SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING

Tallahassee, Florida
June 29, 2004

JOINT CITY-COUNTY-SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

The City Commission met in special joint session on June 29, 2004, in the City Hall Commission Chamber with City Commissioners Marks, Katz, Lightsey, Mustian and Gillum; County Commissioners Sauls, Thaell, Grippa, Winchester, Rackleff, Proctor and Maloy; and Leon County School Board Members Montford (Chair), Lewis, Bowen, Crumpler, Costigan and Varn present. Also present were Assistant City Manager Michael Wright, Assistant City Attorney Linda Hurst, County Administrator Alam and County Attorney Thiele.

Mayor Marks called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m. and welcomed members of the School Board as well as the County Commission. He then turned the gavel over to Chair of School Board Montford.

Director of Planning Wayne Tedder reviewed the agenda as distributed.

Item 1 was the appointment of an Oversight Committee.

At the suggestion of Mr. Montford, the City and County Commissions and the School Board concurred that each governing body would send a name to Mr. Jim Croteau, School Board staff, to serve on a three-member Oversight Committee to monitor implementation of the School Board, County and City Public School Facility Planning Interlocal Agreement.

Item 2 was a discussion of the potential closure of Bond and/or Wesson Schools and the reuse of those facilities.

County Commissioner Proctor presented a request for a new south side high school, and opined that the 20-acre rule for new school siting should be challenged. He also objected to disparities between Rickards High School on the south side and the new Chiles High School on the north side.

County Commissioner Rackleff expressed distress by the prospect of closing either Bond or Wesson because of the potential impact on neighborhood redevelopment, and stated his perception of this as continuance of a policy of closing inner core schools and expanding on the outer edge of the community. He stated that he had observed other cities building new schools in the downtown and he briefly discussed the concept of a student population of 350 being an ideal size for at-risk children.

Discussion focused on the plans of the School Board relating to the closure of these schools and the subsequent use of those school facilities. Mr. Crumpler emphasized that the School Board was concerned with the economic development of the entire community while operating with available funding. He clarified that from a cost feasibility standpoint, the School Board did not have the funds to continue operating both of those schools.

County Commissioners Grippa, Winchester and Maloy left the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Discussion focused on potential future uses of the Bond and Wesson Schools facilities, and Commissioner Lightsey suggested that City staff be directed to work with School Board staff on potential uses for the facilities, noting that the sector planning could include some information on a potential use. Commissioner Gillum suggested that some consideration be given to a potential use as a teen center. Ms. Lewis stated that the idea for a new school had come out of community sector

planning. County Commissioner Proctor suggested that Florida A & M University be included for potential use as a charter school or potential vocational school.

Ms. Bowen stressed the need to move expeditiously on this issue and **by consensus of the City and County Commissions and the School Board, the staffs were directed to work together to explore possible joint uses of facilities that would become available upon the potential closure of Bond and/or Wesson Schools.**

Item 3 was a discussion of the joint use of City/County/School facilities, including a) the leasing of the old school facility at Fort Braden, which was currently under lease to Leon County for use as a community center, and b) after school options, taking into consideration the fencing, locking of facilities and varying requirements at the different schools.

Brief discussion focused on the need for some staff analysis and the next school plant survey in the fall, and the City and County Commissions suggested that the School Board consider donating, trading or selling the old Fort Braden School facility to Leon County.

Discussion continued relative to the potential expansion of the joint use agreements to develop after school options that students could walk to. Mayor Marks discussed his desire to investigate the feasibility of a program that would allow every child to be able to walk to a facility for after school activities, which would require the utilization of City, County and School Board facilities. County Commissioner Proctor endorsed the idea of pursuing a "comprehensive school", which would also include community care such as dental and medical services. Mr. Crumpler pointed to the need to find revenues to fund after school options.

Item 4 was a discussion of student safety.

Discussion focused on the need for improved communication regarding construction, traffic congestion and hazardous road conditions affecting school bus transportation safety. Mayor Marks suggested that this could potentially be coordinated through public information officers.

Additional discussion focused on the need to work together to find ways to improve the safety of students walking and bicycling to school, and waiting for buses.

City Commissioner Lightsey discussed the importance of working together on future school sitings, which required adequate infrastructure and improvements to the areas around the schools as they were sited further out from the urban core.

County Commissioner Proctor expressed concern with the widening of Orange Avenue, Oak Ridge Road and Crawfordville Road creating more safety problems for children. He also stated his desire to see some Bluieprint 2000 funds expended on bus shelters for children and briefly discussed the issue of bus decorum.

