

A workshop meeting of the City Commission was held on February 9, 2010 at 5:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers at the Municipal Administration Building. The meeting was called to order by Mayor L. Jack Van Sickle.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Lee A. Wheeler, III; Terrye Y. Howell; John Paul Rogers; Jonathan Thornhill; Mayor L. Jack Van Sickle.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None.

CITY REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Judith H. Delmar, City Manager; Albert C. Galloway, Jr., City Attorney; Clara VanBlargan, City Clerk; Jacquie Hawkins, Deputy City Clerk.

Agenda Item 1. Swimming Pool: Presentation by Unity-in-Community; Discussion

Presentation by Unity-in-Community

[Begin report & recommendation by Unity-in-Community]

Unity-in-Community

Report & Recommendation

for the Location, Construction and Operation
Municipal Water Park
Lake Wales, Florida

Introduction

For more than 40 years, the Lake Wales City Commission has discussed the construction of a municipal swimming pool, primarily to serve the residents of the northwest community. Several years ago, the Commission set aside \$1 million for that purpose, but has not budgeted funds sufficient for operation and maintenance. As a result, the project has not moved forward.

On March 10, 2009, the City Commission again discussed various funding and location options and considered a staff recommendation to appoint a pool committee to study three possible locations and the cost to construct, operate and maintain a pool and locker room/restroom facilities at each location. The Committee would be asked to develop a recommendation for the Commission by September 2009, with the idea to place the question of funding for operation and maintenance before the voters in April 2010.

Unity-in-Community representatives who attended the City Commission workshop asked for and were granted permission to develop and conduct a survey to determine the size and type of pool and water features desired by the public; to determine public support; to research construction, operating and maintenance costs; to investigate potential locations; and to develop a report and recommendation for presentation to the City Commission.

Survey

UIC conducted a survey of area residents to determine the type of pool, water features and aquatic programs desired. Questions were developed with assistance from Nate Seidl, executive director of the YMCA, who has experience with funding and constructing community pools. With help from Betty Wojcik, executive director of the Lake Wales Area Chamber, the survey was posted on the Chamber's website and survey postcards were designed and printed. In addition to inserting cards into the City's water bills, 3,000 cards were placed at various locations throughout Lake Wales, including City Hall, the YMCA, the B Street Community Center, and the Chamber. The Chamber's educational foundation covered the cost of printing.

741 responses to the survey were tabulated and an evaluation of the survey results was conducted by Dr. Sandra Hupp, an independent pool consultant who was contacted by Nate Seidl. A copy of the survey and Dr. Hupp's interpretation of the data is attached as A-1 and A-2 respectively.

Special Community Meeting

On Monday, June 15, 2009, Unity in Community hosted a special meeting at the B Street Community Center to bring representatives of all major community groups together to share the survey results and discuss options for working together to complete this 40-year-old project.

Survey results, potential locations and other area projects were discussed. Most notably, the consensus of the group was that a Water Park, including a zero-entry pool with special water features and possibly a "lazy river" would be the most successful for Lake Wales, making it accessible to all segments of the community, including residents who are physically challenged, and drawing area residents and visitors in sufficient numbers to generate the revenue necessary to cover the cost of operations and maintenance. (See examples: A-3, A-4, A-5, and A-6)

Design and Construction

The committee reviewed information previously gathered and provided to the City by Commissioner Jack Van Sickle and reviewed the drawings developed by architect Mark Parlier for the former CSX building and previously considered by the City Commission

Unity-in-Community members also met with Nicholas Fuller, from Paddock Industries, to discuss water park options, potential costs and opportunities for design-build contracts with local labor and subcontractors where possible. Mr. Fuller is available to meet with the City Commission to answer any questions they may have regarding this project but certainly wishes to have an opportunity to submit qualifications for consideration. With construction costs affected by current economic conditions, Mr. Fuller believes this is the time to build a water park in Lake Wales, when they City will receive the most value for the funds set aside for this project. In addition, use of the Compak Vacuum Sand Filter, installed below grade, is also recommended, with dramatic savings in construction costs and in water and chemical and maintenance costs over time.

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Operations

Using Bristol, TN as a budget model, actual income exceeded expenses by \$2,152.60 annually for 180 days of operation. with 175 average daily users @ \$3.00 per day; 150 monthly user fees @ \$25.00; and 50 yearly user fees @ \$50.00. (See A-7)

This compares with 200 average daily users at \$3.00 during the summer at the Lake Wales Family YMCA and 600-700 per day at the new Haines City pool (many from Lake Wales). UIC recommends that Lake Wales residents be charged a daily fee of \$3.00 and non-residents be charged a \$5 daily fee. Monthly fees of \$25.00 and annual fees of \$100 would also be reasonable. We believe these conservative estimates of annual income generated by a Lake Wales Water Park show that actual income would be more than sufficient to cover operating and maintenance costs.

