



Meeting Minutes: Steering Committee

Location: First Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 100 NW 1st Avenue, Delray Beach FL

Date: April 18, 2018

Time: 6:00 pm

Meeting #: 8

Steering Committee Members in Attendance: Steve Mackey, Joy Howell, Anne Gannon, David Schmidt, Andy Katz, Yvonne Odom Jeff Meiselman, Kelley Johnson and John Miller,

City Staff in Attendance: Janet Meeks, Samuel Metott, Tim Stillings, Anthea Gianniotis, Amy Alvarez and Jasmin Allen

1. Welcome – David Schmidt, Chair

2. Approval of Minutes – March 14, 2018

Motion to approve minutes was unanimous.

3. Status of the Always Delray Comprehensive Plan Update

Ms. Gianniotis: Informed the Steering Committee that the focus is to complete two elements per month. Staff has been working with other staff experts on Parks and Open Space as well as Education for this meeting. Next month staff will present the Historic Preservation and the Economic Development Elements.

4. Discussion – Education and Public School Facilities Element Draft

- A. Goal 1 Quality Education Initiatives
- B. Goal 2 Extracurricular and Lifelong Learning Initiatives
- C. Goal 3 Education Advocacy
- D. Goal 4 Public School Coordinated Planning
- E. Goal 5 Facility Siting and Development Coordination

Mr. Schmidt inquired as to the status of the education Master Plan

Ms. Meeks responded that the Master Plan will be more detailed to implement the policies in the Element.

Ms. Meeks: Provided a brief overview of the Education Element and informed the Board that staff considered the comments made at the stakeholder meeting, and the suggestions in the Set

Transformation plan and the Education Master Plan. During the master plan update, the Education Board looked how best to fund improvements utilizing the once cent sales, and the tremendous decrease in enrollment in city schools. There are approximately 2,000 empty seats.

Ms. Meeks stated that the First Goal “Quality Education” which the K-12 and working in concert with the School District curriculum. The second goal is “Extracurricular and Lifelong Learning Initiatives” is the portion that the City actively participates with the extracurricular activities with the non-profits. The third goal “Education Advocacy” or the infrastructure and policies that would affect education. The final two goals are primarily taken from the current Comprehensive Plan with respect to facilities.

Ms. Giannotes: As we look at the 2017 enrollment data, it illustrates how many kids attend our schools. In relation to Carver, it shows 814 attending, however 708 students in the district have decide to go somewhere else. So these numbers are something to pay attention to as we move forward.

Mr. Schmidt: Is there something that the district has done to determine why so many students are going to other middle schools.

Ms. Meeks: That is something that the master plan will try to answer as the district might be more concern with the data on a whole. However we want our schools to do well, so this is the data that we might have to gather. But part of the issue is the programming, image problem, a number of reasons.

Ms. Odom: I want to address the elephant in the room as I have been working in the school district for a number of years. In the past, we had a balance of all ethnicities in Pinegrove however, over the years we have lost the white students and the affluent black students and sometimes its perception so we need to discuss how to address that.

Ms. Meeks: The District started Controlled Enrollment, which allows parents to choose another school if there is capacity. It is middle income flight, both parents work and have to commute to work and maybe can take their children to where they feel they could get the best education for their child.

Ms. Gannon: I believe if you improve the education at a particular school then people will come. It is a public perception but that is what marketing is about.

John Miller: There is white flight and middle class flight, the condition of the facility plays a part. Pinegrove does not look attractive and Carver is not much better and those are the two worse schools listed here.

My son goes to Atlantic and I went to Atlantic and know the demographics of the school. We went in, we toured the school, it is spotless. The school is clean and safe and has no glaring issues. Also the staff turnover is problematic.

Ms. Meeks: The City has to take ownership to as to the approach to Pinegrove and make it look more appealing. Maybe there should be policies in the Housing Element to improve the neighborhoods surrounding the schools. Or we begin to have conversations that Pinegrove does

not belong in that neighborhood anymore. Maybe it's outgrown the area, but that's not a part of this policy but it will be in the Master plan.

