

MINUTES OF A JOINT MEETING OF THE FORT PIERCE CITY COMMISSION AND THE ST. LUCIE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, HELD IN THE ST. LUCIE COUNTY COMMISSION CHAMBERS, 2300 VIRGINIA AVENUE, FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA, AT 2:00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2008.

Upon Roll Call, those present for the City of Fort Pierce were: Mayor Robert J. Benton; Commissioners Edward Becht, Christine Coke, Rufus Alexander, Reginald Sessions; City Manager Dennis Beach; City Attorney Robert Schwerer; and City Clerk Cassandra Steele. Those absent: None.

Those present for St. Lucie County were: Chairman Joseph Smith, Commissioners Doug Coward, Chris Craft, Charles Grande, and Paula Lewis; Assistant County Manager Faye Outlaw; and County Attorney Dan McIntyre.

Mayor Benton called the Fort Pierce City Commission to order. Chairman Smith called the Board of County Commissioner to order.

Chairman Smith said this is a joint meeting on some issues that have been concerning both boards. It gives them an opportunity to come together and chat about these ideas and issues. The public comment section of this meeting this afternoon is listed toward the end of the agenda. He just wanted to make it clear to everyone that because this is a board workshop where both boards are getting together and discussing these issues, that no action will be taken, it is just an opportunity for the boards to come together and do some discussion and some workshopping. So anything that is decided here will go back to their individual boards for discussion; and at that time, as always, the public will have an ample opportunity to provide comment before any decisions or any votes are made.

Mayor Benton said he would agree, because for them to make a formal decision, they would have to advertise it and there would have to be public input. This is mainly for them to get together, see what they might agree on, and what they can bring back to their boards for formal discussion and a formal decision. They have not met in over a year as a board. It is very important, they do have items they need to discuss.

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The first item on the Agenda was **Beaches/Life Guards**.

Ms. Faye Outlaw, Assistant County Administrator, said she thinks the discussion that was needed on this item was maybe consensus agreement from the City on Boardwalk Beach as the beach to be life guarded. She thinks Mr. Anderson was at the City's budget workshop meeting and there was a discussion on what came out of the County's strategic planning meeting as it relates to how they would handle lifeguarding of beaches. They are proposing on the County's side to lifeguard two beaches which include Pepper Park and Waveland Park. And then the Board added a City beach and her understanding is that the proposal was for that to be Boardwalk Park.

Commissioner Coke said she does not know when the effective date of this is, but their Boardwalk Park is scheduled to be closed through September for renovations. Is it feasible to then move that funding for lifeguards to the other three city parks?

Ms. Outlaw said she believes the implementation would go into effect October 1.

Mr. Jack Southard, St. Lucie County Public Safety Director, said right now the Boardwalk Park is closed and they have shifted to Kimberly Bergalis Park. They will stay there until the Boardwalk Park opens back up, if that is the City's request.

Commissioner Coke said the County has \$163,000 budgeted to insure the safety at the beach. The total for Kimberly Bergalis Park, Jaycee Park, and the Jetty Park is under \$100,000. Why would they not then have lifeguards at all three of those beaches until they reopen Boardwalk Park and then move it to just Boardwalk Park.

Mr. Southard said those beaches are basically summertime only. If they take the whole year that they were going to do Boardwalk Park - right now they have shifted it to Kimberly

Bergalis Park - that price is still the \$163,000. So they just shifted from the Boardwalk Park, having the lifeguards there. They will still have lifeguards at Kimberly Bergalis Park, Surfside Park, and the Jetty Park like they normally would up to October 1. October 1, they will shift back then to the Boardwalk Park, and just do the free beaches which will be Pepper Park, Waveland, and the Boardwalk Park, if it is open then.

Commissioner Coke said so in actuality what they are saying is from the six months out of the year that they will not be guarding Boardwalk Park... They already had a commitment to do Kimberly Bergalis Park, Jaycee Park, and the Jetty Park from now until October 1st, which was summer only anyway. So there will be a savings for the County of \$81,335.

Mr. Southard said that could be correct. He does not have the figure in front of him. Actually the savings would not start until October 1, then it will only be three beaches that they will guard.

Commissioner Coke said no, there is actually going to be a savings if they are not providing a lifeguard service between a month or two ago when they closed Boardwalk Park until October 1, which is a six month project. With closing it down for six months, they are going to save six months of what they would have spent on lifeguards.

Mr. Southard said that is correct.

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The next item on the Agenda was **St. Lucie County Film Festival**.

Commissioner Alexander said this St. Lucie County Film Festival is an effort of the entire County, it should be. He thinks it is something that has gone or will be going international. And this is their piece of the cake, this is home grown. He thinks they should support these efforts and not telling where it may end up. Surely it has already gone further than Fort Pierce. He is just looking at the good things for Fort Pierce that will bring people to Fort Pierce or bring conversations about Fort Pierce in a delightful way. He thinks is just one of the avenues and machines they should use. What his request would be is if they could come up with some type of line item that every year they have to come back and plead about funds for availability of trying to do the next step to go further. He knows the County does now and he knows the City does, but it is only upon request. So he is just taking it upon himself because he has been able to be right there on the front seat and he has enjoyed what he has seen and he prays to God the things that come out of it will be remarkable. They will have the City of Fort Pierce not only nationwide but worldwide, it is going to go that far. His request today is that some kind of way they go back to their respective boards and put a line item on their budget item and lets see if they can help these individuals with their efforts.

County Commissioner Grande said they seem to have a request, if he understands correctly, to go back to their boards and talk about financing the \$33,800 which updates the Zora movie. Is that specifically what is being asked for at this point in time?

Commissioner Alexander said not only that, he is asking that these boards when they consider their budgets. They have these line items in their budgets that they can maybe put it on a three year basis and let it be reviewed in three years and see where they stand. That is just him personally. All the Commissioners have a great deal to do; and if they can some kind of way curtail some of their input, maybe they can do a more output in their efforts. It is just something to consider now. The request today is funds for the \$33,000 to upgrade. More important when it leaves this County this time, it is going on its on and it is going to have its own reviews. The local reviews that they have had has been great.

County Commissioner Grande said he had the privilege of seeing the initial screening at Club Med. He thinks this is an incredible effort. They have had very few things that show so much of their heritage so well. He thinks this film is as good as it gets. He echoes his request and he will be going back to his Board asking for support for this.

Chairman Smith asked for the \$38,800, is he requesting a split between the two Boards? The County's portion be half and the City's portion would be half?

Commissioner Alexander said he would ask that.

County Commissioner Grande said he thinks it is \$33,800, he thinks there is already a pledged portion.

Chairman Smith asked is it \$33,800 or \$38,800?

**Mr. Joe Garofalo** said he is the Director of the Zora Documentary. One thing he wants to add about the documentary, the reason this documentary has really evolved to levels beyond their wildest dreams. One of the things that have happened is that they have just been endorsed by Lucy Anne Hurston for the Zora Neale Hurston Estate as the documentary of Zora Neale Hurston. It humbles him and it is a real privilege, because there is a couple of other documentaries out there that could have been chosen. However, Ms. Hurston has expressed that no other documentary, no other piece, has ever come close to depicting Zora Neale Hurston the way she has been depicted and depicting what she meant to this area. That is a piece of history that was never spoken about, never written about, until now. Part of the reasons to polish this piece so they can take it to the international level is because Ms. Hurston wants to be a part of it as well. Ms. Hurston is willing on her own accord to come and participate and become a part of the documentary as well as become a part of the Zora Fest that they have here yearly. So this is really growing in more ways than one. It is amazing that only a year ago the St. Lucie Film Society formed as a group of three and it has grown to where it is. It is amazing that they have been able to bring films from around the world and people from around the world to experience this area. It really works on multiple levels, not only on a tourist level, but also a cultural level. He thought he should just mention that.

Mayor Benton said he takes it is a joint funding venture between the City and the County on this that they can bring back basically to both their Boards for a partnership on that funding.

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The next item on the Agenda was Summer Programs for the County's Recreation Department.

Mayor Benton said when Mr. Anderson and Chairman Smith came to the City's Budget Workshop, there was some concerns on the summer programs and the extent of them through the Lincoln Park Recreation Center. That is a big concern of the City Commission. Last summer many organizations throughout the community - the Executive Roundtable, PAL, the Police Department, Lincoln Park Main Street - and he couldn't name them all. But because of all the efforts of keeping young people busy, giving them things to do with summer activities, they did not have a gang related shooting all summer and even throughout the fall. So it is very important to make sure they are not going to lose those programs going into this summer. He knows they are talking about next year's budget, but their concern right now is this summer. They just want to make sure the County is not closing doors.

Chairman Smith said Ms. Brisson, who is their Parks and Recreation Director, will be able to help them understand where they are presently and where they are looking regarding their next budget year so far.

Ms. Debbie Brisson, County Parks & Recreation Director, said they are planning on having five different camps this summer, which is the same number of camps they had last year. They do not have as many spots available because they have had some reduction. They are at about 75% what they were last year as far as their numbers. They are going to be

running a camp at Dan McCarty for ages 5 to 11. Lincoln Park is going to have their camp again for the same age group. They have a camp at Westwood High School. They have a camp at F.K. Sweet and Maravilla. In addition to that, they are also still going to be having soccer and tennis and some of those more traditional athletic type programs as well.

Commissioner Coke asked when Ms. Brisson says they are going to have the same number of programs but not the same number of spots available for children, can she tell her how many positions have been cut or spots available for children?

Ms. Brisson said she believes it is about 40 spots less this year than last year between the five camps. That is based upon a reduction in their transportation funds, which is what limits them in some ways to the number of kids they can transport to the various activities.

Commissioner Coke asked does she know what that dollar amount cut was?

Ms. Brisson said she does not have that number right now, but she can get that number back to her.

Commissioner Coke said her concern is that any one child who was occupied last summer who is not occupied this summer with a similar program is going to be looking for something to get into. If it is not an arranged activity that is supervised by adults, it is going to mischief. Her thought would be, and she knows it is just a small drop in the bucket, but they spoke earlier on beaches and life guards that they were saving \$8,183.50 by not providing a lifeguard during the time that the Boardwalk Park was closed. Could they not flow that money over to expanding the 40 spots that they are cutting or decreasing the number of spots that they are cutting? She is sure \$8,000 has got to go pretty far to put a kid in summer camp.

Ms. Brisson said if the Board wishes for them to do that, they could look into that.

Commissioner Alexander said along that line it is imbedded in his head because he took a lot of grief going to Minneapolis where the Kids of Hope thing and he is always making a statement because it only feels him when he knows that things are being done right. They brought that program back to St. Lucie County. Fort Pierce particularly is supposed to be the hub for that Kids of Hope. He thinks they all recall that it was an initiative as an innovation toward bringing those kids that are left out of that loop. He was thinking maybe with this joint effort that they are putting together as a County, he thinks all those efforts are supposed to... Didn't they have the Executive Roundtable approval it that? That would be an effort for this community for the Kids of Hope.

Chairman Smith said with the same hat, he is also the Chair of the Executive Roundtable. The Executive Roundtable Board did adopt the Kids at Hope Program. It is a comprehensive program that will take a look at the concept. There are many people in the community, so he does not want it ever to be known as an Executive Roundtable program.

Commissioner Alexander knows, he was part of it as well, the community has created this program and they are working very diligently to provide the services that are part of the program scope. He and Ms. Brisson have been speaking in the last few days on how they can broaden the concept of the Kids at Hope program. As mentioned before, they do not want any child left out because of any financial burdens. But one of the issues that is a truism of where they all are right now is that the community will have to pick up the slack where government will not be able to do that anymore. The extra funds that they have had in the past for these types of very important programs are drying up. So they will have to have more church involvement and more community service involvement to provide these programs as well. He hopes to be able to share with his Board in the next few months, as well as the City Commission, the concepts behind Kids at Hope to a greater extent and hopefully have some ideas of how do they make sure that they set that program in place for

this entire community and then be able to make it replicated throughout the County at some time in the future.

Mayor Benton said he wants to thank Ms. Brisson, she had come in front of the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency to partner with a program out at the Lincoln Park Recreation Center this summer. Before the County Commission ever considers cutting a program, please bring it to their attention first. If it is something they can fund... The City is not in the recreation business like the County is. So in his book, he does not mind partnering with them, anything they can do. But it is very important to keep these young people occupied and busy during the summer months.

Commissioner Alexander said he just tried to plant seeds. He was thinking maybe if they can pony up on that Kids of Hope and let them be the umbrella for any other efforts that want to come before them, whether it be County or City. As far as the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency, their boundaries are enhanced there. But with the St. Lucie County summer programs, it seems though it is a boundary thing there. So why can't they just...?

Chairman Smith asked have a clearinghouse, where there is one organization that kind of helps...?

Commissioner Alexander said one organization that pretty much can be the hub of everything. They cannot let one kid drop off for any reason. He is speaking of the dollars that are coming out of the County and the dollars that are coming from the City and the FPRA, those are the dollars that he is speaking of.

Commissioner Session said organizations come before the City and request funding. And Commissioner Alexander being as generous as he is, he always looks out for the young people, so he is always in support of that. He commends him for that, he has one of the biggest hearts that any of them have. An ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of the cure. The City of Fort Pierce, which includes St. Lucie County, has one of the highest delinquency rates of a city its size in the State of Florida as a result of their young people participating in crime. He believes that if they were to make a more diligent effort to couple with the County to fund organizations such as Hope or to perhaps make sure that they are not at a 25% shortfall as to the County programs that they have in effect now. According to what he is hearing, 25% of the children will not be able to participate this year as a result of a lack of funding. Ironic as it may be, those children did not vote for Amendment #1. However, this County Commission will be the voting party that votes to add a wing onto Rock Road. It is one of those situations where they pay now or they pay later. He guarantees that if they continue to keep their young people occupied with things to do during the summer, that they will have a successful summer like they had last summer with less outbreaks within their young people in their community.

Commissioner Coke said she knows they are all very concerned about the youth in their community. Her concern is, today they do not have an exact dollar amount that they have a shortfall in this program to be providing the same resources for their children as they did last year. The County is growing, the City is growing. Quite frankly she thinks they need to be proactive and anticipate growth in these programs, rather than reactive and put another wing on out at Rock Road. Unfortunately, she does not believe that they have the necessary data in front of them today so that they can accurately solve the problem. Whether it is transfer of funds with the FPRA, whether it is looking to get some community sponsorship or involvement, she thinks all of those are going to end up being options. But before they can define which option they are going to pursue, they need an exact dollar figure. Then of course the problem becomes is that school is almost out. They are kind of already behind the eight ball with it. She is wondering how quickly they can get those figures and look to see if they can get a consensus of both boards to maybe have staff get

together and find a way to resolve this issue so they don't have kids just out on the streets this summer.

Chairman Smith asked can Ms. Outlaw and Ms. Brisson have those numbers very soon?

