

A workshop meeting of the City Commission was held on February 8, 2011 at 6:00 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: Michael S. Carter; Jonathan Thornhill; John Paul Rogers; Mayor L. Jack Van Sickle.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None. Terrye Y. Howell – arrived at 6:10 p.m.

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

Agenda Item 1. Roll Call

Agenda Item 2 USDA Grant/Service Center Lincoln Avenue

The full staff memo is incorporated into the minutes.

[Begin agenda memo, prepared by Jennifer Nanek Special Projects Administrator]

SYNOPSIS

Jody Cameron, Senior Consultant for JCL & Associates will present ideas for a Community Policing Substation on Lincoln Avenue and possible grants to be applied for to cover the costs.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests direction from the Commission on this project.

BACKGROUND

Staff has been meeting with Jody Cameron Senior Consultant for JCL & Associates which is under contract to help rural communities get grants for certain needed projects. City staff members have been discussing the need for a community policing facility on Lincoln Avenue. This would provide a police presence on Lincoln Avenue, which would make Lincoln Avenue safer for businesses to open there. A community policing facility could also serve as additional space for various social programs such as job training, classes, tutoring and many others. This would be done in cooperation with various community groups.

Ms. Cameron will provide details on possible grants to help pay for the construction and staffing of this facility and required matching funds.

OTHER OPTIONS

Do not pursue funding for this project.

FISCAL IMPACT

[End agenda memo]

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ed Bowlin, Circle Drive, spoke against putting in a Community Policing Substation on Lincoln Avenue for the following reasons:

- Studies have shown that it does not reduce crime.
- Even if the building is constructed totally through grants, the city would have the maintenance costs, which it cannot afford at this time.
- It would be duplicating community organizations that are presently in the area.
- A police officer would have to remain in the building, becoming a babysitter, and therefore we would have one less officer on the streets.

Rev. James Cleare, 310 C Street, presented the Commission with a petition in opposition to the Community Policing Substation on Lincoln Avenue. He was in favor of using the grant to enlarge the B Street Center for the following reasons:

- There would not be maintenance cost to the City because that would be the responsibility of the Green and Gold Foundation as they are in the process of taking over the facility in the fall.
- The citizens would be better served by having a police sub-station on Chalet Suzanne Rd. because presently there is no facility on the far north side of town where most of the growth is.
- USDA would not support a police sub-station, but would support community programs.
- If there is a need for a sub-station in the Lincoln Avenue area, a secure area could be designed for inclusion in the B Street Center expansion.
- He believed that better patrolling would be the answer for reducing crime in the north core area of the city.

END PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commissioner Rogers spoke against the Community Policing Substation on Lincoln Avenue for the following reasons:

- The City would have to pay a grant match of 25%, which it cannot afford.
- The City would bear the cost for utilities, computers, and supplies, and for maintain the building.
- Commissioner Rogers said he would rather have the City concentrate on fixing the sewers in that area and work on the sewer plant at the cemetery.

Commissioner Carter said that he had been in favor of the Community Policing Substation on Lincoln Avenue but he was intrigued with Reverend Cleare's analysis and thought they should take a closer look at expanding the B Street Community Center instead.

Commissioner Thornhill spoke against the Community Policing Substation on Lincoln Avenue for the following reasons:

- The 25% match
- The additional maintenance and repair responsibility
- If an existing building is used it would have to be brought up to code.
- The area is already close enough to the existing police station so the response time is adequate.
- There already exists an anticrime task force which should be sufficient.
- He would prefer hiring another patrol officer who would be dedicated to the Lincoln Avenue area.

Commissioner Howell spoke against the Community Policing Substation on Lincoln Avenue for the following reasons:

- Because of the cost
- She was in favor of expanding the B Street Center
- She believed that putting a sub-station on Lincoln Avenue would be a waste of money.
- She thought the crime problem could be solved by having more patrols in the area or by having the present patrols get out of their cars and walk through the neighborhoods talking with people.