In addition, the YMCA is willing to discuss management of the new facility, providing lifeguards, etc. and/or ordering supplies and chemicals for the new facility to achieve an economy of scale.

Recommended Location

Several locations for the municipal water park were considered, including west of the Austin Community Center, the tourist club site and a site at the east end of Lake Wailes, across from Kiwanis Park. None of these were found to be viable options.

Therefore, Unity-in-Community members recommend the use of the former CSX building and the property east, north and south of the building, between Kissimmee Avenue and Seminole Avenue, including the property that would be derived from the vacation of Lemon Street. Just south of the Lake Wales Trailhead, the site provides easy access for area residents and visitors, particularly for the residents of the northwest community; enhances the recreation complex already in place; and is convenient to the Boys & Girls Club, the library and the downtown shopping area. The former CSX building offers space for locker rooms/restrooms, offices, storage and concessions. While a portion of the building and a small portion of the site is currently being used for storage and public works personnel, moving those functions to another City-owned site is recommended, allowing development as recommended herein and achieving the highest and best use of the property.

This project is seen as having the potential for a very strong, positive impact on the local economy. In addition, the location adjacent to the Lake Wales Trail offers the opportunity for federal, state and county grants to further enhance the project.

Request for Qualifications for Water Park Design and Construction Services

Unity-in-Community has completed and submitted a recommended document that, with changes as the City finds necessary to meet State or local requirements, can be used to solicit qualifications for design and construction services and begin the project within the shortest possible time.

Water Park Taskforce

Unity-in-Community appreciates the opportunity to help, would like to remain involved as this project moves forward and requests the City Commission authorize a Unity-in-Community Water Park Taskforce to continue to work with the City Commission and staff and, ultimately, the selected design-build firm, to help see this project through to completion.

[End report & recommendation by Unity-in-Community]

Mayor Van Sickle said they would start with the Unity-in-Community group's presentation of the pool information they gathered, followed by Commission comments, and ending with public comments.

PRESENTATION

Howard Kay, 1550 Country Oaks Blvd, President of Unity-in-Community, reviewed the material in the Commission packet:

- The history relating to the construction of a municipal pool in Lake Wales for the past 50-60 years;
- The UIC's (Unity-in-Community's) role in developing a report and recommendation for presentation to the City Commission; and
- Pool survey conducted by Unity-in-Community

Betty Wojcik, Unity-in-Community member and Director of the L. W. Area Chamber of Commerce, reviewed the report and recommendation presented by Unity-in-Community. She said UIC received 741 responses from its pool survey. The point of the survey was not to determine whether people wanted the pool or not, but to determine what kind of features and the kind of pool the community would like to see, because the City Commission had set aside money for a pool. The Committee had a special meeting with representatives from major organizations in Lake Wales to discuss potential locations for the pool and the features they might want included. The Committee determined that the majority wanted a water park instead of a pool. She said that the project needed to be an economic generator that would draw people outside the city with fees for residents, non-residents, and for monthly and annual passes. She said they also looked at the pool information the Mayor had gathered in the past. Their financial report, she said, was conservative as far as income and high as far as expenditures so the Commission would not have to go out on a limb. She requested qualifications for a time line, as now would be the best time to start, while construction costs were low. Mayor Van Sickle said he gathered his information before becoming a City Commissioner.

Ms. Wojcik said that in the report they talk about several possible locations that they considered as suggested by various community representatives: west side of the Austin Center; former CSX building property; Lake Wales; and a practice soccer field site. She said that they are recommending the CSX property to be the location, as mirrored by the discussion of the City Commission.

Nate Seidl, CEO of the YMCA, talked about income projections and possible locations for the pool. He said their recommendation was to use the CSX building and property. He said they got their financial figures from a similarly sized pool in Bristol Tennessee, which is a similarly sized community. They got the user data from Haines City and the YMCA, and chemical cost and lifeguard data from the YMCA's pool expenses. The pool's heating expense data came from Progress Energy. He said that they figured it would cost approximately \$100,000 a year to operate the pool.

Ms. Wojcik pointed out that UIC had put together a Request for Qualifications because of the time line to make it easier on the City Commission if it should decide to move forward with building the pool.

