims-Scottsmoor Community Center Referendum Committee. Names should be received in the North Area Parks Operations office by 3:30 p.m. on February 12 to be considered for appointment by the NBCPR at their 5:00 p.m. meeting that day.

Mr. Nelson will ask the NBCPR to let the committees decide whether or not to join as one committee or remain as two.

Commissioner Scarborough asked for any parting comments.

Questions for staff can be directed to Terry Lane at 264-5105. Barbara Meyer, who can be reached at 690-6890, reported the County is getting ready to build a multi-use sidewalk on Aurantia Road. Access to the trails has been kept in mind when building sidewalks.

Mary Page inquired if motorized vehicles would be allowed. Ms. Meyer stated the plan for this project has always been for non-motorized vehicles. Commissioner Scarborough explained the peace and quiet with no noise is part of beauty of it. Ms. Meyer will bring photos to the next meeting. The corridor is for passive recreation.

Ms. Jeffers noted four-wheelers are ridden in that area. Ms. Meyer explained there are ways to minimize those conflicts, and legitimate users do self-policing. Those conflicts exist on all trails. She described how the wildlife came to the edge of the trail to watch when she was with others walking the trail. There were indigo snakes, bobcats, and native plants. A new trail will not be cut. This will go through full public process and there are ways to design to keep off vehicles. The intention is to develop a full linear park concept with areas patrolled. Mr. Nelson indicated the illegal users will be outlasted with good design and enforcement.

Cheryl Page announced the City of Titusville has an FRDAP grant for a trail from Wuesthoff Nature Park on Barna Avenue to W.W. James Park off Sisson, through the City well fields. It will be paved, 8 to 10 feet wide and about two miles long, It will not be for equestrian use.

Ms. Meyer stated that even though the sales tax referendum failed, the County Manager put together a trails team to maximize existing resources to share out the cost of putting trails together.

Sabrina Jeffers inquired if it will be comparable to Geneva Wilderness. Ms Meyer explained that at some level there may be some interaction at access points, but mostly the uses will be separated by change in grade, etc. Some bicyclists like paved trails, while mountain bikes like more like what the equestrian use. Donna McCone noted that multi-use has been very successful around the state.

The meeting ended at about 5:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry A. Lane, NAPO Interim Manager

jbi