

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
Micco Park Referendum Committee  
Regular Meeting  
March 21, 2002

A Regular Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department Micco Park Referendum Committee was held on Thursday, March 21, 2002 at 7:00 p.m. at the South Mainland Community Center, 3700 Allen Avenue, Micco, FL.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Bill McCready  
Ed Arens  
Diane McCauly  
Albert Malerk  
Robin Tibbitts  
Ken Tworoger

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

**STAFF ATTENDING**

Karen Palus, South Area Parks Operations Manager  
Denny Bert, Park Supervisor I  
Tina Webster, Administrative Secretary

**PUBLIC**

David Perry, Ivey Harris & Walls (IHW)  
Scott Toschlog, IHW  
See Attached List

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mr. Arens, Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Arens dispensed with the Pledge due to the absence of the flag.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Some of the members asked if the page numbers could be added to the minutes in the future. Ms. Webster agreed. Mr. McCready questioned a comment someone had made at the last meeting which was included in the minutes and asked why the A&E Firm couldn't do another plan. Mr. Malerk made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes and Mr. Tworoger seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

**STAFF REPORTS:**

Ms. Palus explained that she met with the South Area Advisory Board on Monday, March 18, 2002 and asked if the Referendum Committees could fill the vacancies on their committees and the South Area Advisory Board agreed. Ms. Palus stated that Cynthia Slick has resigned and represents a local neighbor position. Mr. Malerk questioned the reasoning for allocating representatives on the committees. Ms. Palus explained the purpose of the different representatives allocated for each committee. Mr. McCready asked why so many members are Little Hollywood residents. Mr. Arens stated that there were several times prior to the forming of the committee for citizens interested in serving to provide their names to the Parks & Recreation Department. Not many people responded; it wasn't stacked by anybody. Ms. Palus stated that the South Area Advisory Board did not know who lived in what area when appointing the members; it was based on the names submitted.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Replacement of Cynthia Slick:**

Mr. Arens read the names of the individuals interested in serving on the committee: Lyn Steiglitz, Steven Chilberg, Corky & Aimee Prip, Vicky Benoit, and Wally Kramer. The citizens spoke on their behalf:

- Ms. Steiglitz – stated that she has been coming to the meetings as often as she can; has harassed Mr. McCready for many years about adding tennis courts; she is building a house on the riverside of the street; she is an environmentalist; and she believes she is well qualified for the committee.
- Mr. Chilberg – he lives across the street from the park; is a General Contractor; has built parks and is familiar with the requirements; he believes he could be a compliment to the committee.
- Mr. Prip – he stated that his wife Aimee could not make the meeting but is more of a spokesperson than he is; he mentioned that he is new to the area; his father has lived in Micco for many years and likes it here; he decided that being a committee member could be of service; and he owns a construction business.
- Ms. Benoit – is retired from the Police Department; has owned her home since 1989; is involved in landscaping, trees and is an environmentalist; she is very interested in the park and would like a park where people can utilize nature.
- Mr. Kramer – has lived in Micco for 20 years; he is very interested in the park; has worked hard to keep the community together; believes the park should look like the Village Green; stated he does not like the proposed plan; and stated that the little guys need a place to play at Micco Park.

Mr. Arens asked for discussion from the committee regarding the interested citizens. The members spoke regarding their selection. Mr. Nelson explained the ranking process and Mr. Tworoger made a **MOTION** to utilize the ranking process to make the new selection with number 1 being the most recommended. Ms. McCauley seconded.

**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.** The committee selected Mr. Prip as the new member and welcomed him to the committee.

### **Project Review:**

Mr. Nelson introduced himself as the Parks & Recreation Department Director. He stated that he believed the committee should discuss the plan prior to the A&E firm providing any updates. He mentioned that it is disappointing that all the attending public had not attended the meetings in the past regarding the project. Mr. Nelson opened the floor to anyone who had concerns and/or suggestions regarding the plan.

