

CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION
July 29, 2010

The work session was called to order by Vice Mayor Beth Dillaha at 4:00 p.m. in Winter Park City Hall Room 200, 401 Park Avenue South, Winter Park, Florida.

Members present:

Commissioner Beth Dillaha
Commissioner Tom McMacken
Commissioner Carolyn Cooper

Also present:

Assistant City Manager Michelle del Valle
Planning Director, Jeff Briggs
Parks and Recreation Director, John Holland
Public Works Director, Troy Attaway

Absent:

Mayor Kenneth Bradley
Commissioner Phil Anderson

Protection of Conservation Areas and Friends Groups discussion:

Commissioner Dillaha called the work session as a follow up to a new business item that was mentioned by Commissioner McMacken in the July 26, 2010 meeting to specifically discuss conservation areas and wildlife habitat and how to protect those areas and to define the best practices for "Friends Groups" within the City.

Planning Director Jeff Briggs asked if he could first address an item. Mr. Briggs shared information regarding the Grant Chapel building on New England, a historic church in the Hannibal Square neighborhood owned by Mr. Dan Bellows. He spoke about prior discussions regarding the concept of moving that building to the Heritage Center property for future private and/or public use and the considerations as to who will pay for this and the single family zoning. He asked because this involves City property, as well as private property, if there is any interest to preserve this structure because as of now, when that property on New England is redeveloped it will be demolished and the only way to save this historic structure is to move it.

Mr. Briggs noted that right now there are no CRA funds available and if they do not have \$75,000 which is the estimated cost of the building, they cannot move forward. There was a short discussion regarding the timeframe, if there needs to be a commitment to secure the deal, the eligibility of historic designation of the building, the structural integrity of the building for moving it, the advantages and disadvantages with moving ahead right now with this project or if it is premature with bringing this item forth. Discussion ensued regarding Mr. Bellows proposed agreeable terms and conditions. There was a consensus of three that it is in the best interest of the City to save this building. It was suggested that Mr. Briggs bring forth this item to the Commission for discussion and input.

There was an overall discussion regarding the animal ordinance and staff's recommendation that was presented at the July 26, 2010 meeting. Also discussed was the need to protect and preserve wildlife habitat and conservation areas and the "Friends" groups. Commissioner McMacken suggested that they take a look at another version of the animal ordinance, look at the "Friends" groups and the benefits they provide to the city, along with their contractual agreements, requirements and approvals.

Parks and Recreation Director John Holland answered several questions regarding the different "Friends" groups and the contracts and agreements that are in place. He noted that each group

has a different contract because each group has a different venue with different goals and purposes.

There was an overall long discussion regarding the importance of having specific guidelines and structures in place and the need to establish, create and implement policies, ordinances and contracts for the different organizations. Discussion also included sample language, criteria and information that should be included in these policies, ordinances and agreements. They also shared their concerns with needing to define what a "Friends" group is, their meanings and purpose, establish best practices and the framework for cooperation between the City and the entity. Other concerns mentioned were the need for governance, and/or regulation of certain groups and to see if there is a political affiliation.

There was a request for Mr. Holland to provide an electronic copy of all agreements that are currently in place be sent to the Commissioners for review. It was noted that the "Friends" group issue is on the August 23, 2010 agenda under non-action items for discussion regarding the policies, procedures and framework in place. There was a reminder that the Commission should submit their questions, suggestions, ideas or examples via email to Mr. Knight so the information would be available to all of them prior to the August 23, 2010 meeting to help them in their decision making process.

Commissioner Dillaha mentioned that there needs to be a discussion to review the fundraising for Fleet Peeples Park since the one year time period for raising the funds has expired.

Assistant City Manager Michelle del Valle suggested bringing the 90 day action plan to the next Commission meeting to update everyone on various milestone issues and future items coming forth that will require further direction. There was no clear consensus as to when it will appear on the agenda.

Commissioner McMacken addressed Mead Gardens and the deed restrictions related to this property and other related properties. There was a suggestion for an educational discussion to be done for all "Friends" groups, and that it includes all documents that are in place so they can be aware of any existing agreements, along with hearing what the City has already accomplished to date. It was noted that this information will help everyone understand what their obligations are in terms of the deed restrictions so they can carry them forth.

Jeffrey Blydenburgh, Friends of Mead Gardens, stated that they are prepared to educate the Commission and bring them up to speed on everything. He mentioned the sooner the better because until the City has certainty with how they want to move forward with the items they have been working on, they will not be receiving any funding from anyone so timing is of the essence. He also urged the Commission to be part of the educational discussion because it will help them with their overall decision making process.

There was a discussion regarding the need and goal of protecting, preserving and enhancing the few conservation areas and wildlife habitat areas that they have in the City, the components to do that and the steps they need to take. Public Works Director Troy Attaway suggested including Environmental Resource Manager Tim Egan as part of this discussion because of his expertise, experience and knowledge concerning true conservation wildlife areas. He noted that Mr. Egan can educate them on the various issues, help them define the assets and the potentials along with identifying the areas that need to be protected and the various solutions to

consider. It was also mentioned that with Mr. Egan's expertise, he can help them better understand and provide his viewpoint regarding the balance between parks and conservation and the managing of each for their particular purpose, along with discussing the pros and cons of the different management schemes. There was a suggestion that the citizens also be invited and encouraged to participate in the educational process and to be part of the solution to help support the balance.

It was suggested that there be a discussion in August regarding the need to move forward with "Friends" groups definitions, structure, obligations, the relationships involved, and the recommended steps, along with an action plan. It was also mentioned that the Conservation Wildlife Habitat discussion item be brought forward as a work session meeting for further discussion and input rather than adding it to the 90 day action plan list.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.



Michelle Bernstein
Deputy City Clerk Michelle Bernstein