CITY COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Rogers said that he was not declaring if he was for or against the pool. He said the Commissioners had received several letters from the public and questions he felt needed to be addressed. He made the following points:

- The cost for insurance and the cost for security had not been calculated into the proposed budget for the pool.
- The cost of buying land, building a new facility, etc., and relocating the CSX equipment would be between \$800,000 and \$1.2 million, which was not included in the proposal.
- He found it disturbing that the survey did not ask if people wanted a pool, and that only 741 responses were received, which is less than 10% out of the some 3,000 questionnaires that were distributed. The highest percentage of the responses came from those outside the city limits. He did not understand the lack of interest by residents in Lake Wales and felt that they should be more active in City affairs.
- The Commission had been accused of insensitivity by various newspapers and groups of people in the past and so he was in favor of placing this item on the ballot. He agreed that the pool should be placed on the ballot, but the ballot questions should include finding out if residents want a pool, and if they are willing to pay for it. People should be informed as to what will be on the ballot. If the people vote for a pool we should get it done immediately, cutting through the red tape. If the people do not want the pool, we should table it for a while until the City can support it.
- He could not see the projected revenue coming in and said that taxpayers might have to pay a Special Assessment fee to cover it, as the money is not in the General Fund. The City revenue fell 25% this year because of the economy and will probably fall more next year.
- The photographs of the pools were very nice and added that he agreed that building a pool now would be cheaper than in the future once the economy improves.
- He did not think the city pool could compete with the YMCA pool.
- He was in favor of the Austin Center location.

Commissioner Howell made the following points:

- Over the years, a lot of research and comparisons had been done and it always ended up with the same problem – cost. She said that a pool has been promised for 50-plus years and we have yet to do it. A pool is expensive. It was expensive 50 years ago and it will be expensive 50 years from now. If we want a pool in Lake Wales there will be expense, which will increase.
- There is no guarantee even one person would come to the pool. We have never been in a position until now to know the answer to that question.
- The pool should be centrally located and not at the Austin Center because the pool is not just for the northwest section but for the City of Lake Wales. The pool should be centrally located so everyone would feel comfortable coming to the pool. The question is do we want a pool in Lake Wales. Are we

afraid that these children will get together at the pool and become friends in Lake Wales. This is something that needs to be dealt with in hearts and not on paper.

Commissioner Wheeler made the following points:

- In the document was a statement that the YMCA might be willing to manage the pool, operating on a contract basis similar to those we have for the ball fields and the Depot. Mr. Seidl said they would be very interested in coming to the table to discuss that. He said they were already in the business of running a pool, and if the City and YMCA went into a partnership, they could possibly lower the insurance cost. Commissioner Wheeler asked if the YMCA liability insurance was about 2-3 million dollars and Mr. Seidl said that was close.
- Commissioner Wheeler thanked the UIC's efforts. He said there was no certainty of cost until an RFP was put out.
- He reminded everyone that a few years ago the Rails to Trail issue was put to a vote and he believed that putting the pool to a vote might be the way of settling the issue once-and-for-all. If citizens want a pool, it would clear the way to proceed.
- He thought the November ballot was too far away and Ms. Delmar said it was not too late to be put on the April Ballot. He said that ever since he was a child swimming at the lake he heard about a pool. Every year there was some reason why it could not be built. He reminded them that Haines City had two pools. His recommendation was to put it on the April ballot and in the meantime proceed to get specific costs. He suggested finding out how much it would cost to operate only on weekends.
- He did not think we could nail a contractor down to a definite price, but thought we could seek a very educated estimate so people would be able to make the most intelligent decision they could.

Commissioner Thornhill made the following points:

