

W.W. JAMES PARK REFERENDUM COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of the W.W. James Park Referendum Committee Meeting, appointed by the North Brevard Commission on Parks & Recreation, held Thursday, November 29, 2001, 7 p.m., in the Brevard Room at the Brevard County Government Complex North in Titusville, Florida.

Members Present

Angela Sisson, Chairperson
Dan Lawrence, Vice Chairman
Howard Woernley III

Members Absent

Brian Blickley
Joe LeBlanc
Dr. Ron Bobay, NBCPR Liaison

A&E Present—Daniel Lee, Baskerville & Donovan

County Staff Present

Jack Masson, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director
Chuck Mays, Construction Coordinator
Cheryl K. Page, North Area Parks Operations Manager
Judy Inman, Administrative Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Page opened the meeting by welcoming the committee, and introducing staff present, and Dan Lee from the A&E firm Baskerville & Donovan. She then reviewed the Sunshine Law, stating the meetings are open public meetings. She explained the relationship to North Brevard Commission on Parks and Recreation (NBCPR) to whom the committee makes recommendations. All committee members must vote unless a financial conflict is stated. Facts can be reported to the Little League meetings, but committee members can't discuss items which might come before the committee outside of committee meetings. Minutes can be provided to the League and will be posted on www.brevardparks.com after they are approved. It is a criminal offense to violate the Sunshine Law. Committee members can call Mrs. Page with questions.

Mrs. Page estimated the committee would probably have two or three meetings. She reviewed the project funding of \$1,190,000 and elements including 40 acres referred to as the Pennington Property on SE corner which has been purchased for about \$350,000. Other elements are five baseball field upgrades and lighting, batting cage, parking and site improvements.

II. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN & VICE CHAIRMAN

Angela Sisson was elected chairperson at the nomination by Howard Woernley, which was seconded by Dan Lawrence.

AYE: Lawrence, Sisson, Woernley

NAY: None

Carried 3-0

Dan Lawrence was elected vice chairman following his volunteering to serve, which was seconded by Howard Woernley.

AYE: Lawrence, Sisson, Woernley

NAY: None

Carried 3-0

III. STAFF REPORTS

Mrs. Page suggested unless there were specific questions about the 17 other projects, committee members can check on the website for information.

Dan Lawrence asked about the specific purpose for the 40 acres acquired. Mr. Masson stated leadership will come from committee's input. He indicated staff realized parking is a major problem, but other amenities could be considered. The project will be citizen led. Mr. Lawrence inquired how much acreage is used for the park. Staff estimated 20-25 acres. Mr. Lawrence suggested the committee probably will think of more than just a parking lot. Mrs. Page noted park property is frequently acquired for future use.

Mrs. Page asked the committee members to introduce themselves.

Howard Woernley, III, has been associated with Indian River City Little League (IRCLL) for about ten years and has a little one, so will be at fields for another ten years. He is involved with the board and wants to donate his time.

Angela Sisson, a neighbor, stated the ball fields are nice, but people are doing things at the end of driveway which she thinks they shouldn't be doing such as using the area for a donut track, so she is interested due to security concerns.

Dan Lawrence has been involved with IRCLL for five to six years, has two kids in the league, and is on the board. He had no idea the committee existed until Mrs. Page called a few weeks ago. He stated he voted for the Referendum and it's a pleasure to serve.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Masson reported the purchase price was closer to \$400,000, and to find the amount available for construction, one must also subtract closing costs and fees paid to A&E. Prior to the vote on the Referendum, staff collected information on about 54 projects county-wide. Projects passed in North, Central-MI/Beaches and South Brevard. Staff has a good idea of what facilities would cost. Mr. Masson displayed a layout of the existing facility which includes a softball field, two major fields, and a junior. At one time the area was a landfill. Staff recommends upgrades to existing facilities which includes lighting to meet Little League standards with 100% spill control to keep lights from surrounding areas, directing light specifically to spot needed on the field. Also to be considered are new fences, irrigation systems and grass, where applicable, as well as dugouts, covered bleachers, and scoring facilities. One of the major reasons for acquisition of property is to provide additional parking. Staff feels the athletic area meets the needs of the League. Perhaps some picnic facilities and playground are needed. Staff wants to hear all ideas and suggestions from the committee, but the project must remain within budget. Drainage and security/pedestrian lighting could be considered. The desire is to make this a premier Little League facility in Brevard County.

