

In May of 1996, Ms. Kris Williams of the Florida Wildlife Care, Inc. met with Commissioner Paula DeLaney about finding a location for a rehabilitation center such as the Sheriff's Posse Grounds (Gum Root Park Property) on NW 39th Avenue.

After meeting with Fl. Wildlife Care, Inc. and St. Johns River Water Management District (which the City has an Intergovernmental Agreement with for management of the Property) City staff received written correspondence from St. Johns on July 29, 1996, stating this property was not appropriate.

On August 9, 1996 the City Manager submitted a memo to Commissioner Paula Delaney with the correspondence from St. Johns determining the rehabilitation center is inconsistent with the St. Johns Intergovernmental Agreement and not appropriate for that location.

On December 3, 1996, the City Commission received an update from the Assistant City Manager on the status of the request for property to lease and informed the Commission that Gum Root Property was not able to be used for this type of activity.

Staff met again with Florida Wildlife Care, Inc. to see if another tract of land could be used to meet their requirements. Florida wildlife Care, Inc. was asked for land requirements which staff received on March 6, 1997 (which also included hook up, buildings, utilities, etc.).

On April 2, 1997, Commissioner Bruce Delaney received a letter from Fl. Wildlife Care, Inc. requesting a temporary facility to run the rehabilitation center that they could have access to a phone, electric, water, and sewage.

In May 1997, staff visited the various City nature properties with Fl. Wildlife Care and in June recommended the Conant property to be pursued based on interest from Fl. Wildlife Care. Fl. Wildlife Care was then instructed to get with First Step outlining their project site, and list of needs for this facility.

On October 16, 1997, Mayor Commissioner Bruce Delaney received a letter from Fl. Wildlife Care requesting the City Manager answer questions on the property lease process, receiving exemptions from codes re non-asphalt paving, receiving price cuts from GRU, requesting portable units to be used from the City, etc.

Staff met with Florida Wildlife Care and responded to the questions raised in the October 16, 1997 letter and a summary of this response was sent to Planning, Codes, GRU and Public Works.

On December 16, 1997, City staff spoke with Florida Wildlife Care on the requirements outlined and discussed with them. It was also discussed concerns raised by planning about Comprehensive Plan requirements and zoning, and the need for a conceptual plan to be developed and submitted before anything could proceed.

On January 8, 1998, City staff met with Fl. Wildlife Care to discuss The Conceptual Site Plan requirements from the City in regard to their project. They were asked to submit information about their project and the Nature Division agreed to pursue submitting a joint application to The Development Review Board (DRB) and develop a Lease Agreement contingent upon the facility meeting the zoning and Comprehensive Plan compliance requirements.

On January 9, 1998 the Planning Division received a letter from Fl. Wildlife Care requesting consideration for the use of the Conant Property and outlining their objectives as a rehabilitation center, zoological park and educational programming.

On January 22, 1998, the Conceptual Site Plan was submitted and a draft Lease Agreement was developed for review.

On February 3, 1998, Planning staff received correspondence from Skinner and Associates, lodging a complaint on this project going in that location.

On February 10, 1998 the Director of Recreation and Parks authorized the Florida Wildlife Care to proceed with submitting an application to the DRB for Conant Property.

On March 12, 1998, Fl. Wildlife Care went before the DRB for Conceptual Site Plan Approval at Conant Property where they received input from the DRB and concerns from the residents in that neighborhood. It was determined that the project that was proceeding as a zoological park, really wasn't a zoological park (based on the goals and objectives submitted) and that any property zoned conservation (which includes all nature properties) would not be appropriate for this type of wildlife rehabilitation activity. It was determined by the Development Review Board that Florida Wildlife Care would need to decide how they wished to proceed.

On May 11, 1998 staff again spoke with Florida Wildlife Care on the status of the request. Staff was told that a temporary location was found and that they would not be pursuing The Conant Property because there was not enough high dry land and because of neighborhood concerns. They indicated they still will pursue a location site with Alachua County and if the City was to reconsider changing it's zoning to include Wildlife Care then they would pursue this again with the City.