



City of Gainesville

Pegeen Hanrahan, Mayor

November 9, 2009

Mike Byerly, Chair
Alachua County Board of County Commissioners
PO Box 2877
Gainesville, FL 32602-2877

Dear Chair Byerly:

On November 10, 2009, the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners will consider a request to impose an additional two percent Tourism Development Tax to fund the proposed Nations Baseball/Cooperstown Dreams Park Baseball complex. The City of Gainesville's comments do not address the merit of this project but are focused on the need for an open and competitive process to solicit and evaluate potential projects that could be funded through an increase in the Tourism Development Tax.

The most recent time an increase in the Tourism Development Tax was considered, there was an open Request for Proposal process that allowed all interested parties to submit proposed projects. We believe a similar process should be used at this time if the County Commission is interested in increasing the Tourism Development Tax to support tourism and our local economy. This is the best way to fairly identify and evaluate all potential projects to determine those that can provide the greatest positive economic impact.

The City has a significant stake in how funds generated from the Tourism Development Tax are spent since a majority of the tax is generated within the City of Gainesville. The proposal to impose an additional two percent to the Tourism Development Tax would be a 66% increase that should only be approved after an open competitive process to solicit and evaluate all potential projects.

It is in the best interests of Alachua County and the tourism industry to assure that the strongest projects are funded through revenues from the Tourism Development Tax. If the County Commission is interested in expanding this revenue source to support local tourism, the City of Gainesville feels this can best be accomplished through a competitive Request for Proposal process.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Pegeen Hanrahan
Mayor

cc: Gainesville City Commission
Russ Blackburn, City Manager
Randy Reid, County Manager
Paul Folkers, Assistant City Manager
Roland Loog, Director ACVCB
Steve Phillips, Parks/Recreation/Cultural Affairs Director