

## **MINUTES OF MEETING**

### **UNIVERSITY PARK RECREATION DISTRICT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS WORKSHOP MEETING**

**Tuesday, June 28, 2022**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Community Center**

**8301 The Park Boulevard, University Park, FL 34201**

Board Members present at roll call in person or via phone:

James Case	Chairperson
Bill DiPaolo	Vice Chairperson
Steve Ludmerer	Treasurer
Sally Dickson	Assistant Secretary
Karen Pagano	Vice Chairperson

Also, Present in person or via phone:

Vivian Carvalho	District Manager - PFM Group Consulting LLC
Venessa Ripoll	District Manager - PFM Group Consulting LLC (via phone)
Kelley Milavec	Administrative Assistant - PFM Group Consulting LLC (via phone)
Mark Barnebey	District Counsel (via phone)
John Fetsick	General Manager – Country Club

Various Members of the General Public present & via phone

## **FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS**

### **Organizational Matters**

#### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Mr. Case and Ms. Carvalho confirmed quorum to proceed with the meeting. Those in attendance are outlined above.

Before opening up for public comments, Mr. Case started the meeting by reading his resignation letter to the Board and the attending members. In his address, he thanked the Board, the PFM employees, and the residents of University Park. He thought it best to resign from the Board as there were too many conflicting opinions between him and the other Board members regarding the money spent on the country club. He had given his suggestions about what should be the main focuses for the country club and stated that the current issues that needed to be addressed with the existing structures should take precedence over having new developments to draw people to the community. He stated that his resignation would be effective as of July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

## Public Comments

Ms. Kris Pizzi spoke and stated that she agreed with all of what Mr. Case had spoken about, she was mainly concerned with the amount of money the Board is asking for Phase 2 while there are no concrete plans in place. She agrees in conducting a survey from the UP residents that expressed their wants and needs for the community

Mr. Paul Charlesworth spoke and stated that he is very saddened by the resignation of Mr. Case. He stated that his concerns are not as critical for the community's financial future but more so for the employee and resident satisfaction. He expressed his concern with the kitchen and office space as these are not optimal spaces for the employees to be working as there is minimal space. His other main concern was with the irrigation system for the golf course as it is the primary economic engine for the club.

Mr. Joseph Reed spoke and stated that he is in favor of the bonds but having differing goals and values from Mr. Case. He discussed the issue of "needs" versus "wants" among the community. He also stated that the document that will be submitted in the future would discuss the 16 projects that are a part of Phase 2 that have not yet been finalized. He suggested hiring a general contractor who could run all of the projects and who could assign 16 different project managers to the incomplete projects so that there could be a better handle on the entire project as a whole. He posed the question of "will my life be better here?" concerning the proposed projects for the community.

Mr. John Bondur spoke and stated that he was disappointed when he heard that Mr. Case would be resigning from the Board. He suggested that the Board take a timeout and reassess what should be done with the money; he explained that it should be thought of as the community's money and not anybody's individual money. He stated that he believes that the whole process is misguided in relation to the consensus of 4 Board Members compared to the 1,200 residents of UP.

Ms. Carolou Marquet spoke and stated that she was deeply saddened by Mr. Case's departure from the Board and thanked him for all of the work he has done for the community over the years. She states that there is no consensus pertaining to the wants of the community as opposed to the immediate needs. She asked that the members of the audience be allowed to speak during the discussion topics instead of speaking before any discussion has taken place so that there can be more informed statements. Mr. Case explained that during the workshop, he would be more open to audience members interjecting with regards to the topic being discussed. However, he stated during business meetings, as Chair, he had restricted the allotted time for audience members to speak so that there would be more control.

Mr. Don Baron spoke and stated that he was the Chair of the Henley neighborhood. He inquired about the payback since that assessment would be increased another \$1000 for the community.

He encouraged the Board to slow down with their actions and their ideas be presented

legitimately. He mentioned that the community does not have any reserves set up for the Recreation District at the moment.

Mr. Bill DiPaolo provided some input regarding the comments received by the residents. He spoke about how both the kitchen and the golf course are being considered as essential with both being priced at around \$2,000,000.00 and \$5,000,000.00 respectively. He explained that the bond issuance would be a 5-year deal. He stated that the bulkheads, bridges, the ponds, and the lake banks will need to be taken care of and that will cost around \$1,000,000.00 and some environmental upgrades throughout the campus and the golf course that will need to be taken care of that will cost about \$250,000.00. There will also be a parking lot that will need to be resurfaced in a few years that will cost around \$750,000.00. He stressed the importance of creating a new office space for the employees as well as adding more meeting space as many residents are being denied due to the fact that their current meeting spaces are always in use. He stated that a new fitness center, new tennis courts, new pickleball courts, and new fountains are not being considered as essential. The total for the essential amenities discussed would total around \$15,500,000.00 to \$16,500,000.00. He believes that the investment of a \$15,000,000.00 to \$18,000,000.00 will have a payback of \$1,500,000.00 in increased initiation fees and dues which totals about 10% of the equity invested. To get the exact costs and plans and to get a specific proposal for a building, architectural fees are going to be around \$300,000. He stated that \$2,000,000.00 will be set aside for reserves from year to year. The incremental cost of improving the fitness center would cost about \$1,500,000.00 to \$1,750,000.00.

Ms. Beckie Suverkrup gave the suggestion of hiring real consultants to deal with the division and dissension of the Board and the members of the community. She recalled during one of the first workshops, a survey was to be sent out to the residents to gather input but stated that has not been done yet. She stated her sadness with the departure of Mr. Case and implored the Board to seek further advice and to think about the 1,200 members of the community.

Mr. Dave Hoke spoke and expressed that since this new bond issuance would be for the Country Club, it should be considered a Country Club expense that should not include all of the residents of University Park, therefore only applying to Country Club members.

Mr. Joseph Reed spoke and says the entire process should be refined. It was suggested that the Board get the design on paper first and see if it fits the vision for the project before anything is done.

Ms. Deborah Van Brunt spoke and stated that she believed the Board has been very vocal with their plans for the community. She believes the public are more to blame than the actual Board for the struggles in miscommunication.

Mr. Steve Ludmerer spoke and thanked Mr. Case for his leadership as the Chair of the Board. He gave an overview of the original vision of the club which was to have exemplary facilities, amenities, and service and stated that the mission and strategy was to have outstanding golf, tennis, dining, and other facilities in a club environment.



His biggest concerns are with the kitchen, irrigation, office space, as well as wellness & fitness.

He informed the Board and public that they will not have architectural design and build plans for every planned project as he believes it would be a waste of money. He recognized that each project would all be guided by advisory groups and would have input from everyone in the community. He stated that community involvement up until this point has been almost nonexistent when the plans were presented. He encouraged the public to meet with one of the Board members to hear the details of the plans going forward.

Ms. Pizzi spoke again and asked why the District is not charging more for the summer or annual memberships as she believes they are getting way over value for what they are paying for. She stated that people were on the hunt for 3 years to live in a house in University Park property. She believes they are undervaluing everything that the community has to offer.

Ms. Sally Dickson spoke to Ms. Pizzi's concerns regarding the membership prices. The plan is to have the membership costs fund the reserves for the community and to increase the initiation fee for the memberships. They are going to be addressed in the future.

Mr. John Fetsick spoke and was saddened by Mr. Case's resignation from the Board. He appreciates the amount of volunteer time that the Board takes to make sure things are run smoothly for the community and knows everyone is well-intended even if everyone's ideas differentiate from one and another. He recognizes that everyone on the Board is on the same team regardless of the path that it is taking to get there. He recommended continuing this meeting due to the number of emotions and statements that were happening during this meeting.

Mr. Case stated that he wanted to continue with the meeting as there were important items that needed to be discussed. The meeting held a brief recess at 11:05 a.m. and reconvened at 11:10 a.m.