In response to an inquiry from Howard Woernley, Mr. Masson indicated Dan Lee will do estimates so the committee can prioritize items. After the conceptual with an estimated dollar amount is approved by the committee, the committee's recommendation goes to the NBCPR for recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. Following that, the detailed specifications are made and the bid process begins. Mr. Woernley inquired if it will it then come back to committee. Mr. Masson responded staff will put it on the street. Before that, prioritizing will be done based on estimates. The A&E must be good at estimating.

Mr. Lawrence stated he thought what Mr. Woernley was getting at was to know the price tag of each element so the committee can pick and choose. He would like a specific small t-ball field. Mr. Masson

stated between 100' & 110' is Parks and Recreation standard. Mr. Masson directed discussion back to the original question about needs of the league. He noted softball is down county-wide. IRCLL had two or three softball teams. Holder had only one.

Dan Lawrence noted the situation at Titusville Little League (TLL) is a bit precarious. Mr. Masson reported he and Mrs. Page attended their meeting Tuesday evening, where TLL voted 22-4 to retain their charter for at least another year to see if numbers grow and parental support is increased. The relocation of TLL fields is unknown at this time.

Mr. Woernley mentioned security, safety, parking, and the playing fields. Security can be increased with lighting and speed bumps. He likes to break it down into small bites. Foul balls hitting people is an issue. A playground is a great idea.

Mr. Masson stated the County government's position is compatibility with ADA requirements, whereby facilities and access to them must be in compliance. This includes hardened walkways for accessibility. Mr. Lawrence noted Port St. John Little League (PSJCC) at Space Coast Communities Sports Complex (SCCSC) has nice concrete walkways. He stated that will keep people off the grass and allow it to grow. Mr. Masson agreed that is an important part of park design.

Mrs. Page commented about foul balls and the department has never been able to afford some ceiling netting. Mr. Masson reported construction is looking at covered bleachers which will take care of part of the issue. Mr. Lawrence noted it is a problem every year.

Mrs. Page noted some issues from staff's standpoint are whether or not the road needs to be paved and whether or not to have a security gate at entrance. The road must be re-graded once a year. Chairperson Sisson, asked about the dirt road to her house. She would lock the gate herself and asked if people can be kept out after a certain time. Mr. Masson responded the park closes at dark unless there are specific activities.

Dan Lee asked where the committee would want the gate. Mr. Lawrence responded it depends on how far the road is paved. After-hour donuts are a problem, but if the road were paved, that will be lessened. Chairperson Sisson inquired if that wouldn't eliminate other undesirable activities. Mr. Woernley suggested lighting be improved. Chairperson Sisson, agreed that would help, maybe with enough lighting, and a gate might not be needed.

Mrs. Page asked about the location of the security trailer. She noted the caretaker is willing to purchase a new trailer. Mrs. Page stated the caretaker needs to be visible and Chairperson Sisson stated the caretaker wants to be more visible. Mr. Woernley indicated he would think the caretaker would want to blend into the park, stating the location is good now. It was asked if relocation of the caretaker can be a part of the Referendum. Mr. Masson indicated it can be. Mr. Woernley restated his concerns for security including ballfield and security lighting and safety such as speed bumps, as well as the kids and neighbors, but also the environment so it looks like a park. He believes parking falls under safety. The look of the entrance is important. Most of the fields are in good shape. However, the two front fields haven't been renovated. Lighting needs to be addressed. Priorities should be fairly simple. He is concerned about the security trailer, but is more concerned about getting in and about security and safety. He stated he realizes the caretaker is part of the security issue.

Mrs. Page announced Parrish Medical Center gave the City of Titusville \$200,000 to connect Wuesthoff Nature Park and W.W. James Park with a 12' wide trail as a linear park. The City sent a grant request to State of Florida for \$200,000 for other improvements at Wuesthoff Nature Park. There is the possibility to connect to the Enchanted Forest and further south.

Mr. Masson mentioned dugouts. Mr. Lawrence would like them but wants to know cost. Mr. Masson noted lately overall costs may be more expensive on the old style. He reported concrete block, wooden roof dugouts are a maintenance problem. They are hotter with less airflow, as well as a place for illegal activities after hours. On the positive side there seems to be less interference from kids outside.

Mr. Lawrence likes both concrete block and chain link dugouts, but would like to see the cost of one and the other. Mr. Masson stated the costs of chain-link are tied in with other things such as ball stops and fencing. A net to cover spectators was mentioned. Mr. Masson stated staff is looking at covered bleachers, but there is no commitment yet. Covered bleachers can cause a problem with drainage, but there is enough area between the fields to accommodate that.

