

Minutes of Meeting
Saint Johns County Civic Roundtable
March 14, 2011
Saint Johns County Airport Conference Center

Meeting called to order at 9:05 AM

Minutes from February 14th, 2011 were approved

Treasurers Report – Our treasurer was not present – President Bosco did advise a treasurer’s report would be available at our April meeting.

Guest Speakers

Vivian Browning and Sasha Martin of the North Shores Improvement Association were present and provided a video presentation regarding the progress at the Vilano Town Center. As they celebrate the 25th anniversary as a Main Street Community, here are some of the highlights;

- On January 12th, 2011 a ground breaking ceremony was held for the new 32,000 square foot Publix store that will be opening in early 2012. The new Publix will be a 4 sided art deco style building that will aesthetically enhance the area.
- The building will also contain 8800 square feet of additional retail space. Currently the community is seeking a bank and a “doc in a box” type clinic.
- The new shopping center will serve local residents and will also be available to boaters. Those needing provisions will be able to dock and then shop

Ms. Browning reminded us that the project was a group effort that involved the hard work of the North Shores Improvement Association, Saint Johns County, State of Florida and US government. There was community input on design guidelines and the 40 foot height restriction remains in place. While the economy has had some impact on the pace of growth, the project continues to move forward. With its bookend pavilions, new sidewalks and infrastructure, hopes for a bright future and new growth remain high.

Jamie Alvarez, Coordinator of the new First America Foundation was on hand to share details regarding her work on behalf of the City. Ms. Alvarez was originally a city employee. A few weeks into her tenure, Ms. Alvarez and the City reached an agreement to form a foundation that was funded by and worked in cooperation with City of Saint Augustine. The foundation is able to operate in a more efficient manner. First America will be the party planner for the City and will be responsible for four major events in the next four years and they are;

1. 2012 – Celebration of the Spanish Constitution Bicentennial
2. 2013 – 500th Anniversary of the founding of Florida
3. 2014 – 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act
4. 2015 – Saint Augustine 450th Celebration

According to Ms. Alvarez, all of these events will involve many different groups as well as individual volunteers. The role of First America is to coordinate and develop a spirit of cooperation and not to replace any group. First America will be working closely with the City, County, VCB, Cultural Council, STAR – Move to Florida and other groups. First America was funded with 275K of seed money from the City of Saint Augustine and has a staff of two. First

America operates out of an office at the Saint Augustine Record. Ms. Alvarez can be reached via email at Jamie@myfirstamerica.com

Finance Committee Report

A very detailed presentation on how the County budget process works was presented. That report is attached to the minutes. After the presentation some discussion followed;

- Revenue drives the budget process. The county continues to look at revenue projections in order to determine how much money will be available to them
- There was great concern about the County's credit position. Because of several decisions in the last decade, our credit line is gone. The bond payments are made out of the General Obligation Fund.

Report from Commission Meeting

Three items of importance were shared from the March BCC meeting;

1. Fire Services – The Fire Station at Palencia has 12 new fire fighters. The station will be open and operating for two years thanks to funding from a federal program called SAFER. The good news is the funding is for two years. The down side is that the county is obligated to operate that station after the federal grant dries up. That obligation also coincides with the fire services reserve fund going dry.
2. The county granted a variance to allow Publix a liquor license at Palencia. There is a distance requirement that requires 300 feet between liquor stores. The Publix request was slightly below 300 feet. The BCC granted the request
3. Nocatee mitigation. 1.6 million dollars was spent on sidewalks. There were other projects that have been put on hold. \$5 million remains in the reserve.

Other business-

Assistant County Administrator Jerry Cameron reported the county continues to negotiate on the Fire Services contract. The county is holding firm to correct the overtime issues and will not agree to a deal that guarantees raises. According to Mr. Cameron “an impasse is possible. If that happens the contract would go to arbitration (non binding) and ultimately could land in the lap of the Board of County Commissioners. The BCC would have the final word”.

It was also suggested that reports from committees be scanned and included with the minutes.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 AM