

**JOINT CITY OF VERO BEACH RECREATION COMMISSION/MARINE COMMISSION WORKSHOP
MINUTES TO
DISCUSS FUTURE LAND WHERE THE POWER PLANT AND THE FORMER POST OFFICE
ANNEX PROPERTY IS LOCATED
TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2016 6:00 P.M.
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

PRESENT

RECREATION COMMISSION: Richard Yemm, Chairman; Bobbi Burdick, Vice Chairman; Members: Greg Holton, Judy Jones, Sue Dinunno and Alternate #1 Angie Schepers

MARINE COMMISSION: Thomas Juliano, Chairman; Members: Brian Cunningham and Alternate #1 William Walker and Alternate #2 William Johnson

ALSO PRESENT: Rob Slezak, Recreation Director; Tim Grabenbauer, Marina Director and Tammy Vock, City Clerk

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

Mr. Dan Thomas, Marine Commission
Mr. Robert Snyder, Marine Commission
Mr. Clinton Lanier, Marine Commission
Mrs. Christina Pierce, Recreation Commission

1. CALL TO ORDER

A) Roll Call

The City Clerk performed the roll call for the Recreation Commission and the Marine Commission.

2. OPENING STATEMENTS

A) Chairman of the Marine Commission – Mr. Thomas (Tom) Juliano

Mr. Thomas Juliano, Chairman of the Marine Commission, stated what a unique and exciting opportunity that they have to come up with ideas for these three (3) pieces of property (Power Plant, Post Office Annex, and Waste Water Treatment Plant). He said tonight they all have an opportunity to determine the uses for these pieces of property. He said the City has a few requirements that must be met. One is that the primary use for this property must be recreation and the second is that the land needs to generate income for the City.

B) Chairman of the Recreation Commission – Mr. Richard (Dick) Yemm

Mr. Richard (Dick) Yemm, Chairman of the Recreation Commission, stated that this is the third workshop of three (3) held to discuss this land. He read what they have received as suggested uses for the Power Plant/Postal Annex Land (please see attached). He also mentioned that someone approached him about considering swapping the land where the Vero Beach Yacht Club property currently sits with the Power Plant land.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Dougsky, (spelling may not be correct) of Tarpon Lane, was at tonight's meeting as a resident and President of Tarpon Island Condo Association. He said that he attended the first input session about these properties and was a little nervous when he left the meeting. He expressed that there are over 100 residents who live close to these properties. He said they need to take into consideration these residents. These three properties (Power Plant, Post Office Annex, and Waste Water Treatment Plant) are close to surrounding residences. He felt that noise pollution of any kind must be a high consideration. He said bars are not great neighbors. Nor are places that allow bands to play at their business. He also does not agree with having an amphitheater at this location. He noted that sound travels from one (1) bridge to the other. Where he lives now the residences hear the bands playing at Riverside Café. He expressed that Vero Beach was not the first municipality to own waterfront property. Some research can be done to see what other municipalities have done with their riverfront property. He said this area needs to be developed in the high end or not at all. He commented that the last thing they need is another drug store or gas station at the corner of 17th Street.

Mr. Steve Cox was at tonight's meeting to talk about the Power Plant property. He was proposing a non motorized water craft launch facility (please see attached proposal).

Mr. Juliano asked Mr. Cox how many groups are involved with the Indian River Paddle Sports Association and who are they.

Mr. Cox mentioned the Vero Beach Power Squadron, as being one of the organizations.

Mrs. Sue Dinneno, Recreation Commission member, asked who would manage the storage rental operation.

Mr. Cox assumed it would be the City.

Mr. Tim Grabenbauer, Marina Director, explained that the City does their own billing and bill the kayak rentals on a monthly basis. He said there would need to be someone on site in order to handle the billing.

Mrs. Dinneno referred to the diagram presented by Mr. Cox and asked where the parking was going to be located.

Mr. Cox showed on the doc cam where he thought the parking could go. He said there would need to be an unloading area close to the water.

Mr. William (Bill) Walker, Marine Commission member, commented that he loves the idea that has just been presented. He is on the water every day and it looks to him that it might be quite a hike to have to be carrying a kayak or paddle board to get to the water. He mentioned where they want to put this launch facility is prime property on this site. Mr. Cox said that he would not have a problem if they had to be located on the canal side. Mr. Walker commented that the mangrove issue has not been addressed.

Mr. Yemm reminded the public that at this workshop they were just collecting ideas, which will be submitted to the City Council.