Chairperson Sisson noted professional fields have netting. Mr. Masson indicated it is not good to have spectators behind home plate for Little League. Mr. Woernley would like to look at netting on all fields, which is probably a low-cost solution. The senior field is the major problem.

Mr. Lawrence stated it would be good to know the cost of removing several levels of concrete between the concession stand and pavilion to make it all level and connect the roof. He noted there is a lot of concrete that is an eyesore. Mr. Masson indicated the removal of concrete would also help with calculations of hard surface drainage.

Mr. Masson suggested discussing the 40 acres purchased. Mr. Lawrence noted PSJLL has two fairly large parking areas on either side of the park with tarmac surface and poured concrete curbs. He inquired if it has to be that, or could it be stabilized? Mr. Masson stated the minimum would be paved travel ways and some kind of paver in the parking area. With dirt roads, there is a lot of maintenance. However, the more paving, the more retention is required. Knowing the cost is important to Dan Lawrence.

Property was discussed. Kirk owns property south of the property acquired and north of the park. Mr. Woernley suggested in the future making it into a nice park. Mr. Masson reported the acquisition is almost totally wooded and wouldn't want to level it.

Chairperson Sisson suggested upgrading the baseball area and parking.

Dan Lee asked if the committee wants the area between the two west fields as parking. Mr. Woernley indicated yes. Mr. Lawrence suggested putting all parking at the new property and eliminate parking between fields. Chairperson Sisson suggested the space between the two west fields could be good for handicap parking as suggested by Mr. Masson.

Mr. Woernley suggested not clearing any more than is necessary. He further suggested cleaning up the entrance, keeping parking near the fields, and paving the road. He doesn't know what it would cost to put parking on the back 40.

Mr. Masson reported an encroachment problem on north side of ball fields. Doug Sisson noted according to a survey for a single-family community, part of the right field of major/minor field (NW) is on other property.

In response to an inquiry from Mr. Lawrence, Mrs. Page stated the trail from Wuesthoff will come down Little League Lane.

Chairperson Sisson inquired if the dirt road were paved, where would it stop. Mr. Woernley suggested it would stop at the minor field (NE).

V. PUBLIC INPUT

Irv Hays reported he visited a facility in Seminole County where backstops are much higher. Mr. Masson mentioned 30', cantilevered at 45 degrees. Mr. Hays reported their commons area is all paved with planters and looks like a Disney area. Mr. Masson cautioned the more concrete, the more retention is required.

Mr. Hays noted as to the concession stand and board room building, the disabled can't get to the board room for meetings, indicating it is not the smartest of buildings. Mr. Masson responded that at the time of development, it wasn't a requirement. Elevators are now required which cost about \$40,000. Retrofit cost is unknown.

Mr. Hays commented on public parks like Fox Lake or Sand Point, but this park is pretty hidden—a diamond in the rough. Other parks' rest rooms are open in the day. Other parks are locked at night. He noted 40 acres is huge and if a neighborhood is built, the rest rooms would need to be open. Mrs. Page noted that is a staffing issue. The Little League has keys to open the rest rooms during their season. They can also be opened for specific events.

Mr. Hays noted the Titusville Soccer Club is looking for land, and suggested this project will be raising eyebrows for them and Bears Football. Mrs. Page reported Referendum funding purchased 90 acres north of BCC where the soccer fields will be located as well as softball fields from Marina, along with walking trails, and a series of lakes. Football will stay at Gibson but will be renovated, and will have two football fields and a place for soccer practice.

Mr. Hays stated that if other organizations want to start up, they may want a grassy area. He stated what he is getting at is, it is a lot of land. Mr. Masson stated it won't be cleared out with a bulldozer. Mrs. Page stated that with the trail, she sees it more of a nature area. Mr. Masson concurred that staff looked at it as more of a passive area.

Mr. Hays asked about the encroachment of fields.

Doug Sisson asked if soccer in this town is one entity. Mrs. Page responded players have the option to go to Port St. John or Titusville, because soccer is not limited by boundaries as is Little League. Mr. Sisson reported IRCLL was a huge part of his life as he grew up. He agreed with what Mr. Woernley said about doing it right from the get go. He suggested prioritizing and throwing the money in the most important things. Mr. Sisson stated baseball is his expertise. The fields are phenomenal. The maintenance crews do a wonderful job. He likes the turf and the dugouts. He stated it would be a waste of money to refurbish existing block dugouts. He agreed with a backstop and angling out as far as possible. Being hit by foul balls is a fact of life in baseball with a quad setting.