- He asked City Attorney Chuck Galloway if pool insurance would fall under general liability or if we would need a separate policy. Mr. Galloway said he did not know but that he thought it would fall under general liability. He had no doubt, though, that there would be an increased premium because of the increased risk in having a pool. One way to handle it might be through a contract entered into with the YMCA for them to manage the pool. If there was a way to piggyback off their policy, there still would be intended cost for the increased liability.
- The expense for six lifeguards was included in the report, but not for concession vendors, a supervisor or a director, and these would be additional costs affiliated with the facility. He asked Mr. Seidl if it will be comparable to the YMCA pricing and if we do not have this issue then why are we not going to the YMCA. Mr. Seidl said the YMCA is open as much as possible for people to use. He said it would be cheaper to go to the city pool as a day pass at the YMCA is \$5.00 versus the proposed \$3.00 for the city pool, which is more in line with the fee in Haines City. He said that when they were asked to put the proposal together, they were not asked to take in account a concession stand, so only listed the six lifeguards.
- He asked Mr. Seidl why he did not get quotes from other cities in Polk County that had pools such as Davenport. Mr. Seidl said he did not know Davenport had a pool the size we were considering, so got them from Haines City. The committee looked at the pool in Bristol, Tennessee because it was of a comparably size and had been working at least two years.
- He asked if the committee tried to get estimates for the pool-design from other vendors. Mr. Seidl told him there are basically two companies in the State of Florida able to get the bonding and because he had a previous history with Paddock Industries, he used them. Of course, the pool-design and construction would have to be put out for bid.
- He said he talked with the Recreation Director of Haines City who told him that two years ago he had proposed to have the second pool in Haines City dug up because it was too expensive to maintain. Commissioner Thornhill said he also talked with the Lake Eva project director and it turned out not to be a good comparison because they had additional things that would draw people besides the pool.
- Because the proposal said the pool would pay for itself, Commissioner Thornhill asked Mr. Seidl if he found out how many city pools actually did. Mr. Seidl said that most of his experience was in the mid-west and he gave an example of a 2,000 resident community that built a multi-million dollar water park as a way of generating revenue. He also gave an example of Hill City, Kansas that had an

economic boost because they built a \$7 million water park, though there were no other attractions around and it drew people in from all over. He admitted that here there are attractions to compete with, but it would still be a draw for other nearby communities.

- He asked if Mr. Seidl if he had asked the three cities that had pools pictured in the proposals what their maintenance costs and issues were. Mr. Seidl said he could get these and mentioned several cities that could furnish that information.
- Commissioner Thornhill asked Ms. Delmar what the city would do if the CSX building were used for a pool. She said the City would have to find and buy property suitable to build a structure for Public Works.

Mayor Van Sickle made the following points:

- He said the survey confused him because the term "the northwest section" usually meant the older section of the City. Yet, those people living in Lake Ashton who filled out the survey also live in the northwest section and would have had to mark that category. He was not sure if the survey was projecting the northwest logical area or the northwest physical area. Ms. Wojcik said that both areas were considered to be in the northwest section. Mayor Van Sickle stated that there could have been many surveys handed in with the northwest section marked that were not in the older northwest section. He said that this could explain why the numbers in the northwest section were higher. Ms. Wojcik said it could.
- He said to Mr. Seidl that according to the proposed budget, the YMCA was earning about \$5,000 a month during the summer. He assumed that they were getting more revenue in the summer than in the winter, yet 12 times \$5,000 is \$60,000, which does not come close to the projection for the Tennessee pool, which was \$94,000. He thought the numbers at the YMCA would be a little bit closer than the Bristol revenue numbers, so he did not think the projected numbers were a good comparison. Mr. Seidl said the \$5,000 was what they made from day pass fees alone, though they were assuming that most of them were there to swim and not to make use of other options at the YMCA. He used rough numbers because he had no idea for sure. He felt that the figures were close to the cost of the projected project. He said that the Haines City water-park is packed and people have to wait to get in. Mayor Van Sickle said that the numbers make him wonder how close the figures are.
- Mayor Van Sickle asked Ms. Delmar to explain the documents that had been handed to him, as the Commissioners had no time to look at them. Ms. Delmar explained that the Finance Director did a fiscal analysis and as the Mayor handed the documents to the other Commissioners, Ms. Pendergrass was asked to review them.

Dorothy Pendergrass, Finance Director, said that when she was reviewing the presentation it had not been her intention to do a fiscal impact study but she found some small calculation errors in the Bristol calculations that she wanted to bring to their attention. They were the following:

- The yearly user fees had been transposed from \$50 on Page 2 to \$60 on page 10, with a difference of \$500;
- The anticipated 150 monthly user fees on Page 10 had an additional multiplier of six months added in, which was not included in the Bristol Tennessee's fees. This caused an overstatement of revenue equaling \$18,750.00.
- She said she then decided to look at the Bristol financial statement and tried to tie that to the model. She looked at their budget to see what kind of revenue they showed for their pool. She sent an email to the Bristol Finance Director because she was finding variances between the model data they were provided and the audited and budgetary information that was listed on-line. On Page C-7 of the Bristol budget under "Pools Recreation Fees," it listed three years, which did not add up to the revenue listed in the model. She looked at the financials for the annual expenditures for their pool, found on Page G-32 of the handout, which showed a deficit compared to the revenues. She added that some of the discrepancies had been explained in the presentation by the way they were calculated, so she would follow up and see what the differences were in the revenue. Mr. Seidl explained that the data he got was not from Bristol Tennessee Parks and Recreation but the Country

Club in Bristol, Tennessee. He said he would give Ms. Pendergrass the contact information so she could follow through.