City Commissioners Gillum and Lightsey discussed the potential loss of City funding for crossing guards and requested some School Board history on providing such crossing guard services. Mr. Montford indicated School Board staff would be requested to bring that issue back with some history.

County Commissioner Rackleff suggested that the School Board take an interest in the government's capital projects, and invited School Board staff to give input to capital improvement and development plans that might improve student safety and school access, citing the resurfacing of a road in front of a school as an opportune time for walkability improvements, and TalTran bus routes as a mode of transportation for school children, especially for after school activities.

Item 5 was a discussion on the impact of new developments on schools and the impact of schools on growth on the south side.

The City and County Commissions, and School Board agreed with the need for some staff analysis on this issue.

County Commissioner Proctor also discussed his concern with the potential impact on inner city schools of new legislation requiring approximately 20 acres for new elementary schools, 30 acres for new middle schools and 40 acres for new high schools

Item 6 was a discussion of land use patterns: affordable housing/racially identifiable neighborhoods.

Ms. Bowen discussed the desirability of having more mixed income housing, and the perception that better integrated neighborhoods would result in better integrated schools.

County Commissioner Rackleff encouraged School Board involvement in local government planning, noting that an inclusionary affordable housing amendment had been rejected by the County in the previous cycle of Comprehensive Plan amendments, making the inclusion of affordable housing in new developments voluntary only. Commissioner Katz interjected that the City was moving forward with an inclusionary housing ordinance, which should be brought forward to the City Commission in September 2004.

Item 7 was a discussion of providing a downtown school through the creation of a charter school.

Mayor Marks stressed the desirability of having a magnet downtown charter school, noting that he liked the idea of a school for performing arts.

County Commissioner Rackleff observed that the State of Florida's Bloxham Building, or some other downtown building being vacated by the State, would be a desirable location for a magnet school.

Mr. Montford questioned the affordability of a downtown charter school.

Item 8 was a discussion of economic development/employment opportunities for at-risk students and parents.

Mayor Marks announced a scheduled meeting of the Capital Regional Partnership for Economic Growth scheduled for June 30, 2004 at the Tallahassee Community College (TCC) Workforce Center.

County Commissioner Grippa thanked Mr. Montford and the Mayor for their work on that issue.

Item 9 was a discussion of youth crime: prevention, detention, reporting of arrests, jobs and activities.

County Commissioner Proctor discussed the need for more after school programs and activities with a focus on prevention of youth crime and mentoring of youths. He requested information on the results of a School Board study on the impacts of zero tolerance and the presence of law enforcement resource officers at schools.

Commissioner Gillum stressed the importance of having a teen youth center, indicating it would help with retention in the schools, graduation rates and crime prevention. He suggested that the

Chamber be asked to support the development of such teen center and opined that the community would be supportive.

Mr. Montford **requested that School Board staff would be asked to provide the requested information on the School Board study referenced by County Commissioner Proctor.**

Mr. Crumpler stated that the School Board shared Mr. Proctor's concerns.

Item 10 was a discussion of utility rates.

Mayor Marks discussed the increased cost of natural gas fuel causing higher electric bills for the school district after budgets had been adopted. He stated that prices were not expected to level off for another four years.

Item 11 was a discussion of the use of Traffic Fine Surcharge Funds for Driver's Education.

Mr. Montford briefly discussed the School Board's request for a larger share of Traffic Fine Surcharge Funds to support driver's education programs in the schools.

Item 12 was a discussion of calls to the Sheriff's Office when City Police might be closer.

Brief discussion focused on the school district's special relationship with the Leon County Sheriff's Office because of resource officers in the schools.

County Commissioner Grippa noted that there was an ongoing study to investigate whether a joint dispatch service could result in faster law enforcement response time to school emergencies.

Item 13 was a discussion of the creation of an After School Dinner Program.

County Commissioner Proctor recommended that efforts be made to institute an after school dinner program for certain areas of the community, providing free and reduced fee meals to families in the community.

Commissioner Lightsey suggested that the City's federal lobbyist could explore grant opportunities in partnerships with local government branches for such a program.

Unagendaed. Mr. Montford invited suggestions for future joint meetings. Brief discussion ensued encouraging the continued use of liaisons by the City and County governments, and the School Board.

There being no further business, the joint meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

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Chairman Sauls

ATTEST: