

VERNON MYERS
MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

MARY LAWSON BROWN
VICE MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

ALLEGRA KITCHENS
COMMISSIONER

PHIL LEARY
COMMISSIONER

JAMES NORWOOD, JR.
COMMISSIONER



MICHAEL J. CZYMBOR
CITY MANAGER

BETSY JORDAN DRIGGERS
CITY CLERK

MATTHEW D. REYNOLDS
FINANCE DIRECTOR

GARY S. GETCHELL
CHIEF OF POLICE

MICHAEL LAMBERT
CHIEF FIRE DEPT.

DONALD E. HOLMES
CITY ATTORNEY

Regular meeting 2nd and 4th Thursdays each month at 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES
CITY OF PALATKA SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
December 30, 2013 at 12:00 Noon

Proceedings of a Special Called meeting of the City Commission of the City of Palatka, Florida, held on the 30th day of December, 2013.

PRESENT:

Vernon Myers	Mayor
Mary Lawson Brown	Commissioner
Allegra Kitchens	Commissioner
Phil Leary	Commissioner

ABSENT: James Norwood, Jr. Commissioner

Also Present: City Manager Michael J. Czymbor; City Attorney Donald E. Holmes; Assistant City Clerk Vicki Young; Finance Director Matthew Reynolds; Police Chief Gary Getchell; Fire Marshal Mark Lynady; and Projects Manager Jonathan Griffith

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Myers called the meeting to order at 12:00 noon and read the following meeting Call, which was issued on December 18, 2013:

TO COMMISSIONERS: MARY LAWSON BROWN, ALLEGRA KITCHENS, PHIL LEARY AND JAMES NORWOOD, Jr.:

You are hereby notified that a Special Called Meeting of the Palatka City Commission is called to be held on Monday, December 30, 2013, at the regular meeting place of the Palatka City Commission, Palatka City Hall, 201 N. 2nd Street, Palatka, Florida, to commence at 12:00 noon.

The purpose of the meeting is to review, discuss and select a design for the GP Wetlands Education Center (working title).

/s/ Vernon Myers
Vernon Myers, MAYOR

The following Commissioners acknowledged receipt of a copy of the foregoing notice of a special meeting on the 18th day of December, 2013.

/s/ Mary Lawson Brown
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Phil Leary
COMMISSIONER

/s/ James Norwood, Jr.
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Allegra Kitchens
COMMISSIONER

INVOCATION – Police Chief Gary Getchell

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – City Attorney Donald E. Holmes

1. PUBLIC RECOGNITION/PRESENTATIONS:

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION – Donors contributing to the purchase of two K-9 Units -- Police Chief Gary Getchell said that after retiring the only K9 unit that the City Police had on October 24, 2013, the City Manager and he requested help from the community to fund two new K9 units. The City received a generous response from the community. Chief Getchell presented Wilson, a recently purchased K9 along with Corporal Ashley, his trainer and partner.

Plaques were presented to those who donated funds for the purchase of two K-9 Units in recognition of their respective donations. Donors recognized were

- Rudd Jones, Rudd Jones, P.E. & Associates, PA;
- Mayor Vernon and Mrs. Linda Myers;
- Clay Electric Cooperative, Inc. – Jim Beeler, District Manager;
- Kha LeHuu, President, LeHuu Partners, LLC
- Rotary Club of Palatka Sunrise – Shelley Payne, accepting;
- Palatka New Vision Lions Foundation, Inc. -- Larry Masters, accepting;
- Carr, Riggs & Ingram – John Rowe, Partner;
- Bates & Hewett, Inc. – Jini McCool Robbins, accepting;
- Rotary Club of Palatka (Noon) – Wayne McClain, accepting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS – There were none.