Mr. Mackey: What happens next if the numbers keep going down the way it's been?

Ms. Meeks: That language will definitely be in the master plan and maybe after looking at demographics and trends, maybe we suggest that it's better to combine schools. Maybe do away with all the boundaries and have where everyone goes to particular schools and close others.

Mr. Mackey: We should have the conversation about maybe in the near future having to repurpose some of these schools. Schools that are never going to make it with kids, becomes repurposed into a vocational school perhaps for adults.

Ms. Gianniotis: We have a policy in here that says that we are going to create a 10 year master plan and I think that from that master plan there needs to be that we do that in the next 2-5 years. What do we control - we are not the school district - so we need to get the message on track and also know what that message is.

Ms. Odom: Another comment is that we have a lot of homeschooled kids and especially foreign kids who come here and play tennis. If we can cater to them where we might have to work with the school district to alter their day. Where kids can get their education while they play tennis, Delray is quietly becoming a tennis capital.

Ms. Gianniotis: Under Goal 2 maybe there is some way to expand the idea to be creative to incorporate tennis and other extracurricular activities to play to our strengths.

Ms. Gianniotis: Incorporate policies that prioritize capital improvements around schools such as sidewalks etc.

Mr. Miller: In regards to the perception again we need look at Pinegrove and Morikami Park, we have to hold someone in the school board accountable because why does one school look so clean and maintained while another school does not.

Ms. Odom: Incentives should be given to teachers who take on assignments in those areas.

Ms. Meeks: Look at adding a policy regarding teacher retention through housing incentives. And adding an additional Objective that addresses neighborhood improvement, safety, teacher incentives etc.

Ms. Miller: Those incentives must be translated to the performance of the schools.

Ms. Meeks: Suggested an additional policy to explore implementing strategies that will allow the schools to mirror the community.

Mr. Miller: The policies need to reflect parent engagement and parent expectation.

Mr. Metott: Youth travel sports is dominating the after-school sport activities.

Ms. Gianniotis: There is limited resources expended on sports activities and the district has no money for transporting the students to the sport events.

Ms. Meeks: Inquired if the City should get involved in providing transportation for after school sports activities.

Mr. Mackey: I wonder how you get kids excited to attending school. Maybe it's the sports programs and other things that the schools can offer the students more than just a free education.

Ms. Meeks: We need to economically balance the schools as middle income and affluent parents will fund the schools to make sure that their child is getting the most of their education.

Mr. Mackey: Is there some zoning regulations (down zone) that we could pass to allow for construction of bigger housing that more of a wealthier demographic can come in and be around the school. Or maybe moving the school into a more affluent neighborhood and just provide transportation to the students that were attending the former school.

Ms. Meeks: That is definitely on the table in the master plan

Ms. Odom: My daughter who lives in Georgia in a community where there are three different price points for housing for the different economic levels.

Ms. Meeks: To integrate schools you would first need to look at integrating the neighborhood.

Mr. Mackey: Taking the master plan and all the comments into consideration, we need to talk about some really drastic changes to our schools or the trend is going to continue on a downward slope.

Ms. Meeks: The trend has been relatively flat. You have some fluctuations but it's been pretty much flat. The master plan needs to put forward transformational ideas. Where we brand ourselves and we look outside of Delray Beach and say we are going to be STEM so we invest heavily into that. Or we do something like Aerodynamics so that we would be something different from the status quo. Socio economic factors play a significant part. You cannot separate housing from education. Or education from economic development. So we need to collectively figure out a solution to this issue.

Ms. Odom: We need to get the story out about how the grades are assigned which affect the perception of the school regardless of the other activities that the school may offer.

Ms. Meeks: If the board members have additional comments to transmit those to staff.

Mr. Meeks: Do you believe that the city should be in the space of providing after school programs? Or should we use that money that was allocated for that and put somewhere else that may need it more?

