

**STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2020 2:00 P.M.  
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

**PRESENT:** Vicky Gould, Chairman; Robbie Brackett, Vice Chairman/Councilmember; Tony Young, Mayor; Laura Moss, Vice Mayor; Joe Graves, Councilmember; Rey Neville, Councilmember; Mark Tripson, Member; Linda Moore, Member; Mike Johannsen, Member (via telephone); John Cotugno, Member and Harry Howle, Member **Also Present:** Monte Falls, City Manager; John Turner, City Attorney; Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director and Tammy Bursick, City Clerk

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairman called the meeting to order and the Clerk performed the roll call.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A) February 25, 2020**

**Mr. Tripson made a motion to approve the February 25, 2020 minutes. Mrs. Moore seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**3. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION:**

**A) Draft 3 Corners Report**

Mr. Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director, gave a brief overview of the planning process for the 3 Corners Report (attached to the original minutes). He said what he is asking for today is to vote on their proposed scenario for the Power Plant and Waste Water Plant sites and also the selection of a proposed scenario for the post office annex site.

Mr. Monte Falls, City Manager, asked Mr. Jeffries to go over the schedule they are trying to get to. He said the longer the discussion is out of the public eye the harder it is to keep the plan going. He showed the schedule in order to get the item on the ballot for the November 3<sup>rd</sup> Election ballot. Then if it is approved by referendum it would need to go through a Comprehensive Plan approval and FLUM amendment, as well as zoning code amendments. It could take up to nine (9) months to go through this process after the referendum has been approved. His recommendation would be to pick a scenario that will pay for itself. It is important to wrap the planning process up.

Mr. Tripson asked if on the referendum they will be asking the people if they are voting for or against the proposal.

Mr. Falls explained that the Committee will make a recommendation to the City Council on what scenario they are choosing and that is what the public will be voting on. They are limited to 75 words for the referendum item. It is important they pick a scenario today so that the City Attorney can write the wording that will go on the referendum.

Vice Mayor Moss asked if they will need to have a zoning change.

Mr. Jeffries explained that the only thing that they will be doing is removing the property from Park land and this has to be done because it is in the Charter.

Vice Mayor Moss commented that the Power Plant and the Waste Water Plant properties are included in Section 5.05 of the City Charter, which are protected lands. They would be removing them from the Charter and changing the usage.

Mr. Jeffries explained that they would just be drafting the language to take the properties out of Section 5.05 of the City Charter.

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, explained that the referendum wording is limited to 75 words and the public would be voting for or against the referendum. He said there will be a summary on what the people are voting on and the summary cannot be misleading. It has to be very clear on what they will be voting on. He said right now the proposal that will be voted on is one (1) of these scenarios.

Mr. Robbie Brackett, Councilmember, explained that the Committee will not be doing much as far as what the language will be in the referendum.

Mr. Turner agreed and said that this Committee's job is to select one (1) of these plans.

Mr. Howle commented that they need to select the scenario that includes what direction that they want to go in.

Mr. Turner added that the plan is for the City not to sell the property, but keep ownership of the property.

Mr. Tripson did not know if Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will let them go under the bridge.

Mr. Jeffries commented that the Public Work's Department has confirmed that they will be allowed to go under the bridge.

Mayor Young brought up that the Youth Sailing Foundation uses this area for storage.

Mr. Falls explained that they will need to work out some limitations with the Youth Sailing Foundation and FDOT in their lease agreement concerning the storage.

Mr. Brackett referred to the "Steering Committee Scenario" and said that Mr. Duany did exactly what the Committee asked him to do.

Vice Mayor Moss brought up the mixed use buildings and not including that now, but maybe doing it eventually.

Mr. Jeffries said they could do that if that is their recommendation.

Vice Mayor Moss asked if it would have to go back to referendum.

Mr. Brackett said that there would need to be a zoning change, but it would not need to go back to referendum.

Mayor Young added that they could make recommendations if that is one of the concerns that they have.

Mr. Brackett cautioned the Committee with bringing out a situation and having mixed use on the property. He said that most of the public does not want that and they may have a problem with the referendum passing if they included it.

Mayor Young had a list of projected goals and did review them and said that is the way to select the scenario that they want. He said the Harbor is important to him and Mr. Duany does not hit upon that in his report. He thinks that Mr. Duany is missing a major accomplishment the way he is presenting this.

Mr. Jeffries explained that if it is the consensus of the Committee then he will put their comments in the report.

Mayor Young said that they also need to link the north side and the south side of the road.

Vice Mayor Moss stated that the Committee's plan does reflect what they discussed. The land belongs to the people. It is most likely that the land will be developed. She referred to page 41 of the report and went over what most people want. She said they are looking at Environmental Sensitive land, Park and Open Spaces, Dining/Restaurants and Entertaining. The best way in moving forward is to stick with the plan that they come up with. But, they need to leave room for people in the future to decide on other things that should go on the property. This Committee doesn't need to plan it all now. She said let those who are not even born yet decide. She never wants to see this land sold. It belongs to the people. She noted that the postal annex property is not part of the referendum. If they get far enough along they will need to address parking.

