

Public Hearing and Special Meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of Ocean Ridge held on Monday, August 1, 2005 in the Town Hall Meeting Chambers.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM by Chair Bruce Gimmy and roll call was answered by the following:

James Bonfiglio	Mark Marsh
Ward Northrup	Ellen Bierlin
Chairman Bruce Gimmy	

III. CONTINUE DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO. 2005-14; AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A STATE HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FOR LANDSCAPING ON SR A1A WITH FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Town Manager Mathis stated that this meeting was a continuation of the meeting held last week concerning the landscaping for SR A1A relating to the repaving project by D.O.T. He advised that Jason Litterick was present with a proposed new landscaping plan.

Town Clerk Hancsak distributed a memo from Mrs. Bierlin that posed two questions including: 1. Are the DOT plantings at the north end of Town near the Inlet (Page LD13) – east side clear zone – considered appropriate plants as part of the “signature look” being developed for the Town; and 2. Is a canopy affect feasible with what the DOT has to work with in its ROW.

Mr. Litterick stated that based on the discussions last week he devised a new proposed plan. He distributed an elevation drawing, new proposed plan, and a proposed budget for the plantings. He explained that the Coconut Palms and Pitch Apple trees were replaced with groupings of Cabbage Palms ranging in height from 20-35’ and staggered plantings of Orange Geiger Trees with a 10-12’ height, and a couple of Gumbo Limbo trees were proposed. He stated that the estimated budget totaled \$91,300. In answering the questions posed by Mrs. Bierlin, he stated that a canopy is difficult with the existing power lines. He added that he spoke with the District IV landscape supervisor who agreed that Coconut Palms may not be the best choice for the same reasons previously cited. He advised that his ideas remained with something native and he felt the Cabbage Palm was a good selection because they only have to stay 8’ off the power lines. He added that the new proposed plan showed plantings in the same areas as the older version except the new design scheme replaces the first plan.

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Mr. Marsh clarified that the plan almost entirely encompasses the area from River Dr. to the Inlet. Mr. Litterick commented that there was only a small amount of new landscaping proposed to the south because those areas already have dense landscaping. Mr. Marsh commented that he was not extremely pleased with the Cabbage Palms and the Town would be paying a premium for the curved linear palms and he felt they were not very aesthetically pleasing. He added that he felt the Cabbage Palm was more of an interior tree and would not deliver the effect the Town was seeking but he also stated that he liked the Orange Geiger and Gumbo Limbo trees.

Mr. Bonfiglio commented that after all the costs are incurred and the planting is completed the Town will assume the maintenance after one year. He added that if the Town wanted to add more landscaping it could do so at its own cost.

Mr. Northrup stated that he liked the Cabbage Palms, provided they were grouped in 5-7 tree clusters. He added that there are plenty of existing clusters in Town.

Mrs. Bierlin commented that she liked the Orange Geiger trees because they brought in a little color. She stated that she liked the proposed plan but added that she still liked the look of the Coconut Palms and reminded the members that the Town gave away Coconut Palms in years past as part of grant program.

Mr. Bonfiglio stated that maintenance for Coconut Palms would be a lot more extensive than other plantings. He also stated that if the Town wanted a more integrated look then the Town should bear some or all of the maintenance cost.

Mr. Gimmy stated that he was not in favor of the original proposed two tree plantings and he favored this plan but he inquired if there was a second choice tree other than the Cabbage Palm tree. Mr. Litterick reminded the board that most of the trees were going to be planted near the power lines. He stated that the Town could go with the Washington Palm (they have a bigger head but they are straight as an arrow) or the Florida Thatch Palm (expensive and the size is not very big, 10-12' tall with fronds), and Coconut Palms are good but they would need to be kept further from the power lines. He added that there is a higher quantity of the proposed Cabbage Palms vs. the Coconut Palms.

Public Comment

George Bierlin, 26 Hudson Ave., questioned whether the adjacent property owner would have to maintain the landscaping. Mr. Litterick advised that the Memorandum of Agreement provides that the Town agrees to maintain the landscaping, however, existing vegetation is most likely maintained and irrigated by the property owners and he doesn't feel the maintenance would change much. He added that after the one year period the Cabbage Palms should be spread and the only real landscaping would be to remove the brown fronds, which is not required. He stated that the Orange Geiger trees require very little maintenance also. Town Manager Mathis stated that a new

ordinance recently adopted requires property owners to maintain areas in the ROW to the pavement; however, the Town will be responsible to make sure that it is being maintained.

Mr. Bonfiglio stated that the Town should be active to ensure that the look of the landscaping remains the same and added that maybe this should be placed in the recommendation.

John Jolly, resident of Boynton Beach and landscaper for several residents, stated that he works a lot in Town and he felt the proposed plan would look like the on/off ramp by I-95. He suggested planting other types of palm trees or smaller (10-15') Cabbage Palms to allow time to grow and require minimum maintenance until they grew too close to the power lines and then integrate additional landscaping in the future.

Jerry MaGruder, 9 Ridge Blvd., stated that she liked the palms but she suggested adding some trees with flowers to add color and a lacy look. She stated that she felt this would give the Town a nice presence.

Pat Kropp, 16 Tropical Drive, suggested adding color through bushes such as the snow mountain or pinta (she also distributed pictures of both) and added that they require little maintenance.

Bud Aaskov, 27 Hibiscus Way, also a member of the Master Garden Association, stated that only good thing about a Cabbage Palm was that they are self pruning. He agreed with the comment that it may look like I-95. He stated that there are several varieties of palm such as the Silver or Thatch Palm that may be good, however, they are expensive. He agreed that it may be more attractive to add color possibly utilizing Holly or Crepe Myrtles. He stated that he agreed that Coconut Palms are not a good choice and he was not in favor of canopies and suggested varying heights with lower trees. He stated that he was not in favor of the curved palms.

Mr. Northrup commented that he did not favor messy trees and he is not aware of another method to achieve color and added that under story plantings are not an option.

Mr. Bonfiglio questioned if the proposed trees would be sturdy if involved in an accident. Mr. Litterick advised that all of the trees are installed on the west side of SR A1A and yes they are sturdy.

There was a brief discussion regarding liability concerns and Mr. Litterick commented that he understood the concern for liability, however, FDOT was concerned with utility issues and this was not a new road to start from scratch and they were attempting to make the road look enhanced with the funding they were allotted. Mr. Bonfiglio stated that he was concerned with the Cabbage Palms being planted just south of Island Drive and suggested that the motion include planting alternative landscaping at this location. Town Manager Mathis commented that

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FDOT will not do anything with landscaping if no decision is made. Mr. Litterick agreed and stated that the landscape funding will be pulled.

Mr. Northrup moved to recommend acceptance of the plan dated July 31, 2005 with the exception that the Landscape Architect replace the Cabbage Palms around Island Drive with an alternative plant comparable with the plan and not pose a potential hazard and that a recommendation be included that staff devise a plan to regularly inspect the plantings during the duration of the contract. Mr. Bonfiglio seconded the motion.

Motion carried – Yea (Gimmy, Bonfiglio, Northrup)
Nay (Marsh, Bierlin)

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15 AM

Chairman Gimmy

Attest:

Town Clerk