



SOUTH AREA PARKS AND RECREATION *Rodes Park Referendum Committee*

SPECIAL MEETING **April 3, 2006**

A special meeting of the Brevard County Department of Parks and Recreation, Rodes Park Referendum Committee, was conducted on Monday, April 3, 2006, 6:30 p.m., at the South Area Parks and Recreation Office, 1515 Sarno Road, Melbourne.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Debra Thompson
Ted Whitlock
Al Genchi
Mallena Urban
Carol Burns
Steve McKibben
Bart DeNitto

MEMBERS ABSENT

Joe LaPointe
Keith Barton
Ken Dyke

STAFF PRESENT

Jack Masson, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation
Marsha Cantrell, Parks Support Services Manager
Jeff Whitehead, South Area Parks Operations Manager
Lisa Nicholas, South Area Administrative Secretary

PUBLIC

Rob Medina
Bob Burns
Jim Rosasco
Bill Palmer
Dwayne Thompson
Chuck Downing
Mary Ann Bowman
Jerry Jagrowski
Ramona Birmingham

MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Nicholas called the roll, and Ms. Thompson noted that a quorum was present and that the meeting would be conducted.

SALE OF EXISTING RODES PARK

Mr. Masson noted that Ms. Cantrell had distributed a letter from the School Board of Brevard County regarding the sale of the existing Rodes Park and informed Committee members that the Committee was being asked to make a recommendation on the sale of Rodes Park to present to the South Area Advisory Board. Ms. Cantrell noted that it was staff's intent to take the Committee's recommendation to the South Area Advisory Board immediately following the Rodes Park Committee meeting and then to the Board of County Commissioners on April 25, 2006. Two appraisals had been performed; one appraisal came in at \$2.636 million, and the other came in at \$3.75 million, thereby rendering the average of the two appraisals at \$3.193 million.

Mr. Whitlock inquired as to whether existing fields would be lost prior to completion of the new fields, and Mr. DeNitto responded that he had discussed that issue with Tom McIntyre of the School Board and that it was the intention of the School Board to allow continued utilization of the current fields until new fields are constructed.

Ms. Thompson asked why the current Rodes Park should be sold nearly two years before the new park is completed and why not wait and potentially get more money. Mr. DeNitto commented that, because of all of the subdivisions coming in, values of housing were decreasing, and Ms. Thompson noted that the only safe bet in the past several years had been real estate and inquired as to what the land to the south, in front of the new development, had sold for. Ms. Cantrell recommended that the focus of the Committee members should be on the intention of the letter in front of them from the School Board. Mr. Genchi suggested that the Committee should decide to sell or not sell, or to sell with conditions. Mr. Medina asked what the zoning was of the property to the south, and it was reported that the property was zoned as light commercial.

Mr. Whitlock suggested that the Committee recommend sale of the property to the School Board but upon completion of the new park. Ms. Thompson asked what would happen if that ended up taking longer than anticipated, and Ms. Cantrell noted that things could be negotiated. Ms. Thompson asked what would happen if the Committee were to agree with the letter and recommend the sale of the property, and Ms. Cantrell responded that, if that were to transpire, the property would not actually go up for sale pending approval of the Board of County Commissioners.

Mr. Rosasco mentioned an incident that had occurred several years prior concerning appraisals related to the garbage dump and noted that there was a large gap in the appraisals acquired for the Rodes Park property and stated that there may be sensitivity in the County when things are based on appraisals. Ms. Thompson then indicated that the Committee had asked whether there would be a third appraisal because of the disparity in the amounts.

A member of the public inquired as to what would happen to the revenue generated from the sale of the park and if it would be designated for Rodes Park, and Ms. Cantrell and Mr. Masson responded affirmatively and noted that the money would be placed into a separate, interest-bearing account. It was also asked what would keep the School Board from asking the County to lease the property once the School Board attained it. Ms. Cantrell responded that such an issue could be addressed during negotiations.

Ms. Cantrell reiterated that the primary purpose of the meeting was to obtain the Committee's input and direction with regard to the second paragraph of the letter from the School Board, which requested that the County sell the 18-acre site to the School Board for a price equal to the average value of the two appraisals.

Ms. Thompson informed the Committee that, technically, the Board of County Commissioners can ultimately take whatever action it deems appropriate, even with Committee input and recommendations; there is no guarantee that the Committee's concerns will be addressed. Mr. Genchi stated that, while it is true that the Board will make its decision, the Committee needs to advise. Ms. Burns asked Mr. Medina the feeling of Commissioner Colon on the matter, and Mr. Medina responded that the Commissioner would support whatever decision the Committee reached and that she could communicate that information with the other commissioners.

Ms. Burns expressed that she felt the price was adequate but that she did not want to see a school before a park. Ms. Thompson stated that, if the Committee felt that the park should not be sold at this time, then concrete reasons had to be provided to the Board. Ms. Cantrell stated that, if the Committee decided to recommend the sale, and that recommendation went to the South Area Advisory Board (SAAB), and the SAAB recommended the same, then staff would attempt to negotiate on the Committee's behalf with the information received. Ms. Cantrell reminded Committee members and

participants that anyone could appear at the April 25, 2006, County Commission meeting for the purpose of addressing the issue.

Mr. DeNitto noted that recommending the sale of the property had nothing to do with the start of the park and inquired if plans were still on track. Staff responded affirmatively. Mr. DeNitto stated that he had talked to Tom McIntyre earlier that day and he had reiterated that use of the current facilities would not be lost. Ms. Thompson then asked if Tom McIntyre had the authority to make that call.

Mr. Medina stated, on behalf of the Commissioner, that District 5 staff did not want to have to field calls regarding children and teens displaced from their playing fields.

Ms. Thompson inquired of the Committee as to whether the Committee would be sending the wrong message by recommending the sale, and Mr. McKibben responded that there may be more severe repercussions if the County Commissioners feel that the Rodes Park Referendum Committee is unreasonable. Mr. Genchi inquired of Ms. Thompson what the advantage would be to selling the property at a later date, and Ms. Thompson replied that a better price may be obtained by putting the property on the open market. Mr. Genchi stated that, if that were the case, then the County may or may not receive a better price. Ms. Urban stated that one negative to not recommending the sale to the School Board might be not having knowledge of who is going to buy the property or what might be put on it.

Mr. Whitlock made a **MOTION** to recommend the sale of the property, and Mr. DeNitto seconded. The motion carried by a vote of 5 to 2. There was then discussion with regard to being able to utilize the park at no cost until the new park was ready to host activities and to have the money be paid at the time of the closing and placed into a separate, interest-bearing account for Rodes Park. Mr. Whitlock then made a **MOTION** to amend the original motion to add certain conditions, and Mr. McKibben seconded. The amended motion reads: in response to a letter dated March 16, 2006, from Richard A. DiPatri, Ed.D., Superintendent of the School Board of Brevard County, to Ms. Peggy Busacca, County Manager, the Rodes Park Referendum Committee recommends that the property be sold if use of the current park is permitted at no cost and until current activities performed at the existing park can be performed at the new park and that the property be sold at a price equal to the average value of the two appraisals with the money to be paid at the time of the closing and placed into a separate, interest-bearing account designated for Rodes Park. The motion carried by a vote of 6 to 1.

PUBLIC INPUT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no further business, Ms. Thompson called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Whitlock made a **MOTION** to adjourn, and Mr. Genchi seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.** Ms. Thompson adjourned the special meeting of the Rodes Park Referendum Committee at 7:35 p.m.