City Manager Judith Delmar said that the USDA grant administrator was present to answer questions but stated that the focus did not necessarily need to be on the police station as that was just one aspect of the grant application. She agreed with Rev. Cleare that the USDA Grant would not support a stand-alone substation, and that is why the other elements had been added. She said the grant application cycle

needed to begin if the city wanted to pursue the USDA Grant, as they did not want to proceed if the Commission was not in favor of it.

Mayor Van Sickle spoke against the community policing substation on Lincoln Avenue for the following reasons:

- The existing police station would only be 7/10ths of a mile from the new substation so it would be only a difference of two or three minutes of additional response time, which is not much.
- He said that the old time "police officer beat" where they walked the neighborhood would be nice but the City does not have the staff to do that because of the budget restraints.
- Only two city employees maintain all City facilities. They are behind already and can't keep up with what they now have.
- The City cannot afford the cost of utilities, supplies, and the maintenance on the building.
- He said he would prefer finding a grant to help with the C Street sewer project and sewer plant, and explained why.

Jody Cameron, Central Florida Research Conservation and Development Council, a non-profit organization with a direct tie to the Department of Agriculture, said there had been a waste management grant opportunity last fall for a 1% loan, grant, or combination of both, but though the City missed it, it will come up again next fall. She said she is on the alert list to be informed when it becomes available again because she knows it is a City priority. Ms. Delmar said they are working on engineering for that project now but they hope to be shovel-ready by the time the grant becomes available. By then they will know the actual cost.

Ms. Cameron said the community policing substation program was taking off all across the country because they found that when police officers become part of the community and participate in community activities, the crime rate lowers 15% to 20%. She said she did not want to duplicate the great work already being done in Lake Wales but bring in funds, not only for a facility or to expand the B Street Community Center, but for equipment and police personnel. She said she is to the point of determining what services are not being met yet, and what services now being provided could be enhanced. But she was waiting until she knows if the City Commission is going to support this grant application before going further.

Ms. Cameron listed some of the wide variety of grants that are available, such as for invasive species removal, tree planting, beautification projects, policing facilities, economic development, job training, job stimulus, and after-school programs. She said her goal was to work with Jennifer Nanek, Special Projects Administrator, and the community partners to get grants such as the fire station construction grant that will be available in May; grants for fire personnel through FEMA and Homeland Security; and grants for additional police officers on the streets. Their goal is to also impact the community by encouraging economic development, helping young people to make positive choices, getting single moms off welfare, and helping employment seekers to get their GED and find a job. She said there is more funding available now than she has seen in years and she would like to help Lake Wales to get its share.

Commissioner Howell asked if anyone had discussed having the substation in the northern part of the city and Ms. Delmar said they discussed the possibility of constructing a public safety station for fire and police as well as including a library.

Commissioner Howell asked about the possibility of getting a playground or park in the northern area and Ms. Delmar said they were in the process of looking for land. Ms. Cameron said there are grants for things like playgrounds and picnic areas through the Division of Environmental Protection's Parks and Recreation Department, but though the present grant is due in a couple of weeks it is available every year.

Mayor Van Sickle said he would be interested in a grant for a fire station in the northern section of Lake Wales because the only fire truck in that part of the City is presently located on private property, which they rent, meaning that the arrangement can change at any time. Ms. Cameron said there were grants for

that also though you have to have land, owned or long-term leased, to put a substation on. Ms. Delmar said they were working on finding the land and they have several options. She said they plan on pursuing a grant for that when the window opens again and hopefully they will either own or have a lease on property by then.

Mayor Van Sickle recommended that city staff and Ms. Cameron work together to come up with a list of priority projects and what grants are available for them as they will need to be budgeted. He said they also needed to find out from the B Street organization what programs they would like to include in the expansion.

Ms. Delmar asked Ms. Cameron to explain the process for the community facilities grant. Ms. Cameron said the grant could be for anything from a public safety building to education center. She explained that because the City of Lake Wales' population was under 15,000, they would get a higher point average because smaller communities are being targeted and most of the applications coming in have been for cities over that up to the 20,000 population limit.

