

## **CITY OF APOPKA**

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### **Minutes of the City Council workshop held on January 15, 2016, at 11:00 a.m., in the City of Apopka Council Chambers.**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Joe Kilsheimer  
Commissioner Bill Arrowsmith  
Commissioner Billie Dean  
Commissioner Diane Velazquez  
Commissioner Sam Ruth  
City Administrator Glenn Irby

**PRESS PRESENT:** John Peery - The Apopka Chief

**INVOCATION:** Mayor Kilsheimer asked John Ricketson to give the invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Kilsheimer led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **1. Taurus Southern Investments to address the City Council on the sale and purchase agreement of certain real property in the area of Martin's Pond.**

Mayor Kilsheimer said this workshop was being held to hear a proposal to sell certain property owned by the City of Apopka. A request for proposal was put out last July to develop the property known as the City Center property that is approximately 34 plus or minus acres around Martin's Pond and Highland Manor. A response was received to the proposal from Taurus Southern Investments. The Council voted to open negotiations with Taurus Southern Investments and these negotiations have resulted in a proposed contract for the sale and purchase of the property which is the purpose of this workshop.

Jeff McFadden, Managing Partner, Taurus Southern Investments, said Taurus will be 40 years old this year and they are a private equity development and real estate investment firm worldwide, owning roughly 12 million square feet of developed real estate across the world. He stated their role in this project is to identify opportunities, provide equity, and provide debt to make the entire project work. Their most important role is to identify the right consultants and the right people to help design the project. He introduced the Taurus Team who will be discussing the project details: Craig Govan is his partner and will be working with him; Bob Lochrane, Engineer, is responsible for the civil engineering portion of the project and the traffic studies and design; Kim McCann is responsible for the overall design of the project; Jill Rose is with BishopBeale and responsible for retail leasing; and Amanda Gifford, Attorney for Taurus Southern Investments.

Kim McCann said she is a partner at Eleven 18 Architecture in downtown Orlando and they are extremely excited about the opportunity at Apopka City Center. She reviewed the site that they have analyzed as it currently exists. She stated on their first analysis of the project they are looking for an upscale design with pedestrian flow, a design that connects the community that has street improvements and provides a connection to the property all the way through downtown. She said they are proposing a pedestrian bridge connecting the

north and south sides with over 200,000 square feet of retail, restaurants, and office space. They are proposing a five-story hotel, and in the second phase multifamily and possibly senior living. There will be adequate parking in both service parking and a possible parking garage. She affirmed there are proposed infrastructure improvements of S.R. 441 and Sixth Street with Sixth Street becoming more of a boulevard concept providing the connection through downtown, which will provide urban development that can occur. She advised design of the buildings has not started at this point, but she reviewed images of the designs they would like to incorporate such as large sidewalks to accommodate outdoor dining, street fairs and art festivals, and pedestrian access.

In response to Mayor Kilsheimer inquiring about the architecture, Ms. McCann affirmed the images being depicted are not necessarily what will be the style for this project. This is why they are showing various architectural styles in each image. She stated each city is different and needs its own style and identity.

Mayor Kilsheimer said the common theme they are emphasizing is the open pedestrian walkways, and accessibility of the whole City Center project.

Ms. McCann responded in the affirmative, stating the City Center project is designed with the pedestrian in mind and the idea that streets could easily be quarantined off for any special events. She said the lake, also known as Martin's Pond, is the beautiful part of this project and they will be focusing on it. She affirmed they did a study looking out larger than the actual property to what an entire master plan of the community would evolve to. She reviewed an outline of this study area stating stage one is identified as the one to four year plan that includes approximately 11 acres which includes the lake and a boardwalk around it, pedestrian bridge, new streetscapes, and the relocation of Highland Manor on to the peninsula. She went on to say stage two would be completing the beautification of Sixth Street, making it a boulevard with a median in the center, bike friendly, interconnecting the trail to this project. She went over what they propose as their action plan, which includes finalizing the master plan, and preparing design of the roadways and infrastructure.

Bob Lochrane, Lochrane Engineering, said they will be the civil engineers for this project. He said with regards to infrastructure for the City Center, you are referring to utility services, stormwater management and design, and pedestrian and vehicle movements. He stated utilities and stormwater were in place to service the City Center without any major upgrades. The focus of his discussion will be the road and vehicular improvements to make coming to the City Center an enjoyable experience. He reviewed the improvements stating access to the site for vehicles coming from the west or east on S.R. 436 will access the site at McGee Avenue and Main Street where significant improvements will be needed. They are proposing a traffic signal at that intersection and either an extension of the existing west bound left turn lane, or dual left turn lanes to allow vehicles coming from the east to access the site at that intersection. They are also proposing a right turn deceleration lane for vehicles coming from the east to gain access to the northern portion of the City Center without adversely affecting traffic flow at the intersection. Additional improvements on S.R. 441 for vehicles coming from the south include realignment of Sixth Street further north with a traffic signal at that location and making Sixth Street a boulevard thoroughfare, as opposed to the two lane road it currently is. They anticipate other improvements to McGee Avenue to allow additional traffic coming in to be

accommodated. He said it was mentioned earlier the pedestrian bridge crossing Main Street just east of McGee Avenue, and this will be an element of the overall pedestrian traffic for the project. The property will be provided with a very well-coordinated pedestrian system on site connecting to the offsite pedestrian system.

