

GREATER BOCA RATON BEACH & PARK DISTRICT
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SUGAR SAND PARK - 300 SOUTH MILITARY TRAIL, BOCA RATON
December 21, 2015

The MEETING was called to order by CHAIRMAN Vogelgesang at approximately 5:15 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Steven M. Engel
Dennis R. Frisch
Robert K. Rollins, Jr.
Earl L. Starkoff
Susan Vogelgesang

CHANGES TO AGENDA: None

PUBLIC REQUESTS:

Glenn Gromann

2201 N.W. Corporate Blvd., Boca Raton

Mr. Gromann stated that he fully supports the concept and idea of the District potentially acquiring ocean front property. He felt that the controversy surrounding ocean front property could have been rectified years ago when the District had an opportunity to acquire the properties at a much lower cost. In his opinion, the District needs to better monetarize its operation in a way similar to the Airport Authority. The District has a lot of unused land and attractions which could benefit residents in conjunction with the City's proposed waterfront plan. Public/private partnerships could pay for amenities such as an ocean front restaurant or a beach club for residents.

Gary Youngman

2121 N. Ocean Blvd., Boca Raton

Mr. Youngman stated that the Boca Raton City Council's approval of allowing a property owner to build a 10,000 sq. ft. four-story house on the beach at 2500 N. Ocean Blvd. will change the ocean front in Boca Raton forever. He stated that Councilman Singer referenced 19 variance requests since the late 1980s, and all 19 have been approved. Councilman Rogers was the only one who dissented. Mr. Youngman advised that the 2500 N. Ocean Blvd. property was on the tax rolls for \$140,000 but since the approval, the value is now \$1.5 million. In his opinion, Boca Raton residents are predominantly against what is happening in Boca, but it is the 1% that are driving this issue; not the people.

James Hendrey

151 NE Spanish Trail, Boca Raton

Mr. Hendrey, a 31-year resident of Boca Raton, stated that he looks to the Beach & Park District as the guardians to all the good things that make Boca Raton such a special place to live. He commented that there are people in the community that want the District to sell public property so they can monetize them for profit. What the monetizers fail to realize, is that Boca's beautiful parks increase the value of their properties. The monetizers' selfish interest, greed, and avaricious attitude works against the spirit of the community and what makes our community such a special place to live. He asked the Board to continue to "march" forward. As was said when the Ocean Strand property was purchased "it is for the future."

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETINGS: None

REGULAR BUSINESS:

1. Review of correspondence from City of Boca Raton dated December 16, 2015

Mr. Arthur C. Koski, Interim Executive Director stated that on December 16, 2015 the District received correspondence from Boca Raton Mayor Susan Haynie. The letter requests that “the District identify all privately-owned vacant buildable oceanfront properties in the City and evaluate the possible acquisition of those properties by the District for preservation and public use”. On December 18, 2015, Chairman Vogelgesang issued a response stating that the matter would be placed on the December 21st Board meeting agenda for discussion.

Commissioner Rollins stated that he is not opposed to evaluating any ocean front property that may be available and how it could be used by the public. He asked staff to confirm that all of the City Council members support the request, and that they are willing to assist in the bond issue.

At the request of Commissioner Frisch, Mr. Koski explained the creation of the District and its partnership with the City in acquiring properties.

He stated that the District was formed in 1974 for the purpose of acquiring and developing Red Reef Park. The intention was to regionalize the cost for the acquisition and development with the understanding that people who live not only within the City but within certain limits outside the City, all benefited from having beach front property. The City had a bond issue for the acquisition of Red Reef Park and the District reimbursed the City on an annual basis for the debt service on the bond. Red Reef Park is titled to the City. Patch Reef Park and Sugar Sand Park were acquired in the same manner, however, when the debt was satisfied, the District took title to those properties. To prevent the development of Ocean Strand and to preserve that property for the benefit of the public, appraisals were done, and once again the City issued a bond utilizing the same procedure. When the debt was paid, the City conveyed their interest in the property so the District was the sole owner of the property. There is an ordinance that the City enacted which states that “all property owned by either the City or the District lying east of the Intracoastal Waterway shall be used solely for park purposes”. The ordinance is in existence today and the District is governed by that ordinance.

Dr. Frisch expressed concern about the District owning a series of “pocket areas” which may not be useable for District purposes. If the District can find a way to cobble pieces of land together to make usable park space with public access, he would support that initiative. He does not want to see any more variances, or votes that allow variances. It needs to be determined if it is in the best interest of the District taxpayers to be exposed to the liability and maintenance responsibilities of owning vacant property.

Commissioner Engel agrees that the District needs a consensus from the City Council showing their support for this project, and the costs and liabilities involved. He supports the District taking steps to identify and evaluate properties, with the caveat that these properties be used for the public good.

In an effort to get a better understanding on the position of the City so that the partnership can be maintained moving forward, Commissioner Starkoff suggested the following:

- 1) Mr. Koski, because of his knowledge of development and zoning, be on point to discuss with the Chair and any elected City officials what the intentions of the City are going forward.
- 2) Once the clean-up of exotics and vegetation at Ocean Strand has been accomplished, consideration be given to developing Ocean Strand as a non-active park. The two adjacent properties could figure into that development.
- 3) Mr. Koski should determine the effect of any further private development east of A-1-A on the ability of the District and the City to gain beach renourishment grants from the Federal & State Governments.
- 4) As a public safety concern, learn more about dune structure. Determine what dune preservation does to protect the interest of those properties on the west side of A-1-A, as the District has a vested interest in the tax rolls of those properties that serve all of our constituents.
- 5) Mr. Koski should report on every possible means at the District's disposal to acquire the two adjacent properties at Ocean Strand.

MOTION was made by Commissioner Engel and seconded by Commissioner Rollins to have Mr. Koski and Ms. Harms proceed to obtain a consensus of the City Council, identify available vacant ocean front properties, determine the expense and liabilities involved, and ascertain the City's participation in assisting the District in this matter.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

APPROVAL OF INVOICES:

Commissioner Frisch provided a revised invoice disbursement list.

MOTION was made by Commissioner Frisch and seconded by Commissioner Rollins to approve the invoices as presented totaling \$14,179.59.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Executive Director - None
District Counsel - None

Commissioners

Swim & Racquet Center

Commissioner Frisch inquired about the status of the building ceiling demo at the subject property. Mr. Koski responded that the demo is a sub-contract with Zimmer Consultants and it is about to commence.

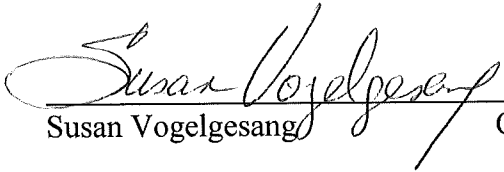
FUTURE AGENDA ITEM

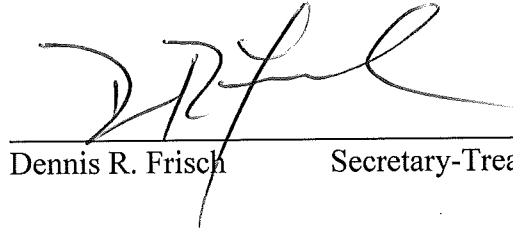
January 4 – Election of Board Officers

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION was made by Commissioner Frisch and seconded by Commissioner Starkoff to adjourn the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED


Susan Vogelgesang Chairman


Dennis R. Frisch Secretary-Treasurer