Ms. Elaine Kulbako spoke and suggested that the workshop meetings be held in the evenings to help with the communication between the Board and the residents of the community. Mr. Case confirmed that there are no real time restraints as to when the Board can meet so he encouraged the Board to consider this suggestion after his departure.

Mr. Jim Freedman spoke and was sorry to see Jim resign. He was pleased to see that there seemed to be much agreement to spend money on things that absolutely needed to be done such as the golf course, the kitchen, and parking lot. He expressed his concern with the potential \$500.00 - \$1,000.00 increase on taxes if all of this money being requested is obtained.

Ms. Dickson spoke again and commented on the program options for the fitness and classes that are currently not offered in the community that would include either Silver Sneakers and/or Renew Active. Joe Lisi has done research for these programs to be integrated into

University Park.

## **SECOND ORDER OF BUSINESS**

### **Discussion**

#### **Update of the Strategic Planning of Phase II of the Master Plan Concept and Steps Going Forward**

Mr. DiPaolo spoke again and stated that they obtained an architect to explore the various options in giving the most cost-effective, efficient way to provide any needed space and hopefully provide firmer costs before any referendum needs to be held.

Mr. Ludmerer spoke again and wanted to highlight that the survey is in the preparation stage. Mr. David Murphy has been providing guidance and has worked on some issues around how to deliver the survey.

Mr. Murphy spoke concerning the property survey. He wanted to clarify that the survey that was submitted is not complete and does not reflect what he wants to accomplish in a survey. He is hopeful that they can come to an agreement as to what a proper survey will look like and will continue to help.

Mr. Ludmerer spoke again and referred to the review provided by PFM that detailed the impact of a \$16,000,000.00 vs an \$18,000,000.00 bond to accomplish the essentials the Board is considering. He believes that the \$18,000,000.00 is necessary considering there is around \$14,700,000.00 that is considered needed for the essential projects. He also mentioned a proposed resolution that was included in the packet that should be reviewed and considered for the future.

Mr. Case spoke and stated that it was conveyed to the residents that the Board would proceed with the referendum only after there has been a thorough and complete analysis of their wants and needs and what they supported before the Board packaged a bond proposal. It was discussed that it is important that residents have input after a plan has been drafted. It was suggested that a survey be sent out to residents and give them around 3-5 days to respond and give their input. It was also suggested that a neutral person put together the survey to be sent out so that there could be no bias and no manipulation of the survey to get the desired answers.

Mr. Murphy spoke again and explained his background where he spent most of his career in marketing and general management as well as running marketing for \$500,000,000.00 companies. He is a believer in objective surveys so there are no biases.

Mr. Case suggested that residents be given time to respond to the survey as many are snowbirds and do not live in the community year-round so that Phase 2 can be as successful



as possible even though visions differ among Board members. The worst thing in his opinion that could happen is if the bond were to fail as bonds that have failed cannot be presented again until further in the future. It was suggested to the residents attending the meeting that if they wish to run for the Board Seat that they submit their names and any additional information to Ms. Carvalho. That information, once submitted, would be shared with the Board so that they may pick someone to fill the seat position.

Mr. Ludmerer suggested continuing this meeting to 3:30 pm so that the Board can reflect on all of the comments made so far today during the meeting.

ON MOTION by Mr. DiPaolo, seconded by Ms. Pagano, with all in favor, the Tuesday, June 28, 2022, Workshop Meeting of University Park Recreation District was continued to June 28, 2022, at 3:30 p.m. at the same location and same conference call information.

The Board had reconvened at 3:30 p.m.

Mr. Case stated that there are pending matters at the Manatee County Commissioners Office that will need to be addressed moving forward as well as a pending proposal to revise the Charter and the District.

Mr. Mark Barnebey provided an update concerning the Charter Amendments. There are some requested language changes for the amendments but he is waiting to hear back for final comments. They are still trying to get the amendments put onto the November's ballot. It is assumed that Mark will appear in front of the County Commissioners. There was a request to change the DRI. Mr. Barnebey stated that the estimated timeline to be revised depends on the County Staff as they are awaiting their first batch of comments, but it was estimated that the revision could be received around mid-July. Once the comments have been received, they will go to Planning Commission and then to the Board of County Commissioners. There was a question regarding who the eligible voters will be; whether it be voted on by electors or whoever the Board designates to vote on such matters which could be residents or owners. Last time, there was overwhelming support for the one person per household or residential property system.