Mayor Van Sickle said they needed to bring the pool issue to a closure and that he believed most people would like to have access to a pool but unfortunately, it cost a lot. He said he has been told that when it comes to dollars, he can make a nickel squeal. He is somewhat conservative.

Mayor Van Sickle said that when he did the past estimates for the pool he had used the Melbourne pool for an example because it was similar to what we might have. Those numbers were not based on 180 days but three months of operation, which was a little different. Their numbers were about the same as those for three months, broken up between personnel and chemical maintenance as were showing for six months. We needed to know the total cost to the community, including the cost of relocating, if the CSX property is chosen.

Mayor Van Sickle said according to the survey, this report had been put together so that the Commission could have the information to put on the ballot and read the collaborating section from the report. Ms. Wojcik disagreed and said that the committee was reporting because of a staff recommendation that was delivered to the Commission on March 10, 2009. There was a recommendation that the Commission appoint a committee that would put together a recommendation to go before the voters. However, the Unity and Community group, at the same meeting, asked the Commission to let them take a public survey to gather the information and get public input instead, and make a recommendation. The direction had not been to find out if the public wanted a pool, but what features they wanted to see in the pool and to find out how much it would cost. The Unity in Community group's intent was to gather the information and bring back a report to the Commission instead of taking it to the voters. The cost of building a pool was obtained from Paddock Pools, and information was gathered about the cost to maintain it. She said she believed revenues from the pool would generate enough income to make it work. Mayor Van Sickle said he did not remember it that way. He asked Ms. Wojcik to read the pertaining sections from the March 10th minutes, which she did. She said that the committee was not recommending a public vote but that this was for the Commissioners to decide.

Mayor Van Sickle said that because it was a big issue and would involve cost to the citizens, he agreed with the Commissioners who already made the statement that it should go on the April ballot. He said that two questions needed to be put on the ballot. Does the public want a pool, and if they do, as the City does not have the dollars to do it, do they agree to a special assessment to fund the relocation of the CSX building, the building of the pool and for maintenance. Ms. Delmar asked the Mayor what he envisioned as a special assessment. He said he saw it not as a higher mileage rate, but similar to the fire assessment fee that every property owner, occupied or not, would pay. Mr. Kay said that the assessment would not have to cover the building of the pool because the million dollars was set aside for its construction. Mayor Van Sickle said no one was questioning that, but it would take a million dollars to move the people out of the CSX building. Two million dollars was needed and we only have one. He said he did not know if we needed more than the two questions on the ballot but we needed to think about that. He asked if this would have to go to a Commission meeting and Ms. Delmar said the City Attorney would have to prepare a resolution. It would have to go on the next City Commission meeting on February 16th in order to meet the ballot deadline with the Supervisor of Election. Mr. Galloway said that the resolution is limited to 75 words so it may have to be written as two separate ballot issues in order to stay within the word limitations. He added that, if it were the desire of the City Commission to proceed, he would prepare a resolution for that purpose, forming more than one resolution if necessary to enable the Commission to get the answers they needed. Ms. Delmar said that each resolution is allowed a title and up to 75 words to explain what it means.

Commissioner Howell said that asking the public if it wants an assessment is defeating the purpose of getting a pool in Lake Wales because no one wants an assessment. Putting that on the ballot will cut a pool right out of Lake Wales. She reminded them of how the public freaked out over the fire assessment. She wanted to know what else they could do besides a special assessment.

Commissioner Thornhill said we have the funds to build the pool but need a way to fund maintaining it and to move the CSX facility. Ms. Delmar said we were only talking about operating shortfalls, not funding

the full cost of operations. The proposal is that user fees would offset if not pay for all the operations cost. However, if it does not cover all, there has to be funding source to make up the difference.

Commissioner Wheeler said that the first step would be to assess the will of the people of Lake Wales. If they want to have a pool then it is the Commission's job to find a way to make it happen.

Mayor Van Sickle said he wanted to know if both questions should be put on the ballot now, or wait another year to ask the second question about the assessment. Commissioner Wheeler said if they are going to have a pool, the time to strike is now while prices are down and if we wait another year, that may not be the case.

The Mayor said that, with projections of 13% less taxes coming in, we should not take on more debt. We needed to find a way to pay for it.

Commissioner Thornhill proposed a resolution to increase the mileage rate by $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mill to pay for future maintenance of the pool. He added that if it turns out the money was not needed, that mileage increase could be removed later. He said he hated taxes and tries to vote against them but this may be a way to guarantee getting the pool.

