

The City Commission workshop meeting was held on June 8, 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: Mike Carter; 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; Jacquie Hawkins, Deputy City Clerk.

Agenda Item 1. Municipal Swimming Pool

The Commissioners each received a copy of the study that was done between the City and community leaders. Mayor Van Sickle said the topic of a swimming pool had been around for a long time, with people both for and against it. He said that the Swimming Pool Committee had been formed to find out the type and cost of a pool, and the amount of revenue needed to build, operate, and maintain it. He said there was no requirement for public input for a workshop but that he would open it for comment. He asked that citizens listen to each other's comments and ideas, whether they agreed or disagreed, because it could give ideas for questions to ask or statements they wished to make.

Betty Wojcik, 4005 Dunmore Drive and chairman of the Swimming Pool Committee, commended all City staff and community leaders who served on the Committee and the project architect Mark Parlier and his staff for all the good work they did. She reported on the Committee's work and the study that was provided to the Commission. Comments included the following:

- The Committee was formed to determine what kind of pool a million dollars would buy, whether it should be built at the Kirkland Gym or the CSX building, and the total cost associated with it at each location. The decision would be up to the Commission.
- A pool or water park in Lake Wales would provide our family oriented community a recreational facility where babies to grandparents could go at the same time and enjoy themselves.
- A pool or water park would be an economic generator.
- The cost exceeded the Committee's expectations and with the economic difficulties the Committee understood that the Commission may find it difficult or even impossible to find the money to support the recommended water park.
- The community needed an answer to its forty year question, "Can we have a pool in Lake Wales?"
- The Committee is recommending Pool Design B.

Mark Parlier, project architect, presented the Commission with the following:

- The design layout for two sized pools to be built at the Kirkland Gymnasium
 - Design A at a probable projected cost of \$1,031, 580.00
 - Design B at a probable projected cost of \$2,145,940.00
- The Features for the water park:
 - Design A: a children's watertoy area, lemon drop, and pre-teen to teenage water slide
 - Design B: a covered portico including picnic benches; slides; water attractions such as cascades, curtains, tumble buckets and jets; a beach entry; a concession stand; work area; a director's office; a pool house; and handicap wheelchair lift
- The Number of persons that each could accommodate
 - Design A – 48 persons
 - Design B- 181 persons

- The Cost of site work, support buildings, parking lot, fencing and miscellaneous fees and permits

Mr. Parlier said that the Swimming Pool Committee recommended design B.

David Admire, ADAU Aquatic Design and Engineering in Naples Florida, described the various amenities in more detail for design B and said that it was designed to separate young kids from teenagers for safety purposes, and could be used to teach swimming.

Mr. Parlier pointed out that the difference between the two million dollar layout versus the one million dollar lay out is that they are providing additional facilities and sun shelters on the pool deck.

Commissioner Carter asked if the 181 person bathing load in design B meant how many people could be in the water park at one time. Mr. Admire said yes.

Dorothy Pendergrass, Director of Finance, explained the assumptions she used to determine the figures for both designs A and B:

- To be on the conservative side, the budget numbers in design A were figured for 25 persons instead of the 48 persons because she did not know how many would actually be in the pool at one time. She said to get the maximum they would need to add \$10,000 to the figure in section 4 of their pool manual.
- The figures for comparing attendance had been obtained from Haines City, Winter Haven, Bartow and Davenport, mainly because of their locations. She had asked each city how many attended the pool on an annual basis.
- The expenditure figures came from the three following sources: The YMCA for the ratio of lifeguards to attendees; from Dave Admire from ADAU for electricity, water, and gas projections; and from Sandra Davis, Human Resource Director at City Hall, for estimates on insurance costs.
- All other expenditures came from comparing the data from the four cities.
- In all four cities, the expenditures exceeded the revenues in both their projections and actual amounts.
- She found that in all four cities, all the costs had not necessarily been included in the figures she received. The costs in all four cities did not include the cost of a recreation director, or assistant recreation director. Some of the cities did not include utility costs, liability insurance, or setting up a replacement fund.
- Ms. Pendergrass included all the additional expenditures in her figures and then compared those figures to the estimates given by the four cities to see if they appeared reasonable, which they did.
- Pool A would have a deficit of \$77,252.88 and pool B, \$126,504.96 which did not include a recommended replacement reserve fund. Adding that cost would add an additional estimated cost of \$18,000 for pool A, and \$41,000 for pool B.

Commissioner Rogers asked where the City would make that money up. Ms. Pendergrass said the Committee had discussed a suggestion from Mayor Van Sickle for a Special Assessment, though that would take more research as she was not sure they could do that. They also discussed Commissioner Thornhill's suggestion of adding ¼% to the ad valorem mileage rate.

