

**THREE CORNERS STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 26, 2021 1:30 P.M.
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

PRESENT: Christine Pokorney-Sickterman, Vice Chairman; Members: Mike Johannsen, Randy Old, Dr. Richard Baker, John Cotugno, Chloe Rose Schwartz, Ben Earman, Jeff Stassi, Linda Moore (via GoToMeeting), Sydney O’Haire (via GoToMeeting) and Laura Moss, County Commissioner **Also Present:** Monte Falls, City Manager; John Turner, City Attorney; Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director and Tammy Bursick, City Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) January 14, 2021

Miss O’Haire asked that her name be added to the January 14, 2021 minutes.

Mrs. Sickterman made a motion to approve the minutes with that correction made. Mrs. Schwartz seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A) Master Concept Plan Discussion

Mr. Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director, briefly gave the history of where they are at today. He said in March 2021, the City Council authorized an additional work order with DPZ to prepare the revised Community Plan for the Three Corners site based on the Steering Committee’s discussion at the Steering Committee’s January meeting. At that meeting, the Steering Committee discussed the elements of the master concept plan based on the presentations from non-profit organizations about their ideas for the developing aspects of the site and notes from meetings with developers regarding the feasibility of the current concept plans, including the original master concept plan and the post pandemic plans.

Mr. Jeffries went over the changes that are shown in the Community Plan. He began with the North Parcel (former Power Plant), which included 1) Reuse of “Big Blue” - a) redevelop entire building as a hotel/conference center with indoor public spaces, performance/cultural venues, retail or restaurants; b) show the ability for a hybrid hotel with combination of traditional hotel and cottages and c) retain the parking lot/garage as noted in the June 16 plan; no dry boat storage. 2) Central Open Space – a) retain June 16 plan version with open space with playground, skate park truck space, and possible relocation of indoor meeting hall.)3 Waterfront Promenade – a) retain June 16 plan version with a public pedestrian destination with a compact mix of uses, b) allow creation of entertainment district by adding more family amusements, small museums, aquarium, or music venues; restaurants could be outdoor cafes as shown in the post-pandemic plan E. 4) Marina – a) retain marina design from June 16th plan as a location for day-docks, overnight docking for hotel or residents, commercial tours, and water taxi and b) retain fishing pier with vendor location for vendors related to the fishing pier and bike trail trailhead in June 16 plan. Then with the South Parcel (Wastewater Plant) – 1) Waterfront: a) redesign the site for the Community Sailing Center based Youth Sailing’s current specifications and b) remove glamping and redesign for park and natural space. 2) Reuse Water Tank Site – a) remove north tank to provide space for Youth Sailing and

reuse the south tanks for a cultural venue with the ideas from Plan E and b) retain the environmental research center. 3) Wastewater Facility Site – a) retain the site as mothballed for future of north parcel development or mixed-use residential development; in the interim could be used for community events.

Mr. Jeffries went over the “goals” of the Steering Committee which are 1) pursue the best and highest use of the public property that is financially sustainable for the City, 2) create a destination that complements the City’s existing commercial centers with a sense of place with a diverse and complementary mix of park, cultural, commercial, and residential land uses, 3) ensure public access to the waterfront that is inclusive to the entire Vero Beach community with dedicated public spaces, 4) create a pedestrian-oriented destination that is inclusive to the entire Vero Beach community with complementary retail and restaurants on the waterfront, 5) enhance the existing harbor and shoreline to accommodate a variety of leisure and recreation watercraft, 6) illustrate best practices for sustainable development that exceed current environmental standards with thoughtful, environmentally sensitive landscaping and resilient waterfront development techniques to protect the Indian River Lagoon, 7) respect the community’s character and aspirations with architecturally pleasing structures and 8) offer opportunities for education and research of the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem and present the history of the site.

The Steering Committee moved on to the proposed Community Plan. Maps were put up on the screen with numbers showing where the different things would be located.

Dr. Baker wanted site 22 put into the Park land. He said that the Audubon Society would be willing to provide some of the trees and plants to go there.

Ms. Schwartz said that site 19 is Park land so she didn’t think that they needed Park land on both sides. Dr. Baker said that they need as much as they can get.

Mr. Johannsen said that he would like to see a soccer field on site 22. Dr. Baker said that is fine. He just wants to see families outside and enjoying the open space.