Mr. Seidl asked, if it takes less than the million dollars to build the pool, if the difference could be used to go toward the operation. Ms. Delmar said it could. Mr. Seidl also mentioned that some of the organizations he spoke with in the community indicated to him that if the pool became a reality, they would be willing to do things to help with funding and operation of the pool. At present, the pool has not gotten far enough along to warrant a commitment from them. He also mentioned that there had been other locations investigated and that the committee had recommended the CSX area not knowing it would cost a million dollars to relocate. If they decide on one of the other locations, the million dollars they do have would cover the cost of the pool.

Commissioner Rogers asked if we would have to borrow the money to move from the CSX building if that location was chosen. Ms. Delmar said we would have to either take it out of our reserves or borrow it, if it were in this fiscal year, but next year we would have the added option. Commissioner Rogers asked if using the reserves would hurt the City's credit rating. Ms. Delmar said that, because it would not be going out to the bond market, the credit rating would not be the issue, but rather a problem covering the City's expenses in the first quarter.

Commissioner Rogers said that if the voters wanted the pool he would have no objections and would work toward getting it. He said he agreed with the Mayor that we had to know how it would be funded and he insisted on it going to the voters. If it is a viable project and if we show the voters how we can pay for it, he believed they would go for it. If they do not want the pool, it is the public's money and we work for them. He asked if the Unity in Community has any objections to it going to the voters and Mr. Kay said that the committee was there to try to help and work together.

Commissioner Wheeler said they had to be careful of the language on the ballot because you can frame a question in a way to get the answer you want. Mayor Van Sickle said that was not the intent but to make the ballot as simple to understand as possible.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kathy Manry, 1071 Sunset Drive, and a member of Unity-in-Community, objected to it going to a ballot. She said the elected officials, knowing there was a million dollars set aside for the pool, ran for office saying they would help get one. She believed those citizens that had been promised a pool would feel the Commissioners were going back on their word, saying the pool is now in jeopardy. Ms. Manry said that when she sat on the Commission last March, UIC had been asked to gather facts so the Commission could begin to put together what operating costs there would be. In her opinion, if it goes before the voters, it would bring up a racial issue that existed for the past 50 years. She said the City Barn is not the issue and that if the UIC committee had known it would cost a million dollars to move, they would have removed that option. She added that surely there was another piece of property in the City for the pool.

Ms. Manry asked where the million dollars came from. She said that happened before she became a Commissioner. Ms. Delmar said it came from the sale of the Cooperative Fruit Property with one million dollars of it budgeted to fund a pool. She said they have been carrying that for the last five years. Commissioner Rogers asked if the money was earmarked specifically for a pool. Ms. Delmar said the money was transferred to the General Fund last year termed as a tax anticipation, reserve account/ pool reserve and at that point, it became designated. Ms. Manry said that she served for four years with the understanding that one million dollars had been set-aside by the previous City Commission for a pool. Ms. Delmar said it happened in 2006.

Mayor Van Sickle said that he remembered speaking with Ms. Manry while she was a Commissioner and before he became a Commissioner, using the term O & M. She had asked him what that stood for, which is Operation and Maintenance. He said that at that time he had come up with the cost of the pool and the cost of operating the pool so the Commission could make an intelligent decision on whether to build one. He said we now have a little over a million dollars. At the time he ran the figures, he said that would not cover the cost of building the pool and bathhouse. Construction costs have gone down and the report said we now could do it. If so, that would be great. All that the Commissioners were saying was that if the CSX property were to be used for the pool, there would be other costs associated with it in moving the employees and finding a place for them. The Commission would have to find the money for that along with operational expense money. According to the UIC report given to them, the pool will generate enough revenue for O & M and he hoped that would be the case. If it does not cover it, the City has to have the means of coming up with those budget numbers.

Ruth Dampier, 1154 S. Lake Shore Blvd., commended the Commission for an excellent job with the swimming pool situation. She agreed that we should not build a pool if we cannot take care of it. She also agreed that it should be put on the ballot because we now want a swimming pool that exceeds our income. She said it would be great to have a swimming pool and she thinks the city needs one. However, she did not believe the Commission should take it upon themselves to determine what the citizens want or do not want. She supported putting it on the ballot. She said the ballot should be open. If the City does not have the income to take care of a pool, it should show on the ballot that there might be the possibility of an assessment fee to cover it. She said that for a long time the YMCA was called a country club because they charged so much money to just belong, in addition to monthly dues. The YMCA has brought its costs down over the past eight years and now has more people using the pool. The Commission needed to keep in mind that Lake Wales is a poor city, and Polk County is a poor county. First, the Commission should get the citizens input, and see if there is money enough to pursue it at this time. For 50-years, Commissioners have been trying to make that decision, which she believed meant that the City cannot afford it. They could not afford it 25-30 years ago and these are even more difficult of times.

