

**City Commission Workshop
Meeting Minutes
June 25, 2019
(Draft)**

6/25/2019 - Minutes

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Mayor Eugene Fultz, Terrye Howell, Curtis Gibson, Robin Gibson

Commissioners Absent: Al Goldstein

Staff Present: Kenneth Fields, City Manager; James Slaton, Assistant City Manager; Stephanie Edwards Recreation Coordinator

2. COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

3.1. Crystal Lake Park Master Plan

Kenneth Fields, City Manager, said we have been working on this plan for over a year and would like input from the Commission.

James Slaton, Assistant City Manager, said that we need to move forward on the Recreation Trails Program Grant which funds a trail from the Downtown Trail through Crystal Lake Park to Lake Wailes Park. Before that grant agreement is brought to the Commission meeting for approval we need some feedback on the plan. There is no action to be taken but he requests input and consensus as to where to go next.

Stephanie Edwards, Recreation Coordinator, reviewed the proposed plan and the components such as additional basketball courts. She reviewed the process for how the plan was put together. She explained that staff would like to offer 10 different activities at Crystal Lake Park including horseshoes. She also reviewed public input that was gathered to assist with this plan.

James Slaton said this is the third revision of the plan.

Mr. Fields said this is part of the idea to connect the lake with downtown.

Scott Crew, architect, reviewed the plans which include possible bring pavers along streets around the two lakes and the walking path. He included images to serve as an idea. He hopes this will serve as an adjacent to our downtown. They attempted to incorporate the lake into the plan. He proposed reconfiguring the natural stage to be used more and an upgraded proshop. He said additional tennis courts would be added. He identified where new features could go such as a splash pad and additional parking. They tried to keep the area as green as possible. Mayor Fultz asked about a pavilion or paddleboats on the lake if they are still there. Ms. Edwards pointed out the red circle and said they are there.

Kenneth Fields, City Manager, said this is a long range plan that will take several years. The commission will decide on the first steps of the plan. The the first phase will be continuing the trail from the Library to Lake Wailes Park. This will be in the budget next year. Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson asked which budget this comes from. Mr. Slaton said impact fees, CRA funds, the grant and City funds can go towards the trail project. Commissioner Curtis Gibson asked if a professional survey was done. He asked about the trail and its composition. Mr. Slaton reviewed some of the professional services

used.

Commissioner Curtis Gibson asked about the composition and location of the trail. Mr. Slaton said the North side will be paved and away of the lake. The south side because of the slope will be more natural if they can put one there. Scott Crews explained that the area will be difficult but the trail will not disturb the natural area.

Commissioner Curtis Gibson said he is in favor of a stage or amphitheater at the lake. We need to make sure this plan is done correctly and that our citizens buy into it. He asked about improving the water quality at Crystal Lake. Scott Crews said this plan can improve water quality. They are looking at options at filtering storm water run-off improving the quality of Crystal Lake. Mr. Fields said there are still elements of the trail that used to be around the lake. There is a slope on one side and vegetation that is very thick. These will be challenges to be addressed. Commissioner Curtis Gibson asked about bricks to signify a recreation area as this might be costly. Mr. Fields explained that there are other materials that are cheaper but appear to be brick.

Mayor Fultz expressed support for improving water quality in our lakes including Lake Wailes. He would still like to see public swimming in Lake Wailes.

Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson said he is concerned about a concrete structure in Crystal Lake as the water levels can vary widely in different years. He said that a structure won't work in the lake. He supports improvements on Park Avenue and that should set the tone for the rest of the downtown. He would like a continual theme to our trails and other areas such as the same lighting. Regarding the use of CRA funds we need to see if this project enhances property values so the CRA gets its money back.

Mayor Fultz agreed with the need for consistency. This will encourage pedestrians as they move about the city.

Scott Crews said they are working with Dover Kohl and they are mindful about keeping things consistent.

Commissioner Howell asked if the basketball court will be in the same spot. Scott Crews said no. and that the amphitheater will displace it. A new basketball court will be next to the tennis courts. Commissioner Howell said she likes the idea of more tennis tournaments. She would like to see improvements to the football field and ball fields. We need to work with the Schools and County on this. Mr. Fields said that we need to work with both school systems and county as county residents use our facilities. This will be challenging but we are advocating for this. This is an issue everywhere in East Polk County. Commissioner Howell said this needs to be a priority. She also shared concerns from home owners on the lake concerned about reducing visibility.

3.I.i. Public Comments

Darryl Washington Sr, resident, encouraged more attention to the Northwest Complex. Mayor Fultz said that the plan will include a connecting trail. Scott Crews confirmed this explaining that they hope to have pedestrian and bicycling facilities all over the city. Mr. Fields said the Northwest Complex will be included in the whole Recreation Master plan and that the city has made many improvements at Northwest Complex. Mayor Fultz said that we are looking at more affordable housing in the area.

James Ajac, resident, said the plan looked good. He suggested the trail be widened.