Commissioner Thornhill wanted to know why they did not do estimates for just a lap pool. Committee member Robbie Shields said that because the YMCA already had a lap pool, they did not want to duplicate it, as citizens can pay \$5 and go to the YMCA pool. Commissioner Thornhill wanted to know why they even needed a pool if that was the case. Mr. Shields said because they were proposing a water park and not a lap pool. Ms. Pendergrass said the Committee discussed extensively that very question, whether it should be a pool, or a family oriented water park. The Committee voted to recommend a water park because they thought it would be what the community would be most interested in.

Mayor Van Sickle said he was concerned that both children and teenagers would be using the locker rooms simultaneously. He also asked if funds for the repairs to the gymnasium had been included in the figures. Ms. Pendergrass explained that the reasons the Committee decided that the pool should be built at the gym instead of the CSX building was the cost for moving Public Works from that building to a new location, because of the slope in the land at the CSX building, and because the locker rooms and bathroom area was already there. Though the Committee had talked about the locker rooms, she said that issue could still be addressed.

Commissioner Carter questioned the unfair comparisons in demographics found in section 4, page 3 of the report, as the cities being compared were different demographically to those of Lake Wales. Mr. Admire said they originally based it on square footage of water surface. The Haines City water area was approximately twice the size of the proposed B design so they took half the cost. Commissioner Carter said there were a variety of recreational opportunities other than the pool in Haines City that would draw people there that our City did not have; for example they could play volleyball in the morning and then stay and go swimming. Mr. Admire said that because there are no similar recreational opportunities in Lake Wales, people would be drawn to the water park itself because there would be nothing else here to distract them or draw them away from the pool to in order to participate in other activities. Commissioner Carter said he was concerned that there was no lap-pool in the design to accommodate adults who would want to swim laps while their children were playing in the water park section.

Robbie Shields, 3570 Silver Oak Court and Committee member, said he understood Commissioner Carter's concern for adult swimming and said that even at the YMCA's lap-pool there usually were so many kids in the pool that adults could not swim laps. He also said that, in response to the concern for having young kids and teenagers in the same locker room, he did not think it was an issue because it was the same way at the YMCA and parents usually go into the changing area with their children. Mayor Van Sickle gave an example of a mother with a male child who would not be able to go into the men's dressing room to assist her child.

Commissioner Rogers said there was no way of knowing how many people would attend a water park if we had one and we were basically just guessing. Mr. Admire said that was correct but that there were companies that did full feasibility studies.

Commissioner Howell said we have no recreation director so the money not spent on one could go toward the cost of workers at pool B. She said pool B will cost more but pool A would be too small and would not be what we need in Lake Wales. She said the City needed this water park for its children and that it would be a draw to other communities as well. She realized that the City did not have the money but said we would have to come up with some creative ways to get the money. She suggested things like having banners displayed for local businesses and organizations for hundreds to thousands of dollars; having fundraisers; renting deck chairs, floats and other things needed at a pool; and making it a community effort. She said that this project would make the community better, would generate revenue and because it was the closest the City has ever come to getting the pool promised to them for 50 years, we should not let the lack of money be a detriment. She said she knows a pool is expensive to maintain and that the City had other things to fix up, things that should have been maintained twenty years ago. She said that the City has other recreational opportunities such as baseball and soccer but that not all children are interested in sports and a water park would provide recreational opportunities for them as well.

Commissioner Thornhill asked Mr. Parlier if any of the buildings were connected to the gym and if they were, did they meet the guidelines for a historical building. Mark Parlier said none of the buildings were attached to the gymnasium. Commissioner Thornhill asked if repairs to the gym had been included in the total cost and Mr. Parlier said \$100,000 was included for the bathroom and weight-room section at the back of the gym. Commissioner Thornhill asked Ms. Pendergrass if there was a way to show how a pool would improve the quality of life in Lake Wales and Ms. Pendergrass said not necessarily, nor could it show what businesses were attracted to a community because of the existence of a pool. Commissioner Thornhill said he was disappointed that the study did not include a cost estimate on the previous plans for

just a pool. Mark Parlier said he gave a price for that plan in 1998, then again in 2004, which he thought was probably comparable to today's cost. Ms. Delmar said it was over \$2 million but that the figure also included renovation of the CSX building.

