

BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CITY OF TARPON SPRINGS
DECEMBER 10, 2009

THE BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE MET IN REGULAR SESSION IN THE CITY HALL SECOND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM, 324 EAST PINE STREET, ON DECEMBER 10, 2009, AT 2:00 P.M. WITH THE FOLLOWING PRESENT:

	TOWNSEND TARAPANI	CHAIRMAN
	MARTY PETERS	VICE CHAIRMAN
	IRVING MARGON	MEMBER
	ROGER SELLEW	MEMBER
	GERALD GOEN	ALTERNATE
	MARILYN CHAPMAN	ALTERNATE
ABSENT/EXCUSED:	CHRIS ANGELOU	MEMBER
STAFF PRESENT:	MARK LECOURIS	CITY MANAGER
	K. MICHELE MANOUSOS	DEPUTY CITY CLERK
	ARIE WALKER	FINANCE DIRECTOR
	ROBERT KOCHEN	ACTING POLICE CHIEF
ALSO PRESENT:	ROBIN SAENGER	VICE MAYOR
	PETER DALACOS	CITY COMMISSIONER

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chairman Peters called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Deputy City Clerk Manousos called roll.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: November 19, 2009

The consensus of the Board was to approve the Minutes of November 19, 2009 with corrections.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. DISCUSSION – CITY’S EFFORTS TO REDEVELOP LEMON STREET/SALE OF OLD FIRE STATION:

Chairman Tarapani explained he would like to further explore the sale of the old Fire Station/Jail on Lemon Street because he felt the sale would generate revenue for the City, as well as, contributes to expanding the commercial area along Lemon Street.

Arie Walker, Finance Director, commented that a referendum was approved by voters in 2005/06 to sell that property and other City owned properties; however, after a market analysis of the Old Fire Station/Jail it was determined the value of the property would be greater after streetscape improvements were made. She suggested stipulating that the sale occur after the streetscape was complete.

Chairman Tarapani further explained why, in his opinion, selling the property as soon as possible made good financial sense and reiterated that it would be advisable to sell before there were further market declines; and asked if the property was approved for sale by referendum why it had not been sold. Ms. Walker reviewed the past City Manager's decision to delay the sale.

Mr. Goen asked if there was any reason not to sale the property.

Mr. Sellew suggested that the resources gained from the sale of this property or any future sales of this type be put back in the Capital Improvement Plan and not used for operating budget.

Ms. Walker explained that the proceeds from the sale of five other City properties were placed in the reserve account and future sales could be handled the same way.

City Manager LeCouris said with a million plus dollar deficit he would like proceeds used to bring the deficit down. He also explained when demolition or other costs were incurred for City owned properties the funds should be repaid.

Mr. Sellew agreed costs should be repaid but said it was important to keep assets funds separate from operating budget funds.

Chairman Tarapani suggested a percentage of sale revenue be used to cut the deficit. Mr. Sellew restated his position of keeping the funds in the CIP fund.

Mr. Peters felt the both suggestions had merit. He also asked how much a new appraisal would cost and City Manager reviewed recent appraisal costs.

(Continued)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Continued):

1. DISCUSSION – CITY’S EFFORTS TO REDEVELOP LEMON STREET/SALE OF OLD FIRE STATION:

Mr. Sellew felt the property should be sold as quickly as possible and explained.

Mr. Goen was concerned that the building could be demolished if sold and not retained as a historic site.

Mr. Sellew said there was a presumption that mold or other deterioration would prevent even reusing the historic elements of the building. The Board felt the building condition would be determined by any contractor involved in improving the site.

The Board discussed obtaining a current appraisal of the property and the best method of marketing the property.

MOTION: MR. SELLEW
SECOND: MR. MARGON

To recommend the Board of Commissioners seek to aggressively sell the Old Fire Station/Jail on Lemon Street and Grosse Avenue and place any proceeds in a restricted account for the Capital Improvement Plan and purchase of hard assets.

MOTION: VICE CHAIRMAN PETERS
SECOND:

To vote on the two issues separately.

MOTION FAILED FOR LACK OF A SECOND.