Ms. Faye Outlaw, Assistant County Administrator, said yes, they can pull those numbers together.

Commissioner Alexander said he was thinking they have already given some directives on the Kids of Hope. Had they put any monies under their names of Kids of Hope or are they asking to share the cost of the Kids of Hope? Because he thinks the Executive Roundtable is inclusive of all the entities in the County. Have they gone in other than just...?

Chairman Smith said they meet once a month and it has been a few months since they actually had the opportunity to meet. But his recollection is they provided some seed money to get the Kids at Hope program started and out of the blocks. However at this point, they do not have the resources to do what they really need to do, which is they need to have a coordinator for the Kids at Hope program. They need to have that clearinghouse where there is one person who is in charge of making sure that these type of programs for their young people in their community are identified and are coordinated. As they know, they have really great programs - the Boys & Girls Club, Big Brothers & Big Sisters, and countless others throughout the community. But when it comes to issues with young people, they often use a shotgun approach instead of a rifle. He should not use guns for that example, but they understand what he means. Everyone is doing something but it does not have as much impact because it is not all targeted in the same direction. He thinks the Kids at Hope program would really be helpful to provide that and that coordinator position would be really helpful. If staff could take a look at the concept, he would be really be interested in having that to occur.

Ms. Outlaw said let them maybe deal with the critical issue first; and that is, taking a look at that funding gap for that additional 25 slots that may be lost, maybe walk that around to the Board and inform them of what that dollar amount is and perhaps some options on how it could be funded, and get direction from them on how they want that information communicated back to the City. Solve the immediate problem. And then they can certainly look at that concept of Kids at Hope.

Chairman Smith said that was his intention.

Commissioner Becht asked was that 25 slots or 40 slots?

Ms. Outlaw said 25%. They have to work out what that number is.

Ms. Brisson said last year they received some additional funding from the Board of County Commissioners to help expand their programs over prior years. That funding was not available to them this year, so that is the difference in the numbers there. They did receive some funding from the FPRA, but it did not quite make up that difference. She would be happy to get back all that information so they can have all the numbers they need.

Commissioner Becht asked does she think that number is going to be more than \$80,000?

Ms. Brisson said no.

Commissioner Becht said so if the County Commission has the will to change the \$80,000 that they are saving on lifeguards to the summer program, they can do it.

Chief of Police Sean Baldwin said he just wanted to take a minute mostly to thank them for having this conversation. Obviously all of them realize how important it is that they keep their kids engaged in positive activities so they can guide them and get through all these

difficult issues that they face as they are growing up. And the only way they can do that is as a community. He knows it is terribly trying for all of them, they have been put in an incredibly difficult position, one that they had no control over. There are going to have to be cuts made. Of course, they are going to have to prioritize those cuts. He can tell them, without filling them with a bunch of statistics, there is a direct correlation between keeping these kids engaged in positive activities and their involvement in crime and delinquency. The goal of the Police Department is to protect the community that they are serving, so he has a vested interest in making sure their kids are busy. He thinks they proved last summer, if the community and government and public agencies come together to do the job, they can get the job done. Going into this summer, he is even more concerned than he was last summer at some of the indications that they have had - disputes and outbursts as far as the gangs go and some of the problems they are having with drugs. He is hopeful that they are going to be able to work this out and provide even more services than they did last year. The Commissioners have his sympathy as they try to work through these issues. If they need information as they are making these decisions, if they need statistics, if they need anything at all, please call on him and he will do absolutely whatever he can to support them and to provide them with that information that they need to make these difficult decisions. He wants to say thank you for recognizing this, he knows every one of them cares deeply. And it is important to the success of their community.

Mayor Benton said he wants to thank Chief Baldwin. Because last year going into the summer, through those organizations he mentioned earlier, the Chief lead the way. He brought a lot of pastors and churches to the table. He was really the one that put last summer together and did a very successful job. He appreciates the effort the Chief put into that.

Chief Baldwin said he was working with a lot of good people that were working towards the same goal and that is all there was to it. As they are making these decisions, keep one more thing in mind. He sits on the Board of Directors for the Boys & Girls Club. They are losing funding because of the cuts at the State level. All the organizations that are serving kids, including the Department of Juvenile Justice, are losing funding in this budget cycle. They are just making cuts across the board in what they are doing for the children. He appreciates what the Commissioners are doing and having the courage to at least discuss alternatives, rather than just cutting things off without really thinking about the long term impact.

Mayor Benton said with the economy the way it is, it also gives young people the ability to consider getting into trouble. There is not a lot of money with mom and dad if they want to go out and do something, so they are looking at other ways. It is very important that they get and keep a grip on this.

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The next item on the Agenda was **Prevention of Crime in the Black Community Conference**.

Commissioner Alexander said this is an item that he put on and he thinks he can just piggyback off of the item of the summer programs. He wants some things to just not have to be a return every year after year for the same efforts with the same problems. Again, that can go back to the summer programs, not just on the County efforts but on the entire efforts of all.

Chairman Smith said he thinks the dates of this conference is June 19th through the 22nd. If anyone is interested in attending, they can chat with Commissioner Alexander.

Commissioner Alexander said his secretary has all the information they need. He thinks it is a good effort. He sees thousand and thousand of other kids from all around the State of Georgia and Florida. This is an effort of the State Attorney's office and Attorney General's office.

Chairman Smith said actually he thought it was really impressive that this is the 23rd National Conference on this issue and it is also their Attorney General here in Florida, Mr. McCollum, as well as the Attorney General, Mr. Baker, of Georgia. Obviously the states are seeing that this is a vitally important issue and he is glad their community sees that as well.

Commissioner Alexander said he would like to commend Chief Baldwin because he step up to bat time after time. He knows what the rewards are from these small efforts and their kids give them in return, because they make them so proud. These conferences, thousands and thousands of kids step up front and be first for this and first for that. It makes him proud. Some get cash rewards for educational things. It just is a blessing in disguise. He just wanted to add it to the summer programs.

Commissioner Sessions said just a point of clarification. Are they soliciting funding from the County in a joint effort to send individuals to this conference? Is that what Commissioner Alexander is looking for?

Commissioner Alexander said it goes back to the Kids at Hope. If they can get that effort going, then these type of things here can fall under their umbrella and they can see that the kids have the opportunity to visit this conference. He is soliciting, but that is why he wanted to put it all in one program, so they do not have to have this program and that effort and this effort. Put it all under the Kids at Hope. He is not sure of that is going to be clear to everyone, but wishful thinking never hurt.

Commissioner Sessions said he can expound on what he said with regards with this Prevention of Crime in the Black Community. He had an opportunity to attend it when he was office before and he intends on attending it this year too. It is one of the best conferences that he has ever attended in terms of giving them ideas and concepts and principles on how to deal with crime in the black community. It is not so much as the black community as it is the community in its entirety, because it is a domino effect - what happens on Avenue D will eventually find its way down south in Port St. Lucie as well as in the unincorporated areas. While they appear to have the gist of the problem in Fort Pierce some would say, he would disagree with that. But the problem exists. They all need to do all that they can possibly can in order to address the problem with regards to crime in their area. If Commissioner Alexander is making a request to solicit funding in order to send their young people to this program, he would piggyback off of that and also echo his concerns. It is something that their young people will come back positively motivated to make a difference in their community. He would encourage everyone if at all possible to attend the conference, if not this year, sometime in the future.

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The next item on the Agenda was **Tank Farms**.

Commissioner Becht said he will take credit for it today, but he did not start it, somebody else came up with the idea, it may have been Chief Sizemore back when he was Chief at the Fire District. They talked about it last year when they had their joint meeting, about trying to get a tank farm established for fuel. All of them have vehicles that need to be rolling - the County, the City, the Sheriff, the Police Department. They know the Sheriff is going to be back in front of them and he suspects that the Chief is going to be back in front of them for additional monies for the 25% to 33% that fuel prices are going to go up. If they want to try and drag in Port St. Lucie, they can do that. And he thinks the Fire District would probably come in. In these times when they are all worried about both expenses and revenue sources... He wanted to throw out an idea. He wonders if they can enter into a joint purchasing agreement where they would try to consolidate the purchases that are necessary by their respective governments, from light bulbs to toilet paper to vacuum cleaners, whatever they need. If they can combine the purchasing power of the two governments, not just fuel. He does not know how they are going to get this thing off the ground with a tank farm. But if they can enter into a joint purchasing agreement on some

things that are fairly generic and save the taxpayers money, then they are doing their job and they are also lightening the load they have for increasing revenue on the other side of the equation.

Commissioner Sessions said he thinks it is a good idea in light the situation that exists. It has been pointed out on numerous occasions and he hates to keep repeating it, but Amendment #1 is written all over their faces when they go out as public officials and they have to address the public as to why the shortfalls are there. Commissioner Becht has come up with a good idea. Fuel is a big issue. He does not know whether they start with the fuel. But he agrees with him, if they can have a combined effort of bulk purchases, certainly bring down prices. He would be willing to join with the County in terms of starting some form of conglomeration of purchasing fuel by the two entities in order to save some money for the constituents.

County Commissioner Craft said one thing that needs to be considered when they look at the tank farm is they have vehicles that are in different places. Logistically, vehicles that are at the landfill, those pretty much stay out there. He thinks when they take a look to see whether or not having a common tank farm makes sense logistically, or will they waste more gas by driving to one place to fill up than what they are saving by just filling up at the nearest service station with whatever purchase cards they have. He thinks it is something that they absolutely should look at. It is something that they have talked about in strategic planning two years ago or maybe at the budget workshops. They had talked about buying an extra tank for their fuel as well. He agrees, lets take a look at it.

Ms. Faye Outlaw, Assistant County Administrator, said she just wants to explain what they currently have in place. They certainly will do as the Board directs. Right now, they have a co-op in place that includes 16 entities. The City of Fort Pierce is one of those entities. The St. Lucie County School Board is the lead agency and they actually take the lead on the fuel. She understands that Port Consolidated, which is the company where the fuel is purchased from, has notified that they do not intend to go with the option to extend that agreement. The School Board informed her late yesterday that their intent is to go back on the street to bid that and they intend to have that bid out next week or maybe the following week. The contract actually expires June 30th. She just wants to make certain that both bodies were aware of that.

Commissioner Becht asked does she see any economies or any efficiencies in expanding that. Apparently they are already doing the joint purchasing of fuel. Does she see any advantage with trying to do that with any other commodity?

Ms. Outlaw said certainly there would be economies of scale in other areas and they can take a look at that. They have started exploring some of those areas with what just came out of their strategic planning session.

Commissioner Becht asked who in the City is she working with?

Ms. Outlaw said she does not know they are exploring it with the City. Right now they are having discussions with the School Board on a couple of items. She does not believe they have expanded that to discussions with the City of Fort Pierce.

Commissioner Becht asked who should she talk with about that?

Mr. Dennis Beach, City Manager, said Tony Barnes.

Commissioner Becht said they will try to direct Mr. Barnes to talk with her. He thinks between the three entities, and if St. Lucie Village wants to piggyback, that would be fine with him too. They could have everybody in the County trying to do what they can do with the commodities that seem appropriate. He compliments her for already doing it on fuel.

He did not realize they were already doing it on fuel. It would just be a logical extension of whatever that agreement is, to his way of thinking.

Ms. Outlaw said they will certainly follow up.

Commissioner Alexander asked did he understand her saying this is coming to a halt?

Ms. Outlaw said the agreement expires June 30th. The School Board has indicated that they are preparing a bid which will be back on the street either this upcoming week or the following week. But they are trying to have something in place by the time the current agreement expires.

Commissioner Alexander asked that would include the tri-county areas and all?

Ms. Outlaw said yes, there are 16 entities in all. Martin County is one of those entities. She believes it goes north to Indian River County as well.

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The next item on the Agenda was **County-owned Downtown Parking Garage.**

Ms. Faye Outlaw, Assistant County Administrator, said she will walk them through what they currently have in place and what they are proposing. She thinks both bodies are fairly familiar with the system that they have in place with the downtown parking garage. Right now they have 28 leased spaces, 104 parking spaces that are free to the public, and then 57 reserved spaces, and that includes accommodation for patrons that park and work downtown primarily as well as some of their judges. They lease spaces at the rate of \$45.83 monthly (\$15,396 annually). As part of strategic planning and given the circumstances that they are in, they are looking at possibly changing that system to go with primarily a metered parking space garage which would include 118 spaces. They would propose to increase the leased spaces up to 65 and retain 6 reserved spaces. They are looking at an increase of the lease rate from \$45.83 to the \$62.25. The meter rate they are proposing would be \$1.00 per hour up to a \$5.00 maximum. She would like to underscore that their Board has not taken formal action on this. The staff has looked at a number of other parking systems in neighboring communities down to the south; and based on what they have seen there, they put together this proposal. But again, it has not gone formally to the Board of County Commissioners.

Commissioner Alexander asked they don't think they are going to lose any customers because that City of Fort Pierce just built a parking garage that is free?

Ms. Outlaw said they have talked about that. And certainly she could ask if the City would intend to charge so that the County would not have to compete, but she is not asking that at all. They had quite a bit of discussion about that at the staff level; and what staff seems to think is that there is enough parking demand that with a free parking garage they would be able to retain the lease spaces there as well as probably start out with about a 75% utilization rate on the metered parking spaces. Should the Board of County Commissioners approve this, she thinks experience will be the best teacher.

Commissioner Alexander said he just does not want his managers to get any ideas and bring them home to roost.

Commissioner Coke said certainly it is the County's parking garage, so she is not going to concern herself too much. She sees a 50% increase in leased spaces, she would think some people would be balking a little bit at that. But her concern is more that it seems to her that they have an Interlocal Agreement regarding this garage that during the evenings that there is Sunrise Theatre performances, this garage will be open and free to the public. She wants to confirm that will not be affected by these changes.

Chairman Smith said he thinks the silence is telling and he thinks there is a reason for that.

He does believe that they are all charged with the same job right now and one of the issues this Board has tasked their staff with is to take a look at everything, including parking in the downtown area. He does believe they do have an Interlocal Agreement, but they are still looking at it. They may have to come to the City at some point regarding that Interlocal Agreement. He thinks it is very important to realize that there are not many downtowns where parking is still free anywhere. So to take a look at the parking garage that the County has down there right now at \$5.00 maximum is still a really good price. This is all proposed, nothing is guaranteed. They are just taking a look at it right now.

Commissioner Coke said certainly if the County wants to come and ask the City for something, the City would certainly entertain that idea and the thought process behind it, so as long the County is very aware that if they are going to change the Interlocal Agreement the City will probably want their million dollars back that they gave them for the Clerk of the Courts building.

County Commissioner Craft said just for point of clarification, he does not believe that there is an Interlocal Agreement for the parking. They have discussed it in the past. He was just talking with staff and they have even went down there on certain events and charged for parking. So they do not have that Interlocal Agreement that he is aware of. They have done it through a letter, he believes it was requested by the City that they have the parking garage open.