Mr. Metott: Parks and recreation after care programs have been an integral part of our community for a very long time. It's something that is generational where parents and grandparents having taken their children and grandchildren there and have put them through these particular programs. At the same time in the big picture, parks and recreation on the statewide level, I don't believe we do as well as some private entities. It used to be the place where everyone use to go. Now there are daycare centers which have after school programs. There are certain conditions that make it almost difficult to have the aftercare program to co-exist with other recreational programs.

Mr. Mackey: One of my biggest pet peeves with municipalities is where they have an asset such as a park and they should look to private entities to have their programs using our facilities and then splitting the proceeds with the city so the city gets revenue from their asset and the park wouldn't just sit there not being utilized.

Mr. Metott: The facilities are not built to accommodate the dual use of activities.

Ms. Gianniotis: If the schools are not having robust athletic support is there an opportunity that the Parks and Recreation Department could do to go to the schools to run a sport activity, art classes, music?

Mr. Mackey: If the city cannot do well in after care programs then those funds should be given to those that are doing well (education) and get that off your plate.

Ms. Meeks: Investigate how the funds for afterschool could be best spent.

Mr. Meiselman: Suggest high tech, world class athletic center that integrate all the students from all the schools that requires that the athlete must do well to be a part of the program.

5. Break: 7:15 – 7:30

6. Discussion – Open Space and Recreation Element Draft

- a. Goal 1 Provision of Excellent Parks And Recreation Opportunities
- b. Goal 2 Park and Safety Access
- c. Goal 3 Open Space Acquisition, Retention & Preservation
- d. Goal 4 Public-Private Partnerships

Ms. Gianniotis: The current Element did not provide mapping so now we have some analysis that shows where our parks are in relationship to our schools. There is a big difference between the development structure of the area east of I-95 compared to the area west of I-95, which has private, gated communities with their own internal recreation facilities. In comparison, the eastern portion of the City relies more on the public parks and recreation facilities. We did use census data to view where all the young people were and to see how they were served, as well as our older populace and based on economic standing to see where those holes were where we can see which places need open spaces. Also, the Parks and Recreation Department is changing the way services are provided from where residents attend a facility to where recreation activities and taken to the communities.

Mr. Katz: These maps do look nice, however I would appreciate if these maps had the names of the different open spaces on them.

Ms. Gianniotis: Yes we actually had that before but for the next iteration we can look to try again making that adjustment.

Ms. Gannon: The Del Rio trail is not shown on the map.

Mr. Metott: Stated that it was never listed as a Delray asset.

Ms. Gianniotis: Staff will review and add it to the map and modify the Policy on Page 17 (OSR 4.1.2) to state to extend and connect the existing Del Rio greenway trail to the one within the city.

Mr. Katz: In regards to future parkland supply we need a stronger statement to state that open space and park space retention and expansion is critical within the DIA (page 12) given the growing population. Something such as "The city is still growing and we cannot afford to give up any existing open space and parks."

Ms. Odom: We just sold off some land.

Mr. Miller: That's a part of the issue

Ms. Giannotes: I know that's an ongoing frustration and we understand. We want to add that to the DIA we will add it to the DIA. We have a policy that we do have in here that there should not be a reduction of acreage. And also that we would evaluate things.

Mr. Katz: I found the statement that you are referring to. However, it's at the bottom of a paragraph instead of being a lead off statement.

Mr. Mackey: What is the total acreage of open space and parks? Is it 293 or the 184 +293?

Ms. Allen: It's actually the total of both at about 500 sq. acres.

Mr. Mackey: If you want to know how underserved we are it's about 4.5 - 4.7 percent of the land area dedicated to parks and open space. Now you have to start asking, "How does our city benefit from its 4.5 percent of open space. I would love to see what other cities have as the total area of their open space.