Mr. Malerk asked the other members of the committee to hear him out for a moment. His concern is from a dollar stand point and does not believe that the dollar amount has been taken into consideration. He believes the plan should be done at the South Mainland Community Center-Micco on undeveloped land. He stated that if the proposed plan is done then the community will be getting nothing new, but losing some things that currently exist. Mr. Malerk noted that the plan is beautiful if it is going to be put on undeveloped land. He commented that the Referendum Process is supposed to be improving Micco Park and he does not believe that is happening. Friends and neighbors have commented that they want to keep the park passive; they don't want the trees cut down; they need an area for families to have small picnics, etc. Mr. Malerk commented that he believes Micco is approaching 15, 000 residents with the snow birds and he would like to see some of the funds utilized for the South Mainland Community Center-Micco.

Mr. Nelson responded stating that the South Mainland Community Center-Micco is one of the Referendum Projects and there is already money allocated for that project through the Referendum Process. Mr. Nelson informed the committee that all the land at the South Mainland Community Center-Micco cannot be developed due to scrub jays and other environmental issues. He then stated that there are only two trees that would need to be relocated at Micco Park and the proposed plan includes four times the amount of trees that are currently in the park. The trees range in size from 100 gallon trees which are about 14 feet tall to smaller pine trees and other varieties. Mr. Nelson commented that regardless if the committee keeps the park and decides to add trees, the trees he just explained are the type of trees that would go in due to the cost of trees.

Mr. Malerk stated that at one of the Micco Homeowners meetings, Mr. Nelson was asked specifically what would happen if all the funds were not spent and he stated that the funds would go back into the General Fund. Mr. Nelson responded by explaining that funds left over from any of the Referendum Projects would go back into the budget for the South Area Projects. A recommendation could then be made to the Board of County Commissioners to allocate the funds left over from Micco Park to be spent at the South Mainland Community Center-Micco. Mr. Tworoger explained that he had contacted the County Attorneys office regarding this and they could not give a specific answer, however he spoke with Scott Knox who replied with the same response that Mr. Nelson just provided. The recommendation can be made but at the risk that it may not be approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Arens stated that if he has his way, the monies will be spent at Micco Park.

A question was raised regarding the possibility of some of the money being put in escrow in case of a serious drought. Mr. Nelson commented that there is a warranty on the trees for one year and the budget addresses the replacement of trees if necessary and also includes the watering of them as well.

Mr. Arens asked how the A&E firm is going to propose the watering of the park including irrigation and drinking fountains. Mr. Nelson responded that the water has always been a problem, however the referendum funds will take care of installing a well and irrigation as needed throughout the park. He also mentioned that he heard that someone was concerned that watering the park would take away from the surrounding neighbors watering systems and that will not happen.

Ms. McCullers asked the committee to move forward. "The more time you spend beating up the plan, the more money and time it is getting to take. The park needs help, do something for the community and move forward with the plan. It is a good plan and anyone who thinks Micco Park is currently a park has not been in a park. There are other communities ready to have this money for their projects. If you do not spend it, you are going to loose it."

Mr. Nelson commented that the sooner the community can come to a consensus the sooner the project can move forward and we could be in construction within a year.

Ms. Steiglitz stated that she personally has no desire to have the community split in arguments. She commented that Mr. Malerk has worked hard to bring the community together and she thinks everyone needs the facts. She asked what a passive park means and what type of park the community really truly wants. "That needs to be decided first."

Mr. Kramer reminded everyone that the park is full of sugar sand which has no nutrients for the trees. He stated that good dirt will be needed and he doesn't believe the County will supply that. Mr. Nelson responded that part of the specifications is to bring in the nutrients required for the trees.

Mr. Malerk stated that a passive park is for families to picnic and grill. Mr. Nelson noted that passive would be a little less active than what the plan shows, but it would not be a sports park. It should have elements that are passive and some that are a little bit active; a family type of park.