Catherine Price, 813 Campbell Avenue, said that putting things on a ballot was not the only way to get community input on issues. She said that the UIC report was somewhat incomplete and she thought it needed to be complete before putting it on the ballot. It was better to form a committee to come up with a solid, well thought-out plan in another location, plus security and insurance costs, operation and maintenance costs and firm a proposal for a specific pool. She felt there should be more discussions at future City Commission meetings where the public can have their input. She did not recommend bringing it to a vote, as she believed that would divide the community, and the pool should be for the whole community, not just for the black children. There are a lot of children in the community who do not have a pool, who are hot in the summer and get into trouble for lack of something constructive to do. She felt that Commission meetings would be the correct forums to use instead of throwing something quickly on a ballot.

Ms. Price said that for a long time it bothered her that so much money goes into Long Leaf Business Park. She asked how much is spent there yearly and Ms. Delmar said the expense was for landscaping, reuse water, mowing, and common area maintenance, about \$5,000 a year. She added that the operational costs are funded by the businesses there. Ms. Price asked how much money was tied up in the land and Ms. Delmar said the entire parcel including Mayfair was \$3.2 million, one million of which is for the pool. Ms. Price said she did not feel that citizens got the bang for their bucks at the park and yet

we were quibbling over money for children to have a pool. Ms. Delmar suggested she make an appointment with her so she could get the answers she needed.

Mimi Hardman, 300 S. Lake Shore Blvd., gave a history of the CSX property and Hardman Complex property. She gave all the reasons why she believed the pool should be located there. She brought the plans that Mark Parlier had designed for the pool and the building that was to be located there. She also mentioned the LWHS location and told why that location did not work out. She said the employees using the CSX building could be moved. Ms. Delmar said they would have to acquire the property first as there is no suitable city owned property for which to move them. Ms. Hardman said there are always buildings available for back taxes if you keep an eye out for them.

Mayor Van Sickle said it was his opinion that it should go to a ballot so they will know those who want a pool and are willing to support it. He said he saw the funding coming from a fire-fee type assessment because that would get everyone involved in it and not just the citizens who pay taxes. He said there could be no vote at a workshop so he was asking for direction as to what course the Commission wished to take and if they wished it to go before the City Commission for a vote. They could possibly have the resolution ready for the next Commission meeting if they so wished, so they could have time to get it on the ballot in April. If it does not go on the ballot, funding would need to be found, as it could not come from the General Fund. If the community gets behind the project and they come up with the funds, the assessment would become zero for everyone.

Commissioner Wheeler said the questions were many and the time was short. He suggested putting it on the November election ballot. Ms. Delmar said we were "shut-out" of the fall election, an Election Office term meaning the black out period when it is too late to get on that ballot. She said that we could have a mail-election any time during the year. It would not be a big problem and would not be very expensive, maybe a couple thousand dollars for postage. Aside from that, the only time we have available would be the election in April.

Commissioner Wheeler said the numbers were all over the place and we needed concrete numbers to be able to put it out to the voters. He personally believed it would pass overwhelmingly and would be a unifying force, rather than a dividing force in the community because they would be uniting for one purpose. He believed the April election would be too soon to get the necessary answers to all the questions.

Mayor Wheeler suggested putting it off and doing a mail vote later in the year. He said we would have to take in to account the city budget process, which takes place in May or June, to get on it the maintenance dollars. This would mean we would not have a whole lot of time after April to do this or it would affect the budget. Ms. Delmar said that even if we started building the pool now, with an opening scheduled for September 2010, we would be almost certainly looking at the next fiscal year. She added that we could always do a budget amendment.

Commissioner Wheeler said that this would give them time to further refine the numbers. Ms. Delmar said that Ms. Price had suggested having a committee to come up with an actual plan for an actual pool, not one modeled after the one in Bristol, Tennessee or someplace in Saint Augustine. It would have the actual cost for maintenance and insurance and not an estimate. If another agency, like the YMCA, were going to contract to operate it, we would need to know what they would charge and who would absorb the operating loss, them or us. There are many questions on the financial side of it. We now have an idea of what the pool will look like but we need something more specific if we want the public at large to vote on it. We could do that by mail ballot next fall, though that would be pretty far off. Commissioner Wheeler said we have been putting it off forever. Ms. Delmar said that as soon as the Commission is ready and has a plan, we could do a mail ballot.