Ms. Barbara McGraf stated that she lives on Cobia Drive and that canal is not very wide. She said they are talking about a pretty big operation with these paddle boats and kayaks. She thought it would be dangerous for people getting in and out of this narrow canal. She also mentioned that there were mangroves there.

Mr. Herb Whittall commented that he would like to see a restaurant on the river. The restaurant could be where the cooling towers are now located. He agreed with not allowing a band to play in this area. If there is an outdoor band the surrounding residences could hear the music. He noted that they will have to move the transfer station, which could go on the property where the former Post Office annex is located.

Mr. Charlie Wilson, Vero Beach Chamber of Commerce, commented that the Indian River Chamber of Commerce put together a Task Force and studied this issue. The Indian River Chamber of Commerce was at the City Council meeting to give their recommendations and said they would not be attending this meeting. He had hoped that they would have been here tonight. Mr. Wilson said that they are actually talking about four (4) properties, with the fourth property being the manufactured home community located to the south. There probably will be some major changes with that property. He commented that it will take years to get this done. The electric station is an important consideration that still has not been settled. He felt that they have heard some good ideas for the property. He said that as far as moving the Water Treatment Plant, Ft. Pierce is in the process of working on moving their Plant so maybe the two cities could work together on this. He felt that what they decide for this land should be the highest and best use for this community. He brought up when the Vero Beach Chamber of Commerce brought in the Nina and Pinta that one thing they learned is that there is a shortage of deep water access in Vero Beach. He said if they lose the deep water access at this site they have lost it forever. The Vero Beach Chamber of Commerce could not use this site for the Nina and Pinta because homeland security would not allow people on the property. The idea of doing a land swap is something to think about. He expressed that they needed to protect their community.

Mrs. Bobbie Burdick, Recreation Commission member, asked with the deepwater canal could they get access from the waterway into that canal. Mr. Wilson answered yes and explained.

Mr. Holton asked how deep is the water that they are discussing.

Mr. Grabenbauer guessed it was about five (5) to six (6) feet. He said no dredging has been done in this area since the barges were there.

Mr. Herb Whitall stated that he lives on the canal off of the main canal and the speed limit is 30 mph. He said when big boats go through this canal the waves come into their canal.

Mr. Wilson did not think that a 90-foot boat was going to be traveling at 30 mph.

Mr. Chris Woodruff, of Paddle by the Sea, commented that he would love to see this be a mixed use type facility. He would also like to see a restaurant there.

Mr. Vic DeMattia, Chair of the Facilities Commission for the Youth Sailing Foundation, stated that the corner of the property should not be a commercial development. His organization sometimes sails out of there and it is not smooth water. He said the Indian River Rowing Club had trouble with 60-foot boats getting out of there.

Mr. Ken Daige stated that this land is protected in the Charter. One thing they have heard is that this area is "prime" property. He would like to see this prime property left open for the general population to go and observe the river. There is not a lot of river front where you don't have to pay to use it. There is also not many places to launch boats where they don't have to pay to launch boats. He said eventually the Water Treatment Plant will be relocated. He asked moving forward that as much open space they can be preserved be done and that the height limitation not be changed.

Ms. Rachel Balm commented that there have been so many great ideas put out for this property. She hopes that whatever this property becomes that it be done in a very eco friendly way.

4. COMMENTS FROM THE RECREATION COMMISSION/MARINE COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mr. Juliano asked for comments from the Marine and Recreation Commission members.

Mr. Johnson felt they were moving in the right direction. He felt that they should use the experts when it comes to the planning aspect of it and then have it presented to the public. There needs to be continued input from the public and he loves the direction they are moving in and the input they have received. He encouraged keeping communication open with the public.

Mr. Juliano commented that this is the very beginning of a long process. He said the citizens of this community will be involved through the whole process. He said no one knows how long it will take. He appreciated everyone spending the time to present their ideas.

Mr. Yemm stated that the next step to take will be the recommendations from these two Commissions to be presented to the City Council at their February 16th City Council meeting. They will present all of the suggestions that people have made and make a presentation to City Council on how to proceed. Some options will be to use a land designer to incorporate all of these different ideas. A charrette will probably be done and different alternatives will be presented. It will take several months before all of this is completed. Council has the option to utilize the services of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council or to go out to bid and hire a developer or land design company to come up with a plan. He said that would be Council's decision. They will take all of the ideas and suggestions and present them to Council. The designer chosen will come in and develop a master plan for all three (3) pieces of land. He thanked everyone for their participation and looked forward to working with them in the future.

5. STAFF COMMENTS

None

6. ADJOURNMENT

Tonight's meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

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