Ms. Pendergrass went through section 13 in the study which covered the annual fiscal impact of \$126,500 required from the General Fund for operation costs, plus the recommended \$41,000 for replacement reserves and the debt service for possibly financing the project. She said the Committee had talked about a special assessment but that City Attorney Chuck Galloway had told them that to be able to do a special assessment the City would have to prove that the entire community would benefit from the pool. The function would be the same for a tax increase but he did not think the City could pass the test of finding a special benefit to each property owner, so it would have to be an ad valorem tax increase. Ms. Delmar said her guess was that it would take between two thirds and three quarters of a mil to cover the cost. Ms. Pendergrass said that she ran the numbers for both one quarter and one half mil.

Ms. Pendergrass said that she had talked to Nate Siedl who said there were organizations interested in funding the operation costs, but that the project had not gotten far enough along to warrant a commitment. There were discussions of possible fundraisers but she recommended that any money promised for capital should be in the bank before the City begins the project because circumstances change and people sometimes can't meet their commitment. She said the pool committee could not gather any more data than it already had and she recommended getting the information out to the community.

Mayor Van Sickle asked the commissioners if they would rather hear public input first or start with commission comments. Commissioner Howell said she would like to hear from the public first. The Mayor opened the meeting up for public comments asking that they don't repeat what others say.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Becky Wynkoop, 1301 Bryn Mawr, said that no one she knew received the pool survey and she wanted to know how and where it was done. She commented that the pool needed a four foot deep section that could be used for senior water aerobics as there was a big demand for this in Lake Wales. Commissioner Rogers said that 3,000 questionnaires had been sent out in the water bills and 700 people returned them. Ms. Delmar added that it was also posted on the City website, and distributed through various organizations. Commissioner Rogers said the questionnaire did not ask if residents wanted a pool, but just what kind of pool they wanted, which he said was a loaded question. Mark Parlier said that pool design B had a large enough area for water aerobics.

Mimi Hardman, 300 Lake Shore Drive, said she was brought up with a public pool and said we needed a pool where swimming could be taught. She said that years ago school children were taught to swim in city lakes and she felt that every child should be taught to swim. She gave a history of the funding she helped raise that led up to this point in building a pool. She said she was in favour of having a pool but that we needed to get a plan first and then raise the money, which she said she would help do, before we start building it.

Howard Kay, Committee member, said that the Commission had not accepted what the pool committee had previously brought to them, which he said had been the right thing to do because what they were now presenting was far better. The Committee had been asked to show the commission what kind of pool they thought the City would like to have, and what the cost would be. They were not asked to find out where the money would come from. He said it was up to the Commission to decide if we could raise the needed money. He said the City wanted growth and that new residents and businesses would probably look first at the kind of school system we had, but then would check out recreational opportunities. The water park would be a definite plus. He said a lot of people from this area go to the water-park in Haines City and he thought that people from Frostproof and Avon Park would most likely come here instead if we had a water park. He said the Committee did what they had been asked to do, and the next step would be to find the funding. There are people and organizations out there willing to donate money, but only if they

can see the plans for the pool that will be built, even if that money was to be put in the bank until we get enough money raised to build it. He said if the pool isn't built this time, he doubted that any of the Commissioners would live to see a pool in Lake Wales.

William Moure, Committee member, addressed the quality of life issue and said that children would be offered free swimming lessons which would decrease the incidents of drowning, and that the close proximity to the Historic Downtown area and to Polk State College would enhance the quality of life for shoppers and for students.

Robbie Shields, Committee member, said that he and the Committee felt that the City needed to provide recreational opportunities for its citizens and have a Leisure Services Director at some point in time. He said he also liked the idea of using the lake because he used to swim in the lakes as a child. He did not envy the decision the commission had to make because two million dollars was a staggering amount of money. He added that, even if it was not right at the moment, the City needed to be working toward that goal.

COMMISSION COMMENT

Commissioner Rogers made the following comments:

- He thanked the pool committee for their hard work, and for being sincere in their efforts.
- He said he wanted a pool in Lake Wales but there were more important projects that needed to be taken care of first including the one million dollars needed for the work on the sewer plant, the three million dollars needed for the sewer problems on C Street which he said was causing a possibility of serious health issue, and that the proposed revenue for the City was expected to be one million dollars short this new fiscal year.
- He said organizations that had been getting city grants had been sent letters stating that the city may not be able to fund them next year.
- He said his priority was the health and safety of the citizens, which included water, sewer, fire and police.
- He said he dabbles in real estate from time to time but never had a single person ask him if the City had a municipal pool.
- He said he was not against recreation for he felt it was important for any community but the City has a YMCA, a Little League program, a soccer program, and other recreation.
- He said he was against building a pool at this time because it was not affordable or feasible and because it was not a high priority.