Ms. Giannotes: One thing that I feel like we cannot ignore is in some of the communities west of 95 you have these developments that provide recreation such as pools, theaters and playhouses. So some of this lack of open space is attributed to our development patterns shifting in the 70s and 80s to gated communities, which have their own tennis courts and their own pools. Which is why we thought it was important to reflect that here. Otherwise, you would look at the whole side of the city and think that they do not have anywhere to play a game and that's just not the reality.

Mr. Mackey: The retention of open space needs to be a top priority of the city or it's going to go away.

Mr. Katz: If you go to Policy OSR-3.1.7 "Strive to expand the parkland area and ensure that there is no net loss of public open space and recreation areas." What it appears is a weak statement even there.

Mr. Metott: To your point, it appears Jacksonville has about 14 percent open space.

Mr. Miller: I think Royal Palm Beach is one of the golden standards in regard to how much open space vs population vs land mass. They are very proud of their parks.

Ms. Giannotes: inquired if there is a perception that there is not enough open space in the city.

Mr. Miller: The parks space need to be categorized, there is open space, passive open space, recreational activities occurring within a gym , natural areas, preserves of which we have very little. And since we are not going to make new natural area we need to protect and if possible restore any brownfield areas or the FIND parcels and utilize it.

Mr. Mackey: A high priority needs to be to preserve what we have or look at a developing a land trust to increase parks and open space when the opportunities becomes available.

Mr. Metott: In new suburban communities, developers want to develop the facilities that bring people together to socialize and play together. However, in Delray we have over 50 something parks but what we don't have is any kind of showcase park. Any park that has a lot of land, a big open space, athletic fields for all your sports. Maintaining 50 little parks is very expensive.

Mr. Mackey: Well in regards to having a land trust, maybe this is something where we go to the public and state that we are going to sell these 10 parks and use the money allocated for those and invest those dollars to a bigger park.

Mr. Miller: Golf as a sport is declining and they're starting to close them and build housing on them and recommended that a policy is added that if it ceases to be a golf course it should not be sold as it could be repurposed/redeveloped to community park/open space or athletic facilities.

Mr. Mackey: The golf course is 18 acres of golf courses are a huge drain on your physical assets for a very few.

Mr. Miller: I do not disagree with you as I personally only golf once a year. However, the sport of golf is something that has been a part of the city of Delray Beach for the last 70 80 years. The course needs to be redone. The city needs to decide if they want to have a first class golf course or not.

Mr. Schmidt: The golf course has not been maintained and has been allowed to deteriorate. The City needs to decide if we want to have a first rated golf course or not. There are some benefits to having one as West Palm Beach closed there municipal course. Boca is going to be closed for a while due to renovations. So I do believe there is a market there for golfers as long as it is marketed correctly.

Mr. Mackey: The city would have to ask itself what market you are trying to capture. Are you trying to capture the dollars of the golfers? What is the greater need for the city?.

Ms. Giannotes: We need to re-work the first objective to go beyond level of service to make a stronger statement about maintaining and seeking more open space and parks and add an additional policy to repurpose golf course and not to sell); not to sell any park/open space that could benefit the city. Within Goal One, staff will revise to address acreage and percentage of parks and open space facilities, increasing open space and look at incorporating Objective OSR 3.1 Open Space Acquisition and attendant policies.

Mr. Katz: Special Studies 1.3.3 some of the wording should not be interpreted or limited to just the preparation of special studies. *"The evaluation should include identification of vacant or surplus parcels, and strategies to assure that neighborhood residents and organizations determine the parameters of the park. Such strategies should strongly encourage participation of neighborhood associations and stakeholders as the identification, advocacy, design, and organizing forces"* It should also include modifications to existing parks vs just the creation of new parks.

Mr. Stillings: That policy is related to a focus look within a neighborhood. The strategic task team

is established to go into the communities that need rehabilitation. So the objective is to see if there is an issue with the existing parks and if there are actions that can be taken to bring them up to a better standard. As well as seeking opportunities of vacant or surplus land to add additional park facilities that would have a positive impact to those communities.