3. REVIEW, DISCUSS AND SELECT A DESIGN OF THE GP WETLANDS EDUCATION CENTER (working title) - Jonathan Griffith, Project Manager, stated that the purpose of today's meeting is to select a schematic design for the GP Wetlands Education Center. The GP Wetlands Education Center Advisory Board met this morning to discuss the design of the GP Wetlands Education Center and he will summarize after Mr. LeHuu's presentation. Mr. Griffith said recently they met with the architect and there are some concerns about the budget. Kha LeHuu presented four options for the schematic design, noting there are some concerns about the budget being enough to build a two story; therefore, he included a rendering of a single story for consideration.

Kha LeHuu, LeHuu Partners, stated that they started with 18 options for a building design and it has been narrowed to these four options. With options 1 through 3, all being two stories there are three designs with only one building having brick on the building. Options 2 and 3 have brick pavers. Option 2 has less brick floor 10' inward to create a veranda, the building is stucco with lights on the second floor which would illuminate and you could see when coming into the city from the bridge. Mr. LeHuu stated some good ideas came from this morning's meeting with the Advisory Board. Mayor Myers asked if the cost of brick was significantly higher than stucco. Mr. LeHuu said that brick costs considerably more. Mr. LeHuu said, during the Advisory Board meeting, the lights at the top of the building were likened to "alligator eyes". He then described each option.

Commissioner Brown asked since the building's exterior was stucco could utilization of murals be used to decorate the outside of the building. Mayor Myers said he would not be in favor of murals; Commissioner Leary concurred.

Inside there will be ecological exhibits allowing for a place for children to gather.

Mr. LeHuu said the single story design was being presented due to the cost factor of the two-story buildings. The cost of the elevator alone is \$75,000.00. A single story would be considerably less expensive. The back side of the building is 12' clear and the front would be 16' clear with an additional 4' to the roof line. Mr. LeHuu said they like doing tall buildings, but wanted to present this option for the cost savings. It was suggested at the advisory meeting that a live aquarium be included.

Commissioner Leary said he was concerned about cheapening the building – the structure will be a focal point for the city – this should be a place where events occur.

Mr. LeHuu said the budget is \$800,000.00 with \$600,000.00 going to brick and mortar. With the one story floor plan you could make it more efficient and not lose the drama. His job is to help the City Commission to see realistic costs. There could be a trellis to provide shade. A live aquarium at the front entrance was discussed, as well as the use of butterfly plants and a misting machine to use during the summer months.

Mayor Myers asked if you can have a trellis on the two story building. Mr. LeHuu said it was something that could be added later. Commissioner Kitchens asked if the one story could be made strong enough to add a second floor later if the funds became available. Mayor Myers said the infrastructure would be the same cost as building a two story.

Mr. Griffith provided a summary of the GP Wetlands Education Center Advisory Board meeting held just prior to this meeting, noting the majority of the members of the Advisory Board and the public in attendance favored Options 2 and 3. They would like to see a brick veneer and a covered arcade/sheltered outdoor space. You will lose about 600 square feet when creating the arcade/shelter out of the total footage of the building. They liked the view that the second story would provide – you would lose that

with a one story building. Mr. LeHuu said you could berm it up or slope the one story to get a view.

Commissioner Leary asked what happened to the option that was on pilings, and said the brick pilings could provide a one story underneath with brick pavers, and the second floor would contain the exhibits and have the river view. Mr. Griffith said the building on pilings would not be in character with other downtown buildings. Additionally, they don't have the opportunity to berm that plaza space. The City has to contractually meet a permit requirement with the SJRWMD to have onsite inline treatment. Within the plaza there will be created wetlands/rain gardens, which will be an extension of the classroom.

Commission Leary asked if there is any way to move this towards Memorial Parkway, noting you lose too much with a one story building.

Commissioner Kitchens said raising the building on pilings would not be out of character with buildings in Palatka. She does not like the paraffin on top of the two story buildings.

Mayor Myers said you lose too much space in the building with a one-story design, and you also lose parking area.