Commissioner Howell made the following comments:

- Because the City is so close to getting a pool it should step up and make it happen. She said she realized we may not get a pool this year or next year but money needed to be put aside from our concentrated effort. We are close to something we have tried to get for Lake Wales for 50 years and she did not think we should let it stop again. She admitted that a pool was not more important than the health of the Lake Wales residents. But it was important and we needed to move forward now while it was on the front burner. She said it might take another 30, 40 or 50 years to finish it, but we needed to get it done.
- There are many things that need to be done in Lake Wales and we don't have the money for those things either. But the pool was something totally different and would not use the same money.
- Once businesses know we are serious about getting a pool she was sure they would help. She said the City has the right people now who care about what is happening in Lake Wales and we need those people to step up and make this come about.

Commissioner Carter made the following comments:

- He thanked the Committee for the well thought out plans that the Commissioners had been presented with. But he said what was lacking was a recreational master plan.
- Though he said he would like a pool, he was against going into debt to get one and believed it

would be the wrong decision for the City to take on more debt. He said we needed to fully understand what the situation will be for the next year or two with the expected revenue, and wait for the bottom to drop out and the revenue picture to improve before building a pool.

- He said the decision as to if we want or don't want a pool should be determined by the citizens through a referendum.
- He asked Ms. Pendergrass how much it would increase someone's tax bill if we raised the tax by one half or three quarters mil. Ms. Delmar said she had a chart in her office and she could get him that information but that he had to realize that if the mil goes up, a portion of that would go to the CRA and a portion to the library. In her experience, to cover this, they would have to go up about three quarters of a mil. Commissioner Carter said maybe the citizens should consider breaking recreation out into a separate taxing district, something similar to the library so that now and in the future, recreation gets a portion of the money.
- He said he was disappointed in the plans because they did not include an adult swimming area.
- He said he was disappointed in the low meeting turn-out as most of those present either worked for the City or normally came to the meetings. He did not know if that meant people were not interested in a pool, they had other things to do tonight, or they were unaware of the meeting.
- He said that he thought Crystal Lake Park should be considered in a recreational master plan because there are already shuffleboard courts, tennis courts, and volleyball there. He suggested that they could have swimming in the lake and put water park option A in the same area.
- He said he had been told there were no grants for recreation but he made a phone call to the county grants department and they said there may be grant money for recreation facilities. He said he had a meeting scheduled within two weeks in Bartow to discuss the possibility. Ms. Delmar said she believed the statement he had heard had been that there was no grant money for **operations** of recreation facilities though there was for capital expenditures. Commissioner Carter said his point was that all the possibilities needed to be discussed for there might be grant money available.
- He suggested doing another survey but one more professionally done.
- He did not agree that if we did not build a pool now it would not happen.
- As much as he would like to have a pool, he said he believed it to be the wrong time. He added that was not to say that a pool would not be built at some point in Lake Wales.
- He said he was against using that million dollars set aside for the pool for anything else. Somewhere down the road, when we have a comprehensive master plan that includes all the things the community wants in recreation, the money will be available. Mimi Hardman said they could not use that million dollars for anything else and Ms. Delmar said the Commission designated that money for a pool and they could change that designation any time they wished, but they are choosing to leave it for the pool.

Commissioner Thornhill made the following comments:

- He thanked the Committee for the work they did.
- He said the pool was lovely and a great idea.
- He said he could not see starting yet another project that would take 30 years to complete when we have unfinished projects like the 1919 building and the gymnasium repairs. If we build a pool he thought it should be done right.
- He did not want the City to go into debt or have a bond issued
- People in the community wanted an answer to their fifty year question and we should either stop dangling a carrot in front of them or tell them they can or can't have the pool.
- He said there were people in Lake Wales that he believed would come through if we started the project. But at this time he did not see it as a possibility in the City budget and he did not want the City digging itself into a hole.

Mayor Van Sickle made the following comments:

- He said when he started looking at the idea of having a pool almost a year ago the idea was to get the information as to what it would cost to the people in the form of a ballot.
- He said if we went forward now we would indebt City residents with more cost by raising the

mileage rate three quarters of a percent and he was not sure it was a good time to do that. He explained that at one time the City's mileage rate was the highest in the county, and though it no longer is the highest, it is still on the high side and said you don't attract businesses when your tax is high. The City needed investors so the companies would pay taxes and get the burden off the people who are paying the majority of the taxes. Raising the taxes even more for a pool was not what the City wants.