A VOTE WAS THEN TAKEN ON ORIGINAL MOTION.

VOTE ON MOTION – Upon roll call vote, the motion carried 4 to 1 as follows:

Mr. Goen, Alt.	Did not vote NOT VOTING
Ms. Chapman, Alt	Yes
Mr. Sellew	Yes
Mr. Margon	Yes
Mr. Angelou	Absent/did not vote
Mr. Peters, Vice Chair	Yes
Mr. Tarapani, Chairman	No

(Continued)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Continued):

2. UPDATE BY THE CITY MANAGER ON ALL CURRENT/PROPOSED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS:

City Manager LeCouris advised the City website would have a current updated list and status of all capital projects and distributed the current list to the Board.

a. TARPON AVENUE:

Chairman Tarapani asked what the Tarpon Avenue amenities were and City Manager LeCouris discussed ongoing negotiations with FDOT for street maintenance issues and a plan to turn the roadway over to the City.

Vice Chairman Peters questioned the expense and future cost of the City of maintaining the roadway and asked if the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. He suggested if the City took possession of the road that a reserve maintenance fund be created.

Mr. Sellw also questioned the advantages of acquiring the roadway, and asked for data on cost and maintenance.

Mr. Margon asked if there were many incidents along the road since improvements were made, and Acting Chief Kochen said, not since the initial installation of islands and bulb out and redesign of one island.

b. Community Sports Complex:

Chairman Tarapani asked about funding for the Community Sports Complex and City Manager stated the project was not funded at this time.

c. Water/Utility Project:

Mr. Sellw asked if the water project listed was the reverse osmosis project and City Manager LeCouris said, yes.

d. Retirement/ Public Services Director:

Chairman Tarapani asked about the change in the Public Services Director position creating a Public Services Director and a Public Works Director and salaries for each.

City Manager LeCouris explained the reorganization and downgrading of several positions; the creation of two new positions and the salaries for each position.

e. Meres Boulevard Extension:

Mr. Margon questioned how the Meres Boulevard extension to U.S. Highway 19. would affect Tarpon Springs Fundamental School and the school bus parking site and City Manager LeCouris explained the re-routing of Meres Boulevard.

(Continued)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Continued):

2. UPDATE BY THE CITY MANAGER ON ALL CURRENT/PROPOSED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS:

f. Parks Department Phase One Tree Project pre-bid meeting:

Chairman Tarapani asked for details on the project and City Manager LeCouris said the bid was for the purchase of the trees. Ms. Walker explained the tree bank fund and said the project would include purchase, planting and ninety day maintenance of the trees.

g. Sunset Beach Pavilion Project:

Chairman Tarapani asked if the project would be done in house and City Manager replied, no the project was bid out and should be completed before the new concert season begins.

NEW BUSINESS

3. LOANS TO STIMULATE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS – FAÇADE GRANTS:

Chairman Tarapani commented on the brief discussion from the previous Budget Advisory meeting regarding Façade Grants and asked Mr. Peters to further discuss his ideas for the downtown area. City Manager LeCouris explained he planned to explore a grant program with the Board of Commissioners in the first quarter. Chairman Tarapani asked about past grants and Ms. Walker reviewed a program that was offered in the past.

Mr. Peters felt loans were a good idea; as well as, property tax credits for Tarpon Avenue and other areas of the City and discussed a possible tax assessment delay for up to two years for building improvements. City Manager LeCouris said the tax credit idea was on the table but that assessments were determined and updated by Pinellas County.

Mr. Sellow reviewed the City's limited ability to grant tax credits, and felt Tarpon Avenue storefronts were in better condition now, than thirteen years ago; however, he agreed improvements were needed.

Ms. Chapman said the idea might work better as a rebate program.

Mr. Margon discussed that façade improvements alone would not increase the customer base and said currently businesses were limited to the sale of antique jewelry.

Mr. Goen was not convinced that spending tax money to improve building façades would spur growth and re-development and explained.

The Board discussed the pros and cons of "giving" money to private enterprise and decided to postpone further discussion until City Manager LeCouris' recommendations were presented.