Commissioner Becht said they may not have an Interlocal Agreement, because if he remembers correctly it was tied to the City contributing money to the County putting another floor on the parking garage and then the cost for that got too excessive. Downtown Fort Pierce is vibrant today, but it is fragile today. He thinks they are probably all right in the hours of 9:00 to 5:00 with whatever they want to do within reason with their charging on that, because he thinks the demand there is the courthouse and that is 9:00 to 5:00. But please be very careful at dissuading people from using it after 5:00 o'clock. Whatever they do, if they could appropriately sign it or put signage up so the public clearly understands after 5:00 it is a different structure, that would be extremely helpful to maintaining downtown Fort Pierce as vibrant after 5:00 o'clock, because the economic engine after 5:00 o'clock is very fragile.

Mayor Benton said just to reiterate the signage. He knows they had received a letter from the Fort Pierce Area Council and their concern is that there is no signage explaining that they have another public parking garage. If they could make it a little bit more visible and maybe explain some of these things... He thinks if the County is going to start charging with their garage... He does understand that there is maintenance. He thinks basically all they are going to collect is enough to do maintenance on the facility. But the City is going to have to look into some type of metering on the streets downtown. Also, the Clerk of the Courts is going to have to get the message out that the free parking is in the City's parking garage or will be in the future. That they just do not want everybody dealing with the court system leaving the County garage and using all the retail spaces or parking in front of the businesses downtown. Somehow they have to get people using the court system into the garages where they can park all day. And down the road when maintenance comes needed on the City's facility, like most parking garages there might be a charge, but they do not see that in the near future.

County Commissioner Craft said he just wants to point out the benefit of this meeting and having this discussion. He can see some of them are getting a little aggravated with the idea of trying certain things. But that is the reason they have this joint meeting, so they can talk about it with one another and hear the concerns of the City and for the City to understand the position that the County is in. As the City will soon find out, they will understand what those maintenance costs are associated with that parking garage and they have got to have revenue from somewhere to keep up with it. And they are running out of General Fund revenue to do so, so they are just looking at any other alternative

revenue streams that they possibly can. He is completely open to the concerns of downtown Fort Pierce in the after hours. Lord knows, he has worked for a number of years to try and increase that traffic. They do not want to do anything that is going to damage that. But they also do not want to put themselves in a situation where it is more difficult to try and set the hours to determine who was in the parking garage before 5:00 o'clock and who was in after 5:00 o'clock. But it is something that he is certain that they can work out, they just need to make sure that they are working with one another.

Mayor Benton said he thinks for somebody going to the Sunrise Theater or anything... He does not know of anywhere, other than Vero Beach, that has free parking. It seems everywhere they go... And this is very inexpensive compared to most of the places he has used a parking garage. Those costs are there. So everyone know, Amendment #1 is the one that is pushing them to start thinking out of the box and doing some of the things that they have not had to do in the past.

County Commissioner Craft said another idea that they can throw out. He knows in some places parking is included in the purchase of a ticket, whether if it is for a show or whatever. Maybe it is \$3.00 that would be added to the price of the ticket at the Sunrise or something like that, so they can make sure that parking is available and they are not hurting the downtown businesses. They just have to work with one another to get this thing right.

Commissioner Sessions said as has been pointed out, while Fort Pierce is vibrant now, it is very fragile. He would hope that they would not place any impediments in terms of trying to continue to promote what they are spending a whole lot of money within the City of Fort Pierce to bring their downtown area up. Chairman Smith brought up that most municipalities do in fact charge for public parking downtown. However, he is not aware of any municipalities that charge after hours in terms of business hours. In the evening times, most of those municipalities do not charge for parking downtown in their major cities. So that is something they need to look at. He does not think attaching a \$3.00 fee to a ticket is going to help them out much. He likes the idea of what they have done here in terms of trying to generate some revenue. Hopefully they have set some precedents for the City of Fort Pierce to look at in the future because what it may boil down to is they may have to do the same thing. But right now, to place that impediment on individuals while they are trying to promote that area, he hopes they would only do it during business hours, not after hours.

Ms. Outlaw said just on a couple of points, she thanks them for bringing up the point about the signage. They did get a copy of that letter; and in response to that, they are preparing signage to be put up and that will come back before the Board, so they are working on that.

The background information that the staff has obtained from the municipalities that were visited, they will make that available as part of the packet that comes before the Board and they certainly could make it available to the City if they all want to just see what information they have collected and the various systems that are out there and how they are doing it. She will be more than glad to share that information so they will have what will be brought before the Board of County Commissioners as well.

County Commissioner Grande asked if the goal is to put this on a paying basis, and they recognize that this is so heavily used by the Courthouse in the daytime, why are they looking at increasing the number of leased spaces, which would drastically decrease the number of spaces that are available for the transients in the Courthouse when they know that they leased spaces will return less than the metered spaces?

Ms. Outlaw said they have looked at the impact of the proposed system on available parking for jurors at the Courthouse. They have built into the proposal a system whereby jurors would be able to bring in their notice, whatever it is they get from the Clerk of Court, that would provide them with free parking in that garage. She does not have all of those details in front of her, but they have built that into the system.

Commissioner Becht said not with 300 jurors called and they have 118 metered spaces. Anyway, the County will deal with it. His biggest request of the County is that they try and preserve the after 6:00 o'clock at night, just so folks can park in there for something downtown.

Ms. Outlaw said they will take all those points into consideration.

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The next item on the Agenda was **Humane Society / Heathcote Botanical Gardens / City Public Works Facility**.

Mayor Benton said he put this item on here because there has been a lengthy discussion at the Board's level he believes a couple of weeks ago and there has been a lot of publicity out there about the Public Works Department leaving. To start with, he has passed out some pictures of the County Public Works Compound and the City Public Works Compound. The City is very proud of theirs, as they can see with the signage. They have put a lot of effort and a lot of TLC into that facility in the last several years. Amendment #1 he thinks has really brought this hopefully to an end for awhile. They have had several joint meetings and Commission meetings. They have the Minutes of those meetings where the City of Fort Pierce specifically said they support Heathcote and the Humane Society, but leave their Public Works Department alone. They do not have the financial ability to move. He knows there was an invitation from St. Lucie County to come join theirs possibly. But he thinks Amendment #1 has closed that door, at least probably in the long term future. They will work with everyone, but they just want to make that clear. In some of these publications it said that with the expansion it would cause the Humane Society to be condemned and bulldozed. That is not going to happen in the City. The City is great with the Humane Society there. They will work with Heathcote, even if they have to spruce up their facility even more. He knows there has been discussion about the Humane Society moving from that facility. In his letter which is dated April 4th he addressed the concerns he just spoke about. Also, he and Commissioner Grande visited the Humane Society. Knowing budget cuts have hit all of them - the private sector and the public sector and everyone out there - that sometimes bringing in money for non-profits is going to be harder and getting money from government for non-profits is going to be harder than that. They should look at can that facility get a face lift, make it safer for the animals, will it work? Would it be more convenient if Port St. Lucie - and he is thinking outside the box - had a facility that they could use where they might have two with the Humane Society that would be convenient with the price of gas today. They have to look at solutions. He gave some information there about the cost per animal that St. Lucie County, Port St. Lucie, and Fort Pierce are paying locally at \$115 per animal. But in the county to the south of them, the City of Stuart is paying nothing. Martin County is paying he believes almost \$500,000 a year. And the numbers in Vero Beach and in Indian River County were \$75 per animal. He thinks because of Amendment #1, they are going to be looking at the way they do business. And they still have to push for those solutions when it comes to all these animals. When he got an invoice for the first three months, it was staggering. It is one thing when they budget that amount, but it is one thing when they see those actual numbers on the increase. He knows there has been concern from this Board, the County Commission met two weeks ago about this. So he just wanted to bring it up for discussion and hopefully everyone can work at solutions. The County had created a licensing and a spay and neutering program, it has been in effect for over six months. He is hoping that if it is working that the City of Fort Pierce will follow.

County Commissioner Grande said he did accompany the Mayor on a tour of the existing site and he would compliment the Humane Society on the strides that they have made lately, the facility is in better shape than it was several years ago. It is an older facility and takes a lot of maintenance, there is no question about that. But his attention was grabbed here in this financial situation. There seemed to be an assumption that the County was disposed to donating a couple million dollars worth of land for a new site, particularly a couple of million dollars of good frontage land in a commercial zone. Short of really demonstrating a need for that kind of thing, he does not think that at least from his

perspective he could support something like that. He did go and look at the surrounding areas both to the south and the north of them where they actually have built new facilities. He looked at their operating budget and he looked at their intake in terms of numbers of animals. And the numbers are staggering. Both Martin County and Indian River County, they are talking about an operating budget that is in excess of \$300 per animal. The prices that they charge for animals that are dropped off are actually more reasonable than what are charged here in St. Lucie County. And that really talks to their fund-raising ability and the amount of effort that goes into raising operating costs in those two areas. Whether that is a question of a better target area or a different fund-raising methodology, he does not think they are in a position to speak to those things. The truth of the matter is, clearly a brand new facility that everybody would love to see has an impact of generally doubling the ongoing operating costs. It would nice to think that a new facility says less maintenance, save money. The evidence, both north and south of them, is exactly the opposite. When he looked at their budget, he was thinking of \$115 or \$118, which is their current cost when they drop an animal off. That is something that he would like to see going down, not going up. He thinks that is the direction that they need to work cooperatively with the Humane Society to see if savings there are possible. If that number cannot go down - and he is not an expert in that area - he certainly does not see that they want to look at methodologies for having that number go up. He put this on their informal agenda at their informal meeting and they put it off to discuss it jointly with their fellow Commissioners in the City because they share the use of this facility. The City is paying the same amount the County is. Everybody is looking forward to having a really nice expansion of Heathcote. They are looking further down the road at having a major park facility there. He has heard they have the opportunity to reserve about as much space as New York City has for Central Park. He thinks that is an incredibly positive dream, something they can work towards today. But he grew up in that area and he knows that Central Park is very diverse. They wonder if they can have an animal facility in a beautiful setting like that? New York City has a zoo in Central Park, and he does not think that elephants and lions roar any less than dogs bark. What he is hoping to do is stop them from assuming or perhaps leading the Humane Society into assuming that there will be a donation of \$2 million in land in a valuable area. He thinks it is the Humane Society's job to plan their own future, but they need to get an understanding of what government can do for them and what they can't and what they would like to see.

Commissioner Alexander said he just wanted clarification on what monies go into the Humane Society from each entity. Is he looking at it saying \$300,000 a year from the City?

Mayor Benton said about \$260,000 is budgeted from the City.

Commissioner Alexander asked is that matching funds from the County as well as Port St. Lucie?

Mayor Benton said he thinks the County is higher. He thinks Port St. Lucie is higher than theirs. It is done on a per animal basis.

Commissioner Alexander said he read somewhere that Port St. Lucie takes their animals to Martin County because it is closer. He does not want to seem like a spoiled individual, but when they are talking about animals versus children... He is an animal lover, he is an animal owner, his family owns animals. But his animals won't allow them to walk to him. He does not have vicious dogs, he has little Yorkies. They won't allow anyone to walk to him. He loves animals and he loves children. This is what he was bringing before these Commissioners today when he speaks about the children. If they can have some type of line item like that for the children on an annual basis, they would not have half of the problems they have now. They are talking about dogs and he loves dogs, but he loves children even more.

County Commissioner Coward said at this morning's meeting, he pointed out some issues related to costs of inmate health care. The public is constantly looking to the government to try and save money. He thinks it is incumbent upon them to inform the public of the limitations of that goal, because the actions of the citizens in this community themselves are affecting their ability to efficiently provide service. This is yet another example where the community needs to take more responsibility for their actions. They are talking about euthanizing over 5,000 animals a year. Think about that, 5,000 animals a year. And it is not only the inhumanity of that, but the serious costs associated with having to provide that service. He does not want to get into a supply side discussion here about how do they deal with more and more animals. The community itself must realize that they are creating this cost for themselves and there is not a long term solution at all. They have to change the way they handle animals in St. Lucie County, both privately and by the government. He too is interested in one thing and that is attacking the root of the problem. That is all he wants to do. He has upmost respect for all the people in this community who are involved in animals. Whether it is Cats & Dogs Forever or whether it is the Humane Society, he has nothing but respect for the people involved in those. But he too shares concerns about focusing on putting monies into expansion of a facility when he does not personally believe that they have sufficiently and adequately attacked the root of the problem, which is trying to reduce the number of animals that are coming into the facility in the first place. That is where he wants to focus their limited resources - on spay and neuter programs and public outreach to make sure that the public is doing its job to help them reduce the number of animals that are coming in and the costs associated with that.

Mayor Benton said he agrees with him 100%. He does not need the information today, but if the County staff could provide himself and his Commissioners with the information about their licensing program that has been in effect for over six months. If it is working, he thinks the City has to go along with it. Somehow they have to make people more responsible for their animals through spay and neutering programs. And make breeders responsible, if they are going to breed animals, they are going to pay, it is a business. They cannot afford to continue at the pace they are. Also he wants to let the folks at Heathcote know they in Fort Pierce are where they were from day one, they are very supportive of the Heathcote expansion, they are there with them, they just can't include their Public Works at this time. He thinks their Public Works Department next to Heathcote has become very convenient, because when there is times when the grass needs to be cut or if the trees... If they do not think that time is here yet, it will be. Because as every non-profit out there is finding out, contributions are not coming in the way there were. They are all big supporters. But Amendment #1, which none of them expected to pass, has changed the way government does business. So they have no choice in this matter.

Chairman Smith said it has been interesting listening to this conversation a few times now. He has kind of a chance to get down to the Humane Society probably three or four times since he has been a Commissioner. But he would really like to separate the conversation. He thinks if they are going to decide whether the County or the City or anyone else should provide land to the Humane Society on which to build, that is one question; and he thinks that is the question that their Boards need to answer. But if the Humane Society chooses to build a new facility, that is not part of his job description, that is for the Humane Society's Board to decide for themselves. He thinks when they get into the concept of should they build a new building or should they not build a new building, he thinks to be fair to the other people for whom they actually send out checks because they provide services to their community, they would have that same conversation if they chose to build a new building, like ARC or the Healthy Kids group that Sylvie Kramer runs. He just wants to make sure what the question is. Is the County going to provide land to the Humane Society to build? Let that be the question. If the question is, should the Humane Society build a new building? He thinks that is for the Humane Society's Board to decide. It feels like, at least he thinks in their meeting a few weeks ago and this meeting today - if he heard incorrectly, then he apologize - but it sounded like he kept hearing them saying the Humane Society does not need a new building, they do not need this, they do not need that. That is not for

him to decide as a County Commissioner, that is for the Humane Society to decide as their own Board.

