

**East Gainesville SPROUT Project Task Force
Minutes
Thursday, May 18, 2006
(Revised)**

Multi-purpose Room
Gainesville Regional Utilities
Administration Building
301 SE 4th Avenue

Members Present	Members Absent	Guest and Others	Staff
Stephen Boyes	Mike Byerly	Mayor Hanrahan	Matt Dubé
Phillis Filer	Robert Hutchinson	Ken McMurry	David Flaherty
Linda McGurn	Janie Williams	Larry Teague	Ron Herget
Kinnon Thomas			
Bob Freeman			

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 5:20 PM when a quorum of members was reached.

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion By: Bob Freeman

Seconded By: Linda McGurn

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS REGULAR MEETING

The minutes of the meeting for February 16, 2006 was approved

Motion By: Linda McGurn

Seconded By: Phillis Flier

IV. REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE TASK FORCE

None

V. COMMUNICATIONS

A) Depot Park Phase 1:

Staff reported that the installation of plants around the pond has been completed and the plants have doubled in size. Native birds have begun migrating to the pond area as well.

B) Sports Arena Proposal:

On April 10, 2006, the Gainesville City Commission authorized the City Manager to submit the Martin Luther King Jr. site as the City's proposal to Alachua County for the bed tax initiative. The Depot Park site was initially being considered but MLK site was decided on.

C) Rail Trails:

NW 6th Street Trail: The Office of Greenways and Trails and CSX are continuing work on the purchase of the corridor. No new news to report; the applicable parties are still negotiating

D) Phase 2 Remediation/Stormwater:

The prequalification of thermal treatment vendors has been completed. Plans and specifications are being completed. FDEP and GRU continue to work toward finalizing the RAP. FDEP and GRU are working to fine-tune storm water and remediation work and they are requesting additional information on de-watering during clean-up.

E) Grants and Funding

Recreational Trails Program Grant: Staff has applied for \$200,000 in state grant funds to construct the Depot Park Trail on the west side of the park site. The funding announcement is anticipated by June 30th. *City Commission*: In February, the Commission allocated \$1.0 million to Depot Park from Capital Improvement Revenue Bonds.

F) Former-Rinker Site

The draft Supplemental Environmental Site Assessment Workplan has been completed. Field workers can now assess contamination at the site. Field activities will begin at the end of May and results will be presented at the next regular meeting.

G) Developing and Promoting the Vision and Funding Partnerships

Work is progressing on refining the park concept. Zamia Designs prepared a context plan for moving the Depot Building 30 feet. The design will highlight the historic character as the park is built up.

H) Park Design/Depot Area Master Planning (B)

The Request for Proposals has been released for the Depot Area Master Plan. A study area map was provided in the agenda packet. General government, the CRA and GRU are planning to jointly-fund the master plan project. The selected consultant will develop general land use changes for the area bounded by SW 6th Street, SW 16th Avenue, SE 7th Street and SE 4th Avenue. A consultant will look at how the area can change to work best with Depot Park in terms of the highest and best use of properties in the area surrounding the park. The proposal is due Jun 19th and work will begin on July 1st.

I) Design and Technical Standards

Staff is planning to develop design and technical standards to select park equipment, identify design criteria, and develop more refined designs for the park elements so they can be constructed in phases after the remediation phase. Research is underway to gather information for this task from other parks to help with the long-term guidance of this park. A consultant will likely be hired.

VI. ITEMS (B)

A. Depot Brownfield Area Boundary Expansion (B)

Background: At the August 25th, 2005 meeting, staff gave an overview of the state brownfield redevelopment incentive program. The current brownfield area boundary encompassing the Depot Park site was explained. The Task Force membership asked that the Brownfield Area be placed on the May agenda to discuss a proposed expansion boundary.

A map of the existing Depot Avenue Brownfield Area was included in the agenda packet. Staff exhibited a land use map of the Depot Area. Members discussed how the Brownfield program helps when there is low contamination at a site, but the program does not offer enough incentives (i.e., intangible tax and revolving loan funds) for areas with high contamination and low development interest. Currently there is not high developer interest around Depot Park to declare it a Brownfield area. However, the area on the west side of Main Street (across from the park) should be looked at after the park has been developed. That area, which includes Florida Rock, Pool Chemical, several auto body repair shops, and other industries, has not undergone much environmental assessment, if any. It was suggested that the area is probably contaminated and the Task Force was encouraged to evaluate that area. With developer interest it should be relatively easy to declare that area a Brownfield site. It was also suggested that developers in the area be made aware of Brownfield designations and the potential benefits to them, since this is not something they may be fully aware of. It was noted that the area west of Main Street is immediately adjacent to an existing Brownfield area and redeveloping of this area could increase property values. Member Steve Boyes suggested a website to describe Brownfield designation rules and incentives in simplistic terms as a sort of outreach type initiative for developers.