Ms. Schwartz agreed that there was a lot to be said to keeping open space and having people be able to play sport activities on it.

Mr. Old asked if there would be a place for a Museum.

Mr. Jeffries said that it would be behind site 31. He said they are calling it “Cultural Venue” for now, but it could be called a Museum.

Mr. Old explained that the Old Vero Man site would like to have a Museum somewhere in the City and they are thinking about this land.

Mrs. Moore referred to the certified incubator kitchens. Mr. Jeffries explained that was the concept provided by DPZ and not necessarily in the Community Plan.

Ms. Schwartz commented that they recommended that site 22 be mothballed, but used for sports activities. Mr. Jeffries said that the Recreation Commission’s recommendation was that in the interim it could be used for sporting activities.

Mrs. Moore agreed because at the time of planning they did not know that the Jimmy Graves field would be in place for sporting activities. She said it is a good piece of property and can accommodate a lot of sport uses. She agreed with mothballing it now and using it potentially for sports.

Miss O'Haire commented that another reason for leaving it open can be an event space for recreation.

Mr. Stassi expressed that he was not on the original Steering Committee. His background is that he was a Parks and Recreation Director for 20 years and has an extensive background in economic development. He expressed that this is a valuable piece property and they need to take it to its highest and best use, which is development. They have not discussed money and what the City will be contributing. He said that if the City has money then there is no reason to look at development. There are a lot of Parks in this City and a big portion of this property is open space. They have discussed having retail with potential like apartments upstairs, but that is not reflected in this drawing. He felt that site 24 belongs along with site 19 and that the skateboard park should be at site 35.

Commissioner Moss explained that the only thing discussed in terms of finances was that the City Manager has stated that they must be revenue neutral. They are not looking for it to cost the City money, but never discussed producing revenue for the City. She said they are not going to engage in that kind of discussion nor would they want to. This is a place that is unique and special.

Mr. Monte Falls, City Manager, made it clear that what he has said is it must be revenue neutral and that would be the worse case scenario. He said that the City does not want to be in a position to have to operate this.

Mr. Stassi hoped that the City Council would put this in front of the voters and let them decide and have a say on it.

Commissioner Moss said that Mr. Stassi was entirely correct that the City Council makes the decision.

Ms. Schwartz recalled that they discussed residential and that by having people on the property it is safer.

Mr. Jeffries agreed that there was discussion, but they had not come to a clear consensus. If you want that in there they can do that. He said it was not a clear consensus of the group. He agreed making this revenue neutral they will need residential dwellings on the property. Mr. Stassi felt that this would also attract more developers on the property. Ms. Schwartz said it also shows they are open to the concept. They need to look at what their best option is then they have some control over it.

Commissioner Moss commented that discussion of residential has always been negative by the City Council. She said if they have residential then it belongs to the few who live there and taking this before the voters might be negative.

Ms. Schwartz agreed that they need to listen to the experts in planning.

Mr. Stassi brought up the taking down of the Waste Water Treatment Plant and that they need to have a timeframe in place on when all of these things will be taking place. They don't want to have another Dodgertown situation.

Mrs. Moore commented that they needed to address Mr. Stassi's comments about the tanks. She said the cost to demolish the tanks is around \$100,000. They could paint murals on the tanks every few years. She is not sure what the cost would be to maintain them and mow the grass.

Mr. Falls explained that once they have talked to developers they will find out if keeping the additional tank is viable. He said that if both tanks were taken down at the same time the cost would be borne by the Water and Sewer Department and not come out of the General Fund. If a Museum was to go in one of the tanks then the cost would be their responsibility.

Mr. Old said that he liked the idea of the Museum going in there. He would take it back to his Board and let them run some numbers and find out if they are interested or not interested.

Mr. Falls was talking in general when he said "Museum." He did not just mean the Old Vero Man site, but anything cultural.

Mr. Earman brought up site two and asked if the proposed music project that they had a presentation given to them was going to go there.

Mr. Jeffries explained that there could be other uses in there as well.

Mr. Emerson brought up site three on the north side.

Mr. Jeffries explained that they are still in discussion with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) about putting parking under the bridge. He said every use will not have its own parking.

Dr. Baker asked where they stand as far as Youth Sailing goes.

Mr. Jeffries explained that the Youth Sailing Foundation has entered into an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City.