Mayor Benton said what brought this to light, at least what he read, is the County was looking at six acres of property with an industrial zoning where one of their employees had given value of that property of about \$120,000, which is \$20,000 an acre. When actually he knows Fort Pierce Utilities Authority just bought some property down there and they paid over \$300,000 an acre for property almost adjacent. So they first need to get the accurate numbers. They are not looking to prevent any non-profit from growing. The City of Fort Pierce works with a lot more non-profits than St. Lucie County does through the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency. And because of Amendment #1 and other budget restraints, one thing he will be asking and already has asked for is not only a copy of their budgets, but a copy of their audits also. They have groups coming in front of them every month looking for literally hundreds of thousands of dollars, some which they have already partnered with, but some of them are not being finished. But the people have said tighten their belt and they are going to have to make people a little more accountable.

County Commissioner Grande said he really appreciates the Mayor's comments, he thinks they are right on, he agrees with him. He thinks there are two things that caused him to speak up. One of course was the land situation. He would not want the Humane Society, should they decide to move ahead, to make an assumption that the taxpayers are going to pay for the land and they only need to raise money for brick and mortar. The second thing that they need to be aware of is, they are not in a position where they can increase the fees that they pay. They are dependent on the Humane Society now to some extent to handle the animal situation, it is not going away. But they cannot pay \$300 per animal. He is seriously thinking about whether or not they can pay it at the rates they are currently being billed. They are cutting all of their departments. He is not sure that they do not need to review those rates. He is not sure that the Humane Society can stand a reduction, but he certainly knows that the County can't stand an increase. He can't do their planning for them, but that is information that they should have when they do their planning.

Chairman Smith said if he could get the information, because he does not have it, as to how the Humane Society ended up in the facility that they are now in. That is on property that is owned by the City. He would just like to have the understanding how they found their way there and when they found their way there, so they have an understanding to know how they found themselves here, so that should they take a look at where they will find themselves next time, how did that occur in the beginning. That would be really helpful to him.

County Commissioner Craft said he couldn't agree more with the remarks he made earlier. He thinks there is some basic questions that need to be answered that the Humane Society has to bring before him, before he makes a decision on whether or not if it makes sense for the County to go and extend their partnership in relationship with the Humane Society. Number one, is there a cost benefit to St. Lucie County? Number two, is there a reduction in euthanasia rates? He thinks that is a goal that everyone in this room shares in common. Number three, will they have an increase in adoption rates? Those are the very basic questions that need to be asked. At the end of the day, does the cost out weigh the benefits, or does the benefits out weigh the cost?

County Commissioner Lewis asked could staff obtain for them, along with this other information, the actual value of the land? They heard everything from \$120,000 to a couple of million. Quite honestly she has no skill in land valuation, she does not know if any of them do. Maybe they can look at comparables, market value is something else. She would like to find out the actual value of the land they are talking about, because that seems to be a sticking point they keep coming back to.

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The next item on the Agenda was **School Resource Officers**.

Ms. Faye Outlaw, Assistant County Administrator, said given that they are in the midst of the budget process, this has been an issue of some concern and quite a bit of interest. The Board last year had some discussion about the fact that funding was not available this year for the Sheriff's School Resource Officers, the County's portion. That represents about \$1.7 million. As she understands it, the County has picked that up in the past. The City of Port St. Lucie has picked up their portion. The City of Port St. Lucie has indicated that they are going to fund it for the upcoming year. The County has not taken formal action as part of the budget process just yet. This item is on for discussion.

Chairman Smith would she be able to explain the chart that they have on the screen right now?

Ms. Outlaw said she was hoping there was going to be a member from the School Board here to actually walk them through it. They e-mailed this to her very late in the day and she has not had an opportunity to walk through it with them. What they intended to show was the number of schools and how the coverage is provided, so that the City of Fort Pierce as well as the County can see what schools were located within the City's jurisdiction, and that cost is actually picked up as part of the \$1.7 million that had been funded by the County in the past.

Chairman Smith said they can get back in touch with the School Board and ask them to have a written documentation to help and they can send this out to all the board members to help explain this.

Commissioner Becht said himself, Commissioner Smith, Linda Bartz with Port St. Lucie, and Kathryn Hensley have been trying to work and stay focused on the School Resource Officer program. Linda Bartz believes that her Commission will contribute at the same funding level as last year. Ms. Hensley believes that the School Board will do it at their level. The County will have to figure out what it wants to do, whether it will maintain the same level as it did last year, and they have the interplay with the Sheriff's budget to figure out. As he understands it, the Sheriff committed to putting it in the budget, but he could change that as the year rolls on and he needs more money for fuel or whatever. Ms. Hensley represented that she had talked with Chief Baldwin and Chief Baldwin had said that there might be the ability to do something with Fort Pierce Police Officers in Fort Pierce schools. This is a very complex issue, it goes to everything they talked about from having the kids do something this summer to the crime in the black community to the beaches - everything. One of the things that was discussed at this meeting was the kids in Fort Pierce would see a school resource officer in a blue uniform and down in Port St. Lucie they would see one of theirs. So the knowledge that the school resource officer would obtain, he could share with the local policing agency. It is something that the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency is probably going to have to tackle this year - and if not this year, in years going forward - to try and maintain this program in their schools. Based on what he has heard here today, he thinks that will probably be an unanimous decision. That is the best update that he can give them on their conversation.

Chairman Smith said understanding (the chart), the 0.36 means that is about quarter time that those deputies rotate between about three different schools. So 0.36 how much time they spend there, 1.00 is full time, and 0.50 is half time of coverage.

Commissioner Becht said one thing he did not say and he does not like advertising it, he likes staying positive about their community, so he will say it in a positive way then. The impact that the SRO program has had in fighting the gang issue and keeping that problem nipped in the bud as much as it has cannot be underestimated. It is very important to that issue. He knows each of them will commit to trying to do the best they can with the limited budgets that they are going to have.

County Commissioner Coward said he was just going to appeal to the City of Fort Pierce. He does not believe the City of Fort Pierce has traditionally partnered in funding for the SRO program. He could be wrong, but that is his understanding. They have talked about a lot of needs. This is clearly one that he has supported for a long time. He would like to see Fort Pierce come into the fold and help share in these costs.

Mayor Benton said he thinks that is going to be their intent. The City, like everyone else, feels if their kids are not safe in school, how are they going to learn? It is unfortunate that their Legislature once again, this is something that they have created for them to deal with locally. Fort Pierce has been struggling over the years reducing their taxes and working with the Sheriff's Department. In the future, it looks like something that they are going to have to pick up and work themselves. The concern he has is the schools that are outside the FPRA's boundaries. There is not but a few of them, but those are the ones that they are going to have to look for the funding in the capital budget or in the general fund, which is not going to be easy.

Commissioner Sessions asked what is Port St. Lucie doing right now in terms of contributions?

Mayor Benton said they have always done it themselves. He believes they have spent over \$1 million a year.

Commissioner Becht said no. If he remembers the figures correctly, he thinks Port St. Lucie contributes \$800,000 and then the School District pays \$800,000 towards that. It is like \$1.6 million that is the cost of that program, but they are picking up \$800,000 of it. He thinks the same thing is true with the Sheriff's Department, whatever they kick in, the School Board matches up to... He forgets what that number was.

Commissioner Sessions asked is it a financial contribution or do they actually use their city police officers?

Commissioner Becht said they actually use Port St. Lucie police officers. That was his point, to his knowledge they are not using Fort Pierce Police officers in Fort Pierce schools, and he thinks they miss something by... Well, they miss the expense. He does not criticize those that came before him, but they also miss an opportunity for the Fort Pierce police officers to connect with the youth and know a little bit more about what is going on. Commissioner Session said he does not think the question is can they afford it, but can they afford not to when they look at what is going on in their schools. In the State of Florida, kids are no longer bringing brass knuckles to school, but they are bringing weapons, guns and knives, to school. This is an item that they cannot take lightly in terms of protecting their young people and allowing them to obtain an education in a safe environment. He personally, if it is something that the City needs to look into, if the County is trying to get away from it, he thinks they do need to take on their fair share of the weight in terms of funding these officers, at least from a standpoint within their municipality itself.

Commissioner Coke said first off they need to find a way to do this. It is beyond her comprehension how their society has evolved to where they must have police officers in the schools. Her mom used to go to school the first day of every year and tell the teacher - you have my permission to beat my daughter. That does not happen, it never did, but the thought was there it might possibly. The Mayor was out of town a few weeks ago and she went with Mr. Beach and had lunch with the School Board, Port St. Lucie, Commissioner Smith. They all had a brief discussion that touched on this. She thinks the concern level was expressed by Mr. Anderson from the County that although they were budgeting for this year, they did not think that they would be able to support it for next year. Port St. Lucie echoed that concern. Fort Pierce said they did not think that the Chief put it in his budget, she would be surprised to find out if he had. And there was some talk of possibly establishing a MSTU for this purpose. She does not know legally, when they look at

funding things through the FPRA, it is supposed to... There are all kinds of things they have to cross and things they have to dot in order to be able to utilize that. She does not want to jeopardize the possible legalities of the FPRA. She knows the money is not in the City's general fund. She thinks maybe they need to think outside the box and find a funding source that will be universal for this and this alone.

County Commissioner Lewis said that something Commissioner Sessions kind of bothered her, he said if the County is getting away from this. It is not so much that they want to get away from it, it is that they are having the same sorts of difficulties everybody else had. If they look at the chart, Port St. Lucie Police have covered some of the schools for a long time now. She knows in Port St. Lucie High School there is one of each - a Port St. Lucie officer and Sheriff's officer. In some of the K-8's they are doing the same thing. If they look at the chart, they can see that they have participated. This year the question is not do they want to get away from it, but how can they continue? She thinks the discussions that she is assured have been going on among her colleagues and various groups, the Mayor's groups have discussed it, and Commissioner Becht was just saying he is part of a group that has been discussing it. She thinks they are all trying to find a way to make it happen. It is purely anecdotal, but she has a kid that has been graduated for a while; and when she told her what was going on, she looked at her in horror and said she would not go to school anymore if there was not an officer there. She has someone that is just graduating this year; and from what he tells her it has not gotten better in those years, unfortunately it has gotten worse. She personally feels this is something they really need to address. She personally is committed to finding a way. As Commissioner Coke says, maybe they need to step out of the box, they are all trying to do that for everything these days. Quite honestly she guesses they are just asking is there a way they can find a partnership here as they have with so many other things. She thinks that is why it is brought up today. She does not find it to be quite honestly a negotiable item. With that said, they are looking at a horrible budget situation. She does not know how they are going to make it happen, but she personally is committed to making this happen, because she does not know how they can walk away from it. Folks have complained to her that they have friends and relatives that live in other areas and they do not seem to need police in their schools, what is going on? She knows it is corny and she knows it is probably a little bit overstated, but they did not know that they needed officers in Columbine either. She does not want to wait until that happens to discover that they need these folks in the schools. She was talking to one of the Resource Officers who was in a middle school. She is currently working out of two or three elementary schools. She told her that she is most often called into kindergartens and first grades to deal with kids that have just flipped out. She said she would go into a kindergarten and find computers on the floor, desks overturned, and chairs flying through the air. What she told her that kind of horrified her, she said what she does is try to get between the other people in the room to prevent injury.

She asked her, can't she stop the child? She said if she lays hands on the child, she has to be prepared to do something official. What her job is, is to make sure nobody gets hurt until the behavior tech arrives. They have gone to a whole other level when they need that.

The fact that they are even considering eliminating this... She knows they said there were no sacred cows, but this gets as close as they can get as far as she is concerned. She really thinks they need to all collectively, and she knows there are several groups working on it, but she would ask all of them as they are sitting here to all bend their brains on this one and see if they can come up with something. She cannot see how they can let this one go.

Mayor Benton said when they went to the Legislative Delegation in February, he believes that was on of their major items, and he never heard a response one way or the other from them. The sales tax that they are talking about for schools, he does not know what type of revenue, if it is going to be over and above what they are getting now. But is that something that maybe they can tap into for this? He thinks for all of them, this is their number one priority. They know the situation in the schools, he knows they are going to

get there, but it is not going to be easy. But is this something that they could maybe add to that? How do they get there? He would imagine that every city and county in Florida has the same problem.

County Commissioner Lewis said she hates to speak for the School District, she wishes somebody was here. But the last figures that she heard quoted, the sales tax was not going to reach the cuts. She heard that they are now 50th in school funding in the nation.

County Commissioner Grande said this is maybe a discussion that they should have with somebody from the local delegation. Weren't they the folks that were going to hold the schools harmless from this kind of stuff?

County Commissioner Craft said he wanted to point out to Commissioner Coke that is had to be the region, because he grew up with the officers in school. It was something he grew to expect.

Commissioner Coke said she is sure Brooklyn was a lot safer.

Commissioner Alexander said when they get to their children, he does not know how they are going to deal with it. He knows the Sheriff's Department has done a wonderful job and he knows they are going to continue to do with the support of the surrounding cities. But their officers carry tasers. He is not going to be in support of anyone going on school campus with a taser that may feel that a child is being unruly and that is his only outlet. He is not making this an issue. But if they want him to support them with the dollars, then he can wholeheartedly. But some of their officers feel they are threatened, they are going to tase. He is not going to be in support of officers being on campus with a taser.

County Commissioner Lewis said they have had resource officers in their schools for a long time and she has never heard of anything like that happening. What she has seen is a kid walking out of a middle school in handcuffs. They have to do something pretty bad to get handcuffed and led away. What she saw was the resource officer with his hand on his shoulder saying - come on, you do not want to spend the rest of your life this way. They do not just pull folks out of the squad room and say go watch the school. These are people who are committed to what they are doing, they are experienced in what they are doing. Like her daughter, she cannot imagine sending kids to school without them anymore.

Commissioner Alexander said he is in support of it. But when they are speaking of having a blue and a green on the same campus, then something goes along with blue that the green does not have. How are they going to deal with that?

Commissioner Coke said she feels unfortunately this is not necessarily within their power to resolve today. First of all, she is concerned about the fact that the state said that this would not hurt their schools. She wrote a letter to the governor, who promptly passed it along to the Lottery Commission, asking where is all their money? She thought they voted for this lottery so they would have a better education system. She does not see that it has gotten any better. And now it is worse. She particularly asked - can they not at least fund school resource officers from this lottery fund? Maybe nobody needs to win \$60 million, maybe they could live on \$58 million and the other money could go back to the schools. She thinks they need to revamp. But she does not think any of them here can afford to hold their breath and wait for the state to come to the rescue. She does not think they can count on the sales tax unless they are responsible for the distribution of it, because it will be collected in this county and sent someplace else. She thinks they as elected officials need to step to the plate and find a solution themselves - whether it is a special taxing district, whether it is a line item budget, whether it is a different kind of comp plan for officers where they volunteer a certain number of hours and then get a certain number of hours of comp time off that is larger than what the pay scale would have been. She thinks they need to definitely look at this as a local problem. It may be statewide, but they need to take care of

what is in their back yard, and let Martin County and Vero Beach and Tallahassee take care of their own backyard.