Mrs. Linda Moore commented that she hopes to see a Trader Joes go where the post office annex property is located.

Mr. Jeffries said they would need to change the zoning of that property to commercial use with the possibility of specialty retail.

**Mr. Brackett made a motion to go with scenario three (3) (conceptual master plan design), which is the Steering Committee's plan. Mr. Tripson seconded the motion.**

Mr. Falls made it clear that they were not approving taking down the Power Plant or getting rid of the Water Plant.

Mrs. Chloe Schwartz hoped that the Power Plant would remain on the property.

Mr. Jeffries explained that the Power Plant was talked about in the different scenarios. He said it all depends on the feasibility. It could remain as the structure that it is today and reuse it, or he has talked about the cathedral (the hall remains) and the new hotel could go in or the entire building might be taken down.

Mrs. Schwartz said that she would hate to see the Power Plant torn down for the sake of not trying to see what could be done with it. She said that a roof top bar would be great. She would hate for them not to utilize the height that the Power Plant has to offer. There is so much potential for revenue and entertainment.

Ms. Gould asked Mrs. Schwartz how her whole group of friends feels about having entertainment.

Ms. Schwartz commented that they are desperate for entertainment. It is hard for young people to find places where they feel comfortable in Vero. The younger people need to have a space to go, to as well as the younger generations. This place would be for everyone. She said having an entertainment center is crucial. She loves all the green space in the middle. She loves the harbor idea. She wants it to be the best place for the community. She is happy with the Steering Committee's plan. She likes keeping old historical buildings and repurposing them. It is great to see so many cultural places. She said that Vero has a great potential for an artistic community. She loves the glamping. The plan does a good job of appealing all the parties.

Mr. Brian Heady commented that the bottom line is all about the money. He said that hopefully no one on this Committee is an investor. The Charter was written long before this property was being discussed going anywhere. Everyone just thought the Power Plant would be here forever. Whatever they do it has to be financially feasible. He said that if he doesn't see a return on his investment then he is not putting his money towards the project. This Committee has done a lot of work and the consultant did what they needed him to do. He is saying that because he (consultant) has investors that would be interested. He understands why the Steering Committee may want to rein back a little, but if they don't give the maximum they are not going to get an investor. He said consider the maximum use because that is where the investor is going to have their maximum interest.

Mrs. Gould stated that is a dilemma for her.

Mr. Jay Bird stated that he plans to be at the Planning and Zoning Board meeting on Thursday to present his plan for the 3 Corners and find out what the obstacles are. His plan will take between 10 to 12 years to get completed. He said let's make the Park, "Centennial Park" for the next 100 years for the young and old. He left copies of the drawing for his plan if anyone wanted to look at it.

Ms. Gould commented that there is not a huge difference between the developer's plan and the Steering Committee's plan. The final decision will be for the voters to decide.

Mr. Joe Graves, Councilmember, commented that at their last Steering Committee meeting they spent a lot of time going through this and Mr. Duany making pleas about his scenario. He said why hire a consultant if they don't go with his recommendation.

Mr. Brackett stated that you hire them for their expertise.

Mr. Graves brought up the mothballing of the south portion. He commented on the importance of having Mr. Duany on board with this plan because of his contacts with developers.

Mr. Brackett stated that Mr. Duany's plan and the Steering Committee's plan is identical except for the mothballing.

Ms. Gould asked how the Committee felt about Youth Sailing. She is very concerned about the safety aspect.

Mr. Graves said that they needed something that would draw people to the area and Youth Sailing would do that.

Ms. Gould questioned how often Youth Sailing draws the public.

Mr. Graves commented that it is interesting to watch them sail.

Mr. Neville commented that Youth Sailing is only on the water certain periods of time. The dynamics talking about Youth Sailing would be limited. When they are not there it is an empty building.

Mr. Brackett added that the maximum plan he has shows Youth Sailing on the south side.

Mr. Rey Neville, Councilmember, explained that the motivation for Youth Sailing to go on the north side was because they thought that they could get their project built sooner. They are fine with being on the south side. He said when they are having a regatta the place will be packed.

Mr. Graves told Mr. Neville if he was saying that Youth Sailing is happy with the south side, then he is fine with that.

Mayor Young commented that looking at the logic of what they are wanting on the south side it would allow them (Youth Sailing) to have all the competitions that they want to have and they don't have to go around the bridge to get there. He said that is the best alternative for them.

Mr. Falls mentioned that Youth Sailing is ready to enter into a long term lease on the south side so they can start moving forward.

Mr. Tripson asked what was the time frame for moving the Water Plant up to the area near the Airport.

Mr. Falls explained that it is a 5-year plan.

