

Blueprint 2000 CAC Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 5, 2012

Blueprint 2000 Office

2727 Apalachee Parkway, Suite 200

Christic Henry, Chair, called the Citizens Advisory Committee meeting to order at 4:31 pm.

Committee Members present:

Christic Henry	Richard Drew
Tom O'Steen	Ron Pease
Henree Martin	Andrew Chin
Lamar Taylor	Kent Wimmer
Daniel Parker	Erin Ennis
David Jones	

Guests/Presenters/Staff:

Dave Bright	Gabe Menendez
Wayne Tedder	Harry Reed
Dave Snyder	JW Hunter
Ray Youmans	Paco de la Fuente
Marek Romanowski	Helen Vidal
Debra Schiro	Ramona Watson
Angela Ivy	Leigh Davis
Shelonda Meeks	Samantha Shapirei
Junious Brown	
Tony Park	

Agenda Modifications

There were no Agenda Modifications.

Information Items

Item #1: Capital Circle Northwest/Southwest: South of US 90 to North of Orange Avenue – Bid Opening

This item was informational only.

Item #2: Franklin Boulevard Flood Relief and Roadway Project Update

This item was informational only.

Consent Items

Item #3: CAC Minutes: February 9, 2012

Henree Martin moved approval; Kent Wimmer seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Presentations/Discussion

Item #5: FAMU Way Extension Status

Gabe Menendez, Director of Public Works for the City of Tallahassee, gave a brief presentation on the status of FAMU Way extension project. Mr. Menendez noted that due to the fact that CSX is not going to allow an at-grade crossing of the CSX railroad, that a revised FAMU Way extension alignment connecting with Gamble Street was now being pursued.

Kent Wimmer questioned if part of the purpose of the FAMU Way extension was to provide relief to Gaines Street, if it was prudent to propose a more southerly alignment for FAMU Way. Mr. Menendez stated that it still provided some relief and alleviated intersection issues at Lake Bradford Road. There were multiple decision points to be made before the alignment could be solidified. He also noted that the neighborhood was in support of the realignment.

There were additional questions and discussion from Mr. Wimmer regarding the possible extension of the St. Marks Trail through the project area. Mr. Menendez spoke to the constraints due to contamination and possible alignment options of it as well. Mr. Wimmer had concern with the St. Marks Trail crossing FAMU Way at the round-a-bout at Gamble Street.

Tom O'Steen questioned how the connection to Innovation Park would be made. Mr. Menendez stated that Stuckey Street to Roberts Avenue to Rankin Road would connect FAMU Way to Jackson Bluff and Capital Circle. Dave Bright stated that by dropping south to Levy Street, one could connect to Innovation Park. Mr. O'Steen noted that the extension of FAMU Way was not a project on the original EECC plan for Blueprint 2000. One of the things they hoped to accomplish was enhancing the viability of Innovation Park. He was interested in possibly a companion round-a-bout or other "grand entrance" that made the connection along Levy to Innovation Park. Mr. Menendez requested that Mr. O'Steen hold that thought as a member of the Sales Tax Extension Committee because the City was interested in that and other "gateway" projects.

Henree Martin questioned when the Monroe Street to Martin Luther King Boulevard segment of FAMU Way would be constructed. Mr. Menendez stated that it was not yet funded. It was another potential project for the sales tax extension. Ms. Martin stated that if it was to counterbalance traffic flow from Gaines it was imperative that it connect to Monroe Street. Mr. Menendez stated that the section of Oakland Street from Adams Street to Monroe Street would be renamed FAMU Way.

Item #6: Future Development Plans for Sensitive Lands Properties

Tony Park, Director of Public Works for Leon County, gave a presentation on the County-maintained Sensitive Lands properties acquired by Blueprint. These included the Headwaters of the St. Marks River and the Fred George Basin properties.