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The next item on the Agenda was Wastewater Treatment Plant Site: Relocation / City-County Charette Partnership.

Mayor Benton said he believes they have talked about this together at workshops and at their lunches. They need to get going on this and find out how the public feels on some of the ideas that are out there, plan it, and then move that facility off the island.

County Commissioner Craft said he asked staff to put together a financial model to actually show how feasible it would be to remove the wastewater treatment plant from the island. Basically if they can get a \$100 million investment on the property, there is enough tax revenue generated to bond whatever the cost of relocation of the wastewater treatment plant is. He and the Mayor had met with Bill Thiess for lunch. Mr. Thiess said that two years is all it would take to actually remove the plant - and that would be very generous amount of time - if they had the funds to do it. They have actually put together a model to show how those funds could be achieved at no cost to the rate payers of the Utilities Authority.

Mr. Larry Daum, St. Lucie County Economic Development Manager, said this is a model that was done back in February 2008. It is complex, it will require further discussion. He will be more than glad to hit the high points today and then come back and have individual meetings if that be necessary. When they started this, the assumptions that they were given were that they were looking at a 400 room five star resort to be placed on that piece of property. They looked at it in two parts, the first part being the tax implications.

County Commissioner Craft said for anyone that is getting excited about the County is planning on what is to happen with that property, he asked Mr. Daum to start at that just so that they had an idea of a financial model to work from. He is not by any stretch of the imagination saying that is what has to be there, he is just saying that development is going to have to be there of some sort, and a hotel/conference center of some sort would be beneficial to their community. It is obviously a decision that the City is going to make.

Mayor Benton said with public access. It is something that they hope that during the charrette they can throw this possibility out and get public input, if this is the road they should go.

County Commissioner Coward said this is something that they have talked about for years and it really seems to hinge on a critical philosophical discussion and decision the City of Fort Pierce needs to make. What that is in his mind is their willingness to take a piece of land and allow for a private company to lease it in order to generate the revenue. In the past, he has heard several members of the Commission express concern about that, that it should be left as a park and so forth. As well intended as that is, it is never achievable, because they will always have the treatment plant. So does the compromise of allowing for some type of public/private partnership where they retain the land, generate the lease amount, and then get rid of this plant off the island - is that the best compromise? He was just curious whether this City Commission has in fact debated that and come to some resolution. Do they have a position at this stage as whether they are willing to even entertain that possibility?

Mayor Benton said they have not yet. One of the reasons was with the economy going the road it is going and now that development has sort of ceased almost. Fort Pierce Utilities Authority had a goal to remove that facility. Now it is about eight years away. In reality, they needed a lot more customers and they are not getting them now. So it is a time to maybe look at another option. With a charrette coming up, in his opinion, they will hear from the other Commissioners, and it is also a chance to throw it out to the public. Are they willing to wait longer until they have those users? Those 8,000 homes on Jenkins Road are

not reality like they could have been. How do they get this facility moved? Here is an option. Are they willing to give up a good percentage of that property? And it would also probably entail the old trailer park property if they combine the two. It has drawn a lot of interest from developers and everyone else. It is something the Commissioners briefly talked about and it is something they need to think about.

Commissioner Becht said he will entertain a private use of that property and it does not need to be all green, meaning it does not have to be an open space park, in order to achieve the benefit of getting the wastewater treatment plant off of the island and all that means. That has been his position for a while.

Mr. Daum said back to the assumptions. He was not trying to tell them what needed to be done with that piece of property. Obviously, he is just trying to take an assumption here and move forward to see what the impact is going to be to the community. The first thing they looked at was the tax implications. It is their belief that over an 18 year period, this would generate somewhere in the neighborhood close to \$42 million worth of tax revenue. He is also going to point out that it includes the School District and the Fire District in there. If they want to pull those out, they can find out what could be used to fund the facility itself. The second part of this is, they have the ability to run what is affectionately known as the REMI model (Regional Economic Models, Inc.), which is a software package that is used by South Florida Economic Forecasting Partnership. They are a member of that, but they may be soon leaving that organization due to financial situations. But that model takes assumptions of employment levels and types of operations and then explodes that and says this is what should happen within the community, this is what the projections are. To give them some of those numbers, he thinks they are talking about almost 1,000 jobs being created by this, not necessarily just from the resort, but all the things that are impacted - that source where the resort is sourcing their stationery or whatever. That is all taken into consideration. That would generate over an 18 year period somewhere around \$508 million worth of revenue turning hands and creating jobs and creating additional tax and additional structure within the community. He watched the County Commission meeting this morning when they were talking about \$5 million that was going to be done by the City to redo the beach area right there. So there is already being some effort put in against that particular location.

Commissioner Coke said the City has not made a commitment to \$5 million. They had made a commitment initially to partner with the County for \$4.5 million each. The County kind of backed out of that commitment. The City has made a commitment to a \$600,000 immediate fix of the Causeway Park. To the best of her recollection, when the County backed out and said they did not want to put in their \$4.5 million and they did not want to give the City the park, then the City said they are not putting in \$9 million.

Mr. Daum said his point in bringing it up was that park was being discussed and it shows the interest in that particular area. Whether the County is funding it or whether the City is funding it, that was not his point. His point was that there is interest in doing something there. This was just on the other side of it.

Commissioner Coke said she was just letting him know that nobody is funding \$5 million there. She did not want the public to think that.

County Commissioner Coward said he thinks the crux of this issue is that this is workable, it is doable. He thinks a charrette is perfect because he thinks a charrette allows the community to identify what it is that they want to see occur there. And then if they are able to go in partnership with private investors to fulfill the community's vision and generate a revenue stream to make it a reality and to get rid of this plant, they have the ability to do so. He honestly believes that.

Mayor Benton said what he thinks they are looking for today, is trying to set a time frame when hopefully they can jointly fund this Charrette and when that time will be.

County Commissioner Craft said he for one would be happy to try to find the funds to do a joint planning effort for this property. In his opinion, there is no single more important piece of property than that, the potential to the destruction of Indian River Lagoon if that thing were to seep into the lagoon and for the overall property values in that area. There is a higher and better use for that property than a wastewater treatment plant. The only purpose of this model today was he wanted to be able to show the City Commission and his Board that there is a financial model that will work with a minimum financial investment from them. They can make this happen if they have the political will to make it happen.

Mayor Benton said they have options. He knows his Commission is very supportive of this. He thinks what they are looking for is to see if the County is willing to partner. So as soon as they can an answer back. But he knows with the Redevelopment Agency, it is a top priority.

Commissioner Alexander said he heard him say a hotel and a center. He was thinking about past conversations with him or some other Commissioner they were talking about some type of civic center or public place. Is that out the door? Are they just going to go with leasing this property to an outside entity?

County Commissioner Craft said he thinks that is something that needs to be determined in a public process. But his personal vision of this is they need to have a place where they can host major events such as a bio-conference. Right now in order to advertise and promote their research and education park that the County has invested \$10 million in, the State has invested millions of dollars in, and the Federal Government has invested millions of dollars along with the School Board, they promote it by flying out to these different places one event at a time trying to catch as many people that go by. If they had a hotel and conference center where they can actually host an event and have buses there where during the conference they can show their product, they can put them on the bus and drive them out there.

Commissioner Alexander said that is all his concern was, that they are on the same page and they are thinking the same way.

(County Commissioner Coward left the meeting at 4:00 p.m.)

Mayor Benton asked do they have any idea what this Charrette could cost? Do they have any figures from the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council?

City Manager Beach said he believes that they can anticipate a cost similar to what they had with the Waterfront Charrette that they just did. Conceivably less than that, but certainly not more.

Commissioner Coke asked would he like to name a dollar amount?

City Manager Beach said he could, but then they would hold it over him later when he was wrong. He would say \$75,000.

Mayor Benton said see if they can get a figure from the TCRPC. And maybe a commitment that the County would like to partner with them on that.

Commissioner Coke said she thinks they need to have a public meeting and have public input on this project. Secondly, the H.D. King Power Plant is being decommissioned Thursday. And they already have a developer proposing to build something similar - he doesn't have his proposal in - a hotel and possibly a conference center. One point she is going to make, which is probably not the most popular thing, but it would really help all of these things they are talking about having, like convention centers and hotels, if they had an operative airport. They have more square miles in their airport than Palm Beach does

and they do not get planes coming in and out of here. That would really help to develop all of these things.

County Commissioner Craft said he wishes they could just wave the magic wand and make St. Lucie County attractive to a commercial airline. But they do not have the heads in this community to sustain a commercial airport at this time. In the future, they will. But tomorrow, it is not going to happen. It is not going to happen for 20 years. That is just a fact. They cannot make a commercial airline come here. And he does not think the taxpayers of this County are going to subsidize it. That is the bottom line. But when they do the right things... They are an hour from Orlando and they are 45 minutes from West Palm Beach. They are not that far out of the realm of being able to attract these kinds of things. He thinks that with this piece of property, there is just not a more important piece of property. This is more important than the H.D. King Power Plant site. The potential environmental hazards that exist with this are just unbelievable. They have got to make this happen and they cannot wait on it any longer. They have the ability to do it and they have the ability to do it quickly.

County Commissioner Grande said speaking to the airport, if they have a hotel/conference center in place of the plant, if they have the resort destination over on South Beach in place of the sewer plant and the trailer park, as they build their bio-industry and related industries, that is what is going to make them attractive to a passenger scheduled airline. They are not going to get the airline first. They are going to get attractive to them and then they are going to come.

Commissioner Sessions said Commissioner Coke brought up an interesting point with regards to getting an airport desirable to a major airline. He notes that they shared some information with regards to population, he guesses the numbers are not in place. He finds that hard to believe with Port St. Lucie being involved. Being it as it may, could he share that data and information with him personally? He would like to look at it with regards to substantiate his point in not having the numbers in order to get a major airline at their airport.

County Commissioner Craft said he would be happy to. He can set up a meeting with their airport director. That would be great.

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The next item on the Agenda was **Fort Pierce Community Center Building & Lincoln Park Recreation Center Building including Property Adjacent to Center.**

Chairman Smith said the last time the Board of County Commissioners spoke about this item was at their strategic planning session in March. They have taken a look and are really interested in the continued investments within the Lincoln Park community. They were proud to have a few weeks ago a ribbon cutting for the new \$685,000 shell that they have placed on top of those basketball courts. He has been very proud to drive by there in the evenings and see there is standing room only at those courts. It is obviously a great opportunity. With that out of the way, he thinks the next step is that they have been looking and they have been trying very hard to make sure they continue to provide significant investments in the Lincoln Park community because those investments have not occurred there for many years. The Lincoln Park Recreation Center presently is actually a rented space for the Board of County Commissioners from a community organization who built that building more than 50 years ago. He guesses it is a historical structure now. They have been able to rent it from them for awhile. The concept that they had and would like to proceed with is to purchase land adjacent to that area and be able to construct as time will allow - obviously they know what their financial limitations are - to provide a new facility there for their young people and for their young at heart as well. At this point the owner of the property which is adjacent is not interested in selling her property at this time. She did let him and Mr. Anderson know that should there come a time when she is interested in selling that they would be the first people who she would come and speak to because she has an understanding and appreciates the need for this type of investment in the

community and she is absolutely willing to be a partner with them at some time, just that time is just not today.

Ms. Faye Outlaw, Assistant County Administrator, said that is the point that she wanted to have him explain to both bodies. At their strategic planning, she thinks the consensus direction from the Board was to keep the funding that they had for acquisition of that property in the budget and push out the plans for the capital part of that to 2010/2011. Mr. Anderson had been working with Commissioner Smith in those discussions with the owner, so she wanted both bodies to hear directly from him and how those discussions had gone.

Commissioner Alexander asked who had these conversations with the owner? He also had a conversation with that owner and the owner said she is just not going to give her property away. This was already budgeted for \$459,000. Other entities had offered her \$600,000 for it. She feels she is being shafted by the County. He does not know why anyone may have this idea that there is no valuable property in the northwest section. For the last 20 years if they have made this part of the community desolate because of haven't done things in that property, he thinks that \$685,000 project that the County put there should have put some value in that community. For him to continue to hear saying that a certain portion of the community does not have valuable property, he resents it and he won't be part of a conversation about his district that is some type of dilapidated portion of the City that does not have properties such as this with a structure on it. How much property is that, do they know?

Chairman Smith said he thinks it was a little less than three acres. To his points, he appreciates them very much. All he can say is that obviously they share the same district and he absolutely share in his concerns and he knows that the property owner had those concerns as well when she raised them with himself and Mr. Anderson. What they said to her was that they had an appraisal from a year ago that appraised at \$310,000. It was a low appraisal. However, they spoke with the property owner at that time and asked her to please go out and get another appraisal; and if her appraisal comes in at a different number, the County can then take a look at that appraisal and make some decisions regarding the number they are offering. This year they went back to their appraiser, they were given direction to do that. They went back and checked with the appraiser to see if that number would hold; and in fact, they were very nervous that it may not hold. They received the information in April 2008 that number did hold, that \$310,000 was still the number. In the meeting he and Mr. Anderson had with the property owner, they received word that she was considering going ahead and getting that second appraisal, and he looks forward to receiving that appraisal and seeing those numbers. He shares his frustration in the idea of believing that a three acre parcel can appraise at \$310,000, but he is not a professional appraiser so he will not attempt to say yea or nay to that number. But he does hope that the property owner does get that appraisal. At that time, she and this Board as well with the assistance from the City of Fort Pierce will be able to take another look at this piece of property.

Commissioner Alexander said the thing that bothers him is the structure on that property, he thinks he heard the cost of that value of that property was like \$75,000. He is sure they get a nice rental out of that property on an annual basis. And to replace a building or structure as that, he thinks he heard the number something like \$75,000 for that building. He gets different things from that owner and she is upset more so than anything that someone is taking advantage of her. He brought it before his Commission, he does not know if it was the City or whether it was the FPRA, but they were supposed to look into that for him. He has not heard anything back from them. He does not know if there was an appraisal done on that property. What was the decision to do about that property?

Mayor Benton said when government has appraisals, and if the party has an appraisal also, then they might have a third appraisal; but they are only legally allowed at the most to go

10% over that appraisal. Anything over that is illegal for government to do. That is the situation they are in. He has heard it from the attorneys.

Commissioner Alexander said he does not want to hear the attorneys today. He wants to hear it from the level-minded people today that they are not going to sit here and allow a property that has been in destitute, which is the St. Lucie County has the Recreation Department, the whole surrounding area is a recreation park. And they are telling him that for them to want to purchase that property and put \$2.5 million building there, it is beholding to him how they can just take advantage of someone. If they say that is all it is worth, then he is through with the conversation.