At this time, Mr. Jeffries went through DPZ's recommended plan. He said that there are two (2) cafes and no restaurants because Mr. Duany was concerned about restaurants being able to be successful on the site. But, he has added some food trucks. Mr. Jeffries explained that the market study would be important to determine what risks there are for restaurants.

Mr. Johannsen asked if there were builders that resonated with the cottage idea. Mr. Jeffries answered no. He said they thought that it was a high cost in construction for very low revenue. He said at the last Steering Committee meeting they wanted to keep it as an option or "live" as a concept.

Mr. Stassi explained that when a developer comes in they will not put in a restaurant if it is not going to be successful. The developer is developing the buildings and he will make sure that it will be a success.

Mr. Jeffries added that developers have a relationship with restaurants or chains and they will know from the market study if it is viable.

Mr. Stassi agreed that this was the perfect time to develop the property.

Mr. Jeffries continued with the DPZ plan and said that a swimming pool has been provided, it is more than just a traditional swimming pool. He explained to the Steering Committee that there are two (2) plans and what they are recommending to the City Council is the Community Plan. Once this has been approved by the City Council, he will move into the feasibility of the plan.

Mr. Cotugno suggested that the Steering Committee decide which plan they are going to go with instead of going back and forth when they open up the meeting for public comments. He said that the DPZ plan is different enough from the Community Plan that the comments could be different.

Mr. Jeffries said that the question is does the Community Plan reflect what they discussed in January and is that their plan.

Mr. Cotugno felt that the DPZ plan might be confusing to the public. What he is looking at addressing is what they consider to be the Community Plan and have comments made in conjunction with that plan.

Mr. Stassi agreed that the Community Plan was the one (1) that they wanted to focus on with a little tweaking.

Mrs. Sickterman said that the City is engaged with DPZ and their plan also merits discussion.

Mr. Falls explained that DPZ's original plan as the "Standing Ovation Plan" is the "Community Plan" today. They did a great service for it. The Committee may want to make some additional changes to the Community Plan.

Ms. Schwartz commented that they have already discussed the DPZ Plan and that is how they got to the Community Plan.

Mr. Jeffries reminded the Committee that they will need to take public comments.

Mr. Johannsen asked if DPZ was going to give them another plan.

Mr. Jeffries answered no.

Miss O'Haire had some concerns that the smoke stacks were not in the Community Plan. She said they are a part of Vero Beach and talked about a lot.

Commissioner Moss agreed with that. She said it makes it unique.

Mr. Johannsen said to tell the developer and he has to agree to it.

Commissioner Moss said she was not telling a developer anything.

Miss O'Haire commented that as part of the community they can tell the developer what they want to see.

Commissioner Moss commented that the developer comes after the people have made their decision.

It was a consensus that the Committee liked the smoke stacks.

Mr. Cotugno brought up having to get a variance on the height limit if they have the smoke stacks.

Miss O'Haire said that they are putting the cart before the horse. This is just a concept.

Commissioner Moss said it is a concept that needs to go to referendum. She said if it doesn't pass a referendum then they are not doing anything with the property.

Mr. Cotugno recalled that a church steeple was voted down because they had to get a variance, but it first had to go to referendum. He felt that they would increase their chances of not getting this approved if a variance was needed.

Ms. Schwartz said that the smoke stacks could stay where a variance would not be needed. She said it would be nice to see them as part of this plan and is something that she would like to keep.

Miss O'Haire agreed that shade on the roof top is something that they all would like to see utilized. She said they may have to shorten the smoke stacks in order for them to remain and fit according to Code. She would like them to stay there in some capacity.

Mr. Stu Keiller, Director of the Youth Sailing Foundation, said that he was thrilled with this plan. He said that this is what he had planned other than the building might need to come back a little bit from the mangroves. He said they have received two (2) \$100,000 donations to the building fund. Now they have \$720,000 in the bank. Another \$220,000 has been pledged. He has been promised an additional \$100,000 the day they get their permit. He said they are ready to go with this project. They don't want to kick off the campaign until they officially have the site. As long as they have some close in parking for day to day needs they are fine. They are already a destination on the property and it will only go up from there once they have the building and public access to that land.

