

MINUTES OF THE WILDFLOWER WORKSHOP MEETING
CITY COUNCIL
BOCA RATON, FLORIDA
Tuesday October 18, 2011
6:00 PM

The purpose of this Special City Council Workshop Meeting is to discuss the future use and possible improvement and/or development of the Wildflower property.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Susan Whelchel called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. It was noted that Council Member Constance Scott declared a conflict of interest was not present at this time.

2. PROCESS OVERVIEW (City Staff)

City Manager Leif Ahnell introduced Deputy City Manager George Brown who outlined the process initiated at the direction of the City Council. He reviewed the schedule and parameters of the request for letters of interest. He identified the location of the property, the five proposals that would be presented, and categorized the balance of the public comments received. He concluded by noting that direction from Council for further action was anticipated at this workshop.

3. PRESENTATIONS (Parties who submitted Letters of Interest)

1. Boca Outdoor Center

Rick Clegg described his proposal to establish an eco-tour/kayaking center, outlining the reasons his business would be a good fit for Boca Raton, promoting nature and open space for residents.

2. Hillstone Restaurant Group

Scott Ashby presented on behalf of the Hillstone Group, outlining the reasons this special site would be ideal for partnering with the City to provide a top-notch restaurant.

3. Boca Dockside Marketplace

James Peters made the presentation, promoting a city marketplace akin to Pike Place Market in Seattle. He described his vision of what this would encompass, a transformative development for downtown.

4. Guanabanas Restaurant

Anthony Barbar introduced Chad Van Boven, president, who presented on behalf of the restaurant. Mr. Van Boven described the current location and operation in Jupiter. Jon Sullivan, vice president and general manager, added his thoughts.

5. BrickTop's

Joe Ledbetter, CEO, presented on behalf of his restaurant group. Eric McCormick, on behalf of CFO Aileen McCormick, spoke on behalf of this project.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Two late proposers were afforded the opportunity to make a presentation.

Jim Comparato advocated a mixed use project that incorporates Silver Palm Park. The concept would be a composition of many of the ideas presented earlier.

Jose Barrera proposed a park that would incorporate a number of features with a central water attraction, accessible to all.

Lenore Wachtel and Bob Owens advocated a passive park.

Arlene Owens, John Stetz and Bill Trinka advocated expansion of Silver Palm Park, including parking, and keeping the property as a public park.

Mary Csar, Executive Director of the Boca Raton Historical Society, proposed moving the historical Luff house to the Wildflower site.

Krista Maki advocated something akin to Riverwalk in Texas.

Lisa Fulp advocated a small-scale, affordable restaurant and other outdoor options provided by local entrepreneurs.

Vivian Leshner advocated a creative idea to attract people other than a restaurant.

John Elliott commented on the proposals and the effect some would have on the immediate area.

Stuart Thorn expressed his likes and dislikes for uses of the Wildflower property.

Deborah Cusick expressed concerns about traffic flow in the area.

Al Zucaro advocated having a public space that would include a public/private partnership.

Patrick Bless advocated a public use.

Suzanne Siegler expressed concerns about the project volume and potential traffic, while advocating some type of learning environment.

Michelle Bellisari advocated a waterfront destination with linkage to other areas, especially downtown.

Heidi Klier asked about ownership of the land and advocated a park.

Derek Vander Ploeg commented on the financial elements/commercial use of proposals balanced with the public use.

Elisabeth Hoffman advocated keeping the site fluid and remaining user friendly.

James Hendrey commented on the creative ideas put forward tonight.

Rick Clegg suggested modifying his proposal for Boca Outdoor Center to include Rutherford Park.

James Peters spoke again.

Pattie Dervishi commented on a restaurant use.

Seeing no one else come forward, the Public Comment period was closed.

5. DISCUSSION BY CITY COUNCIL

Deputy Mayor Haynie thanked the participants and asked about the Chop House property and the Intracoastal current issues.

Council Member Mullaugh noted that there needs to be public access to the waterfront as well as a project that produces revenue.

Council Member Majhess thanked all participants. Taking a long term view on the development of this property, he asked that the City Manager look into optioning the two adjacent parcels of property.

Mayor Whelchel thanked everyone. She noted that the bottom line for any project going forward is finances.

The City Manager noted that tonight's objective was to hear from the public and further thoughts from the Council.

The City Attorney noted for the record that, in recognition of the new County ethics rules and in an abundance of caution, Council Member Scott recused herself from tonight's discussions.

6. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned without objection at 9:20 pm.

Susan S. Saxton, City Clerk