

To: Ed Lavallee

From: John Holic



Date: 3/24/2018

Re: Parks

I will first comment on your page 1 bullet points, one at a time:

The City gave VABI about \$1.25 million over a period of about 5 years to help with the cost of developing the Venetian Waterway Park (VWP). Additional funds for the VWP were obtained from FDOT during bridge reconstruction and agreements with the USACE and WCIND were made for land usage. Most of the work was done with volunteer labor and donations, little to no help from the county that I know of. The county made a deal with VABI that the county would maintain the VWP, both sides, in exchange for VABI building the combined almost 10 miles of trails. Without the VWP on the east side of the intracoastal there would be no connection of the legacy trail to South Venice, Without the VWP on the west side of the intracoastal, there would be no connection to Caspersen Beach, Both South Venice and Caspersen are county properties and VABI did a great service to provide the VWP. You do not see the same participation in Sarasota to extend the Legacy Trail north bound; rather the county wants to take care of it with a bond issue. The county wanting to give Venice the responsibility of the west side VWP is an example of it not living up to its commitments and wanting to arbitrarily discard and agreement for no other reason than to save money in its budget and cause additional burden on the city's budget.

Additionally, I would like to see the county's census of VWP users. What percentage are City of Venice (COV) users versus outside of COV limits.

Chuck Reiter Field should not even be part of the negotiations, other than to require the county to maintain that field to the same level of service as it does with other regional fields. We have a census from Little League that fewer than 10% of the users are COV residents and we have the mapping to show that COV is only 15% of the land area served by the park. If the county does not want to consider Chuck Reiter as regional, that's their problem, data proves that to be a faulty conclusion on their part.

Additionally, I have provided documents from as far back as 1969 where the county virtually forced the enlargement of Chuck Reiter, against the judgement of the city, because it did not want to develop fields in South County. Chuck Reiter was supposed to be temporary and the county was supposed to build a permanent location – another example of lack of follow through by the county. We should assume no responsibility for Chuck Reiter until the county moves the fields off it and then we will take back the park and repurpose it,

The proposal to transfer “local parks” back to the city – I would need to see their definition of local.

The Community Center is a regional use building and should only be considered for city take over as a last resort. I would like to see what the county is charging Englewood, Nokomis and Laurel for their community center. As with all the parks and buildings in this new proposal, we should be given a study of what goes on at that park, what are the hours of operation, **where the users of that facility come from**, how many people or man hours will be needed to run the facility, what projected utility costs will be, what shape the rest room facilities are in, what capital equipment would have to be purchased and what costs are involved in the operation and replacement of that capital equipment.

A contract of only 5 years duration is ridiculous and a waste of time and dollars. Further, their proposal of 5 years termination has to be for cause, after that the 5 year renewal can be terminated for any reason is just a way of saying this will be a 5 year contract. We need to give the users a sense of confidence that this will not happen again, should be a 20 year contract.

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As stated, term should be 20 years with an automatic renewal 10 years. Cause should be defined and a sentence of the contract can be modified with agreement of both parties at any time without termination.

Chuck Reiter, total county responsibility, no time limit for moving it, no city monetary sharing, not even \$5000. Field reverts to the city when little league moves away. Note the agreement in 1969 that was never followed through.

VWP, we don't take it, we have already given a tremendous amount by building it without the aid of county dollars, and they can at least live up to their agreement with VABI.

Wellfield, a 99 year lease, only terminable by vacation by the county or by agreement from both parties. City does not put in another cent and the agreement will automatically renew for 25 additional years if the county is still using the field for the same or similar purposes.

The other points within your proposal for Wellfield are fine

Termination clause in your proposal is fine, with the exception of Wellfield and Chuck Reiter. Those can only be terminated if agreed by both parties or if the current sports move off the field and no other regional activity replaces them.

I do not agree with the city taking over the community center or Hecksher Park. We need to have a census of the park users (residency), ADA deficiencies, cost to operate, personnel required, equipment required, capital outlay, depreciation schedule, plant equipment that needs replacing (sheds, restrooms), etc. We should have this for all the parks, not just those two.

If we do take over parks, it should be in stages, suggested as follows:

Chauncy Howard and Higel --- October 1, 2020

Legacy and Myakka ---- October 1, 2021

Hecksher Park --- October 1, 2022

Community Center --- October 1, 2023

This will give us time to accumulate funds to operate the parks taken over and to gear up with personnel and equipment. Some of the parks also require scheduling and the county should provide us with a program that is compatible with theirs and provide training for the program

One final note, the city retains the final say on any naming of any park or building within the COV limits. The county may recommend, but the city decides.

Finally, I wanted to be on record as stating that I am appalled by the treatment the county has shown 3 cities that happen to be within Sarasota County. I find their action of unilateral termination of the interlocal agreement and their demands to be particularly abhorrent actions and totally contrary to an organization that professes the need to partner with other governmental units. Their action was dictatorial without concern for citizens or municipalities within their borders.

I find their edict and action repulsive. We pay the same in county taxes as the rest of Sarasota County, yet we are given less service followed by slap in the face edicts serving only to balance their budget, not do what is right for the citizens of Sarasota County.

If the county treated the cities with the same respect as they do Charlotte County, we wouldn't be having this discussion. Look at Englewood Sports Complex, a beautiful up to date sports complex. The land area served by this complex appears to be approximately 30% in Sarasota County and 70% Charlotte and other counties. Charlotte and the other counties pay no taxes to Sarasota County, yet they get full service. We pay taxes, yet we are treated as a lower form of life. This holds true for not only the sports fields, it carries over to the storm shelters. Rather than working to resolve problems, the county is making them more complex at a disservice to its residents.