Mrs. Jan Demco, Vero Isles, thanked the Committee for putting her non-profit organization (Kitty Café) in their notes. They need to have a time line to get things done in order to make a proper presentation on how their investment of a Kitty Café will draw in young people. They initially wanted special space for the elderly to come out of the rest homes to see the cats. They are not a restaurant nor a rescue. They met with Mr. Duany to discuss how they would fit into this project. She wanted to know by a general consensus that the Steering Committee wanted this organization at this location. This is a way to reduce cat population in the community and from an environmental sense the building they have in mind would be environmentally pleasing as it faces the water. They just trademarked their logos and need a thumbs up from this group.

Ms. Gould explained that it is not up to this Committee to make that decision.

Mrs. Demco said that she would meet with Mr. Jeffries concerning this investment.

Mr. Scott Johnson stated that he is an architect and owns a home on Ocean Drive. He also has a design studio in New York City and goes back and forth. He told the Committee that they are doing a magnificent job. What he has observed is incredibly innovative. He applauded the Commission for pushing this forward. He invited the Committee to take a trip to Savanna where they also have a Power Plant from

the same era where they are making renovations to it and there is a Marriott Hotel going there. They also have a sky top lounge. He said in New York City they are looking for places to hold performances and the Power Plant would be ideal for that and could be done right now.

Mr. Brian Heady agreed that this area was not the best place to have housing.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Jeffries asked the Committee to discuss the old postal annex property and what they would like to see go there. He would like to include it in his executive summary.

Mr. Howle commented that the property now has the new Florida Power and Light (FPL) substation located there so it should be put up for sale and let someone buy it.

Mrs. Linda Moore , Committee Member, agreed with wanting to generate revenue for the City, but she did not want to see a gas station there.

Mr. Jeffries commented that page 105 of the report outlines what was discussed during the charrettes for the use of this property. It included office use, retail, parking and/or housing.

Mr. Brackett stated that parking was not an option. He said the other things mentioned by Mr. Jeffries could work there.

Mr. Graves suggested that the City hold onto the property. He said once the property is sold, the City can never get it back.

Mr. Howle expressed that the City has a horrible reputation when it comes to real estate.

Mr. Jeffries asked for some ideas of what the appropriate zoning would be for this site. He said that C-1A is commercial.

Mr. Graves suggested rezoning it commercial then holding onto it.

Mr. Tripson asked how many acres is the property now since the substation has taken a big part of it.

Mr. Falls stated that there is 1.3 acres left.

Mr. Tripson suggested finding someone that wanted to enter into a long term lease.

Mr. Graves commented that there are different ways to handle this piece of property. The City could hold onto it and lease it out, which would enable them to still have control over it.

Mr. Neville stated that now is not the time to put the property up for sale. He said once the plans have been firmed up on what is going to go on the Power Plant and Water and Sewer property then someone might be interested in leasing this particular piece of property. He was not in favor of having a strip mall there.

Vice Mayor Moss agreed with keeping the land. She liked what Mr. Tripson said and that was that they are not making more “green space.”

Mr. John Cotugno, Committee member, commented that they are living in a very challenging time now. They are going to be asked to bring a referendum to the public and as they enter this challenging time it is very important as to how they word this referendum. He asked if the Steering Committee was going to have a budget to help them market the plan for the referendum. They could have some sort of marketing campaign that helps explain what they are trying to do.

Mr. Turner explained that the City cannot expend funds. They could have some sort of PAC that would fund the marketing tool.

The idea of keeping the “Speakup Vero Beach” website came up. Mr. Jeffries explained that it would cost between \$5,000 to \$6,000 to keep the website and that money would need to be budgeted.

Mr. Brackett explained that marketing this referendum would be hard for the Committee to do because of the Sunshine Law. He said it would have to be done by a private group.

Vice Mayor Moss commented that what they have in the plan are the things that according to the survey that was taken were what the public wanted to see on this property. She would not consider this a tough sell.

Mr. Brackett heard Ms. Gould say earlier that not everyone gets what they want, but everyone gets something out of the deal. He agreed with that statement.

Mr. Jeffries commented that the Committee could hold off on a recommendation for the postal annex property or they could pursue a special grocery retailer, which would mean a rezoning and going to C-1.

Mr. Graves suggested rezoning the property, which gives the City some potential of finding a partner for that piece of property.

**Mr. Graves made a motion that they recommend rezoning that parcel (postal annex) to general commercial use. Vice Mayor Moss seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Mr. Jeffries asked for ideas on what to name this piece of property.

Vice Mayor Moss said it really is not 3 Corners. She suggested calling it “Power Plant Park.”

Mayor Young suggested “Loy’s Landing” after Alma Lee Loy.

Mr. Howle recalled Ms. Loy saying that she did not want anything else named after her.

Mr. Brackett suggested not coming up with a name because the developer may want to do that.

Mr. Jeffries said that holding off on naming the property was fine.

Ms. Gould stated that it was the consensus of the Committee to hold off in naming this piece of property. She thanked everyone for their participation in this process.

Mr. Falls thanked Mr. Jeffries for all of the work that he has put into this project.

Mr. Jeffries stated that he would incorporate the comments made by the Committee into the final report. He wanted the Committee to know that so there were no surprises.

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comments were taken throughout the meeting.

#### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

Today's meeting adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

/tb