Chairman Smith said he does not know if it is possible for the City through the FPRA, if they would consider having an appraisal done on the property as well. He can share with them the name of the appraisal company that they have used. If the appraiser that the City usually uses would appraise that property as well, they may find that there is a discrepancy or they may find that this number is in line. Either way, both boards will have a comfort level that is achieved by the actual number that is being presented. Would that be amenable?

Mayor Benton said they can put it on the agenda for the FPRA to look at having that appraised.

County Commissioner Lewis said what they probably have here is a function of the market which has behaved very strangely. She just spoke to a friend of hers that sells real estate and she is routinely telling anybody that calls her about sales at this point in time to hold onto it, because it is a buyers market right now, they can get incredible deals out there. Quite a few of them are selling really large houses, nice properties for really reasonable prices. She thinks what they are probably looking at is, if the price that this land owner was given was a year or two ago, it very well might have been twice what it is now, unfortunately that is what has happened. She certainly would support getting another appraisal so they could all be assured. But she personally does not doubt that is what has happened to the value of the property. And she knows it has nothing to do with where it is, because it is happening all over. Prices in Tesoro have dropped like a stone.

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The next item on the Agenda was **Parks within the City of Fort Pierce Maintained by St. Lucie County and update on Parks MSTU.**

Commissioner Sessions said this is an issue just as dear to him as operating their own Police Department, operating to some degree their own parks and recreation. He has done his homework in terms of what the consensus has been in the past with regards to his predecessors on this issue. The City Commission appeared to be somewhat split on whether or not this was a responsibility that they wanted to take on, from looking at the history of this issue. He may be breaking vote in order to make it happen from he looked at in terms of the Minutes of the meetings. He does not know what the County's position is, but it certainly is something that he would like for them to entertain. The County Commissioners should be rocking back smiling, based on the fact that he is coming here and saying that perhaps the City wants to take on their parks in light of what is going on right now. But it is a serious issue for him that he would like to see the City perhaps entertain and take on the responsibility of doing so. So he requests that they find out what the operating cost was, what the inventory was within the City itself, and the funding source or sources of revenues that the County uses in order to operate these parks within the City.

Commissioner Coke said she wants to thank her esteemed colleague for putting this on the agenda because she kind of got tired of doing it for the last seven years. Interestingly they have some other information provided to them related to the Parks MSTU that shows that the City of Fort Pierce's percentage is about 12% or 13% of the MSTU that is collected within the taxable base when it is broken percentage-wise. When she looks at the

County's Parks & Recreation budget for 2007/2008, there is \$22 million total for parks and \$2.47 million total for recreation. She understands that budget is down 17% from the previous years, according to their figures. The level of concern that she has is, not that they are not doing their very best, but Fort Pierce is contributing 13% to 14% of the tax revenue based on the MSTU figures; however, the budgeted amount that the County is spending on parks and recreation in the City of Fort Pierce works out to a little under 4% a year. She understands that the push is now that they should handle what they can through the FPRA and she thinks that is something that the City is going to need to bite the bullet and do. Her concern is then, she thinks they need to tie this all in altogether. If the County is not going to or does not want to spend a proportionate amount of revenue collected, if they are telling her that in the parks MSTU, that 13% of that is population versus tax, to the City, then they need to be spending 13% of the County's Parks & Recreation budget on the City parks, and they are spending 4%. She thinks they either need to step to the plate and give them their 13% worth of work in the parks; or they need to find a way to reallocate the funding that is in the Parks MSTU, which she understands is for capital improvements, and let everybody pay a little bit more their fair share for the County facility at Lawnwood Stadium which is located in the City, and the City needs to bite the bullet and find a way to fund their own parks and recreation department.

County Commissioner Craft said he has been trying to get his Board to give the City their parks for two years. He does not think it should be the County's responsibility to take care of little small pocket parks within the City limits. They are a County government, they should be tasked with regional facilities only and those that are in the unincorporated County. If it is in the City limits and the City wants those, as far as he is concerned the City can have them. He does take a little bit offense. He does not know that her numbers are completely accurate because Fort Pierce gets the lion's share of the parks. The County does not have parks in Port St. Lucie that they take care of other than South County Stadium, if he is not mistaken.

Commissioner Coke said she is looking at their 2007/2008 budget - Parks is \$22,012,486 and Recreation is \$2,470,586, which works out to \$24 million. And they are telling her that they spent \$1.4 million in the City of Fort Pierce.

Ms. Debbie Brisson, St. Lucie County Parks & Recreation Director, said she believes those numbers that she has might include the MSTU capital dollars and is not just based upon the actual operating for the parks and recreation department.

Commissioner Coke said no, she is looking at Parks & Recreation, printed off of the County budget, for fiscal year 2007/2008.

Ms. Faye Outlaw, Assistant County Administrator, said she thinks Commissioner Coke is looking at maybe information from the budget and what is provided in their backup today. Under that item is the MSTU budget only.

Commissioner Coke said the only thing she brought up regarding the MSTU is, in the MSTU figures they are telling them that their percentage of income dedicated to Fort Pierce should be about 13%. When she is looking at the budget figures is what she is looking at here.

Ms. Outlaw said she thought they had actually provided backup on the MSTU - what was budgeted and going to the City from the parks MSTU.

Commissioner Coke said yes, but she was not looking at that one. What she is looking at the Parks and Recreation St. Lucie County, Fiscal Year 2007/2008 Budget, which is showing her about \$24 million, out of which the County is spending \$1.4 million.

Ms. Outlaw said she does not have the budget document or that piece that Commissioner Coke is reading from.

Commissioner Coke said the reason that she brought the budget figures that she received into play is, if they are looking at the MSTU at a 13% level, then she would think that the regular budget for Fort Pierce should also be at a 13% level. Here is \$24 million and the figure she just gave her for Parks and Recreation for the City of Fort Pierce is \$1.4 million.

Ms. Brisson said the actual budget for parks excluding capital in 2006/2007 was \$5,021,781. She believes they have a combination of capital MSTU, all of the capital outlays in that \$22 million. And then in recreation, the actual monies spent for operations of personal and operating for the County in recreation in 2006/2007 was \$2,129,000. That is for what they would consider to be typical parks and recreation operations, excluding major projects.

County Commissioner Grande said he thinks the question the Commissioner would really like to have answered is - if they are bringing in \$20 million, how come they are only showing expenditures of \$1.4 million within the City? He suspects that expenditure amount is not the total amount of parks and recreation money that is spent within the City of Fort Pierce since that is where they have most of their parks. On the surface, the quick analysis is this is apples and oranges. But he thinks the City deserves an answer that says of the total amount that is brought in to their expense budget or in their expense budget says is in their total parks and recreation expenditures, that includes operating capital, the whole shebang, how much of that is spent with the City of Fort Pierce? And he suspects that number is higher in order of magnitude than the number that she showed them as \$1.4 million for only those parks that were listed.

Ms. Brisson said that is correct.

County Commissioner Grande asked would she like to take a shot at what the real number is?

Ms. Brisson said she thought the parks and recreation budget, including the Fairgrounds, Tradition, Fairwinds, and Savannahs, was somewhere around \$14 million a year. It would be difficult for her to give them a number. But she does know in the Parks & Recreation Divisions, the greatest amount of money spent is within the City of Fort Pierce, because that is where the majority of their facilities are located that they manage.

County Commissioner Grande said he absolutely believes that statement is correct, he knows it is. Perhaps not right here right now, but they need to be able to provide the Commissioners with a breakdown that shows that it is true.

Ms. Outlaw said she thinks that is a good idea. But let them look at the numbers so they can pull factual numbers and certainly give that information to the City, so that they are operating on facts here as opposed to memory.

County Commissioner Lewis asked is there a reason Lawnwood is not listed? There are soccer fields and ballfields there, and it is not on this list she is looking at. Is there a reason for that?

Ms. Brisson said the reason is, what they were presenting, they concentrated on the regional aspect of what they do. They look to maintain those regional assets and look to get some help in either finding other delivery agents or the City for the smaller pocket parks. So the prices and the costs of operating the regional facilities are not in those numbers, like Lakewood, Lawnwood, etc.

Commissioner Coke said for clarification, what she is saying is that Lawnwood Stadium is a County facility that just happens to be located in the City of Fort Pierce.

Ms. Brisson said it is considered a regional County facility that is located within the City of Fort Pierce, yes. And its numbers are not in the numbers they have before them.

Commissioner Becht said he does not want to sound too argumentative, but to follow up on Commissioner Coke's point. They have identified in their \$1.4 million all of the parks that aren't Lawnwood or regional? What other parks do they have that aren't regional that would be in or close to the City of Fort Pierce?

Ms. Brisson said this list of parks before them are non-regional parks within the City limits. There are other pocket parks or smaller parks that are within the unincorporated areas.

Commissioner Becht said he has two Commissioners over here that are whispering into his ear - beaches.

Ms. Brisson said exactly, the beaches as well.

Commissioner Becht said he is not sure he agrees with that, because there is not a sign up that says do not use this beach unless you are a Fort Pierce resident. There are people from all over the County that use those beaches, as ill-maintained as those are. So he too is very interested in seeing these numbers. The County may have the perception that the City is getting the lion's share, but he assures them that is not the perception of Fort Pierce residents. So they need to have the numbers to back up their perception.

County Commissioner Craft said if they look at the screen, every one of these parks are in the City limits. Is that correct?

Ms. Brisson said that is correct.

County Commissioner Craft said they do not have \$1.4 million that they are spending to maintain parks in Port St. Lucie, no where near it.

Commissioner Alexander said Port St. Lucie has their own recreation department. How much does Port St. Lucie receive from the MSTU?

Commissioner Coke said \$29 million.

Ms. Brisson said the Parks MSTU is another Agenda item. But the way the allocation goes on the MSTU is based upon the value of property within the areas as designated. In 2002 when the first allocation was done, the countywide property value was \$9.4 billion, of which almost \$3.4 billion was within the City of Port St. Lucie, or 35.92%. That is why their allocation of funds is greater as well.

Ms. Outlaw said before they start in with the MSTU, and she knows these issues kind of overlap, but she just wants to put the slide on the operating costs in perspective. That is generated from the discussion out of strategic planning where they were looking at the idea of the cities taking over parks within their areas. That is why that information is as it is and it does not include the regional parks, just to put that into context. Ms. Gouin has a presentation on the parks MSTU and is probably the best person to answer because she has that history.

Ms. Marie Gouin, St. Lucie County Director of Management & Budget, said back in 2002, the Board had come into an Interlocal Agreement after the referendum for the Parks MSTU. They have Interlocal Agreements with the City of Fort Pierce and Port St. Lucie and St. Lucie Village. In the Interlocal Agreement, the portion for Port St. Lucie goes back to them and the portion for the City of Fort Pierce is retained by the County to do Lawnwood and Iloos Ellis Park in Fort Pierce and then St. Lucie Village gets their portion. Based on the

Interlocal Agreement, it is based on the taxable value of each municipality. If they look at Port St. Lucie, the total countywide total value in the County back in 2002 was \$9.4 billion. Port St. Lucie was \$3.3 billion, Fort Pierce was \$1.2 billion, St. Lucie Village was \$32 million, and the County portion was \$4.8 billion. Based on that, what they did according to the Interlocal Agreement, was to do a ratio based on the property values, the total value of each entity. And that is how they came up with these percentages and that is how the dollars are distributed. They are to look at that every three years. They changed the numbers in 2005 based on the property values that they got from the property appraiser in July. The property values in 2005, the total countywide values were \$17 billion. Port St. Lucie was \$8 billion, they had grown a lot, and Fort Pierce was \$1.8 billion. Again, this proration was done in the same format. Like she stated before, the allocation for Fort Pierce was to do Lawnwood and Ilois Ellis Parks, and that is what parks and recreation has been doing. They went through and seen how much the collection has been since the first collection that they received in FY 2003/2004 for Fort Pierce. As they can see, the actual revenues that they received was \$318,000, the expenses was \$149,000, and there was a balance of a surplus of \$168,000 that year.

Commissioner Coke said to reiterate, Lawnwood is a regional facility that happens to be located within the City limits of Fort Pierce. She voted against the Interlocal Agreement as written. Originally, the proposal that they has was that they were going to give 50% of the money collected to the County to utilize for Lawnwood and the other 50% they were going to have a committee of the City of Fort Pierce to have input into which parks throughout the City they would spend those funds on. And somehow when it came back, it was the City got \$600,000 for Ilois Ellis Park and the rest of it was going to Lawnwood. Just for point of clarification, can she tell her how much money the City of Port St. Lucie and St. Lucie County and St. Lucie Village have expended towards Lawnwood Stadium regional facility?

Ms. Gouin said zero to her knowledge.

Commissioner Coke said so the entire burden of the renovations of the County's regional park is being borne by the funds that are collected from this MSTU from the residents of the City of Fort Pierce.

Ms. Gouin said based on the Interlocal Agreement, yes.

Commissioner Coke said the answer does not make her at all happy. It concerns her because she would much prefer to be in an Interlocal Agreement where everybody was being treated equally. She does not think Fort Pierce is being treated equally since they have no say in what happens at Lawnwood Stadium or the planning of it or the utilization of it, and yet their citizens are paying for this. She would love to revisit the Interlocal Agreement, rather than recommending... There is a termination clause that if they give 12 months notice, that after the first of the year following the City giving notice to the County, the Interlocal Agreement would be terminated and then those taxes would not be collected within the City of Fort Pierce. She really does not want to get to that point. But she also really does not think it is fair that a facility that is being used by Port St. Lucie, the County, and most often for things that come from all over the state that brings tourists here. And yet their tourism dollar, they only have one-third of one cent being spent north of Midway Road and they are trying to take that away from them. She has a lot of problems that Fort Pierce is paying for this facility to bring in tourists, bring in sporting events, the tourist development money is going back down to Port St. Lucie, and Port St. Lucie is paying nothing towards this facility.

County Commissioner Grande said he is not sure they are reading the figures correctly. It shows the amount that they are bringing in and it shows the amount that they are spending at Lawnwood. And certainly in years subsequent to 2003/2004, they were spending a whole lot more on Lawnwood than they have collected through the MSTU in Fort Pierce. So he thinks the statement that was made quickly, perhaps in misunderstanding the

question, that Fort Pierce has paid for the entirety of the maintenance of Lawnwood, he thinks that statement is not right. He thinks the chart in front of them demonstrates that the overwhelming bulk of what has spent on Lawnwood comes from funds other than the MSTU collections in Fort Pierce.

Commissioner Coke said she believes what has happened was that parks money was bonded out in order to complete that facility; and from the audit that they received from the MSTU, it is looking another six or seven years down the road of the City of Fort Pierce MSTU dollars going 100% to repay that bond.