Mr. Chapin has looked over the plan from the last meeting. He has lived in Micco for 24 years and stated that Mr. McCready has made the park what it is today. This is a great opportunity to improve the park. He asked the A&E Firm if this plan has been used anywhere else in the County and what did you envision the group gathering area for? Mr. Perry responded stating that no, the plan has not been used anywhere else in the County. He also replied that at previous meetings the committee was asked what the park is currently being used for so that it could be incorporated into the plan. The plan is designed to utilize the park for special events/festivals as discussed by the committee. The covered pavilion could be used for a band with open area for seating; or be designed as an organized space for a community gathering. When that area is not being used, we want it to have some type of artistic value to it. Mr. Nelson wanted to clarify that as far as utilizing the space for festivals/events, that was based on what the community is currently doing, not what the County plans on doing.

Mr. Chapin asked the A&E Firm about the idea of having a few curbs in the walkway instead of a solid straight line. Mr. Perry replied that it would not be a problem, however the committee wanted to maximize the peripheral of the walking path, but it could be changed if desired. Mr. Chapin commented that softening the walkway might take some of the formalization out of the plan. Discussion ensued.

Some of the citizens like the formal idea of the plan and some do not. Mr. Nelson stated that they must come to some sort of agreement. Mr. Chapin asked if the berms are at different elevations and Mr. Perry replied yes, with the maximum height being four feet.

It was asked where the soccer field was since there is a ball field. Mr. Nelson recommended a backstop and stated that the proposed field is a multi-use field and soccer could be played. Discussion ensued regarding clay versus grass.

Mr. Arens commented that the plan includes a multi-purpose field which can be utilized for many different activities.

Mr. Forman lives on Parker Drive and attended the last meeting. He stated that as he really took a look at the plan, he realized that it accommodates everyone in the community. If you keep chipping at the plan nothing is going to get done. The park doesn't have everything that everybody would like and it never will, but it is a good plan and he believes the committee should move forward.

Mr. Daryl stated that he likes the plan and doesn't see anything to argue about.

It was asked why a whole new game plan was designed rather than just a few updates to the park. Mr. Nelson responded stating that the plan includes the things that the committee added to their list at one of their first meetings which is available if anyone wants to see it.

There was discussion of the ballfield placement. Mr. Nelson commented that the ballfield has been proposed in its location because that is where it should have been to begin with to do it right the first time. It is not going to increase the cost of the project because the pond had to be filled anyway and there was a need from the community to have large open area for events as discussed at prior meetings.

Ms. Boyd lives in Little Hollywood and is very interested in sports activities. She would like to see a ballfield with a backstop; it would be nice to have two tennis courts; her grandchildren would like to have more active activities and she hopes the committee moves forward in improving the park.

Ms. McCullers stated that the community has put their trust in the committee to provide a park. The South Mainland Community Center-Micco was approved by a vote of 3-2 and has been a tremendous asset. The Parks & Recreation Department goes out of their way to have meetings and work with the committees. "We can sit here for the next two to three years letting the community fight about this park or accept it with open arms and trust the committee to do the right thing for the community."

Mr. Newell stated that he believes the A&E Firm should listen to the input from the community. He mentioned that he feels the entrance way should be reduced to increase the parking; the gathering is down at the far end of the park and could be difficult for the elderly that do not use walkers or wheelchairs; and he thinks the playground area should be switched with the gathering area.

Mr. Arens stated that he would be in favor of having a larger sprinkler area without a lot of little ones to allow overflow parking in the park with events.

Ms. Benoit commented that she would hate to see them accommodate parking for two or three events a year. At the last meeting there was a suggestion of utilizing the South Mainland Community Center-Micco parking lot if needed during events. She believes the ballfield should be near the restrooms and would not mind switching the playground area and gathering area. The new trees will eventually provide shade for the children; she is completely in favor of this park.

There was a concern that the plan does not include xeriscape plants which need little watering. Mr. Perry replied that the plan is to use xeriscape material for the berms but it will still require water at first. Mr. Nelson commented that the park has xeriscape now, some are saying the park is too dry and others don't want a lot of water.

It was asked how the budget will include the maintenance of the park. Mr. Nelson replied that the Referendum process includes the maintenance of the facility and is in the budget.

There was a question of proposing bleachers for the field. Mr. Perry replied that because the committee decided on a multi-purpose field rather than clay, bleachers were not needed due to the lack of a formal field.