Mr. Sisson continued by stating a paved road is a must. Grading the road is needed because of cars doing donuts. A paved road at least to right field corner of NW the field would make it more attractive. The security trailer is an eyesore. It would be a waste of money to place a new trailer in the same location. He suggested putting the trailer at the entrance which would be a deterrent to undesirable activities, using a security gate, and posting a few no loitering signs. The old trailer location would be a perfect parking area. He suggested taking out chain-link fence and turn to border at property line. It could extend parking from the Sisson's driveway down to middle of SW field.

Mr. Masson inquired about access. Mr. Sisson stated his family deeded the property for access when they gave the property to the County.

Irv Hays reported the league had to put requests for any kind of improvements for the last couple of years in writing to the County. Mr. Masson stated requests should go thru the league president to Mrs. Page for approval. Mrs. Page will meet on December 10 with the Little League presidents for daily operational procedures and a wish list which is generated every year. Mrs. Page questioned spending money on capital items covered by the Referendum.

Mr. Masson initiated discussion regarding timing. It won't start prior to the 2002 Little League season. The traditional Little League season is January thru mid-July, so realistically the window for work is from mid-July through December, so timing is critical. What that means is the league may have to forego fall ball one year. Or maybe that is the year Holder has fall ball. What staff doesn't want and won't have is development when traditional Little League is in season. Timing is also important for competitive bidding.

Mr. Masson introduced discussion about where to go from here stating the need to set up a subsequent meeting. Dan Lee will put committee's ideas on the conceptual drawing. It was agreed to hold future meetings on Thursdays at 6 p.m. Mrs. Page reported Holder is meeting January 31 which leaves February 7 or 21. Dan Lee preferred February 21 which the committee agreed was okay.

Dan Lawrence asked about the time frame for completion. Mr. Masson stated he hopes for all in three years. In response to an inquiry from Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Mays and Mr. Masson agreed it was doable in a six-month time frame. Mr. Masson reported after materials are on site, ballfield lighting can be installed in less than two weeks. Chuck Mays stated the problem is getting the design and bid by July. Dan Lawrence asked if the committee would have to make a decision at the next meeting. Mr. Masson responded not necessarily, but if the committee likes the design, it can go forward. Once the committee gives their blessing, it goes to the NBCPR.

Chairperson Sisson reviewed the discussion as follows:

- Concession and pavilion together, take out steps and incorporate roof design, replace pavilion.
- Try to pave up to behind NW field.
- The committee likes Doug Sisson's idea for parking where caretaker now is.
- Dan Lee can bring cutouts to move around.
- Regarding the trailer, Mr. Masson indicated if parking is tied in, relocating the trailer is an option for improved security. Mr. Woernley changed his priority and would like to move trailer near the road. Mr. Masson noted the caretaker buys the trailer; the County provides the location.
- Mr. Woernley stated he wants to make it into a community area.
- It was noted batting cages weren't discussed. Mr. Masson indicated there would be opportunities in phase two.
- Lights are a good thing.
- Fencing—higher backstops. Mr. Masson stated the need to look at fencing in general. He wants this to be a nice facility.
- Mr. Masson also stated the need to look at turf and irrigation.

Mrs. Page informed the committee the rest rooms will be open when the trail connects to Wuesthoff.

Doug Sisson inquired if the back 40 could have a pavilion and grill, and exercise trail as part of trail head. It could be a family gathering place.

Mr. Masson reported staff has a fairly new design for batting cages. Disney has signs saying something like heads up this is a ball field (foul balls).

Dan Lawrence would like to have conceptual plan with cost estimates.

Mr. Mays reported Mr. Lee gets one public meeting to present the conceptual plan with cost estimates.

Chuck Mays noted the 40 acres in the corner are not provided access. Mr. Masson indicated staff will look at that.

Doug Sisson inquired about field dimensions. Mr. Masson recommended 300' as a minimum. Mr. Lawrence, noted fences can be moved as the fields don't have to be symmetrical.

Mr. Woernley asked about re-claying the junior and major fields. Mr. Masson responded staff has standard specifications. The A&E puts in the footprint. Mr. Masson reviewed field specifications for various size fields and noted clay is a maintenance issue.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m. at the motion by Howard Woernley, seconded by Dan Lawrence.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Sisson, Chairperson jbi