Ms. Cameron explained the process as follows:

- A two-page paper needs to be developed explaining what the project is and how it will benefit the community.
- It is to be submitted to the Florida Office of Rural Development between now and the middle of March.
- If approved, the application process begins for funding, which needs to be submitted in the spring.
- There is a 25% match requirement but in-kind services can be counted as part of the match such as the land the facility will be constructed on, if applicable; community service volunteer hours for things like afterschool programs, and computer training; and police officer salaries if one is housed in the facility. She said she had no doubt that the City could cover the total match amount with in-kind services.

Ms. Delmar said that Ms. Cameron needed to know from the Commission if they would like her to pursue the community facility grant or if they wanted to pass on this one and have her continue to look for other grants.

Mayor Van Sickle asked what the effect would be if they pursued the grant while the City still owned the B Street Community Center and then it is turned over to the Green and Gold Foundation in the fall. Ms. Delmar said the match would then come from the local community. Ms. Cameron said that was true but if the police substation is housed in the B Street Center, the City would have to have its own match to get things like computers, additional staff or cars. The Mayor asked if it would stop the transfer of public ownership to a private non-profit and Ms. Cameron said that would not be a problem. Mayor Van Sickle said he would not be against using the grant for the B Street Center as long as it did not hinder transferring the property.

Commissioner Howell wanted confirmation that if they voted in favor of pursuing the community facility grant, they would not be approving putting a community policing substation on Lincoln Ave. Ms. Delmar confirmed and explained that they were in the conceptual phase and the Commission's yes vote would mean only that the grant should be pursued, though she said it might be worthwhile to pursue the use of the B Street Community Center instead of building a new facility and providing some space for police officers if that is agreeable with the Commission. She reminded them that the Finance Director would have to do a fiscal impact study per ordinance and then the City Commission will have the opportunity to review the final grant application before it is submitted.

Commissioner Carter said the B Street expansion option may be what the City is looking for because once the Green & Gold Foundation takes over the facility in the fall the City will be relieved of the maintenance responsibility. He said having a police substation there was only one emphasis, and the greater emphasis will be the benefit it has on the community for job training etc. He said that the two did

not necessarily have to be discussed as one because it may be determined that the best location for a police substation is in some other part of the City. Ms. Delmar said having the substation at the B Street Center would be just one block from the area they want more police presence. Commissioner Carter said his recommendation for a consensus would be to ask the City to work with Ms. Cameron to put the information together for a grant to expand the B Street Complex, with the full understanding that in the fall we will be transferring the ownership.

Ms. Delmar asked what operating grants were available and Ms. Cameron said there were things like job readiness training, and welfare to work etc. Commissioner Howell asked if there was program money for things like afterschool computer skill training for high school students and Ms. Cameron said there was a 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant through the US Department of Education that can be used to build computer labs to be used after school hours for student training and during the day for things like job readiness programs for adults.

Commissioner Carter asked if there was a cost for her services and she said there was not.

Commissioner Rogers said he would go along with the grant as long as there was no cost to the City but he personally would like to pursue a grant to cover the utility problems mentioned before.

Mayor Van Sickle said the consensus was to pursue the grant for a B Street upgrade.

Agenda Item 3 Pistol Range inside City Limits

The full staff memo is incorporated into the minutes.

[Begin agenda memo, prepared by Kathy Bangley, Planning & Development Assistant]

BACKGROUND

Staff has been approached by American Legion Post 71 about the possibility of opening a gun range in the City of Lake Wales. Presently there is no provision in the code of ordinances to allow for this type of establishment.

Staff is seeking direction from Commission regarding whether or not the Commission wants to consider allowing gun ranges to be established within the city limits:

- Do we want to allow gun ranges of any kind in the City?
- Do we want to allow indoor ranges? If so, under what conditions?
- Do we want to allow outdoor ranges? If so, under what conditions?
- What zoning districts would be appropriate?

These are just a few of the questions that we will need to answer.

Staff has contacted Auburndale, Winter Haven, and Haines City. Auburndale does not have any provision to allow this type of use. Winter Haven allows skeet/rifle ranges under Recreation – Outdoor Commercial in their heavy commercial and industrial zoning districts. They do not have a provision for indoor ranges. Winter Haven does not currently have any ranges within the city limits. Haines City allows outdoor ranges in their Agricultural zoning district and indoor ranges in their General Commercial district. The indoor facility has a soundproof requirement. Haines City does not currently have any of these establishments.

