

CITY OF APOPKA

Minutes of the City Council Workshop held on December 13, 2016, at 1:00 p.m., in the City of Apopka Council Chambers.

PRESENT: Mayor Joe Kilsheimer
Commissioner Billie Dean
Commissioner Diane Velazquez
Commissioner Doug Bankson
Commissioner Kyle Becker
City Attorney Andrew Hand
City Administrator Glenn Irby

PRESS PRESENT: John Peery - The Apopka Chief
Reggie Connell, The Apopka Voice

Mayor Kilsheimer called the meeting to order and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

DISCUSSION

Edwards Field/Splash Pad:

Discussion was held regarding the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee who made recommendations to City Council. Mayor Kilsheimer advised the members of the committee were Chair Jerome Miller, Christine Bornstein, Eli Rivera, Danyiel Hunter-Yarbrough, Bill Spiegel, Tenita Reid, Justin Gomez, Bryan Richey, Larry Zwieg, Anita Boyd, and Matthew Hutchinson.

David Burgoon, Director of Parks and Recreation, said the budget approved by City Council on September 28, 2016, included a splash pad. He stated they were here to discuss the location for the splash pad and the amenities to be included. Staff recommends Kit Land Nelson Park as the best location for the splash pad. He reviewed the various locations taken under consideration and said the best option was determined to be Kit Land Nelson Park. He said they were looking to place the splash pad at the tennis courts and redo the racquetball courts into restrooms. He reviewed the layout for the other events and pointed out the restrooms would be a benefit to these events. By placing the splash pad in this location it would be easily accessible by the bike trail and bring more families to the park.

Following discussion, it was the consensus to move forward with the conception of placing the splash pad on the tennis courts with Commissioner Dean going on record against this location.

John Land Statues:

Mayor Kilsheimer said the artist has sent two letters to the Land family regarding placement of the statue on the front lawn. The artist has recommended the west side of the lawn across from the 9/11 memorial.

It was the consensus to wait for a response from the Land family.

Ride/Share Ordinances 2510 and 2511:

Mayor Kilsheimer said the city has postponed these ordinances multiple times to allow Lyft and Uber to respond to objections. He proposed moving forward with the ordinances as submitted by staff.

City Attorney Hand said Lyft did provide some edits and several of those were incorporated. Some of the edits were denied with regards to their request to remove significant protections pertaining to the drivers. He advised anything that dealt with the protection of the public remained in the ordinance.

The consensus was to proceed with the ordinances as drafted by staff.

Eco-Tourism Initiative for Lake Apopka:

Mayor Kilsheimer reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on Lake Apopka Restoration Center (LARC) that he and Paul Faircloth have been working on for approximately two years. He stated trends that are occurring in the tourism industry, along with the things happening with Lake Apopka and the Lake Apopka North Shore area, are all coming together at the same time. He said this will be an economic generator for our community for generations to come. He declared birding has taken off on the Lake Apopka North Shore area and the Audubon Society has stated the greatest diversity of bird species of any inland area in North America is on the Lake Apopka North Shore with more than 360 species of birds having been identified. He discussed the restoration of Lake Apopka stating the water quality has been restored to a great extent. He said there were some unique opportunities with the City of Apopka with some land the City purchased some years ago. He said this area's potential can be highlighted as a premier destination. He spoke of connecting guests with some type of water based adventure or experience on Lake Apopka and support the Lake Apopka Restoration Center by not only celebrating the comeback of the lake, but being an active participant in the ongoing restoration of the lake. He stated there could be research brought to the area on how to remove nutrients from the water column, stating this is the key issue in various areas throughout the State and United States. Their vision is to establish a new economic engine for Apopka and for Northwest Orange County that is centered on water research and nature based tourism. The goal is to create a plan that operates in concert with what SJRWMD is currently doing. If successful, this plan will create sustainable jobs with the creation of a nature inspired facility. He spoke of private/public partnerships and how the residents supported this during the visioning process. He reviewed various eco-tourism opportunities for this area. He stated the City of Apopka owns 45 plus acres in this area and discussed the possibility of realignment of Binion Road to consolidate this land. This land lies in a natural bluff that overlooks the North Shore of Lake Apopka and this would provide incredible opportunities. He said the next steps would be to entertain agreements with SJRWMD on the gateway birding park idea and operating within their management system, development an agreement with the City on how to undertake that idea, plan for public safety in the area, city and county agreements on whether to annex the north shore and realignment of Binion Road. There needs to be an RFQ drafted and work on the legal framework that allows the city to move forward with this and allows private partners to make commitments. He said this was a work in progress and there was a lot to pursue. He said it is felt a proposal or RFQ can be prepared sometime in 2017.