Tom O'Steen questioned what the projected budget was for construction of the proposed amenities in the Headwaters of the St. Marks. Mr. Park referred him to the agenda item as the capital expenditures were included there; the total was approximately \$2 million. Dave Bright clarified that what was listed as proposed expenditures was the information provided in the Management Plan submitted to the Florida Communities Trust (FCT) in 2007. When the County

finalized the details of the site plan, those items and costs could change.

Mr. Bright further stated that Blueprint staff combined the Management Plans for the three parcels acquired with three separate FCT grants to make reporting easier on staff. The proposed items and costs were carried forward from the Management Plans with the knowledge that they would be revised if needed, and reported in the updates provided to FCT. Mr. Bright stated the original grants were for land acquisition only, not to fund the proposed improvements. Mr. Park stated that there was no estimate of maintenance costs as of yet.

Per the terms of the grant, Mr. Bright stated, the County "should have been" approximately halfway through the implementation process. However, given the economic reality of the last several years, FCT understood that, at the time of budget cuts, future items such as the improvements listed in the three grants were not able to be funded from county budgets. Kent Wimmer questioned if the remaining funds could be used for a primitive trail system throughout the land. Mr. Wimmer offered that he potentially had a source to help build trails. He felt that as the sales tax extension discussions moved forward access to those areas would be imperative. Mr. Bright clarified for the members that staff recommendation was to use the remaining allocated funds to complete improvements as shown in the Management Plans for the St. Marks Headwaters Greenway and Fred George Basin Greenway.

Mr. Park discussed the inclusion of one baseball field at the Fred George site in the southwest corner as well as the renovation of an existing home that the County, with the Wildwood Preservation Society, would operate and maintain as a museum and/or education center. Ms. Ennis questioned why only one baseball field. Mr. Park stated that other fields were nearby at the Canopy Oaks School. Also, the City owned property near the intersection of Mission Road and Fred George Road that they were considering using for a ball field.

Many members of the committee questioned why they would consider either facility, given the environmental sensitivity of the land and the limited dry area of the closed basin. Mr. Park stated that the County was feeling the pressure to include one ball field because of the support needed for the league in that area. If the City moved forward with the Mission Road site, improvements at the Fred George site might not be necessary. The field the County proposed was intended for an older youth group and would complement the City's efforts. Also, it was included as part of the FCT grant application.

Mr. O'Steen stated that he would like to see a potential partnership with the School Board in which Blueprint would fund improvements, or the addition of another field at a public school or public park in that vicinity rather than at the Fred George site. It felt to him as if they were trying to cram an amenity into a space that did not lend itself well. Given that it was identified in the FCT grant, he wondered if there was any leeway or if they were locked in. Mr. Park stated that there were several fields in the area to accommodate younger-aged players. However, the purpose of the Fred George Greenway field was to support older youth players in the area.

Mr. O'Steen stated that initially the purchases of the sensitive land areas were intended for environmental protection. The EECC did not envision them as active or populated property for parks and recreation. With the larger acreage of the St. Marks Headwaters area there were more

options; trails certainly fit with the passive use intended. Baseball fields did not. Museums felt like a stretch without a better understanding of what they were intended to address.

There was a real concern from the City and County at the Sales Tax Committee meetings about the lack of funding for maintenance for these projects. He felt that before the committee could move forward, they needed a better understanding of what the maintenance costs were projected to be. The next agenda item, and the next conversation, was and needed to be, "what does the sales tax extension apply to?"

Christic Henry stated that it was in the grant application and she did not want to renege on that document. At the same time she shared the concerns of Mr. O'Steen. Mr. O'Steen agreed that it was necessary to follow through on the agreement or to understand any latitude in some of those commitments.

Mr. Bright stated that the Blueprint "blue book", as developed by the EECC and as further developed by staff, always included some funding for site improvements - be that trails, benches, etc. It did not address museums or ball fields. Nor did the FCT grant address who would fund the improvements that Blueprint or the County received points for in the grant award.