If the Commission would like to go in the direction of allowing this type of establishments the chapter of the code will have to be amended also. Chapter 15 prohibits the discharge of a firearm for recreational purposes.

Chapter 15 – Miscellaneous Offenses, section 15-2(a) states “It shall be unlawful for any person to discharge an airgun, BB gun, bow and arrow, firearm, fireworks or slungshot within the city limits, except as follows: During a bona fide training or safety course or class offered in the use of bow and arrows or firearms;.....”

[End agenda memo]

Ms. Bangley said she was seeking direction from the Commission regarding the establishment of shooting ranges within the city limits. It was not a site specific request but a citywide impact decision.

Mayor Van Sickle inquired about the archery program at Hillcrest School that was highlighted in the newspaper. Ms. Bangley said this was part of the school curriculum and was considered a safety and training course although they had not discussed this with the city. The Mayor asked how the American Legion request would be different. Ms. Bangley said the American Legion was not related to an established school curriculum and would be open to the public through membership. The American Legion came to the City to ask for the possibility of creating an outdoor pistol range on a piece of property on 9th Street. But, there is no provision in the City Code so staff cannot even consider the request, though there is a provision in Chapter 15 for the training of law enforcement officers. She added that the City Commission alone has the authority to decide if there should be a provision, whether indoor or outdoor, in the City for the shooting of firearms. Ms. Delmar added that if the Commission decides this is something they would want to allow within the city limits, staff would have to create a zoning and a land use classification and create an ordinance that would go through the planning board process. It would have to be brought back to the Commission for approval before there could even be a discussion on the requested pistol range.

Mayor Van Sickle asked how big the property on 9th Street was and what surrounded it. Ms. Bangley said it was just shy of four acres with one side bordering the railroad tracks with the Whispering Ridge development just beyond that. Directly to the south is a grove, currently in the county, with a land use designation of rural residential. The undeveloped land across from 9th Street is designated residential. Mayor Van Sickle said a pistol range is a training facility just as the archery range at Hillcrest School. He said he was not opposed to pistol or archery ranges as long as it is done safely and in a manner that protects the area.

PUBLIC INPUT

Ira Anderson, American Legion, explained the features of the mock-up pistol range he brought for demonstration purposes. He gave his reasons for approval of the range as follows:

- It will be state certified but will go beyond state requirements for a pistol range.
- It will be run as a school by NRA certified range masters who will hold training classes on how to handle a weapon and the rules associated with the both the pistol and archery ranges.
- It will be open to the public and not just Veterans.
- A person would have to schedule in advance the use of the facility to make sure room was available and because a range master has to be on the site.
- Their goal is to be able to involve school children in archery and use the firing range to teach the high school's ROTC students.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Carter addressed his concerns as follows:

- He asked what the property was zoned for and he was told it was zoned “Professional”, which meant that an office building or a club could be built there.
- Commissioner Carter said he had concerns with generated noise as it would be in a residential area. Mr. Anderson explained the construction design that he said would cut down the noise, though not eliminate it entirely, and discussed the safety measures. Ms. Delmar wanted to know how four inches of sand inside a wooden frame would baffle noise produced from the firing of a

gun. Mr. Anderson said it was a partial enclosure which would be enough to baffle 80 % of the sound, but open enough to use during daylight hours. He said that currently, at 300 yards away, it would be no louder than a weed-eater or lawnmower. He said he did not know how often the train goes through, but it would not be as loud as that. Commissioner Carter asked if it was a pistol range or a rifle range and Mr. Anderson said it is considered a pistol range, though 22 rifles will be used because both use only 22 " shells.