(Continued)

NEW BUSINESS (Continued):

3. LOANS TO STIMULATE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS – FAÇADE GRANTS:

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Vice Mayor Saenger asked if grants funds were discussed and City Manager LeCouris said other communities had developed numerous programs and staff would bring the ideas back to the Board.

Beverly Kurpinski, 726 Waterside Court, asked Mr. Peters about his suggestion for matching grant funds and Mr. Peters felt further research was needed before commenting on matching funding. Ms. Kurpinski was also concerned that if money was given to businesses that they should be required to maintain the property.

Mr. Joseph Muzio, said the downtown area was in desperate need of improvement and street appeal, and any program would help redevelop the area and attract new business. After curb appeal was improved, he felt ideas to a more diverse business district and other ideas could be tackled.

Commissioner Dalacos felt the Chamber of Commerce's input was needed, as well as, other interested groups.

4. NEW STREET LIGHTS ON TARPON AVENUE & POTENTIAL RECYCLE OF OLD STREET LIGHTS:

City Manager LeCouris explained the bidding process was slowed because of a bid protest that required an in-depth engineering review of bid specifications. He the review would be complete so the bid could be presented at the January 12, 2010 Board of Commissioners meeting; however, he did not want to rush the process.

Chairman Tarapani asked if electric lines were in place for the new streetlights and City Manager LeCouris said that some lines needed to be placed.

Chairman Tarapani asked what happened to the lights that were taken out several years ago and thought lighting Spring Bayou would be nice, and City Manager LeCouris said that the old light were recycled throughout the City and agreed finding a way to restore historic lighting to Spring Bayou would be great.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Beverly Kurpinski, 726 Waterside Court, discussed finding a power source for the lighting loss on the corner of Tarpon Avenue and Safford Avenue. City Manager LeCouris said staff was working with Progress Energy to solve several power source problems.

(Continued)

NEW BUSINESS (Continued):

5. PLANS FOR A PARKING LOT ON TARPON AVENUE:

Chairman Tarapani asked for an update on the plan. City Manager LeCouris explained a commercial appraisal was being conducted on properties to the north and south side of Tarpon Avenue and explained the steps that would be followed once those appraisals were complete.

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA:

6. CLARIFICATION – COMMISSIONER BUDGET CUT PROCEDURE/PROCESS (MR. PETERS):

Chairman Tarapani asked Mr. Peters about the item and Mr. Peters reviewed the following suggestions:

DEVELOP IDEAS FOR THE BUDGET CUT PROCESS INCLUDING:

- A. Conserve paper with colored coded page replacements with highlighted additions and bracketed deletions at each step.
- B. Each addition or deletion will be listed on a separate report for the Board of Commissioners and the Budget Advisory Committee with the increase or decrease that each change makes in the millage rate and such reports will be presented a minimum of two days prior to each official meeting of said body.
- C. Add a new line in the budget book "year to date".

Mr. Sellew said that "year to date" line was now included in the book and asked if staff could review Mr. Peter's suggestions to determine the feasibility of each.

Chairman Tarapani agreed and asked for staff comments for the next agenda.

7. DISCUSSION FOR NEW YEAR – 2011 BUDGET (IN DEPTH DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS)

- A. Tarpon Avenue Streetscape amenities.
- B. Tarpon Avenue jurisdictional transfer including discussion of:
 - 1. Future maintenance cost estimates.
 - 2. A presentation from a major advocate of the idea to speak about the benefits of taking over.
 - 3. Cost projections over twenty years.
- C. In Depth Department presentations for general cost saving ideas for FY 2011 beginning with Information Technology.
- D. Examine all insurance programs provided for employees.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no additional public comments.

BOARD COMMENTS:

There were no additional Board comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 3:55 P.M.



TOWNSEND TARAPANI, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:



K. MICHELE MANOUSOS, CMC
DEPUTY CITY CLERK & COLLECTOR

CITY CLERK'S NOTE: This meeting has been recorded in its entirety and the recordings are kept on file in the City Clerk's Office for the required retention period.