The need for lighting was discussed and Mr. Arens stated that the committee had decided not to light the park. Mr. Tworoger added to that by stating that the committee decided on minimal lighting for the tennis courts that would be on a timer. He also mentioned that the committee has worked hard trying to provide something for everyone. Mr. Tworoger stated that the committee heard that tennis does not get a lot of daytime use but does get utilized in the evenings, so if the committee is going to allocate the money for tennis courts, we need to make sure it is going to be used. Mr. Arens commented that there will be some security lighting throughout the park. The lighting of the tennis courts has not been decided at this time.

The mural was discussed and it was stated that the gentlemen who did the mural has offered to do another one.

Mr. Chapin asked if a larger tree could be placed near the playground for the children.

Discussion ensued regarding the playground. Mr. Perry mentioned that the playground must meet ADA and safety requirements where as the existing one does not.

Mr. Nelson made the suggestion to switch the playground with the gathering area in an effort to reduce the walking distance for seniors. Mr. Arens pointed out that the plan shows less of a walking distance than what currently exists. Mr. Nelson mentioned that the Parks & Recreation Department staff could help with pavilion access for special events. Mr. Arens

reiterated that it would only be needed two or three times a year. Mr. Nelson stated that emergency vehicles would be able to access the park through the walkway, however we do not want people driving their vehicles into the park.

Discussion ensued regarding berms throughout the park. It was suggested that the money for the berms could be spent on something better because the plan is not adding anything that isn't already there. It was pointed out that tennis has been added. Another concern is that hoodlums could hide in the berms and there is a concern that the canopy of trees and improper maintenance could inhibit emergency vehicle access.

It was asked again why a new park concept has evolved rather than just updating the existing park. Mr. Perry explained the process the committee and the A&E Firm has been through up to this point. He mentioned that the existing park is not inviting and is very institutional. The goal was to open up the park and make it more welcoming as well as add shade throughout the park. Mr. Perry went over the plan again discussing all the elements. He stated that they wanted to create movement for the park and visual special elements. It was asked if the fencing around the perimeter of the park would be replaced. Mr. Perry replied that it is a large cost element and is not included in the plan at this time.

Mr. Tworoger readdressed the concern of the use of berms versus landscaping to define area. He asked the A&E Firm to explain the difference of using xeriscape instead of berms. Mr. Perry explained that the berms are designed to be no more than four foot high throughout the entire park; berms are easily maintained; they are cheaper than plant material; and you could not create the same effect with plant material due to the cost; in his experience parks have more trouble with people hiding in shrub material than berms and shrub is higher maintenance.

It was asked if more shelters were proposed. Mr. Perry replied that there is another one proposed under the tree canopy and the Parks & Recreation Department can add additional shelters in the future if needed.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

The committee has approved the conceptual plan and is now in the tweaking process. Mr. Nelson stated that the fencing of the park would be priced out and a backstop is needed for the ballfield.

Mr. Tworoger was concerned with the cost of the project being over budget. Mr. Nelson stated that the committee will add the items as discussed tonight and if the plan is over budget, the committee will reconvene to prioritize the elements. If there are any other ideas that anyone has, now is the time to bring them up. Mr. Tworoger asked for clarification as to what was added at tonight's meeting. Mr. Nelson replied the fencing around the park and the backstop.

Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of adding another tennis court. Mr. Arens commented that the tennis court could be added later if the need was there. Mr. Malerk reiterated that he feels the community is losing facilities. Mr. Nelson asked where the committee would add another tennis court. That would have to be decided. Mr. McCready mentioned that he did a plan that he would like the committee to look at and would also like to include botchy ball. It was stated that botchy ball would require more supervision. Mr. Prip thinks the firm has done an excellent job and he likes the layout. He suggested a spot behind the tennis courts be reserved if a future court is desired.

Mr. Nelson stated that the project needs to move forward. He thanked all for attending and providing their input.

#### **PUBLIC INPUT:**

Public input occurred during the meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

There was no further business to discuss. Mr. Tworoger made a **MOTION** to adjourn and Ms. Tibbitts seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**. The meeting adjourned at 10:39 p.m.