

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
Pineda Causeway Boat Ramp  
Regular Meeting  
January 7, 2002

A Regular Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department Pineda Causeway Boat Ramp Referendum Committee was held on Monday, January 7, 2002 at 6:00 p.m. at Ascension Catholic Church, 2950 N. Harbor City Blvd., Melbourne, FL.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ayn Samuelson  
Mark Leslie  
Herb Richter  
Mary Ann Kise  
Al Vazquez

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Gary Hanlin  
Ken Vilardebo

**STAFF ATTENDING**

Chuck Nelson, Parks and Recreation Director  
Bill Ross, Parks and Recreation, Construction  
Karen Palus, South Area Parks Operations Manager  
Tina Webster, Administrative Secretary

**PUBLIC**

List Attached

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mr. Leslie, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Ms. Samuelson made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes as presented and Mr. Richter seconded the motion.  
**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

**STAFF REPORTS:**

Ms. Palus provided the committee members of copies of the questions that Mr. Vilardebo had asked and the answers she had provided to him. She read over the information provided. Members of the public had raised a concern of the depth of the canal and the funding source of dredging the area. Mr. Nelson mentioned that there has not been any decision as to the funding source for dredging. Discussion ensued regarding how the committee came to be and there was a request that the committee introduce themselves and include their background; where they resided and their interest for being on the committee. The members proceeded with introductions. Ms. Palus then resumed her overview of the information she had provided to the committee regarding Mr. Vilardebo's questions.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Mr. Nelson stated that the Referendum included a launching area into the Banana River. The County already owns this site and therefore, this particular site was chosen. Discussion ensued regarding the amount of parking spaces, which was originally 80, but the committee chose to reduce the amount to around 40 at a previous meeting. Some members of the public had concerns with buffers; impact on existing neighborhoods; questioned whether this project was permissible; and how to voice their concerns in a way to stop this project. Ms. Samuelson stated that the goal of the committee is to come up with the most workable design for this project to provide to the County Commissioners. Mr. Nelson recommended that the public voice their concerns when the project is presented to the County Commissioners for review. The Commissioners will have the final approval as to the status of this project. Mr. Nelson mentioned that the Commissioners are going to need a design in order to be able to make a decision as to go ahead with the project or not.

Members of the public also had concerns over the manatee use of the canal. Mr. Nelson mentioned that the County has developed a Manatee Protection Plan, which was approved by the Commissioners. The plan was sent to the State over a year ago and the County is still waiting approval of the plan.

Mr. Moore gave three reasons why he believed the project was not a good idea including security issues in regards to PAFB; manatee issues; and impact on surrounding neighborhoods. Ms. McCafferty asked how to stop the project. Mr. Nelson re-

iterated that the public could address the Commissioners when the Commissioners review the design for the project. The Commissioners will then have to make a decision to build or not. The Commission meetings are open to the public. Members of the public raised more concerns including vandalism of their property's; increased boat traffic; the presence of duck hunters; a decrease in property values; being told that the property was a sanctuary to never be built upon; the manatee issue was re-iterated; and the opinions that a boat ramp is not a need in the proposed area-they feel that existing boat ramps are underutilized.

It was asked of how this proposed project came to be. Mr. Nelson stated that the South Area Advisory Board, which is a citizen advisory board appointed by the Board of County Commissioners and many public citizens who came forward with information. Many public meetings were held to discuss the projects. A copy of the referendum brochure was in the Florida Today, web site, government channel; etc. On the brochure it says "Pineda Causeway Boat Ramp" and the map shows an arrow to the location, the exact address however was not provided. Members of the public stated that they would like to see an alternate site selected for this project.

Other concerns discussed were:

Keeping the Australian Pines to create a buffer; pelicans loafing on the site; osprey nests; requests of keeping and not disturbing the scenery and wildlife as it currently exists; environmental concerns were re-iterated; manatee issue was re-iterated; safety, noise and traffic concerns; do not want this project in their backyard; people were told that this was a bird sanctuary not to be built upon; increased litter and vandalism; public expressing that they did not realize what they were voting for; request of an alternate site; etc. Mr. Leslie, Chairman, challenged the members of the public to find an alternate location. It was mentioned that the public citizens of Tortoise Island would fight this proposed project for years if they have to. Tortoise Island residents feel that they are having to pay tax dollars for a project that they do not want. It was mentioned by a public member that the only people who seem to be against the project are the surrounding residents.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

None

#### **PUBLIC INPUT:**

Public input occurred during the meeting as described above. Additional input is noted below:

Various members of the public spoke and re-iterated the majority of the concerns and issues as discussed earlier in the minutes. There was a concern regarding the width and depth of the channel causing increased boat traffic and dangerous situations. Mr. Nelson asked if anyone could provide documentation that says the area cannot be developed? Members questioned the accuracy of the ten-year study, stating that a new study should be done. Discussion ensued regarding the availability of permitting and dredging before going any further. It was again re-iterated that the residents would go into litigation before the project could be developed.

A member spoke in favor of the project. He commented that the residents weren't concerned with environmental issues when building their homes and a large number of Tortoise Island residents do not maintain their mangros as permitted, but are bringing up environmental issues.

Mr. Nelson mentioned that St. Johns River Water Management made the statement that this site was in terrible condition and development of this park would only enhance it.

Mr. Nelson asked the committee to decide the next step. They agreed that they would like to see if the County could get the next meeting location on beachside. The County agreed to look. Ms. Kise again asked the members of the public to find an alternate location for the project from Eau Gallie to 520 on the Banana River.

It was asked if a survey had been done regarding the average boat traffic in the canal. Mr. Leslie noted that it wouldn't hurt to find out that information. He also asked the public to respect the goal of the committee and the committee will listen and respect the information provided, to come up with the best possible plan.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Ms. Samuelson made a **MOTION** to adjourn and Ms. Kise seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.** The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2002.