



Fort Myers Beach Town Council Joint Session with Bay Oaks Recreational Campus Advisory Board (BORCAB)

**Council Chambers
2525 Estero Blvd.
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931**

Minutes

Monday, January 11, 2021

9:00 AM

ORDER OF BUSINESS

FINAL

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members present: Mayor Murphy, Vice Mayor Hosafros, Council Member Allers, Council Member Atterholt and Council Member Veach.

BORCAB Members present: Chair Betty Simpson, Vice Chair Barbara Hill, Beth Cherry, Janna Holmes, Lee Melsek, Holly Sweeten and Karen Woodson.

II. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Discussion about Bay Oaks Campus Redevelopment

Mayor Murphy apologized for any confusion and noted they had to move on. He thanked BORCAB members for thinking big and hoped they could reach a consensus.

Chair Simpson commented that their original goal was to meet the needs of the community. She noted the recommendations were ambitious and might not be feasible. She stated that they recommended an athletic center with a new gym and a community center for low-impact, passive activities, emphasizing youth and senior needs. She suggested that they take advantage of the opportunity and work together for their Island.

BORCAB Member Melsek questioned whether they would discuss the list of questions submitted earlier. Mayor Murphy replied that they would see where the discussion went.

BORCAB Member Hill commented that the disconnect had to do with phasing the plan and she questioned whether phasing the overall plan was acceptable to Council. If concessions had to be made, the Welcome Center could be eliminated along with artificial turf.

She questioned whether they could look at available funding for the overall plan, perhaps up to \$15 million, with a separate amphitheater.

BORCAB Member Sweeten commented that basic issues needed to be discussed and it was important to move forward.

BORCAB Member Woodson noted additional funds could be available and she questioned fundraising by the Friends of Bay Oaks to offset the costs to the Town. Mayor Murphy replied that everything could be on the table.

BORCAB Member Holmes agreed with investigating fundraising opportunities.

Mayor Murphy agreed with comments and felt that phasing was an option, but he cautioned against locking in future Councils to any future phases.

Vice Mayor Hosafros remarked that she supported phasing the project. She noted they borrowed money in phases, they could stop borrowing it at any time and a future Council could stop the project in its tracks. BORCAB Member Melsek commented that the current Council had three years left and could get a lot done with phasing.

All Council Members understood that the budget was \$5.5 million. Council Member Atterholt mentioned that they did find an additional \$1 million in reserve funds for the Times Square project, which could be applied to Bay Oaks if that was the will of the Council. Council Member Allers noted that the current plan at 30% was well over \$5.5 million. He recommended that they address BORCAB's questions. Council Member Veach noted that they did discuss pulling the \$1.5 million out of the loan, but they decided to keep the project at \$10 million.

BORCAB Member Sweeten stated that the previous plan did not allow for phasing the project, but it was important because BORCAB members would like to see a separate amphitheater. Council Member Veach commented that it was a risk to count on an amphitheater with future expansion.

BORCAB Member Sweeten understood the risk but felt they should look at positive aspects. Council Member Atterholt stated that the recent plan was a phased plan, but the big question was how they phased it.

Mayor Murphy questioned whether BORCAB had a list of priorities. Chair Simpson replied that they came up with an ambitious plan that cost money, but they were not aware of all the other things that went into their plan.

BORCAB Member Cherry stated that it was hard to come up with a list without knowing how much the items cost. Council Member Allers reviewed previous discussions and questioned what services were not being incorporated in the current plan. BORCAB Member Melsek stated that they gave Council priorities, the proposed building was inadequate for the future and not close to what they planned. Council Member Veach stated that they could make one building larger instead of two separate buildings. He indicated that the latest design developed the amphitheater and provided for most of what they wanted for less money. BORCAB Member Hill explained that the Athletic Center and Community Building would house different activities. She stated that their priorities were two separate buildings and an amphitheater to be constructed in phases.

She felt that the latest consolidated plan did not allow for a separate, integrated amphitheater. She stated she was happy to revisit the cost of the buildings. Council Member Allers remarked that the recent plan would allow for expansion on the north side of the building. He indicated that a state-of-the-art amphitheater could be incorporated into a building to save money and suggested that they focus on what they could get now.

Chair Simpson and BORCAB agreed with BORCAB Member Hill's priorities. BORCAB Member Hill specified that the Community Center was the priority, followed by the Athletic Center and amphitheater.

Vice Mayor Hosafros suggested that they use the property they purchased and open up the entrance to Bay Oaks. BORCAB Member Woodson agreed and stated that everything in the design was smaller than they originally planned. Council Member Veach mentioned staffing multiple buildings and he felt one main building was more efficient. He noted that constructing two buildings might cost them half again as much as a stand-alone amphitheater and building a stand-alone amphitheater might mean they could not build a Community Center. He thought the gym had more life to it than what was being said.

BORCAB Member Hill indicated that if they agreed with one building, it would have to be redesigned to allow for a larger footprint or fuselage. She would like to see their original plan redrawn to incorporate their needs.

BORCAB Member Melsek stated that they were told that approximately \$2 million might not be used on the other two projects and he questioned whether Council would increase the budget for Bay Oaks. Council Member Veach replied that he was uncomfortable using reserves, but he supported securing grants to increase their budget. Council Member Allers stated that their current design was over \$5.5 million and he did not oppose using the funds leftover from Times Square. He understood that the plan was to move forward with securing available grants. Mayor Murphy stated that he would vote to use other funds if they become available. He noted that once the project started, grantors would be more inclined to approve grants.

BORCAB Member Hill thanked Council Members and felt that redesigning the 30% plan to allow for everything to happen and discuss as a part of phasing was positive. She felt they had a productive meeting.

Mayor Murphy thanked BORCAB for their work.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Mayor Hosafros moved to adjourn; second by Council Member Veatch. The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

Minutes adopted with changes, February 1, 2021; Motion by Vice Mayor Hosafros and seconded by Council Member Veatch. Passed 5-0.



Amy Baker, Town Clerk