Mr Bob Daken handed out what he felt was an inspiration for the Committee to see. He said less than a mile from the Three Corners property is sea grape, which is beautiful because of its uniqueness, charm, and personality. He feels lucky to live on Lady Bug Lane. He said that teenagers come down that road and take prom pictures, there have been weddings and several other things because of its beauty. They could make the Three Corners property a desirable place to go by dismantling the Power Plant. He felt that they were limiting their ability to get a quality developer by telling them that the Power Plant has to be incorporated into the plan. He said by having a conference center on the property limits their ability to draw revenue. He said that they are not economic feasible. The majority of the Town voted to take the Power Plant down very early in this process. The results were to take the Power Plant down and the other percentage was undecided. Then there was the Standing Ovation Plan and there were less people attending that charrette than the vote of taking the Power Plant down. He said they need to accept reality that the Power Plant needs to come down. The smoke stacks need to be taken down and the water tanks need to be taken down. The picture he just showed them is loaded with personality and they can find that personality for the Three Corners property.

Miss O'Haire appreciated the comments made by Mr. Daken, however she said that she grew up in Vero Beach and the Power Plant and smoke stacks are a part of Vero Beach.

Mrs. Moore commented that she has teenagers who come and get their pictures taken by the murals located in the alley.

Mr. Johansen requested getting the results of the survey on how many people wanted the Power Plant to come down.

Ms. Schwartz commented that since the survey there were many discussions that took place and why retaining the Power Plant is valuable to the City. They have discussed this many times and most people came to the consensus on how important it was to save the Power Plant. It is a landmark to her. She said that it probably does not mean as much to him (Mr. Daken) because he is new to the City. She said if it is not right to a developer then it will come down, but they want to have the opportunity to salvage it.

Mr. Daken said that it would be a huge challenge to a developer if they have to deal with the Power Plant. The cost associated with keeping it would be high.

Commissioner Moss was not debating the number of people who filled out the survey that was tabulated before the tours of the Power Plant took place. She said that there were two (2) tours held where over 700 people came to both of the tours that were given. She said that people went away real excited for it and the people that experienced it firsthand were excited.

Mr. Johansen asked how hard it would be to resurrect the SpeakUpVeroBeach website.

Mr. Jeffries explained that the survey took place prior to the tour and after the tours people were more positive in saving the Power Plant. He said it resulted in the majority of the people wanting to save it. Also, the survey was done before the charrettes took place as a starting point for them.

Mr. Johansen felt good that the number represents the public that wants to keep the Power Plant.

Mr. Cotugno requested to see the data broken down between City and County residents.

Mr. Falls made it clear that they have never said that they were going to try to mandate a developer to keep the Power Plant, nor are they trying to mandate that the tanks or the smoke stacks need to stay. He said that the developers that they have talked to agree with keeping Vero nice and keeping Vero what it is.

Mrs. Sickerterman commented that beauty comes in many forms. She said they are trying to preserve the history of Vero, as well as trying to expand people's vision.

Miss O'Haire referred to the Savanna, Georgia, project that resulted from repurposing their Power Plant.

Dr. Baker said that the Power Plant could always come down, but that is not something that they need to decide today.

Mr. Draken commented that he has studied Savanna a lot and within a quarter mile there are 13 hotels and have SCAD in Savanna, which amounts to a lot of people going to visit Savanna. Some of the dynamics that make Savanna successful are things that Vero Beach does not have. He encouraged the Committee to debate what they are doing.

Ms. Schwartz commented that calling the conference room a conference room is limiting what they are having there.

Mr. Earman looks at it as having a place where non profit organizations can host events.

Mr. Jeffries was hearing that for site 1 they did not want to call the convention center a convention center.

Ms. Schwartz commented that how they communicate things are important. She said as they continue they might want to look at the list and make sure they represent what is going on the property.

Commissioner Moss suggested maybe calling it a meeting hall rather than a conference center.

Mr. Jeffries explained that a conference center has many variety of uses, which he read some of them. He said that the final editing on the master plan and the wording will be important.

Mr. Earman expressed that conference centers are so out dated. He said someone from the outside might come in and say that it will not be used. He said the same thing goes for the certified incubator kitchen.

Ms. Schwartz agreed and said maybe call it a kitchen.

Mr. Stassi briefly explained how the process works when finding a developer who wants to develop the property. He said that the hotel would come first and the developers generally would have restaurants that they work with who may want to partner with them on this project.