Mayor Kilsheimer said without objection they will continue work on this concept.

Council recessed at 3:09 p.m. and reconvened at 3:16 p.m.

Apopka Begins and Ends with “A”:

Mayor Kilsheimer said he wanted to bring the individuals here in a workshop session for Council to be able to ask questions. He said there were documents included in the packet including the document used to propose this idea more than a year ago, as well as updated data on school grades, and the final report submitted in July, 2016. He spoke of public schools and how they have children of all spectrums attending and our schools are providing the best education they can. He felt it would be great to do something to change the perception of Apopka schools and set out to encourage the community to embrace public education and the idea that it is up to the community to help our public schools deal with issues and meet goals. He spoke of City of Life and his involvement having chaired the board and utilization of facilitated discussions through community action teams. He stated facilitated discussion keeps the discussion on track and allows exploring an idea and quickly bringing solutions to problems. He stated attending the workshop from City of Life were Gerry Glynn, Richard Wyrick, and Allan Chernoff, as well as John Wright, Area Superintendent for the North Learning Community. He advised over the last year, community action teams were started at Lovell Elementary and Rock Springs Elementary Schools, with a plan to expand to other schools. He reviewed several examples of helping schools make accomplishments, including the donation of books in conjunction with Goodwill Industries.

John Wright, Area Superintendent Orange County Schools, said Orange County Public Schools has 202,000 students and they are the ninth largest school district in the United States. About 17,000 students reside in the Apopka corridor. He said their vision is to be the top producer of successful students in the Nation and their mission is to lead students to success through the support and involvement of communities and of families. He said this program goes hand in hand and aligns with their mission and work. He said each school has their own unique personality, culture, and challenges. He declared the community action teams are a place where the community can come together to look at what would help the school move to another level. He stated they were hoping to add Zellwood and Phyllis Wheatley as the next two schools for community action teams.

Commissioner Dean said according to the chart Wheatley and Zellwood were two of the lowest when it comes to academic scores. He expressed concerns with paying tax dollars on certain schools and neglecting other schools. He said he felt this was the responsibility of Orange County Public Schools to bring facilities up to the expectations and not the City’s responsibility.

Gerry Glynn, City of Life, handed out a report from the National League of Cities on improving public schools. He stated Commissioner Dean was correct, in that Orange County Public Schools is primarily responsible for the outcome of our academic success of students in Orange County. However, what he hears the Mayor suggesting is, you don’t want the Orange County Public School system deciding whether or not Apopka students get a priority. He declared you want the Apopka students to be a priority and to succeed above the schools in other communities. One way to do that is to leverage the resources that are here and ask the community what they can do to partner with the school system. He said the City of Life’s job over the past year has been to facilitate a conversation between the community and the schools to see where they can come together to make progress toward that goal. He declared the community is not replacing what the school system is doing, but finding what it is that are barriers for some of the schools getting to an

“A” and how can the community leverage their resources to have an impact on this.

Commissioner Becker said this was an important program and he supported it during the budget process. He said he would like to see a report on the success criteria and how it is gauged.

Commissioner Velazquez said she volunteered prior to this program and said the community action team makes a difference on the success.

Commissioner Bankson said it concerned him to take money from another area we have responsibilities and spending it on this program. He said looking at the grades, it was not a clear measure.

Mr. Glenn explained the funds are for the facilitator of the community action teams. The teams are made up of volunteers, principals, and teachers.

Mayor Kilsheimer said students from all schools feed into the two high schools which is why schools not in the city are supported. He inquired if the consensus was to provide direction to staff to move forward.

Commissioner Becker and Commissioner Velazquez both supported the program. Commissioner Bankson said it was a worthwhile program, but he saw other needs that weighs heavily on him that local taxes are for. Commissioner Dean said he would support it since the funds are going to a foundation.

Fisher Plantation Annexation Referendum: Jim Hitt, Community Development Director, advised there were approximately 81 homes in Fisher Plantation and residents are interested in annexation. He said rather than doing a person by person annexation, it is recommended to do a referendum with an opportunity to get this scheduled for April next year. Proper notification has to be given to the Supervisor of Elections and the City will pay for the election at an approximate cost of \$900. An ordinance will be brought to City Council for approval to move forward with the referendum and the annexation would be contingent upon approval of the referendum with a date certain placed in the ordinance.

Mayor Kilsheimer said hearing no objection, staff will be directed to proceed.

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

Joseph E. Kilsheimer, Mayor

ATTEST;

Linda F. Goff, City Clerk