

CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION MINUTES
December 1, 2008

The meeting of the Winter Park City Commission was called to order by Mayor David Strong at 4:45 p.m. in the Commission Chambers, 401 Park Avenue South, Winter Park, Florida.

Members present:

Mayor David Strong
Commissioner Margie Bridges
Commissioner Phil Anderson
Commissioner Beth Dillaha
Commissioner Karen Diebel

Also present:

City Manager Randy Knight
City Attorney Trippe Cheek
Deputy City Clerk Nancy McLean

Alternate Commuter Rail Stop

Dan Bellows commented that he firmly supports a stop in downtown Winter Park in Central Park and believed it was appropriate. He presented an illustration of Lee Road heading out to Interstate 4 (I-4) and 17-92/Orlando Avenue heading north to Maitland. He explained that after 11 years he acquired 56 acres of fee simple real estate with contracts on several more acres. He commented that it is a wonderful geographic location that is close to I-4 and at the border of Maitland and Winter Park. He stated that there were several thousand feet of train track. He proposed a spur that comes off on his private property and a multi-modal stop would accommodate Lynx buses, commuter rail, pedestrian bike path, taxi's, and a parking garage. He added that there would be an opportunity to introduce a trolley system that includes Eatonville, Maitland and Winter Park. He stated this property is 18 acres and it allows many more uses than the current Maitland stop or the Winter Park stop. He spoke about the opportunities of the project with the 65,000 square foot Performing Art Center, a shared City of Winter Park/Maitland fire station, etc. He wanted the Commission to understand that this project has been in the works for a while and there have been at least a dozen public meetings about this with prior Commissioners. He added that they were looking for Winter Park's version of the Maitland Center which is a place where Winter Park can truly encourage density.

He spoke about asking Winter Park to annex the property but they refused so he went to Orange County. He stated the section he was talking about is in the City of Maitland and proposed (discussion everyone needs to be involved with) that Maitland could pick up 5-10 acres of this unincorporated land that has never been in a municipality and in exchange they give up a few acres along the train track to Winter Park. He commented that Winter Park is in control of the commuter rail station and can grab hold of Maitland's pedestrian bike path and connect it into downtown Winter Park. He would also be prepared to donate one acre of land to a political entity for the new fire station and donate two acres for this 65,000 square foot Performing Art Center. He hoped to have discussions about this because there is matching State grants in doing so.

He explained that the entire report and analysis has been put together, they had multiple meetings with the State and the application is ready to be submitted. That site is situated to be in Phase II by 2013, whereas, the current Winter Park site is in Phase I by 2011. He stated that in having multiple meetings with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the County other things occurred and the School Board asked him if he would be willing to trade land for the Winter Park Tech site at Webster and Denning Avenue. He responded yes. Mr. Bellows stated if anyone sees this as an opportunity where they can stimulate something at Webster and Denning Avenue, he would work with them. He also spoke about his Denning apartment site and the infrastructure he has in place.

He stated this plan, regardless of what happens in Central Park is an incredible facility that can accommodate many transportation opportunities on a larger scale and not offend anyone as to having the buses, commuter rail, taxi's, bicycles, etc. He commented that he is willing to work together with the City and would like to have dialogue about getting more involved with the Commission on this project. He added that if they have any vision of how to work together at Webster and Denning Avenue and the Denning apartment site, he would welcome the opportunity. Mr. Bellows answered questions.

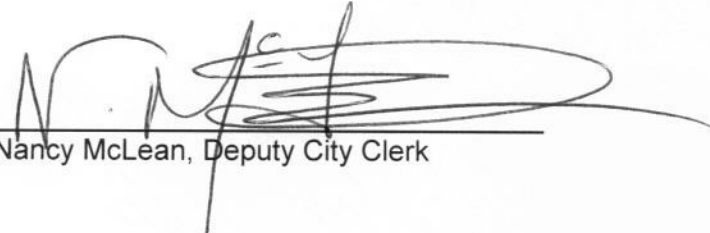
Mr. Bellows also stated there may be electric power opportunities to allow Winter Park to expand their power service into this project and receive some significant revenues from the commercial components. He suggested the City Manager explore the possibility to create a funding source which will ultimately benefit the City and the project. City Manager Knight explained that we used to create a franchise fee equivalent from the electric that is currently paid by Winter Park electric and the ability to pledge the new revenue generated by this big development back towards the infrastructure has potential.

Attorney April Kirsheman expressed that this is timely, not only for commuter rail but it also works hand in hand with the problems associated with the comprehensive plan. She stated a lot of the benefits of coordinating with this property and/or with Denning Avenue and the Public Schools are to address some of the objections and recommendations that came back. She commented that if they were able to do that and tie it together, it could help with addressing the financial feasibility questions that is amuck in the report. She hoped to tackle it with this project, then the financial feasibility and the concrete standards and plausibility of the land development will follow.

Mr. Bellows hoped that the Commission will look at the New England corridor and create a comprehensive plan that will allow development of 3 stories or less; restrict the 3rd floors for residential; and adhere to the New England façade guidelines. As he understands it, the current comprehensive plan today will not allow that to happen.

Commissioner Diebel asked for a staff recommendation or an analysis to understand where there are conflicts in the comprehensive plan according to the New England corridor. She stated she did not want to proceed in trying to adopt something that does not resolve this conflict. Mayor Strong commented that this issue has been raised before and they cannot have a comprehensive plan that denies a property owner reasonable use of his land. He stated they have asked P&Z to look at this particular area, very specifically because of his concerns. Mr. Bellows commented that P&Z formed a subcommittee to discuss this. Commissioner Dillaha commented that P&Z is looking into this, they will make a recommendation and it will come before the Commission. Commissioner Diebel reiterated that her direction stands and would like to know if the conflict exists. Mayor Strong encouraged P&Z to finish their work. Planning Technician Caleena Shirley commented that she spoke with Mr. Briggs and they will have one more work session and vote in January.

The meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.



Nancy McLean, Deputy City Clerk