- Commissioner Carter asked the Police Chief if there was a way to make the police's firing range available to the public, to make some money for the City and satisfy the need for a pistol range. Chief Gillis said that when theirs was initially built in 1992, training classes had been offered but significant damage had been done to the facility and the City had to cover the cost. Commissioner Carter asked if the Police Chief would be opposed to revisiting that if his concerns could be dealt with to his satisfaction and Chief Gillis said that would be a Commission policy question. Mayor Van Sickle said there would be a lot of legal aspects to that so he personally would not be in favor of it.
- Commissioner Carter asked what the property would be zoned for if one was approved at that location and Ms. Bangley said she did only preliminary research so far but if they wished her to continue, she would research further and let them know what would be the most appropriate zoning, would prepare a recommendation for their consideration, and would provide information on the acreage, wording, and other issues.
- Commissioner Carter said this was for a specific recommendation and if the American Legion cannot be zoned or rezoned comfortably with the land-use around it, there would be no reason for them to go further. Ms. Bangley said they have to make a generic decision because even if Mr. Anderson's request is denied, there may be other requests in the future.

Commissioner Thornhill said he was favorable for both indoor and outdoor gun ranges and liked the training aspect though he did have concerns with the noise. He asked if they could put specific requirements for reducing noise in the ordinance. Ms. Bangley said they could. Mr. Anderson said their range would be following the same guidelines as the Sheriff Department's range in Bartow and Commissioners could take a tour through that facility if they wanted to see what it would look like, though that range uses automatic and high caliber weapons and his would not.

Commissioner Howell said her only concern was the noise near a neighborhood but if it could be made soundproof she would have no problem with it. She asked if it would be a private club and Mr. Anderson said it would be opened to the public but they would have to pay by the hour if they were not members of the American Legion. Commissioner Howell asked whose liability it would be and Mr. Anderson said it would be theirs and they would have one million dollars in liability insurance through the National Rifle Association.

Commissioner Rogers said he had no objections except having someone living within 1000 ft. Ms. Bangley said the northeast side of the approved phase II portion of Whispering Ridge would partially be within that area, once constructed. Commissioner Rogers said that the State limits the firing of a weapon within 500 ft. from a resident so it would be within the law. He also said that if they were going to let the elementary school children shoot bows and arrows, they should let the National Rifle Association's certified range master instructors shoot bows and arrows at the American Legion

Mayor Van Sickle said it seemed to be the consensus of the Commission that there were no objections to pursuing an ordinance but the key would be the zoning. Ms. Bangley said they would also have the issue of determining if the American Legion property would be appropriate for that zone once decided, and if it would be in harmony with the comprehensive plan. Mayor Van Sickle said the direction for staff was to pursue this along with insuring that the range meets state requirements for a pistol and 22 caliber rifle range. Ms. Delmar said that would not fall under zoning regulations so an associated ordinance would have to be adopted to set out the rules, though it would probably fall under the same thing as business licensing.

Mayor Van Sickle said they need to find the proper zoning that will make sense of where it will be located.

Ms. Bangley said there was much legwork to be done to provide the Commission with the necessary information for their decision. Ms. Delmar said they could probably work on all the ordinances together in tandem and bring everything forward in 45 to 60 days.

Mayor Van Sickle said he thought outdoor ranges were not as noisy as indoor ranges because of the echoing effect but hopefully the baffling would take care of it. Ms. Bangley said she had a sample of a baffle, though without sand, that anyone interested could view in her office.

Mayor Van Sickle asked that a recommendation be brought back to the Commission.

Agenda Item 4. Draft Economic Development Plan

The full staff memo is incorporated into the minutes.

[Begin agenda memo, prepared by Mike Morrow, Lake Wales Economic Development Partnership]

LAKE WALES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (EDP)

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Located in Central Florida, the City of Lake Wales lies among the rolling hills known as "the Lake Wales Ridge," the highest ground in peninsular Florida. Because of the area's rich soil and warm climate, citrus has been a major contributor to the local economy since the earliest days of the City. The area has been successful in attracting light manufacturing, construction, and electronics firms. In addition, major retailers and hotel chains have begun to locate facilities throughout the City.

Geographically centered in the state, and at the intersection of two major highways, Lake Wales is one of the most desirable locations in Florida. Approximately 8 million people -- half of Florida's population -- reside within a 100-mile radius.