Mr. Jeffries gave a recap of changes that the Steering Committee wanted to have made to the plan. He said that they would like site two to be broader, on site 13 it should indicate a restaurant is to be at that location.

Mrs. Moore asked in regards to the conference center it should be referred to as event space.

Mr. Jeffries said that he would work with DPZ to get this defined. He said that it would be a mixed use structure.

Dr. Baker referred to number 30 where it says research center. He asked if they have someone in mind.

Mr. Jeffries commented that there is no one specific in mind. He said that the Ocean Research Conservation Association (ORCA) has expressed some interest in using this site or other places in the City. He said on the other end of the property will be Youth Sailing. He expressed that this is a master concept plan and this plan helps them if these uses become more real and how things will fit on to the site.

Mr. Earman expressed how important it was to have the roof top restaurant on site number two and indicate that is what it is. He said when you look at this plan it looks like that has been excluded when it has not.

Mr. Jeffries explained that when the plan is finalized it will be detailed out. He recalled that some of the early plans had playgrounds and they are still part of the plan.

Mrs. Sickterman expressed that on both the Community Plan and the DPZ Plan it was important to leave the large water plant on the site in case someone wants to use it.

Mr. Jeffries said that it is all about functionality.

Mr. Stassi wondered if they could have the Farmers Market put in the Park area. He thought that it would be better utilized than the sheds.

Mr. Jeffries said that the June 16th plan showed the sheds as retail use.

Ms. Schwartz suggested maybe saying flexible space instead of sheds that would only be used once a week.

Mr. Stassi commented that there is a lot of opportunity here and he hopes that it comes to fruition for the residents.

Mr. Cotugno made a motion that they move forward on the proposed Community Plan with the modifications that have been discussed. Mr. Schwartz seconded the motion.

The modifications to the motion including the residential component was discussed. This would be a verbal addendum with not necessarily including it on the plan.

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, asked if they were offering an amendment to the proposed plan. The Committee said that they were. Mr. Turner said that they need to approve the amendment first.

Mrs. Sickterman made a motion to include residential as part of an amended proposed Community Plan. Mr. Earman seconded the motion.

On a roll call vote the motion passed 5-4 with Mr. Cotugno voting no, Mr. Stassi yes, Mr. Earman yes, Mrs. Schwartz yes, Miss O'Haire yes, Dr. Baker no, Mr. Old no, Mr. Johannsen no, Mrs. Moore (cut off from the meeting), and Mrs. Sickterman yes.

Mr. Johannsen said for clarification that this is only for residential above commercial. He was told that is correct.

Mrs. Sickterman stated that the motion passed, which includes residential in some sort of mixed use capacity to the mixed use plan.

Mr. Jeffries went over some of the other items mentioned today that the Committee asked for changes to occur. There was the mixed use events center, the roof top restaurant, changes to 11 and come up with a different term for sheds (sheltered flex space), number 13 changed to restaurants, number 23 says outdoor restaurants.

Mr. Stassi brought up that number 24 and number 27, which are restaurants, should be out of the Park area.

Mrs. Schwartz said that was not necessarily a bad thing.

Mr. Jeffries said that the whole idea of that area was to have a mix of uses in this space.

Mr. Jeffries reread the amendments included as mixed uses, event conference center to event mixed use venue, retail flex space on number 11, number 13 be changed to restaurants, identify number 24 as recreational space/sand volleyball area, and number two mentioning the roof top restaurant or bar.

Mr. Sickterman made a motion to include all amendments just mentioned by Mr. Jeffries. Mr. Stassi seconded the motion and on a roll call vote the motion passed 10-1 with Dr. Baker voting no.

Mr. Jeffries stated that he would pass this plan on to the City Council. He said that staff will move on doing the feasibility analysis on this preferred Community Plan and then they will go from there.

Mr. Turner reminded the Committee that they are still under the Sunshine Law and Public Records Law until the Committee has been sunsetted.

The Clerk was asked to let the Committee know when this item was going to be discussed before the City Council.

Mr. Jay Bird thanked the Committee for all of their comments. He wants the Committee to keep the youth in mind when going through this process. He said that they should keep moving along and that he likes the job that they are doing.

Mrs. Sickterman thanked everyone for their time and input.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

This item was heard earlier in the meeting.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

/tb