Mr. Katz: I feel like those good ideas can still be transferred outside these special studies should be added to regular maintenance and improvement for all other parks.

Ms. Giannotes: We need to add something like that under 1.2.2 or expand one of the other policies to add that language.

Mr. Odom: Regarding Policy OSR 1.3.4 the CRA and Palm Beach County Sports Commission have set aside funding to complete a study of the Tennis Center to see what other uses could be accommodated and suggest rewording to policy to require the completion of the study.

Ms. Howell: Where does the idea come from to sell city owned properties?

Mr. Stillings: Sometimes you have private offers that come up or the city intentionally works with a broker to market it for sale.

Ms. Howell: We should have a thorough review checklist when a request is made to sell any surplus city property and ask can we add more green space, etc.

Mr. Katz: The city needs to think of the long term impact of selling city owned properties.

Mr. Miller: Suggested that the policy be modified to state no net loss per capita which means we will have to acquire more property.

Ms. Giannotes: Instead of per capita, the percentage of the city or dispersion maybe a better measurement.

Mr. Mackey: The City is built out and we need to repurpose and may have to knock buildings down to acquire park lands.

Mr. Miller: There are large land owners such as the school district, industrial areas or city facilities that the city should focus on for acquiring for parkland.

Mr. Mackey: The thing about selling off the properties is that usually you receive some money that is short-lived and the land is gone. However, if the city gets in the habit of preserving it and not allowing a net reduction in the total amount, it forces people to get creative. So if a park is underused that's fine, try to trade the land for another piece somewhere else that could better utilize that use. The concept of trading will become very important.

Ms. Gannon: We need to look at the effect of density and how it impacts the provision services.

Mr. Katz: Policy OSR 1.3.4 add the word expansion or repurposing relative to the tennis center.

Mr. Katz: Policy OSR 2.2.2 Delete the word "strive" to state the city will develop a scenic recreation network...etc.

Mr. Schmidt: Policy OSR 2.2.7 should be reworded to state the city will actively plan and implement interconnected greenway corridors etc.

Ms. Odom: Policy OSR 2.1.5 should be reworded to state the city will continue to work in partnership with the Delray Beach Police Department to provide patrol of park throughout operating hours.

Ms. Howell: Inquired what happens if the tree canopy goal is not met. The policy should be more specific and quantify the percentage increase or establish measurable bench marks.

Mr. Schmidt: Policy OSR 3.1.1 reword to state “create the Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) program to aid in open space land acquisition”. Policy OSR 3.1.3 delete the word “explore” to state “develop a policy to promote land-swaps to protect environmentally sensitive land.” Policy 3.1.6 replace the word “encourage” with “solicit”. Policy OSR 3.2.4 cautioned the blanket expansion of the tree canopy within the public rights-of-way and that adherence to the right-tree right place standards to be cited.

Mr. Katz: Policy OSR 3.3.4 add the word “maintain” Policy OSR 3.3.7 add the word “public beach dunes” as a native habitat.

Mr. Miller: Policy 3.3.1 add the Public Beach Dunes and Bexley Preserve area to the list of conservation areas. Recommend adding a new policy regarding the provision of consistent wall and fence treatment when the rear of the lots faces the right-of-way without any separating green space.

Mr. Katz: Policy OSR 3.5.1 recommend accomplishing the policy within a shorter time period than the stated 2025. Ensure that the old Policy OS 3.6 and 3.7 of the current element are included. Modify Policy 4.3.4 to state “engage community leaders, stakeholders, and residents in the planning and design of existing and new park facilities and open space.”

Mr. Mackey: Policy 3.1.2 replace the word explore with establish and that the city need to engage the private sector.

Mr. Miller: Policy OSR 4.3.6 add the “words and coordinating: to state “Encourage citizens to volunteer within the parks and recreation system by offering and coordinating opportunities to be involved in recreational and resource programming, youth athletic coaching, park clean-up efforts, habitat restoration and special event support.”

7. Next Meeting: May 16, 2018

8. ADJOURN