The City's slogan "Progressive Vision, Vintage Charm" describes Lake Wales' conscious commitment to its rich architectural and cultural heritage while creating an environment conducive to economic growth.

Though the objectives of most economic development plans are job creation and wealth enhancement, much of how those objectives are achieved actually occurs outside the influence of government. Cities and economic development organizations create the climate and remove barriers so that private and non-profit employers can create jobs and improve the tax base, while educated and skilled residents earn the wealth that contributes to an improved quality of life enjoyed community-wide.

As such, economic development is first and foremost a team endeavor because it involves merging public and private players. It also necessarily includes many economic development players: city, state, and regional agencies; chamber and other business associations; representatives of labor, education, utilities, finance, and other segments of the community; and many more.

With this in mind, the Lake Wales City Commission and the Board of Directors of the Lake Wales Area Chamber of Commerce met in December 2009, and formed the Lake Wales Economic Development Partnership. The Partnership's mission is to utilize a community approach for planned economic development while supporting the growth of existing businesses and industries.

Partnership members have met monthly since January 2010, bringing together representatives from the City, the Chamber, Main Street, the public schools, area colleges and universities, utilities, the hospital, and the business and nonprofit community.

Members reviewed the area's strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities for expanding local economic development efforts, utilizing a condensed version of the SWOT analysis process and focusing

on issues within seven key areas that define and facilitate economic development as identified by the group, including:

- Marketing
- Retention & Expansion
- Workforce Development
- Recruitment
- Small Business Development
- Tourism/Visitor Attraction/Hospitality
- Redevelopment

Members participated in at least one of the seven groups that focused on individual economic development areas. Each group met independently and developed priorities and recommendations for inclusion in the new Economic Development Plan (EDP).

While it is understood that components of each area may overlap to a greater or lesser degree based on the specific projects undertaken, Partnership members recognize that cooperation is critical to achieving the goals identified within the EDP.

Following review and approval of the draft EDP, the Partnership will present the final version to the Lake Wales City Commission and the Lake Wales Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors for public input and adoption, with each Partnership organization moving forward to address specific recommendations. Partnership members assigned to each economic area will monitor progress and recommend revisions as needed, based on changing needs, resources and conditions.

What is Economic Development?

The answer to this question varies by community, but, for most communities, economic development is seen as a way to improve the quality of life for residents by providing more and better quality jobs. While often associated with population growth, improving the economic vitality of a community does not depend upon a growth in population.

The goal of economic development is to adopt a consistent set of policies and programs that will increase the standard of living for residents of Lake Wales and the surrounding area community. Such policies and programs will enhance the competitive position of all businesses in the city and attract other complementary businesses to locate in the area.

The City of Lake Wales' economic development mission is "to encourage and facilitate quality growth and economic development without compromising the vintage charm that is so important to the residents of the community."

Plan Overview

The City of Lake Wales Economic Development Plan establishes a course of action designed to facilitate a collaborative partnership between the private sector and city government. At times, this partnership calls upon the City to actively invest resources in projects that assist businesses. At other times, the City's role is simply to "get out of the way" of business by streamlining regulations.

The EDP outlines the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats identified by Partnership members during its review of local economic conditions and major economic development components. It also provides a series of goals, policies and objectives for the current and future economic development efforts of the City in cooperation with the Lake Wales Area Chamber of Commerce and other participating community entities.

[End agenda memo]

Mike Morrow, 232 S. Lake Shore Drive, Director of Resource Development at the Lake Wales Care Center, and representing the Lake Wales Economic Development Partnership, gave the background for this item and opened it up for questions.

Commissioner Thornhill said many good comments were made and he especially liked the list of so many positive things about the City. Though the City has its weaknesses, which can be improved, it has many more strengths. He said if we don't have a plan then we don't know where we are going, so this is a good thing for we now have a place from which to jump start and keep moving along.