- He listed his high priority projects and said it was important that these be completed in order to attract businesses. If our sewer system is not working well, or would soon not be working at all, businesses would not want to come.
- He said a letter went out to just about everyone the City had been funding to let them know that we may not be able to fund them this year for a lack of revenue.
- Not only would it be foolish to finance a pool now, but the City may not even be able to pay the interest on the loan. He said that the Finance Director stated at a previous meeting that we have several loans that will be paid off in about six years, freeing up about two million dollars. If we wait until then we can use the two million dollars to do the needed repairs on things like the gym, Crooked Lake project, and the water plant instead of paying interest and getting it now.
- He said we needed to take care of basic problems but have to use what little money we have smartly, though he was not implying that getting a pool was not smart. He felt confident that all the commissioners wanted the pool but we would have to rely on the YMCA pool for a while longer.

City Manager Judy Delmar said she did not think she had received a consensus among the commissioners to go forward with the Committee's recommendation. She said the Committee would like to see some acceptance of their report and a recommendation for proposal B so that even if we have to wait two or three years, if we have a full plan to show, we could submit for grants and promote citizen involvement.

Mayor Van Sickle asked the other commissioners to correct him if he was wrong, but he thought the consensus was not to go with option A as it was too small for the needs of the City and would be a waste of money. He said the drawings and things for option B are great but unless we get some big businesses to pay for it, we don't have the money.

Commissioner Howell said the Committee knew when they met that the City did not have the money. She asked if the Committee had discussed what they would do. Ms. Wojcik said the majority of the Committee had wanted to build the pool at the CSX building but the cost of doing so was prohibitive. They also thought Option A was ridiculous but they included it in the report to let the commission and community know what they could get for one million dollars. At one point, the Committee wondered what the point was or why they were there because they knew the cost was more than what the commission would approve, given the economy. But Ms. Pendergrass had reminded them that the job they were given by the commission was to gather the information so the commissioners could decide. The pool they recommended was of a size that could be used for adult water aerobics or swimming based on scheduling and could accommodate a variety of community needs. She said there was no need for the commission to make excuses because the Committee knew where they were coming from. But, the Committee's position is that something can be done over time.

Ms. Pendergrass said that when the Committee got to the point of realizing the probable cost of close to two million dollars, and another million dollars to move the CSX employees to another location, she had encouraged the Committee to keep going because in the past, it was the cost that always stopped the project. She said that in the year and a half she had been Finance Director the pool issue came up three different times. The Committee's task had been to produce a document that would show to the community that has been waiting 40 years that the million dollars they now had would only get a motel sized pool. She said that if it is true that there are organizations willing to donate money if there was a specific pool done by an architect, the documents are now available. The Committee has provided the information about the cost of the pool and what the operating costs will be as compared to others in the area so the special interest groups can have the information they need. With the City about a million

dollar short next year, the Committee knows that the funding will have to be from the community and special interest groups.

Commissioner Thornhill asked Ms. Delmar's if her question had been answered and she said it had not. She said what they would like to hear is that proposal B is the one they want to move forward with for fundraising purposes. Commission consensus was not for the purpose of beginning design engineering but to let the community know that proposal B is the pool the community would receive if we move forward. Commissioner Thornhill said he thought option B was a good plan.

Mayor Van Sickle agreed but said his only concern was with the locker rooms because the commission still did not know what the cost would be to repair the gymnasium. Commissioner Carter said \$100,000 was going toward the showers and bathrooms. The Mayor asked why the City would spend \$100,000 on the back end of a building when the rest of the building was falling down. Harold Gallup, Economic Development Director, said the five year cost for fixing the gymnasium would be between \$320,000 to \$350,000 to cover known structural issues, replacing the floor, painting the building, and fixing the water intrusion problem. He said that repairs have not been made in city facilities regularly but that the commission needed to keep in mind that the gymnasium would have a living budget with a cycle every three, five, or eight years where a sizable amount of money would need to be budgeted for repairs. If they are not attended to, what was a \$5,000 repair becomes a \$15,000 repair etc.

Howard Kay said that, with commission approval, the Committee could start fundraising and they could go to interested people with a definite approved pool plan; they could tell them how much it will cost for construction and operation, tell them how much we have and how much needed to be raised, and ask them if they would like to donate. People will not donate if they don't know what they are donating for.

Mayor Van Sickle said he thought the commissioners were saying option B was a good design and was usable. He told Mr. Kay if he could get people to donate for the B pool design it would be a smart move.

Commissioner Thornhill asked Mr. Admire if the different water-park features could be added later such as the slide. Mr. Admire said the slide could be added later as money became available as well as other various features.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

ATTEST:



Mayor/Commissioner



City Clerk