David Price, resident and president of Bok Tower Gardens, commended the City for looking forward. Improving the City helps Bok Tower. He shared concerns about having a plan and maybe using Dover-Kohl to help with this. He enjoys walking the trail in the morning and this area brings people together. There are many details to be aware of. Connections are important. The park is used for many events and these changes may negatively affect those events. He distributed a letter to the commission from his wife Catherine Price. Mayor Fultz said Ms. Price has spoken to him about her

concerns and recommended a letter. Mr. Price said Crystal Lake is polluted and needs attention. He said that all these upgrades will require more maintenance and landscaping. It may be more challenging for the City address these. He asked how many employees are dedicated to landscaping. Mr. Slaton said there is one person dedicated but others help with landscaping. Mr. Price suggested that more may need to be hired with this plan. A Recreation Master plan would address these concerns. Commissioner Howell asked Mr. Price if he attended any of the public meetings. Mr. Price said he was unaware of them. He has spoken with Mr. Fields about concerns regarding the Downtown trail. That path is not a bike trail or connecting trail. It should be wider. This is why a plan would be helpful.

Scott Blackburn, resident, said that he has 4 kids and they use many of the facilities included in the plan. There is a great need for additional and improved recreation facilities. There are many groups who wish to use the tennis courts and there is high demand for football and baseball fields. This is a multi-use area to serve various needs and interests. There is a need for additional facilities. He has to go to other communities to participate in some activities. Mayor Fultz said he heard these concerns years ago.

Mr. Fields said that reviewing additional maintenance costs is part of their planning process.

Jennifer Leeks, resident, spoke saying that we do need more recreation facilities.

3.II. YMCA Agreement

Kenneth Fields, City Manager, reviewed the history of this issue. He said the need for additional facilities in the city led to explore a partnership with the YMCA. This will open those facilities to all residents.

James Slaton, Assistant City Manager, reviewed the highlights of the proposed lease that was distributed to the Commission. The property was appraised at \$8 million. A contractor has done an initial assessment of the facility which is in pretty good shape but work needs to be done. The facility is not on our wastewater system this will cost \$75,000. In the proposed agreement the YMCA will be responsible for maintenance costs under \$5000 and the City will be responsible for the higher maintenance items. The City will subsidize memberships for City residents at \$84,000. The City will continue to subsidize swimming for the public at \$36,000. The programs at the YMCA such as the classes will be made available to all residents. Mr. Slaton shared a list of next steps prior to purchase.

Kirk Eich, Director of the YMCA, said this is a good step for the YMCA as there is property there that could be better used. He hopes that residents will be pleased. He wants to provide more recreation for the city. He explained how the memberships work and they have scholarships for those that need it. He said this is a good deal for the City. He looks forward to building a good relationship with the City. Some additional parking may be needed in the future. They are looking to get lease finalized. Hopefully in October it can be approved. The goal is to break even on the membership.

Kenneth Fields, City Manager, said the benefit of this is that we maintain the building letting the YMCA focus on what they do best and opening up the Y for more people to use it. He then reviewed the next steps towards completing the purchase.

Commissioner Howell said she is glad that we will soon get a pool for Lake Wales. She emphasized the importance of everyone being made to feel welcome. Who works there is important. She is glad that the green areas can be used for other things. She asked about maintenance costs. Mr. Eich said they will collaborate on goals for the facility as far as upgrades but this will be a city building. Mr. Fields said that day-to-day maintenance will be their responsibility but the City will pay to bring the building up to standards.

Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson thanked the West Central Florida YMCA for their help in overseeing our YMCA. He has been involved with the YMCA since the beginning. Its a good building for our community. This will be a good partnership. It seems as if this will become a recreation center for Lake

Wales. He asked about repaving the parking lot. This was discussed. He asked about insurance. He has concerns about the YMCA bus that transports kids. He said our lawyer needs to protect the City in these areas. He expressed concern about fairness in what residents and non-residents pay.

Commissioner Curtis Gibson reviewed the costs to users of the facility. He asked about subsidized memberships. Mr. Eich described how they work and how there are options if someone can't afford a membership. Membership Dues will be at City's discretion. Commissioner Curtis Gibson said he is concerned about operational costs to the City. This was discussed. Commissioner Curtis Gibson said he is glad for a possible additional football field.

3.II.i. Public Comments

Darryl Washington, resident, expressed concern about maintenance costs for this almost 40 year old building. Mr. Eich explained the importance of the facility to recreation. This partnership will help maintain this resource. Mr. Washington asked how we compare with other cities. Mayor Fultz said most of our other communities don't have a facility such as this. There was a discussion about how different cities operate including the charging of fees. Mr. Washington suggested that the City could run the recreation instead of leasing the building to the YMCA. Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson explained the YMCA lease and how it will work and how it is beneficial.

Jennifer Leeks, resident, asked what will be done to the facility. James Slaton, Assistant City Manager, said there will be mostly maintenance issues but also some enhancements. She recommended more exercise equipment at Crystal Lake that would be available for free. Stephanie Edwards said that is a possibility.

Lee Turnquist, non-resident, said he was a long term resident and that he appreciates the commissioners being mindful of spending the city's money. He reminded the Commissioners of the big picture. It would cost the City much more if they had to purchase and develop a facility themselves. He said that everyone is welcome at the YMCA.

Commissioner Curtis Gibson said he appreciated David Price coming and would like to work more with Bok Tower. Mayor Fultz agreed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Mayor/Deputy Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk/Deputy City Clerk