Ms. McCann again reviewed the stage one proposal showing some conceptual designs. She stated moving Highland Manor will make it a landmark marquee of the entire project and it will be interconnected with the boardwalks around and across the pond. She reiterated these are not the final designs, but ideas. They are proposing outdoor seating and entertainment and they will be integrating the beautiful oak trees on the property, keeping that history and building on it.

Jill Rose, Vice President of Retail Services with BishopBeale Realty, said she has been tasked with drawing the trade area based on driving patterns and shopping habits of the residents in this area and who would come here to shop and eat on a regular basis. She spoke about the demographics stating the trade area was very strong from a demographic perspective of approximately 140,000 within the trade area. She said the median income was very strong of \$56,000 per year and an average income of \$74,000 per year. She advised retailers focus on the median income. She stated there were a lot of families in this area and the household multiplier was 2.7 with a median age of 38. She came up with uses of who they thought would be successful in this area and then went deeper to look at specific users within each of those uses. They believe strongly the project needs an anchor and she reviewed potential anchor stores that would be supported by the residents in the area. She stated they feel entertainment use would be very successful in this area. In addition, restaurants that they would work to meet the demographics, as well as retail and various service areas.

Ms. McCann said the overall concept of this project and what they stress is how to take all of these components and give it the longevity and appeal that it needs, not only for Apopka, for also for drawing others to the area.

Discussion ensued regarding the moving of Highland Manor and concerns by the Council regarding the area. Ms. McCann said they feel this area is a prime spot for Highland Manor to be moved to and the view from S.R. 441 creates a signature area. She pointed out that it is not the location that is historic, but the building and its unique quality.

In response to Commissioner Velazquez inquiring what has been transpired with FDOT, Mr. Lochrane advised he has not had any direct communication with FDOT at this point. They have had their in-house traffic consultant look at the overall broader view of this corridor to come up with the program they are discussing. Once they have more commitment for the overall project, they will contact FDOT to open that communication.

Commissioner Dean inquired if Taurus was the only developer to submit an offer, to which Mr. Irby responded in the affirmative.

Commissioner Dean said while he wants to see the City Center built, he was reluctant about moving forward as fast as they are with regards to the sale of the property.

Commissioner Arrowsmith also expressed concern about moving Highland Manor and inquired if the area was going to have to be filled in around the pond, as well as inquiring about parking in the area.

Tom Callan, Esquire, responded in the affirmative and said there would be stem walls, subject to being permitted by SJWMD.

Ms. McCann advised from an event standpoint, valet parking was planned.

In response to Commissioner Ruth regarding commercial versus residential, Ms. McCann advised there would be a mix of retail, medical office, and possibly a hotel in the first phase.

Mr. McFadden explained the structure of the contract has the city responsible for utilities to the site, the public roadways and the pond are the responsibility of the city, the roadways and wide sidewalks on property are the developer's responsibility.

Commissioner Dean suggested if moving Highland Manor, the city does not have a historic district, and recommended moving it across from the VFW/Community Center and develop a historic district in that area.

Mr. Callan said the developer pays all costs to connect to utilities. He stated there were additional considerations in the agreement that go beyond the purchase price per acre, stating they will be designing the entire area, public bike paths and pedestrian tracts, and the idea of using and making sure this area connects to any future bike paths. The developer will be maintaining the property.

Mayor Kilsheimer advised the City had this property independently appraised and the average market price per acre was \$217,650. The Orange County Property Appraiser has the average price per acre right at \$100,000. He said all of the money the city has spent so far was an investment in the future of the city. He stated the \$150,000 per acre is a price proposed by Taurus and will allow them to start development. He stated the city center area is within the Community Redevelopment Area, stating the state statute allows for the city to dispose of the property at a price they agree upon as long as the objectives of the city are being met in the development plan.

Discussion was held and concerns expressed with regards to this being spread out over 10 years and the city being obligated upfront and not receiving their money until over a 10 year period.

Mr. Callan advised there was no obligation in this contract for the city to spend any money. He said the development agreement must be completed within 30 days, or 60 is agreed to by both parties.

Mr. McFadden thanked everyone and said they were looking forward to working with the city and staff.

**ADJOURNMENT** – There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

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Joseph E. Kilsheimer, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Linda F. Goff, City Clerk