County Commissioner Grande said what he is saying is, the converse is not true. That is, they are paying more for the bond. They are paying more for Lawnwood than what they are collecting in the Fort Pierce portion of the MSTU area.

Commissioner Coke said with all respect, the County should be because it is their facility.

County Commissioner Grande said right, so they are in agreement there.

Commissioner Coke said they are not in agreement because she does not think Fort Pierce should be paying 100% of what they collect going towards the County's facility. That is where they differ. It should be directly proportional, Fort Pierce should be paying 13%, if they are saying that 13% of the revenues come from them. And Port St. Lucie should be paying 45%. And the County should be paying whatever percentage... Someplace along the line when they agreed to this Interlocal Agreement - and she voted against it - the City of Fort Pierce's parks got the short end of the deal. Because all of the City's money, whether it is proportional or not, all of their money is going towards this. What she would suggest is if the division for 2008 works out at 13% and 35% and 51% or whatever, they should have that exact same percentage of Fort Pierce funding going towards Lawnwood and the remainder needs to go towards the other parks in the City of Fort Pierce. They have beach parks that are falling down around them, they have a Veteran's Park that is desperately in need of work. She was very hopeful when they passed this MSTU that they would be able to clean up the parks in the City. And they have done nothing, other than one park and Lawnwood Stadium.

Chairman Smith said he knows this item is near and dear to her heart. But if she would do him a favor, because he really does want to help explain or do whatever he can do to help make this positive. They have kind of flown through and they have hit a snag here. He thinks obviously something they need to deal with. If Ms. Outlaw can arrange it so Mr. Anderson and County staff and himself can get with Commissioner Coke and they could make sure they have all the numbers out and available, along with the Parks & Recreation Department, to make sure that she has that comfort level to understand exactly what is going on with these dollars. He thinks it is going to be really difficult to get this settled today, as it has been for the last seven years. Let's try to get this settled here in the next month or month and a half if possible, before the County gets into this year's budget cycle.

Commissioner Alexander said include him in that too.

Chairman Smith said he will have individual meetings with Commissioner Coke and Commissioner Alexander and whoever else on these boards that would choose to take him up on that.

Ms. Outlaw said she will be glad to. She has been looking for an opportunity to delegate up to Mr. Anderson, so she will task him with that.

Commissioner Sessions said he is still trying to get an answer to his question. From the County's standpoint, are they interested in relinquishing the parks within the City of Fort Pierce over to the City of Fort Pierce? He has not got any response yet.

Commissioner Craft said yes.

Ms. Outlaw said yes.

Commissioner Sessions said he appreciates it. Now he must work on his City Commissioners.

Ms. Outlaw said there was direction given to them at a strategic planning and they are following up on that.

County Commissioner Craft said in the meeting when staff recommended this, he was the one who said lets slow down a little bit and lets make sure the City is in a financial shape to be able to take on the parks. They may only be able to take on a couple, they may be able to take them all. He wants to give them all to the City, he has no issue with it; but he wants to make sure that they are financially prepared to take it, he does not want to just dump them in their lap, that would be wrong.

Commissioner Sessions said if they had that MSTU funding, they probably could handle a vast majority of it.

Commissioner Alexander said when someone gives him a stepchild and that stepchild is dirty, he does not expect them to give it to him dirty, clean it up, and then he does not mind taking care of it. He does not mind being in support of them relinquishing these. But remember that amphitheater the County sent to them? He is not using that as an excuse. Just clean up their children and then he does not mind, they could be his stepchildren.

Commissioner Sessions said he noticed also they did not include South Causeway Park on the inventory list.

Chairman Smith said because it is next on the agenda.

Commissioner Becht said with the stepchildren parks that Commissioner Craft wants to donate to the City after he cleans them up, would that also include their other big park - the research park?

Ms. Outlaw said no.

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The next item on the Agenda was **South Causeway Park**.

Ms. Debbie Brisson, St. Lucie County Parks & Recreation Director, said this item came before the Board this morning, the Glatting Jackson proposal - the conceptual design that the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency had already approved - they approved today to move forward with the design of that. The County has an Interlocal Agreement with the FPRA to fund the design of that facility. Also they have just recently executed an Interlocal Agreement and the City as of April 1st begun the daily maintenance of the South Causeway Park. The question is at this point, what is left for them to do and what other information are they looking for her to provide?

Mayor Benton said he is getting a headache. He thought they told their staff to start making improvements on that park a month ago.

Commissioner Coke said they have had a group that has been working on this for six years now. As a matter of fact, she thinks she came to the County Commission one day and said lets sign the Interlocal Agreement so they can move forward, and she thanks them all for that. They have a grouping of approximately \$600,000 worth of immediate repairs that are within the realm of what has been proposed by the Master Plan. She believes the Interlocal Agreement says they can do all of that so long as they are not making any changes to that. Mr. Hood has been working diligently on a timetable that hopefully they can begin the process. What they have been talking about lately is how they are going to

stage it so that the work is the least disruptive to the community. Rather than closing the entire park, they are trying to see if there is staging possibilities to it. But they would love it if the County would like to give it to the City, anything east of the driveway in conjunction with the rest of the park, that they would like them to take over.

County Commissioner Craft said yes.

Chairman Smith said he is not interested in turning over the South Causeway Park. He thinks that the County's responsibility. If they can't have beachfront access serve as a regional facility because no one owns the water, then what can they confer and say is a regional facility? That is just his personal opinion.

County Commissioner Craft said he does want to state for the record, every time FPRA dollars are spent, County dollars are being spent. So to say that the County is not making an investment is absolutely not true. They are making a larger investment than the City of Fort Pierce because they are the single largest contributor to the CRA.

Commissioner Coke said she is going to make two points. Number one, when they are looking at their tax rebate check coming back and they are going to get \$1,000 and they are going to buy this lawn furniture and this speaker system, there is only so many times they can spend that \$1,000. If the County gives them x-number of dollars a year, she is very glad, because it betters the entire community. But they can't say that the FPRA spent \$1 million here, that the Courthouse and the FPRA spent this. The FPRA partnered with the County. Their share of that money only goes so far. The same of the City's share of that money only goes so far. If they want to say that they spent their \$4.3 million there, then that is fine, but then they can't say that they spent it over here and over there. There is only one go round. Decide where they want...

County Commissioner Craft said but it is every year that they contribute that money.

Commissioner Coke said she understands that. But it is every year they want to hear that there is four or five different places it went. She really is not looking to argue with him, but what she is saying to him is that the County approached the Causeway Park people, not the other way around. The County approached the City - because she was the one the County approached six years ago - and said they have a plan, would she please go to the FPRA and see if they would partner with them? If the FPRA comes up \$4.5 million, the County will come up with \$4.5 million. They worked diligently for years and years on that plan. And then the County said they do not have the money for it. That is fine. But what she is saying is, if they want them to move forward to implement that \$9 million plan, she can't justify to her constituents and her tax base that they are going to spend \$9 million on a County facility. The same as she gets a lot of flack with them that they are spending all of their Parks MSTU money on Lawnwood Stadium. She understands Commissioner Smith's theory that they ought to have public access to the water and that the County needs to provide that and she agrees. But if they go look at Causeway Park, if she was the County she wouldn't admit that she had been maintaining it for the last 20 years, it is a disgrace. She sees it every day, several times a day. She would venture to say that in a few months when Mr. Hood is done working his little miracles over there, it will be a facility that they will all be very proud of.

Commissioner Becht said he wants to clarify something. His understanding is the County's contribution to the FPRA is under \$5 million. Is that correct? Like \$4.6 million? The largest contributor to the FPRA is the citizens of Fort Pierce, they contribute that money, because their side of that equation is larger than the County's side of that equation. But he is going to thank the County for its contribution, because without that contribution everything they have seen in downtown Fort Pierce throughout Fort Pierce over the last five, six, or seven years would not have been possible. The budget difference that the County sees in terms of having to spend less revenue in and for Fort Pierce is a direct

benefit to their bottom line. As hard as this may be to swallow, their Sheriff's Department is having to spend less time in Fort Pierce than they used to because of the improvements and capital that the City has been able to make because they have helped with this FPRA. He is going to say thank you and everybody ought to focus on what they have been able to do and not gripe so much about what they have not done. Because of the partnership, they have done quite a bit. Thank you.

Commissioner Grande said welcome, he means that sincerely. He thinks it is a very successful partnership. He agrees with Commissioner Becht's point, they should take it as a positive and move forward. Earlier today at the Board's meeting they approved moving ahead with a plan that when it was presented to him he understood it to be the plan that was worked out for the most part with Fort Pierce. He does not think it was the County's plan. Did understand that incorrectly?

Commissioner Coke said if it was the Glatting-Jackson plan, that is the plan that the County Commission... The County got grant funding from FIND. The City of Fort Pierce had absolutely no input into that plan, they were shown it after the fact, after it was done, because she was there.

Chairman Smith said he does believe that the City of Fort Pierce did have an opportunity to review; and it was through citizen involvement that that plan occurred. If Ms. Mushier or Ms. Peck never had an opportunity to see that, he will be quite surprised.

Commissioner Coke said it was after the fact that she and Ms. Peck... After the County had the plans drawn up, they invited her and Ms. Peck to come look at it, and then presented it several times after that to the City.

Mayor Benton said let him give a little brief history. Many years before most everyone up here was sitting here, except for maybe Commissioner Lewis and maybe Commissioner Sessions, he and Commissioner Barnes sat down with a group of people and Glatting-Jackson many years ago and put together a rough draft similar to what they are asking Public Works to do now. This has been in the talking stages for some ten years plus. But he knows they had a Charrette in the old fire station one day, a planning session where they got public input, and he believes this is where this came from. They have been talking about this for years. And he knows it has always been budget restraints. The County put a lot of effort into the west side of the park on the west side of the boat ramp. It is the part between the fire station and the boat ramp that they are looking at today. He knows the FPRA asked their Public Works Department to get going on some expenditures and improvements which they have already started, knowing that there is budget restraints all over. Hopefully they can get through this. They have been on it for some time.

Mr. David Recor, Deputy City Manager, said he believes the plan that presented to the Board of County Commissioners this morning is the same plan that was endorsed and approved by the FPRA. So the City has sort of taken the lead role in finalizing the Glatting-Jackson plan, the overall master plan. He thinks those plans this morning were 30% plans. They are going to continue to move forward in finalizing that Glatting-Jackson master plan. However, there is a short term improvement plan. It is a plan that was presented at their capital improvement workshop earlier in the year, they discussed it in detail at their budget workshop as well. The time frame on that is work over the summer, he believes it will be complete in September. Those involved removing the existing structures that are subject to flooding, putting in a bollard and rope system to keep the vehicles off of the beach area, bringing in some additional beach and fill material, reconstructing the structures, delineating the travelways, providing additional parking. It is a plan that he thinks they will all be very proud of. All of which is designed to be consistent with the overall master plan that Glatting-Jackson is continuing to make progress on. Just so they are aware, they have regularly scheduled meetings with Glatting-Jackson once a month in the City Manager's

conference room. They are meeting tomorrow as a matter of fact. They are all on the same page here. At the end, they will all be very proud of what they end up with.

County Commissioner Grande said so what Mr. Recor has said, based on the Glatting-Jackson plan, is the approval that the County did today is consistent with the City's vision for that park in the future, and the sharing of the costs going forward as envisioned by the approval today is exactly what the City was asking for them to do. Is that right?

Mr. Recor said yes, the plan that the County Commissioners approved today is the plan that was approved by the FPRA. The only funding that has been committed so far is for the design of the park, which is the subject of the Interlocal Agreement. The estimated \$6 million to construct the overall master plan has not been committed.

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The next item on the Agenda was Funding of the Angle Road Sidewalk Project (Orange Avenue to 53rd Street).

Commissioner Sessions said this was something that the TPO Board visited last meeting. Chairman Smith as well as Commissioner Coke sit on the TPO Board with him. This project is something that has been sitting on the back burner going on three to four years from his understanding. They are only talking about \$1.2 million to build some sidewalks to prevent a child from being killed. He would hope that they could be more proactive instead of reactive in what is going on down in Port St. Lucie. It appears from the type of vehicles that come up and down this corridor are commercial vehicles and industrial vehicles. It is bound to happen on that particular portion of Angle Road. He would solicit their support in terms of funding the \$1.2 million if at all possible. They had a grant that was available and the grant provided for \$800,000 of the project, which is a big portion of it. But from what they were told at the last TPO meeting, they may be jeopardizing that grant because they are talking about only funding one-fourth of the actual project, which is on the commercial end near 53rd Street. They are forgetting about what the whole objective was from the beginning and that was to place some sidewalks on this very dangerous corridor to protect children going back and forth in the neighborhoods walking in that Westwood area.

Commissioner Becht said he is going to offer to the County a solution for this problem. He will pledge his vote as a City Commissioner to getting those sidewalks paved if the County will just agree to - since Commissioner Coward is not here to lightly oppose this idea - legislative annexation all the way out to Angle Road. He is serious. They will annex it and they will pave the sidewalks for them.

Commissioner Alexander said if they need to get a second opinion about it, he knows Commissioner Sessions is adamant about it. He has seen the death occur on Angle Road unnecessarily. People are trying to walk out on a grassy area. He is adamantly opposing the way the annexation is going in the City of Fort Pierce on the south - nothing is west, nothing is north.

County Commissioner Lewis said before they have any more dog fights, could they let staff explain what is happening. The project is going forward. They are making it sound as if nothing is happening and that is far from the case. Maybe because some of them do not sit on the TPO or whatever. They have had this before them as a Board several times in the past couple of weeks and funding has been provided for some things and other things are committed. She does not know whether which of them needs to speak, but she would really like to hear what is actually happening before they tear each other up any more.

County Commissioner Grande said he was going to suggest they should have Mr. Powley explain the way this project has been split. He does not believe that anything is actually being endangered.

Mr. Mike Powley, County Engineer, said yes, he concurs with Commissioner Grande's statements. The County has presently \$1.5 million set aside for the construction of Angle Road sidewalk from Orange Avenue completely to 53rd Street. There was some discussion and some TPO approval to partition the project so they can go to construction much more quickly than they would otherwise. But they have \$1.5 million of their own money and they are eligible for and receive \$840,000 of reimbursement funding through FDOT in future out years. It is their intention to go to bid on the first section from Avenue Q to 53rd Street in July; and then follow quickly with the second portion, which is Avenue Q to Orange Avenue, and be done one year from today.

Chairman Smith said Mr. Buchwald can speak about the bigger issue that they have had some trouble with.

Mr. Peter Buchwald, Executive Director of Transportation Planning Organization, said at the last TPO meeting, the Board approved the partitioning of the Angle Road sidewalk project. As FDOT is providing a grant toward the project, the question was does the partitioning jeopardize a portion or any part of the grant? And if so, does that jepordize the completion of the project in any way? The County Engineer just indicated that should the grant be jeopardized at all by the partitioning of the project, that the project will not be jeopardized because it is already funded by the County.

