

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR WORKSHOP MEETING
CITY COUNCIL
BOCA RATON, FLORIDA
MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2007
1:30 PM

The Workshop Meeting of the City Council of the City of Boca Raton, Florida was called to order by Mayor Abrams at 1:30 p.m.

ATTENDING THE MEETING WERE:

Mayor Steven L. Abrams
Deputy Mayor Susan Whelchel
Council Member M. J. Mike Arts
Council Member Peter R. Baronoff
Council Member Bill Hager

Also attending the meeting were:

City Manager Leif J. Ahnell
City Attorney Diana Grub Frieser
City Clerk Sharma Carannante

PROCLAMATION: National Volunteer Week – April 15 – April 21, 2007

Volunteer Coordinator Catherine Vanden Broeck accepted the proclamation and commented on the contributions of the volunteers.

1. BOARD INTERVIEWS:

- a. Advisory Board for the Physically and Mentally Challenged – four (4) vacancies.

Paul Rockwell asked to be considered for appointment and Mary Ellen Burton-Jones and Charles Pipes expressed interest in reappointment.

- b. Citizens' Pedestrian & Bikeway Advisory Board – two (2) vacancies.

No one came forward to be interviewed.

- c. Elder Affairs Advisory Board – one (1) vacancy.

No one came forward to be interviewed.

- d. Environmental Advisory Board – two (2) vacancies.

Donald Stone expressed interest in reappointment.

- e. Marine Advisory Board – one (1) vacancy (professional engineer with experience in marine and coastal matters).

Karen Akers interviewed for the position.

- f. Pearl City Blue Ribbon Committee – one (1) vacancy (resident of Dixie Manor, Pearl City, or Lincoln Court).

No one came forward to be interviewed.

2. PUBLIC REQUESTS:

No one came forward to comment.

3. REVIEW OF REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

a. Questions relating to the agenda.

(Consent Agenda Item No. 3.e., Resolution No. 37-2007 / Renewal of South Florida High Intensity Financial Crime Area Task Force Memorandum of Understanding) Council Member Hager inquired as to how the City's participation in this task force benefits the City. The City Manager explained that the renewal of this Memorandum of Understanding adds the Internal Revenue Service to the partnership of agencies, which will enhance the ability to combat financial crimes in the South Florida area.

(Consent Agenda Item No. 3.i., Resolution No. 41-2007 / Agreement with Keith and Schnars, P.A. for professional engineering services) Mr. Hager asked if this entity is eligible to receive work from the City. Mr. Ahnell responded affirmatively.

4. FUTURE AGENDA MATTERS/ITEMS OF COUNCIL/PUBLIC CONCERN:

a. Ice Rink Update

The City Manager noted that this update is in response to Council's direction following the analysis staff did several months ago to gauge demand for an ice rink. Recreation Services Director Mickey Gomez then proceeded with the PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Gomez stated that the direction given by City Council in January was to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the City to enter into a public/private partnership for a facility to be located east of the Spanish River Library on Spanish River Boulevard; the City would contribute the land for the facility but would not be operating it. Information related to proposed location, physical features of the facility, parking, amenities, programs, and services were provided in detail. Specific benefits for City residents and the City's participation in profits were also reviewed. Mr. Gomez advised that the RFP is currently being reviewed by the Purchasing Division and could be "out on the street" within approximately two weeks.

In response to a query from Council Member Hager, the City Manager confirmed that the concept is that the City will contribute the land and solicit offers from private entities to construct and operate the facility. The City also will seek certain "breaks" for City residents in terms of costs and scheduling and looks to recoup some money if the endeavor is profitable. The RFP will also address what would happen to the facility if it were not successful, so that taxpayers' interests are protected. However, Mr. Ahnell indicated that he does not believe viability will become an issue. Staff's research revealed the main obstacle to profitability for the facility operator is debt incurred for purchase of land – a non-issue in this scenario.

Alternate sites were discussed, specifically land directly north of the location shown in the presentation; this location would still allow for shared parking with the Spanish River Library. In response to a query from Mayor Abrams in regard to location, Mr. Gomez confirmed that he has not been contacted by Florida Atlantic University. And, responding to Mr. Hager, he stated that the Greater Boca Raton Beach and Park District has not expressed interest in participating. Following discussion and comment, it was agreed that the City Manager should send a letter to the Beach and Park District to determine their interest.

Without objection, Council directed the City Manager to move forward with the RFP to seek bids for the construction and operation of the ice rink.

5. CITY MANAGER REPORTS:

a. Summer Meeting Schedule

Cancellation of the second June meeting (June 26, 2007) and the two July meetings (July 10 and July 24, 2007) was discussed. The City Manager will ask that formal action be taken at the Regular Meeting tomorrow night.

6. CITY ATTORNEY REPORTS:

The City Attorney had no reports.

7. MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBER REQUESTS AND REPORTS:

Deputy Mayor Whelchel referred to a recent news article that reported that Boca Raton, according to the Palm Beach County Commission, had spent only 50% of allotted CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) dollars. Mr. Ahnell provided possible reasons for their confusion and assured Council that this was not accurate. He stated that staff would investigate this allegation and then send a letter of clarification to the Commission.

Council Member Hager referred to another recent news article regarding special taxing districts and inquired if there is any proposed legislation about which the City should be concerned. The City Manager advised that he is aware of one proposal that would include rolling back all special taxing districts in terms of taxes and another proposal eliminating them all together. As with the property tax debate, it is "wide open." Mr. Ahnell then provided figures that showed astronomical growth in revenue for certain special taxing districts. He added that in both Palm Beach and Broward County the property tax line (on tax bills) for special districts has grown faster than any other property tax line and people are questioning where the money is going. He specifically noted that the fire rescue tax paid by residents in unincorporated Boca Raton totals upward of \$200 million, yet the County is trying to tax all the cities for an additional \$10-\$12 million because there is apparently insufficient money to fund their communication system -- an issue over which the City has filed litigation.

Council Member Hager distributed an article concerning the health dangers posed by excessive consumption of salt but advised, when queried, that he would not be proposing any legislation for regulation of same nor was he proposing that a letter be sent to City restaurants.

Council Member Baronoff stated that FAU Coach Schnellenberger was interested in coming before Council to give an update on the football program and stadium. The City Manager advised that staff has been in contact with FAU in regard to preparing a proclamation recognizing the success of the football team at which time Coach Schnellenberger will be asked to provide an update. It is anticipated that this will be scheduled for one of the May 2007 meetings.

Mr. Baronoff also asked that the City Manager arrange for recognition of those persons who served on committees for the Allianz Golf Tournament and the Festival of the Arts.

Mayor Abrams queried the City Manager as to the impact of water restrictions on the budget. Mr. Ahnell responded that staff is currently in the process of doing an analysis of the impact on revenue, but noted that the City has had the 3-day watering restrictions in place for several years; the possible 2-day restriction could have more of an impact. There was further comment and discussion regarding enforcement, the City's compliance with the restrictions, and the use of re-use (IRIS) water.

The regular workshop meeting of the City Council of the City of Boca Raton, Florida, adjourned at approximately 2:40 p.m. on Monday, April 9, 2007.

Sharma Carannante, City Clerk