

From: Costa Vatikiotis
Sent: Monday, June 14, 2021 8:59 AM
To: Mark LeCouris <mlecouris@ctsfl.us>
Cc: Board Of Commissioners <boc@ctsfl.us>
Subject: West Klosterman Preserve

I am requesting an agenda item for the June 22nd regular session of the Commission meeting to discuss the West Klosterman Preserve property. Time is of the essence in this matter. The 14-acre parcel is located on Klosterman Road near the intersection of Carlton Road and abuts a 66-acre County-owned preserve on its north boundary. (Please use this email and the attached figure as back-up for the agenda item.)

The purpose of my request is to determine whether the City Commission has an interest in sending the Pinellas County School Board and the Pinellas County Commission a resolution or a letter in support of keeping the subject property as preservation. As a minimum, we should consider requesting the property be annexed before any sale for very good reasons.

I was contacted by a resident late last week who watches the Commission meetings and was asked what the City's position was on the West Klosterman Preserve. The property has been mentioned publicly a couple of times at Commission meetings and nothing has yet come forward from the administration concerning the matter. It was an excellent point. So, I did some research over the weekend.

The property is owned by the School Board and is shown as being in unincorporated Pinellas County. However, it is in the Tarpon Springs Planning Area, and this situation is exactly why some immediate action is needed by the City.

First, if the property is developed, I believe it will rely on City utilities, and as such, it will eventually be annexed into the City anyway. However, like the River Bend Development off Anclote Road, it could be rezoned, planned, and construction permits issued by the County before the property is annexed. You may recall that the River Bend site came to the city devoid of trees, and the City, the developer, and the County, to the best of my knowledge, are still haggling over the tree clearing fees and where the funds are to be spent. In addition, the city did not have any say in the layout or any amenities for the development although it was subsequently annexed into the City before any homes were built. These are good reasons why the property should be annexed before any sale of the property for development.

Nevertheless, the property is still important as preservation and should be considered to remain as such. Besides being in the Tarpon Springs Planning Area, our Existing Land Use Map shows the property as Conservation/Preservation. (Please see the attached figure from the City's Existing Land Use Map.) Our zoning map shows it as vacant property. On the other hand, the County's land use designation is R-S, residential-suburban, and its zoning is RA, residential agriculture. I do not understand why the differences in the Land Use designations and Ms. Vincent, our Planning Director, can clarify the matter. In any case, we do carry the property in our Comprehensive Plan as Conservation/Preservation.

Residents and grassroots organizations interested in preserving the property have so far been unsuccessful in raising the money to purchase the property from the School Board. This parcel competed for a state grant alongside the 44-acre former Douglas property in Dunedin, and as you may

know, the Douglas property won out. It is now a beautiful preserve with no chance of commercial or residential development.

I do not know the status of the West Klosterman Preserve property except that the School Board has made overtures to selling the property to a developer. The School Board had also previously agreed to first give residents time to pursue funds for purchasing the property as preservation land. In addition, Pinellas County, as I understand, has agreed to oversee and to maintain the parcel just as it does the preserve to the north.

The bottom line is that the West Klosterman Preserve property will eventually be part of incorporated Tarpon Springs. Does the City wish to keep it as a preserve as it now shown in our Comprehensive Plan and where Pinellas County has agreed to maintain it? Alternatively, if the property is developed, does the City wish to control its development and annex the property beforehand, or allow the property to be developed under the Pinellas County Land Development code, and inherit what the County decides for us before it is annexed? In any case, we should make our position known to the School Board and to the Pinellas County Commission.

Thank you.

(For the City Commission, I am copying you on this email for information only. Please do not respond. Thank you.)

CITY OF TARPON SPRINGS
Current Land Use

-  Single Family
-  Mobile Homes
-  Duplex/Triplex
-  Mult-Family
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Public - Semi/Public
-  Agriculture
-  Rec/Open Space
-  Vacant
-  Misc
-  Conservation/Preservation
-  Marina
-  Tarpon Springs Planning Area

City of Tarpon Springs Planning Department, July 2007
Source: Pinellas County GIS Data Sets, July 2007