Member Kinnon Thomas indicated that there may be some negatives to declaring the area west of Main Street as a Brownfield Area to promote redevelopment. He suggested that some of the auto body repair shops located there cater to low-income customers and are able to keep their costs down due to low-cost rent. Redeveloping that area may force those companies to move or lose clientele because of rent hikes. Another negative is that labeling a site a Brownfield Area could have negative repercussions in that the site will always be seen as a contaminated area. Designating sites as Brownfield Areas may scare investors away from the area; however, once sites are selected for redevelopment, remediation can proceed with or without the Brownfield Area designation.

The Task Force decided to not expand the Brownfield Area anytime soon.

The question was raised if the city gets any benefits from the Brownfield designation on the Depot Park site. Staff replied that the city gets tax credits and they can transfer them to other entities with taxable income. Tax credits can be transferred by selling them to a broker or company and the current market value is between 60-80% of face value. In the City's experience, it is difficult to transfer these credits because of the small number of interested parties. The city has talked to brokers and companies but so far no commitments have been made to transfer the tax credits. The city currently has an estimated \$200,000 in tax credits. There is a \$500,000 cap in tax credits per site per year.

It is estimated that remediation will take place at the current site for two years and therefore would receive \$1 million in tax credits.

Motion: If it would be beneficial in terms of gaining more tax credits, it is recommended that the City add additional parcels ("white areas" on the Brownfield Area map) to the existing Brownfield Area.

Motion By: Linda McGurn **Second:** Stephen Boyes **All in Favor:** unanimous

B. Depot Park Concept (B)

Background: On April 10, 2006, the Gainesville City Commission moved to ask staff to review the Depot Park program and bring a report back to the Commission by October 10, 2006. This motion was part of the sports arena discussion. Three years have passed since the creation of the park concept and it may be necessary to re-evaluate the program. Staff has conducted an in-house re-evaluation of the basic park elements and found that they are appropriate with some modifications. These modifications are making more parking available, reconsideration of the skate park location, creating historic context for the Depot Building, and modifying the amphitheater.

A copy of the Depot Park Concept was brought to the meeting and the Staff asked for feedback on which elements are relevant, what needs to be changed, and what needs to stay as it is. Three issues were discussed: increased parking, reconsideration of the skate park location, and modifying the amphitheater.

1) Increase parking: there are approximately 90 proposed parking spaces in the current park concept. Member Linda McGurn suggested that people might be more inclined to stop at the park if there was more visible parking at the front of the park. Member Kinnon Thomas suggested that 90 parking spaces would be enough for the park but not for the amphitheater (estimated seating of 1,000-2,000). It was suggested that GRU property be used for overflow parking, but GRU is currently planning on developing those 14 acres for some type of mixed-use development. For long-term planning, the city should think about building a parking structure in the area. As the Depot Park continues to develop, outdoor events and amphitheater events will take place and this will require additional parking. One suggestion was to shuttle people to the park from other parking areas. On nights and weekends, GRU parking lots are open to the public and could also be utilized as overflow parking.

2) Reconsideration of skate park location: A question was posed as to whether it is a good idea for the skate park to be so close to Main Street. David Flaherty, Director of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Affairs said that initially, the skate park money was reallocated to construct a skate park at the MLK Center because of demand and regulations that prohibited construction of the facility at other city parks. The regulations have since changed and the location of the new skate park is still undecided; however, the skate park can be moved to a different location, or

remain at Depot Park, if needed. Mr. Flaherty said he would not recommend the skate park for Depot Park. Members suggested that perhaps it would be better to have the skate park away from downtown urban areas because of noise and potential damage related to skateboarding. It was suggested that the area allocated for the skate park at Depot Park be turned into extra parking.

3) Modifying the Amphitheater: The amphitheater will be constructed in a multi-phased development. The initial construction of the East Pond will create a bulkhead on which a "show mobile" will be placed until more funding is obtained to create a state-of-the-art facility. Zamia Design designed the grading plan for Phase 2 to create a slope for the amphitheater seating. It is estimated that the completed amphitheater will cost approximately \$1.5 million and will seat 1,000 to 2,000 people (½ fixed seating and ½ lawn seating). Member Bob Freeman suggested sloping the area and using terrace-like seating. Member Stephen Boyes suggested laying a concrete slab for a stage. The amphitheater design phase will incorporate community input. The concept designs for the amphitheater will be forwarded to the City Commissioners when completed.

4) Other: Staff reported that the Gainesville Police Department looked at the Mounted Patrol Unit Substation area on the concept plan to be used as a staging area for weekend and evening patrol. GPD said the proposed area was too small but they have not yet come back with an alternative area.

VII. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

None

VIII. REQUEST FOR AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING, AUGUST 17, 2006

None

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 PM. The next meeting is scheduled on August 17, 2006.