David Jones stated that it seemed odd to have only one field rather than a complex; however, the support for older youth players was critical in that area. In order to maximize potential for athletes, they needed the intermediate step between non-competitive league ball and high school. The fields at high schools and parks were fully utilized during baseball season. There was a high demand for the advanced-level fields for older youth. He was supportive of an older, advanced-play one-field area that was desperately needed.

Daniel Parker questioned parking. Mr. Park stated that the parking area was intended to be shared between the field and the museum. To clarify, he further stated that the museum was intended to be more of an educational facility to describe the importance and environmental sensitivity of the area.

There was considerable discussion regarding the inclusion of a baseball field with many members expressing concern and support mutually. Christic Henry, to prompt a motion, again restated the staff recommendation to the committee: to use the remaining allocated funds to complete improvements as shown in the Management Plans for the St. Marks Headwaters Greenway and Fred George Basin Greenway. **Kent Wimmer moved staff recommendation; Richard Drew seconded the motion.**

Option 1: Staff recommends use of remaining allocated funds to complete improvements as shown in the Management Plans for the St. Marks Headwaters Greenway Management Plan and the Fred George Basin Greenway Management Plan.

Lamar Taylor stated that he shared the sensitivity to on-going maintenance. He felt obligated to have some information on the annual maintenance costs or who would be responsible and where the funds would come from. Mr. Park stated that, currently, funding came through the budget

process via the County Commissioners. There would most likely be a staff person on site for maintenance. He also expressed his appreciation for the concern for operation and maintenance from the CAC.

Erin Ennis was unclear of the motion. Wayne Tedder stated that Blueprint had funds remaining in the budget for the two project areas. In the line item for the Headwaters of the St. Marks there was \$1.5M of unused funding from previous years and \$2M in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for fiscal years 2014-2016. In the line item for Fred George, there was \$1M of unused funding from previous years. Dave Bright stated that the funds were shown in the Agenda Item and the proposed improvements were outlined in the agenda item. The St. Marks improvements were those shown in the Management Plan submitted to the FCT in 2007. Staff did not try to make adjustments to the improvements or costs and realized they were five years old. Some of the proposed improvements might not be constructed as outlined. The costs would, however, be readdressed and revised if the item moved forward to the IA.

Mr. Tedder stated that using portions of the funds for maintenance of projects purchased with the current and future tax had come up in discussions by the Sales Tax Committee. Mr. O'Steen stated that, in his opinion, the question would then become did they want them to maintain passive trail systems on environmentally sensitive lands, which made sense. Or would they want those dollars to fund a single standalone baseball field adjacent to a 100-year flood plain; it left him a bit uncomfortable.

Mr. O'Steen requested a legal opinion on Blueprint's commitments to FCT to understand what latitude was available, as well as an estimate of maintenance costs for both facilities to gain a better understanding there as well. Tony Park stated that the County would provide that information. Additionally, the County was developing their 5-year outlook for operation and maintenance budgets and it included these types of facilities. Mr. O'Steen questioned if the County had a funding source. Mr. Park stated that their proposed budgets intended to compete for any other operation and maintenance dollars. Mr. O'Steen stated that he would rather understand now, rather than later, if Blueprint dollars would be expected to fund those costs.

Ron Pease stated that, after two years on the CAC, the current conversation was the first time he had heard of maintenance being an issue. Had it been brought to the CAC before the Sales Tax Committee began meeting, while he could not say what the CAC would have done, he did not feel that maintenance would have been an issue. That concerned him and, he questioned, was there a mechanism to adjust the utilization of the money available to make room for a maintenance budget? Baseball field or not, the money was invested in both greenway areas for the education and utilization of the citizens. There were many people interested in both types of amenities. The ball field could be an attractor to other elements of the greenway too.

Mr. Taylor stated that he understood the staff recommendation but offered as an alternative the request for additional information about ongoing maintenance projects and the extent of flexibility of the FCT grant in terms of the single ball field. Ms. Ennis stated that a friendly amendment to that would be to see a budget for improvements in 2012 dollars versus 2007; she indicated her displeasure in seeing costs that were five years old.