Commissioner Carter thanked the Partnership for their hard work and for giving the City a roadmap. He said he would next like to see a budget and a timetable so they know what plan of action they need to take. Mr. Morrow said, though it was a working fluid plan, the next step would be to get it adopted. Once adopted the committees would continue working to following up. He said they could work toward a budget and timetable for some of the bigger items but it would be hard to do for some of the smaller ones. Ms. Delmar said one of the more costly items is the enhancement of the entranceways to the City, which is a high priority in the plan and will involve budgeting. But it also would involve a partnership with everyone on the Committee, the private sector in general, and code enforcement.

Commissioner Howell said that sidewalks and landscaping should have been done with the widening of US 27, but maybe FDOT could now help or maybe the County can find a grant that would help with the entranceway on Washington Ave. Ms. Delmar said it would be more effective if the private business sector requested help from the County because they turn a deaf ear to the city's requests. Commissioner Carter asked if they could lobby the County Commissioner for support and Ms. Delmar said they could. Mayor Van Sickle said he had a meeting with an engineer from Florida Natural who was interested in working with the City to possibly improve some areas, one being off US 27 at Washington Avenue because it is also the entrance to their plant. The Mayor said he believed some of the businesses would also help financially to improve certain areas.

Commissioner Howell said the draft plan had been laid out wonderfully for them so they now know what they need to focus on and hopefully some of the items on the list can be taken off soon.

Commissioner Rogers said he thought it was good that they were trying to develop a plan. He announced that they are working on bringing to Lake Wales a company within the next 90 days that will employ up to 180 people. It will be a big shot-in-the-arm for Lake Wales because the wages will be a lot more than a living wage, from \$20 to \$50 an hour, which is what Commissioners have been trying to get in Lake Wales.

Mayor Van Sickle said the plan would help the City and he appreciated their work on it.

Ms. Delmar said the Chamber of Commerce Board also needs to review and adopt the plan so this item will probably be brought before the Commission at the first or second Commission meeting in March.

Jesse Jackson, Superintendent of Charter Schools, addressed item 3.03 of the Economic Development Plan which speaks of a partnership with the school district and other educational institutions to do things relating to job training and development. He distributed a copy of a press release. He said that a year earlier he saw the Sunrise apartment project as an opportunity to get high school kids involved in job training, especially students who have had a difficult time finishing school. He, along with members of the B Street Community Center and City staff, met with company officials to request that they hire someone to get Lake Wales' citizens hired for jobs, and Lake Wales High School students hired as apprentices. They got an agreement from the company to hire the requested person and because of that, people are even being hired who had been turned down at the worksite. Sunrise is in its eight-to-nine million-dollar phase but two more phases are planned depending on if they can get outside help from the Legislature for matching funds, which he is personally seeking. He said we have the great opportunity of building up the community by finding meaningful employment for its citizens, who then will make better, more

agreeable parents for the children in our schools, and will become more responsible citizens in our community. He said he believed the next step on the plan would be to seize the grant opportunities mentioned for job training etc. so we can put our people back to work. He said the Commission has an opportunity to put a better face on our community, and to take a personal interest in the people in Lake Wales at no cost to the City for Ms. Cameron's services, by doing what it can to seek and get those grants.

Commissioner Carter said that the Sunrise project was not just about giving people jobs, but giving them skills that will last the rest of their lives by training them for a career and or apprenticeship.

Commissioner Howell said it was a great idea and would be a positive thing for the City of Lake Wales to let unemployed citizens know the City is involved and wants to help them find a job. She said they need to do something as a Commission to help the citizens of Lake Wales and suggested using the James P. Austin Community Center for classes or for a workshop.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

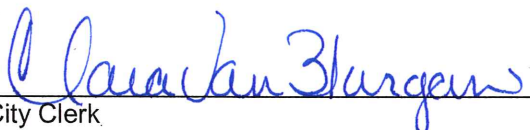
Commissioner Rogers thanked the people who came to the workshop because he said it helps the Commission to feel like they are getting things accomplished. Mayor Van Sickle agreed and said at times it seems no one cares what is going on in the City unless it is an item of personal interest to them. He said it takes the whole community to help the community to grow. The City may not have a lot of money, but it has found someone that can work for free to get us some needed funds in the form of grants that can benefit us all.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



Mayor/Commissioner

ATTEST:



City Clerk