Commissioner Kitchens said she favors a two story building; however, the one story design is very attractive and would not go over the budget.

Mr. Griffith said when you come across the bridge, this building needs to catch your eye. The purpose of this meeting is to find out which direction the City Commission wants to go.

Commissioner Kitchens said she is in favor of Option 4, given the budget constraints. She has a problem going outside the budget. The two story building looks like the Frank George Apartments. They need to look at the budget.

Commissioner Leary said he is favor of Option 1. The building is beautiful, very eye catching, and similar to a building in Alaska.

Commissioner Brown said she is in favor of Option 2.

Mayor Myers said he is for either option 1 or 2. He is not crazy about the parapets; he prefers the beacon to be in line with the rest of the roof line. Also, he has a problem with an aquarium, simply because there are living things that need to be taken care of; this is a maintenance issue and a large added expense.

Mr. Czymbor said they have tried to stress the importance between the architect and Georgia Pacific. They have talked to local commercial contractors who have given the City a "comfort level" that \$600,000.00 as a do-able budget for a two story building. He

aid they won't know for sure until they have the detailed construction plans. He believes Georgia Pacific has an option of obtaining more funding.

Mr. Terry Hadaway, Georgia Pacific, said Georgia Pacific is not willing to go over the \$1.2 million dollar budget for the curriculum, the building and interior design. He said this was his first significant decision when he went to work for GP. He has already asked to go from \$750,000.00 to \$800,000.00. He made his recommendation to increase the funds to \$800,000.00 based upon the assurance that this was capable of being built for this amount. His preference is a two story building, in keeping with the architecture of downtown Palatka. This creates a landmark for Palatka – it needs to stand out. Mr. Hadaway reminded the Commission that assurance was given to him by Jonathan Griffith and Michael Czymbor that \$800,000.00 was a doable budget.

Commissioner Brown asked if more money could be leveraged off of something else, like a historical museum grant that pertains to the river, to help get more funding.

Mr. Hadaway said because of the wetlands mitigation requirement, there might be companies that need to do wetlands mitigation that might be interested in coming into the project. It might be possible for those companies to go through Florida Department of Environmental Protection to invite other funding partners to provide additional funding.

Commissioner Kitchens said before the City commits to a building, they need to be cautious and make sure the funding is adequate.

Mr. Griffith stated staff worked with an architect two years ago and confirmed \$800,000.00 would be enough. He believes they can work with Mr. LeHuu and make any of the options work.

Commissioner Kitchens asked if instead of an aquarium, that option could be a closed-system terrarium, possibly something with turtles.

Mr. Griffith said they need to stay on schedule; therefore, they need a recommendation on a design.

Commissioner Kitchens said she is in favor of the one story, and she likes brick.

Commissioner Brown said she favors a two story design – it needs to have a WOW factor.

Commissioner Leary said either Option 1 or Option 2 is acceptable to him.

Shann Purinton, GP Wetland Center Advisory Committee member said you would be giving up some of the outside area with a one story building – the outside area could be very valuable. You would lose parking, storm water retention, and classroom area.

Commissioner Leary made a motion to direct staff to move forward with a two story option – either Option 1 or Option 2, and bring back a design and cost estimate. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion, which passed four in favor, none opposed.

Mayor Myers asked the GP Wetland Education Center Advisory Board to stand and be recognized.

4. CITY MANAGER & ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. Czymbor wished everyone a safe and Happy New Year.

5. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Leary said, regarding the Golf Course USDA RBEG funding; USDA Director Machek is strongly supporting the funding for the golf course improvements.

6. ADJOURN – There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Commissioner Leary at 1:10 p.m.

ANY PERSON WISHING TO APPEAL ANY DECISION MADE BY THE CITY COMMISSION WITH RESPECT TO ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT SUCH MEETING WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS, AND FOR SUCH PURPOSE MAY NEED TO INSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE, WHICH RECORD INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED. FS 286.105