There was much discussion of the wording and language for the motion. Dave Bright stated that his understanding of it was that **Mr. Wimmer moved Option One with the tweaking that included approval of the concept to fund improvements on the properties, but not necessarily the itemized list in the agenda item unless those items were still necessary and desired; to re-evaluate and further develop the improvements shown in the Management Plans for both properties; a recommendation to address the need of the ball field; and address the maintenance plan.** He perceived they would like, without making any motions, Mr. Park to return to the CAC with an updated outline of what the \$1.5M and \$1M would be funding as well as need for additional and future money. His interpretation of that was that the committee was generally in favor of the use of the funds to move forward. However, they wanted to know what the updated plan for each site would be. Essentially giving the County approval to move forward and assuring their movement and installations were appropriate for the sites and Blueprint funding.

Kent Wimmer amended and restated his earlier motion, with the fine-tuning from the committee as: The CAC recommends use of the remaining funds for improvements as shown in the Management Plans for the Headwaters of the St. Marks Greenway and Fred George Basin Greenway, and directs staff to update the plans and budgets for said projects. Richard Drew seconded the motion; it passed unanimously.

Mr. Taylor clarified that the venue for vetting projects through the CAC was to periodically update them of the progress through an agenda item and presentation. It was agreed that Mr. Park did not need to bring the item before the CAC at the June 2012 meeting.

Item #4: Cascades Park Update

Gary Phillips gave a brief presentation on the latest construction progress at Cascades Park.

Daniel Parker questioned the distance between the Centennial Field area and the children's Adventure Garden. Mr. Phillips stated that it was quite a distance. He also asked about the proximity of the restrooms. Mr. Bright stated that they were approximately 400-500 feet from the children's garden.

Richard Drew questioned the activities at the ball field. Mr. Phillips stated that it was a small area, intended for young children (whiffle ball); other activities that might be programmed there would be up to Parks and Recreation. Wayne Tedder noted that the Fans of Centennial Field were supportive of the small field as a tribute to its history.

Mr. Tedder updated the committee on the discussions between the City and County and neighborhoods regarding the amphitheater. He stated that, as it developed, he would keep the committee informed, possibly even sending information out of the meeting cycle.

Ron Pease reminded Blueprint staff to keep in mind all segments of the community for restrooms, benches, and other amenities. Four hundred feet could be quite a distance for some members of the community.

Item #7: Leon County Sales Tax Committee

Dave Bright shared that the next meeting of the Sales Tax Committee would be a public hearing at City Hall on April 26, 2012 at 6:30 PM. Wayne Tedder stated that all uncompleted projects on the original Blueprint list (Tier 1 and Tier 2) had been added to the list of potential projects for the Sales Tax Committee to review.

Christic Henry stated that Lamar Taylor, Henree Martin, Tom O'Steen, and Terrance Hinson (former CAC member) were the voice of the CAC on the Sales Tax Committee. That being said, she wanted to be mindful of the committees not overlapping nor influencing one another.

Daniel Parker raised the question of, for example, calling up one of the CAC/STC members with his thoughts on an item, if it would violate any sunshine laws. Lamar Taylor was unclear and asked staff to clarify that for them. In an abundance of caution, however, he requested that until it was confirmed, to limit communication to the open forum of the CAC meetings themselves or at a public hearing. Mr. Tedder stated that if it related to any current Blueprint items or projects, the answer would be no. Future projects, however, were fine.

Citizens To Be Heard

There were none.

Items From Members Of The Committee

Erin Ennis questioned the status of the Blueprint Manager position. Mr. Tedder stated that he was in the third round of application review and interviews, with approximately 45 applications on his desk.

Adjourn

Daniel Parker moved to adjourn, seconded by Kent Wimmer. The meeting adjourned at 6:41 pm.