

Wild Spaces Public Places

Citizens Oversight Board

July 15, 2019

Alachua County Appointed Members

Joni Ellis

BJ Bukata (alternate) – Chair

Alachua County Appointed Members Absent

Amy Kauper

City of Gainesville Members

Carla Lewis - Miles

Vacant

David Ruiz (alternate)

Incorporated Cities (not Gainesville) Member

Dudley Wade

Gary Kocher (alternate)

Staff Present

Gina Peebles – Alachua County

Other Municipal Staff Present

Dan Hoffman – City of Gainesville

Charlie Houder – Alachua County

Damon Messina – City of High Springs

Michelle Park – City of Gainesville

Betsy Waite – City of Gainesville

Outside Council Present

Patrice Boyes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:46 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Dudley Wade made a motion to approve the agenda as amended; David Ruiz seconded; unanimous approval.

Introduction of Outside Legal Counsel – Patrice Boyes

Patrice Boyes was introduced.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Dudley Wade made a motion to approve the April 8 (revised) minutes as presented; Sarah Kovachich seconded; unanimous approval. **MOTION:** Joni Ellis made a motion to approve the May 13 minutes as presented; Carla Lewis – Miles seconded; unanimous approval.

Discussion of Oct. 1, 2017 – Sept. 30, 2018 Financial Reports

City of High Springs – Damon Messina, City of High Springs, stated that public access is available to the playground during non-business hours. The City owns the land and paid for the playground equipment. Ms. Boyes stated that the agreement provided is (1) missing the signature page (2) she cannot verify the entity as they are not listed in the Division of Corporations website under the name listed in the agreement (3) questions if it is a 501(c)3 organization and (4) insurance and indemnification does not include the general public. Mr. Messina will send staff follow up documentation for distribution to the

Oversight Board and ask the City Manager if the City is willing to take over the operation and maintenance of the playground.

City of Gainesville – The Oversight Board reviewed the DRAFT letter and incorporated additional changes. **MOTION:** Joni Ellis made a motion to send the letter as revised; Sarah Kovachich seconded;

Jo Beaty stated that accountability is needed and this Oversight Board is charged to ensure accountability to the tax payers. Tamara Robbins read the ballot language, which requires citizen's oversight, hence the creation of the Oversight Board. Dan Hoffman stated that the City has provided, and will continue to provide, the list of expenditures to the Oversight Board for review. Bill Berger, Public Recreation and Park Board Chair for the City of Gainesville, stated the mission of the Oversight Board is to track overall expenditures of the sales tax and that the letter, as written, has very strong language. Joni Ellis stated that the Oversight Board had a fiduciary responsibility to ensure the WSPP proceeds are being spent appropriately. BJ Bukata stated that staff were not hired in the last WSPP initiative (from 2008). Michelle Park replied that funds from the 2008 referendum were used for staffing, but the Oversight Board at that time didn't request that level of detail.

The motion passed (3:2) with Carla Lewis – Miles and Dudley Wade in dissent.

The Oversight Board requested Mr. Hoffman to request a discussion on a future Joint City of Gainesville / County Commission meeting to discuss WSPP funding.

Chair Bukata passed the gavel.

MOTION: Sara Kovachich made a motion to reconsider the motion; she withdrew her motion.

MOTION: BJ Bukata made a motion to reconsider the letter previously approved; Joni Ellis seconded; unanimous approval.

MOTION: Dudley Wade made a motion to table the letter and reconsider it at the August meeting; Carla Lewis – Miles seconded;

Dan Hoffman offered to send a letter to the Oversight Board that addresses the items raised in the proposed letter.

The motion passed (3:2) with Joni Ellis and BJ Bukata in dissent.

Review Hierarchy of Statutes, Ordinance and Resolution – Joni Ellis

Joni Ellis stated that the State Statute is overarching and outlines the types of taxation for referendums. The next level, developed at the local level, is an Ordinance which lists the specific uses of the referendum. Finally, the Resolution details the Oversight Board's duties and no other advisory board has been voted on by the electorate.

Ms. Boyes reminded the group that an exception exists, which only applies to Alachua County [a County with a population over 75,000 in which the taxable value of real property is less than 60 percent of the just value of real property] which allows WSPP funding to be used for operations and maintenance for capital improvements. The Oversight Board has to determine appropriate uses of the funds, using each

of the aforementioned documents together. Whether or not an expenditure is appropriate is based on the facts and circumstances.

Ms. Ellis will email staff specific questions, which will be forwarded to Ms. Boyes for review and a response.

Clarence R. Kelly Center Project

Carla Lewis – Miles was able to attend the public meeting and reported that the neighborhood was engaged and their suggestions were included in the proposed park improvements.

Board Decorum

Chair Bukata requested the Oversight Board be mindful and professional in the tone of emails. Ms. Lewis – Miles also requested that Oversight Board emails be sent to staff for distribution and that members not email each other directly.

Public Comment

None.

New Business

None.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

The Wild Spaces Public Places Citizens Oversight Board will meet next on Aug. 19 at 4:45 p.m. in the Grace Knight Conference Room.