

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
FRANKLIN COUNTY ARMORY
FEBRUARY 7, 2008
9:00 AM**

MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Noah Lockley Jr. – Chairman, Joseph Parrish – Vice Chairman, Cheryl Sanders, Russell Crofton, Bevin Putnal

Others Present: Alan Pierce – Director of Administrative Services, T. Michael Shuler – County Attorney, Linda Phillips – Finance Officer, Erin Griffin – Finance Clerk, Michael Morón – Board Secretary

Call to Order (9:00 AM)

Chairman Lockley called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM

Special Meeting

Mr. Begos, of the Seafood Task Force, stated that based on the Board direction at the 2/5/08 regular meeting on Tuesday, he has attempted to negotiate the sales price of the 'Lombardi Property' with the seller, and the seller has agreed to split the closing cost up to \$10,000 but will not reduce the sales price.

Attorney Shuler discussed the sales agreement further.

Commissioner Sanders asked Mr. Begos to discuss some of the funding sources for this purchase.

Mr. Begos discussed the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) loan, which has a variable rate, the County would apply for to purchase the property, discussed using TDC funds to cover the annual payments for this loan, and stated that fund raisers and donations will be used to cover maintenance and other overhead cost.

Attorney Shuler explained the FAC loan interest rates and some of the options the County has with this loan, and stated some of the other cost associated with the closing cost which the seller only agreed to pay \$10,000 of.

Commissioner Crofton wanted verification if the loan was with a variable interest rate, which was confirmed by Mr. Begos, and then asked for information on the Department of Agriculture grant that was listed as a funding source.

Tommy Ward, Chairman of the Seafood Task Force, explained the Department of Agriculture grant further.

Commissioner Putnal suggested renting some of the space at the 'Lombardi Property' to Fish and Wildlife Commission which could provide income for the property.

Commissioner Crofton asked if the County's Parks and Recreation Department would be involved in the management of the property, and wanted to make sure that a new County Department would not be created to manage this property.

Mr. Begos stated that the property will be managed jointly by the County's Park and Recreation Department and the Seafood Task Force, but because of the County's limited resources the Seafood Task Force would be very involved with recommendations for the property to the County.

Commissioner Crofton expressed the concerns he had with the financing of this property purchase.

Mr. Begos explained financial plan in more detail.

Commissioner Sanders stated that she asked a lot of questions at the Tuesday meeting because she was not as informed about the land purchase as she is now, but since she has had a chance to review all of the information, was more in favor of the land purchase but shared Commissioner Crofton's concerns about the financing and asked for better communication, in the future, from anyone wanting to commit the County to any large financial debts.

Mr. Begos continued his explanation of the financial plan.

Commissioner Crofton suggested increasing the down payment so that the financing cost is lower.

Mr. Pierce stated that, after discussing this option with Mrs. Johnson, the Clerk of Courts, he is recommending that the County use \$400,000 from the County's land acquisition account, and \$100,000 from TDC which was previously approved. Mr. Pierce stated that Mrs. Johnson again reiterated her statement that she was against charging the seafood workers an access fee to use the property.

Commissioner Sanders was also against charging the seafood workers an access fee and expressed her concerns of using all but \$100,000 from the land acquisition account for this purchase in case it was needed by the Supervisor of Election, who currently rents space outside of the Courthouse or for any major maintenance emergencies for the Courthouse.

Mr. Begos commented on this recommendation but still wanted the option of allowing the Seafood Task Force to use fund raisers and other options to lower the principal.

Mr. Pierce recommended using any funds raised by the Taskforce for operations.

Mr. Begos stated that the NOAA grant will help with operations cost.

The Board discussed and agreed with the Clerks earlier statement of not charging any access fees to the seafood workers.

Commissioner Putnal suggested renting FWC office space and a dock to tie up their boats.

Commissioner Lockley was concerned that if we rented office space, it would make the County liable for the equipment in the office.

The Board, Mr. Pierce, and Mr. Begos discussed TDC funding

Tommy Ward stated that if the County purchases the property, other state offices, including the Gov office and FWC have agreed to provide funding for rehab of the buildings and office spaces currently on the property.

Commissioner Parrish asked the Task Force to continue to seek grants to help with funding the maintenance of the Lombardi property project.

Mr. Begos assured the Board that he would.

Commissioner Parrish explained how receiving grants would help with the project and provide additional overall funding for the Task Force.

Motion by Putnal, seconded by Sanders, to agree to purchase the property known as the 'Lombardi Property' for the sales price of \$1,550,000; with a financing contingency of a variable interest rate with no cap; a \$500,000 refundable deposit, \$400,000 from the County's land acquisition account and \$100,000 from previously approved TDC funds; with the seller paying up to \$10,000 in closing cost; an inspection period; and a 20 year term on the loan; Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Sanders, seconded by Parrish, to direct Mr. Begos and Mr. Pierce to apply for grants, as in the FCT grant, to help with financing and maintenance of the 'Lombardi Property'; Motion carried 5-0.

Chairman Lockley stated that the purchase of this property is a good step for the seafood industry in Franklin County.

Tommy Ward stated that the Board made a very good decision today.

Adjourn

There being no further business Chairman Lockley adjourned the Special Meeting.

Noah Lockley Jr., Chairman FCBCC

Attest:

Marcia M. Johnson, Clerk of Court