Commissioner Thornhill said the capitol outlay is there, but he does have a concern about the maintenance. He asked Ms. Delmar if the Mark Parlier plan had been looked at and Ms. Delmar said it was a conceptual plan, not a design. Ms. Wojcik added that they looked at the plan but it was for a pool and they wanted a water park. Ms. Delmar said the difference between the income and expense is what we have to cover. There are a few ways to cover it, go into the reserves, use an income tax, or cut other

services. Commissioner Thornhill said we must understand that the City is a "service business" and not a "for-profit" business. He said he never had anyone come to him saying the pool was not wanted. They just wanted to know how we would pay for it. Commissioner Thornhill said he has come close to hiring someone to fill in the pool he has at home. The last freeze cost him and he had issues with his water bill, so there are always expenses that add to the cost. If they finally get a pool, he does not want it closed for repair like the Kirkland Gym. If we are going to do it we need to do it right and take care of it so it lasts another 50 years.

Ms. Wojcik said the UIC recommendation was to find a firm that is bonded to work with the committee, Commission, and staff to design the pool and come up with specific costs. If someone is found who would be willing to help design it, then when we got ready to build it, they could be selected, or they at least would have the leg-up on the process of selecting to build. She said that was the most economical way to do it and she would hate to see them lose time and miss out on getting it built for the best possible price.

Mayor Van Sickle said the numbers we have now are a bit fuzzy. He agreed with the idea of a committee to do the work. Then the City could go out to bid contingent on availability of funds to build and maintain it. If we have the funds to build the pool but no funds to maintain it, then we cannot build the pool. Mimi Hardman said she wanted to give them the phone number of Kelly Callahan, Recreation Director of Haines City, because they have a very successful program that is working there.

Mayor Van Sickle asked if they wanted to go ahead and get a committee together. There was a discussion on how many members there should be. They decided to have seven members, two of which would be staff, and the other five coming from the Unity in Community group and the Recreation Advisory. Ms. Delmar said she thought the Public Works Director and Finance Director should be the two staff members on that committee. Ms. Price was asked if she would also like to be on the committee and she said she would help when she could. She said she did not want it to go to vote with a haphazard plan that would be knocked down unnecessarily. Ms. Delmar said you would get a different response if voting in the abstract rather for an actual plan. Ms. Price said the issue was presenting a definite plan and a way to pay for it. It did not matter if everyone agreed. The committee needed to work together on something positive for the community. If a pool is something important to the City, we need to sit down and figure out what it is we need. Maybe we do not need a water part, but a descent pool.

The Mayor asked who should be contacted if someone wanted to be on the committee and Ms. Delmar said one could call the City Clerk. She said this committee did not need to rise to the level of a City Commission appointment, just volunteers working on a project. Mayor Van Sickle said that it was best to keep the Commission out of it because they would fall under the Sunshine Law and there would have to be detailed notes.

Commissioner Rogers said that the committee needed some direction and he suggested they find out the following:

- Location of the pool
- The cost for relocation If the CSX property was to be used
- An economic package with facts and figures to support it

Commissioner Rogers said he did not want to do something haphazard and that if we do it, it needed to be done right. In his opinion, the Bristol country club pool was not comparable to one in Lake Wales and he suggested using pools in Haines City, Davenport, Winter Haven, and Bartow for comparison. He hoped the committee could bring back a good, affordable package. Ms. Delmar added that the only viable location the City had would be the Hardman Complex. She said that the Austin Center was determined to be a beautiful location but not suitable for the pool, and there are the water table issues around the parks. She said the Hardman Complex was basically acquired to serve as the location for the pool. Ms. Wojcik added especially if you want the pool to be an economic generator. Ms. Delmar said the property was well situation near the Rails to Trails so there would be access.

Commissioner Wheeler asked that there be some time restraints and suggested 90 days for a deadline for the total package to bring back to the Commission. The Mayor and members of the CIU agreed to that. Commissioner Wheeler said if they are able to do it before then, all the better. Mr. Seidl asked if he could say the City was behind the pool if they could make it economically feasible. The Mayor said he could not speak for the other Commissioners but told Mr. Seidl he could say the current Mayor was for the pool if the City could afford it.

Commissioner Rogers said he is open-minded on the pool, but it had to be economically sound for him to vote for it.

Ms. Delmar added for the record that a design-build is a lot easier in the private sector than for the public sector. The public sector had a different set of rules to adhere to. She asked the committee to remember that if they put together a design-build. She said the City Finance Director would do the research.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

ATTEST:



Mayor/Commissioner



City Clerk