Mr. Powley said they have \$1.5 million presently. They have a grant for \$440,000 for sidewalk. The question is unanswered whether that \$440,000 would be proportioned out for that amount from Avenue Q to 53rd Street. Be that as it may, they are prepared to deal with that. They have \$400,00 solely for the signalization of Avenue Q. So at risk is perhaps \$200,000 of the \$840,000. But the County has been intending to fund this from the beginning. It was only later during the design process that they became aware of FDOT grant funds and they went after those, but they were not part of their initial package. They intended to do this on their own nickel if need be; but if they have grant funds available, then they chose to pursue them.

Commissioner Alexander asked what is the cost of the total project?

Mr. Powley said their engineers estimate as of May is \$1.85 million with a 15% contingency. He thinks those figures might be a little high. Engineers have been working so they are not surprised in a negative sense. He suspects they will come in at or under budget at the \$1.85 million estimate.

Commissioner Alexander asked that is from Orange Avenue to where?

Mr. Powley said Orange Avenue all the way to the near side of the bridge at 53rd Street.

Chairman Smith said he brought this up at their last TPO meeting and they discussed it. But the frustration his board is beginning to hear a lot, is that because they are dealing with state issues, they are also dealing with the historical nature of some of the homes in the area. Because to be able to get reimbursed for the funding that they are going to put out, they need to make sure that none of those structures are historically significant. They have some brownfield issues in that area. At Angle Road and Avenue D, they are looking at some potential brownfield issues there. And even for sidewalk, they have to find their way to be compliant to those instructions that are going to be required of them there. He absolutely shares their frustration that they are now in year of three of this sidewalk. Their Board just got information today that they are going to have a similar issue with the Weatherbee Road and Midway Road sidewalks that they are attempting to build there as well. These are State issues. He asked his Board earlier today if there was a way for them a letter to the FDOT Secretary and alert FDOT to the issues here regarding how long it is taking them because of state mandates on the way that they construct these sidewalks, and at least see if there is anything that they can do, any allowances or ways they can get

beyond the drafting and beyond the design phase and actually get to implementation and building.

Commissioner Sessions said as far as the State is concerned, he understands that they have requirements and they put them under the auspices of environmental impact and historical impact. In his opinion, that is a bunch of bureaucracy. At any rate, it is going to take someone losing their life on that corridor. From what Commissioner Alexander is saying, it has already taken place. He guesses it is going to have to take place again when one of those children are killed. Then perhaps the County will abandon going through the bureaucracy of trying to fund a \$1.8 million project that he feels needs to be given some serious consideration and fund it aside from waiting for these state dollars.

Chairman Smith said once again, they have done that. That is why they are moving towards the Avenue Q/53rd Street segment, so now they do not have to worry about all of the State issues on the Orange Avenue to Avenue Q side. They are in the process of doing that right now. Would the City Commission be interested if he and the Mayor were to write that letter together to the FDOT?

Mayor Benton said he is sure they would. They will have it for discussion on their next agenda.

County Commissioner Grande said before they write the letter, he would ask that they look into the historical side of it because he thinks there may be some level of misunderstanding. They seem to be getting static about anything over 50 years old; and he suspects that the State's real regulations apply to buildings or lands that have already been designated. Somewhere there seems to be an assumption that 50 years old is equivalent to designated and he does not believe that is true. He thinks they are making a mistake and shooting themselves in the foot. If they can square that away, he thinks things would go a lot quicker.

Mr. Powley said he will concur with Commissioner Grande. This is a moving target. In the last three weeks, they have learned much on this Angle Road project. The historical structure is no longer an issue, that is behind them.

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The next item on the Agenda was Funding Request for State Road A1A - U.S. #1 to Blue Heron Boulevard.

Commissioner Coke said back in February she went in front of the TPO and they agreed unanimously to allow the City to bring forth a recommendation to reallocate some funds from FDOT so long as the projects were within the City. She accidentally missed the March meeting. She spoke to them again at the April meeting. And once again they had a motion that were the County to agree with the following reallocation of funds, that the TPO has already approved it. Let her point out that this is a reallocation of funds either for engineering or budgeted right-of-way for a project along U.S. #1 that has not been budgeted in the 2030 plan. FDOT is looking to buy property now, but there is no plans or funding available to do the project. On behalf of the City of Fort Pierce, she is requesting the County Commission agree to allow the City of Fort Pierce to reallocate \$650,000 budgeted for preliminary engineering for 6-laning U.S. #1, reallocate \$7,007,000 budgeted for right-of-way acquisition for U.S. #1 from Midway Road to Edwards Road, and reallocation of \$1.88 million budgeted for right-of-way acquisition for U.S. #1 from Midway Road to Edwards Road. If the County will agree to this, they will be able to finally finish the A-1-A project. They have Phase 1 done. They are going to have Phase 3 done. They have the contract in place ready to be let on the middle phase that they cannot do until they get this funding reallocated.

Mayor Benton said they need their support.

County Commissioner Craft said they will be happy to support it.

Mayor Benton said the price of this project has gone from \$12 million to \$19 million. They need to get it done. The price of underground utilities, just in the planning stages, has almost doubled also. They do not want that to go up even more. If they can have the County's help on this, they would appreciate it.

County Commissioner Grande said the middle piece of the A-1-A project that they are speaking about here is clearly of higher priority than any of the areas that anybody is considering reallocating from. He hears his younger friend enthusiastically saying yes. He may not totally agree with the sources; but whatever sources the City chooses since this is a City project, it is their choice and he would support them.

Ms. Faye Outlaw, Assistant County Administrator, asked is this something that needs to come to them on a formal...?

Chairman Smith said it would have to come to the Board for formal approval, yes. He will absolutely take a look at it. He has not had an opportunity to talk with the Growth Management Director and with Mr. Buchwald, now the TPO Director. He will be happy to sit down and chat with them. He does not mind this coming before the Board for a vote; and when it does, he will have the information that he needs to make a decision.

County Commissioner Grande said he would actually volunteer another \$11 million from another project.

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County Commissioner Craft said he really dreads doing this, but he has to ask their indulgence and ask everyone if they can back up for a minute to the **Parks** conversation again. The idea of turning the parks over to the City and what Commissioner Alexander talked about with the dirty stepchildren, he is trying to provide some opportunity to bathe those kids before the City takes them. He is offering to maybe split some of the costs of that first year, what they would be putting into operating costs and personnel, to help the City get the parks to where they want them and then they are on their own for the following year. If staff could work together and find a happy number that their boards would support.

Commissioner Coke said it sounds reasonable to her.

Commissioner Alexander said as long as he leaves the door open, so they may be able to come back and knock on the door.

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The next item on the Agenda was **Public Comments**.

**Ms. Marjorie Harrell** said the only reason for being here today was to hear their plans for the Lincoln Park Recreation Center and acquiring the land, as the County said in their strategic planning workshop, in order to be able to move recreation into the future. As they well know and they mentioned this afternoon, the current building was built by citizens in the community selling fish sandwiches and potato pies. They cannot do it that way no more. They have used this building and it has not been increased in size, yet the community has increased. It is not sufficient for even housing a summer program. The summer program that they are going to have right now, all the slots are filled. There are people calling and parents asking what are they going to do, the recreation center is already filled. They are already using F.K. Sweet Elementary for the middle school program, that program is filled also. Her organization, along with the Historical Society of St. Lucie County, had a program last summer where they housed 75 students off of a lousy \$17,000, but they made it work. They are not doing that this summer because it was too stressful. They cannot do it without funds. Something happened over the weekend where three of their kids possibly - she has not checked it out yet - but there is a situation that might have happened with three students and school is not out yet. She will check that out tonight and then she will let them know. Her heart is heavy right now, wondering what is

going to happen to their kids this summer if this is already taking place and school has another one to two weeks. Her concern is that they need... It is not a matter of the lady wanting to sell the land, she is not interested in selling the land, she did not put up a sign saying - land for sale. They know they need to acquire that land in order to move recreation into the future for kids who use that center as a safety net. It is a safety haven for them. She knows that they can make things work when they want to make them work. She is asking her Mayor and her representative who is the Chairperson, they all get together and make it work. She wants to tell them about Juneteenth because that is coming up soon. She will be back to tell them more about Juneteenth when she gets her proclamation that she always gets each year. Isn't it ironic that this year on approximately March 21st, the State of Florida Legislature issued a resolution apologizing for Florida's part in enslaving and the brutal treatment of generations of people and then Juneteenth is coming up now? They are going to make this thing bigger this year. It is going to be held at the Lincoln Park Recreation Center, it is going to be big, they are working with her diligently to get it done, and they are going to be proud of what they are doing. She is asking them this year to show their faces. Let the kids know that their Commissioners are just not people seen on television. They have had events in that community. Just like they are afraid to come there sometimes, she is afraid to go downtown sometimes, she is afraid to go into Port St. Lucie sometimes. Their kids might shoot each other, but they are not chopping each other up and putting them in refrigerators and burying them under the ground. They all have fears and that is part of life. She is asking each of them to come and bring their friends to the Lincoln Park Recreation Center to their Juneteenth, their independence celebration. With the 4th of July, they were still slaves and thrown on the auction box that day. Their independence day, it is not their fault it is in the summertime, that is when their foreparents let them go. She is asking them to show up for that event some time during that day. She works with a lot of organizations, she works with Zora Fest, and she feels comfortable by being with every one of them because she comes to their houses and sits there and enjoys their parties and stuff. She has no problem with anybody. But life is life, and they have to look at what happened in the past in order to make sure they understand why it happened and make sure it never happens again in order to move to the future in harmony.

**Ms. Cris Adams**, President of the Board of Trustees of Heathcote Botanical Gardens, said these comments are directed to all of them on both Commissions, both the City of Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County, and for the staff members of both groups who have dedicated time and effort to their amazing project of the expansion of Heathcote Botanical Park. Many of them have part of this planning from the onset. Some of them came aboard midstream and a few of them are just now getting involved. She assures them that this project will be around long enough for all of them to be most familiar with it. Every important project has a beginning. Heathcote Botanical Park grew from what if beginnings on the part of visionary folks in the City of Fort Pierce. With the what if's still being pondered, the City provided \$85,000 for a master plan of the existing gardens and the adjacent land which, in its completion, will be almost 150 acres of public park and enlarged botanical gardens. This area will connect to additional green spaces to the north and to the south to create an open space and recreation area the size of New York City's Central Park. She was not kidding when she said this project will be around for a long time. Eventually this vision became part of the City's Comprehensive Plan adopted just a year ago. Their willingness to incorporate this vision into the Comprehensive Plan is yet another indication of their farsighted view of the future of the City as the resource in the region for green spaces. It is also a strong indication of their willingness to partner with St. Lucie County and with Heathcote to accomplish this monumental plan. Their vision was so entrancing that it soon included Heathcote Botanical Gardens and the St. Lucie County Commission and staff. Evidence of this is the award of the \$3.3 million grant from the Florida Communities Trust (FCT), a proposal engineered in large part by committed County staff, that will make Phase 1 of the expansion a reality. Certainly this is a mark of collaboration. The land has been transferred from the City to the County ownership. And the check is not only in the mail, but it is in the hands of the City of Fort Pierce, and the City

has committed all of this money to fulfil the grant requirements. To gloss lightly over this accomplishment would be an injustice. Many meetings, many concerns, much time, and considerable work by all parties, staff and volunteers, went into the transfer of this property, the creation of the Interlocal Agreement, and the Management Plan to make this award possible. They are presently reviewing proposals from landscape architects and engineers to provide design services and working drawings for Phase 1. Grant provisions for Phase 1, which is the FCT grant, must be complete within three years. Fundraising is being conducted within the private sector for additional elements to Phase 1. Both the City and the County have given to this project and have supported Heathcote. They could not have done it without the City and the County. They appreciate their help and support and especially their vision. It is a coupling of the best from governmental entities and a non-profit organization, a union not often seen at this level. They also recognize that these are difficult economic times. When there are problems or challenges in this grand scheme, Heathcote is a partner and they are here to help develop solutions. Will there be bumps in the road? Of course. As she told David Recor recently, bumps in the road she can handle, she is not sure about sinkholes. They sometimes have different ideas of how to accomplish their goals, sometimes they have differences about the goals themselves. They are embarking on a lifetime's work. Central Park in New York City is still a work in process 100 years later. With the FCT grant funding, they are in a position to make noticeable changes and improvements to 64 acres to create useable green space in a relatively short period of time. She appreciate this opportunity to tell them publicly, on behalf of the Heathcote Board of Trustees and staff, that this unique project is a testament to their vision, their forethought, and their commitment to making St. Lucie County and this region an even better place to live and work. They look forward to continuing this partnership as the work commences.

**Ms. Susie Caron** said she applauds them for coming together here tonight and making an honest effort to work together for the benefit of our community. She would like to offer a possible option and maybe even a solution. She sat back there wondering how they can keep Resource Officers in the schools. Her daughter is a teacher. She does know the importance of this. Her son-in-law happens to be a detective. She sees both sides every day. As she sat back there, she thought about maybe incorporating or recruiting retired police officers right here in St. Lucie County with creatively incentivising with flexible hours, part time, and subsidizing their incomes. Because with the economy they have now, she thinks that might be a possible option. She does not have all the answers. But maybe that could be a core of something they could as leaders expand on. She thinks it would be a win-win for everybody in their community. She also believes that it is of great benefit, as suggested by them today, to consolidate resources and services instead of triplicating them. Working together is obviously the key. As they spoke about joint purchasing agreements, park maintenance, and many other areas could be fiscally profitable; and if written well in Interlocal Agreements, it actually could be fair and equitable to all parties, and she thinks that would be essential to this. She urges them to continue these meetings, she feels they are beneficial to all of the residents of St. Lucie County.

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The next item on the Agenda was **Questions and Comments.**

Mayor Benton said he would like to thank everybody today for coming and discussing issues that affect both the City and the County together. One thing they did learn from Amendment #1 is the public has told them to cut back, cut the spending. He thinks next time they meet they need to talk more about what they can do when it comes to consolidating the way they work with their parks department and recreation. He thinks by pooling their resources, the public is going to get a lot more than splitting them up. It has worked very well for the last many years. Please, lets take a close look at that, and what else can they pool their resources with now. He thinks that is what the public is demanding they do.

Chairman Smith said on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners, he would like to thank them all for coming down to this part of Fort Pierce to be with them today. They

really appreciate everything that the City Commissioners are doing. As one of their constituents who lives in the City, he wants to say thank you for the way in which the City has continued to grow and shape and is looking wonderful. He hopes together their boards can continue to do the people's business and serve everyone very well.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

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Adjournment.

ATTEST:

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CITY CLERK

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MAYOR COMMISSIONER