Mr. Ludmerer gave a brief overview of the meeting he had with Mr. Barnebey and Ms. Carvalho stating that the one person per household vote was highly sought after in the past and would be favorable to continue to use the same way in future voting. He brought up that it is important that the votes are secured and confidential. In this environment, they will need to have a paper ballot inserted into the envelope which is then inserted into a second envelope with a home identifier. Electronic voting would not protect the confidentiality of votes being casted.

It was clarified to the audience over Zoom that there will be 2 different elections; one for the charter election which will hopefully take place in November and the bond referendum election. The bond referendum would consist of one vote per household whereas the charter election will be given to the electors. Mr. Case excused himself from the meeting at this time. Mr. DiPaolo announced that he would temporarily take over as Chair for the Board until a 5<sup>th</sup> member of the Board has been added. It was decided that the new members would be discussed in the upcoming July meeting.

Mr. Case's seat is set to expire in 2 ½ years. Mr. DiPaolo stated that he did not intend to run

for re-election as his term is due to expire in February 2023. He suggested reassigning and being appointed to Mr. Case's Seat number and then the Board could appoint someone to Mr. DiPaolo's old seat in February. His resignation could be accepted by the Board which would still have a quorum of 3 and appoint him to Jim's Seat, leaving his original Seat open for a new member to join the Board. Ms. Carvalho suggested to the Board that they address the appointment of the open seat at the next Board meeting since this meeting is a workshop and no action is taken.

Mr. DiPaolo requested that Bruce Mantia take the lead on preparing the survey based on his previous experience and suggested that he work with Mr. Murphy on the input. He asked Mr. Ludmerer to take charge of the Charter amendment matters. The amount of the bond has not been decided yet and needs a referendum. The current referendum states that the bond will not exceed \$18,000,000.00. Mr. DiPaolo would like to make a presentation for the members during the July meeting to recap where the Board is and how they have stepped back after hearing the comments made at today's meeting.

It was suggested that the important documents be added to the website so that the members have easy access to what has been discussed during the meeting and the specifics of what is planned. Ms. Carvalho asked if Mr. DiPaolo would like to join the meeting between herself, Mr. Fetsick and Mr. Barnebey going over the agenda and adding materials necessary for the meeting. It was also suggested that a workshop be held to discuss the various membership classes, including getting the final details for Silver Sneakers, how it would apply to social members and if all social member will be allowed or not allowed to use the fitness center. This topic will be planned for the August 2, 2022, workshop. The August 12 Board meeting will have to be rescheduled to meet quorum. Ms. Carvalho stated that they cannot hold the Board meeting too far into August because the tax roll will have to be certified for the debt service assessment for the bond. It was mentioned that the Auditor Selection Committee met and are well on their way to advertise.

Ms. Pizzi had a question regarding the social membership impact for the and paying for the operation of the club. Mr. DiPaolo stated that they could charge fees for classes being taken. He stated that the financial model of country clubs is that the better the amenities, the better the income will be. He suggested that they will have between \$1,500,000.00 - \$2,500,000.00 for initiation fees when better amenities are presented.

Ms. Joyce Gilberti spoke and wanted to add that social members pay \$250.00 to be a member of the fitness center. She was not seeing the financial benefit when anyone could pay to attend a fitness course regardless of membership. Mr. DiPaolo stated that this discussion would be included in the workshop in August.


### **THIRD ORDER OF BUSINESS**

### **Adjournment**

ON MOTION by Ms. Dickson, seconded by Mr. Ludmerer, with all in favor, the Tuesday, June 28, 2022, Workshop Meeting of University Park Recreation District was adjourned at 4:18 p.m.
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Secretary / Assistant Secretary

  
Chairperson / Vice Chairperson