

BJP Citizens Oversight Committee

Quarterly Meeting 1-29-04

Meeting Minutes

Chair Ron Salem called the meeting to order at approximately 6:10 p.m.

Mayor Peyton thanked the COC for their oversight, commitment and time. The Mayor presented the Quarterly Report and highlighted key accomplishments over the last quarter and for the fiscal year ended September 2003.

Mayor Peyton explained in detail the situation with the equestrian center barn. The private group has fallen well short of their commitment to raise \$5 million to fund permanent barns at the site. However, as the project was already under construction, the city recognized the need to have barns available to make the equestrian center a marketable facility. Industry experts said a minimum of 300 stalls must be available to make the facility viable. One permanent, 150-stall barn will be constructed from *savings earned in the construction* of the rest of the facility – no additional money has been or will be moved to the project to build the barn. Temporary stalls will serve in the interim.

The fundraising group has reorganized and is headed by former Council member Alberta Hipps. She has reiterated the commitment of the group to raise \$5 million. The group currently has approximately \$65,000, but is working actively to hold fundraising events and is pursuing naming right opportunities to meet their goal.

Chairman Salem opened the floor to questions and comments:

Q: Will there still be a lot of computers in the libraries?

A: Mayor stated that computers will be an important part of the libraries.

Q: What is the situation with the pedestrian bridge for the new main library?

A. Mayor responded that he is hearing both sides and hopes to make a decision within the next week.

SUBSEQUENT ACTION: Mayor Peyton decided against the \$250,000 pedestrian bridge.

Q: There is a reported \$1.2 million contingency in the library program. Will it stay in that program?

A. Mayor said there is no intention to move those funds around
Chairman Salem noted that any extra money in the programs could (or should) be used to end the tax earlier.

Q: During the conversations about the courthouse, was the current courthouse and annex property pledged to pay down bonds?

A: Mayor responded that the use of funds outside BJP would be used to cover the difference between the \$211 million in BJP funds and the \$232 million approved by City Council.

BJP Citizens Oversight Committee
Quarterly Meeting 1-29-04
Meeting Minutes

Some would come from savings achieved through moving the State Attorney and Public Defender offices out of rented space. Also, revenue generated by the sale of the courthouse property would definitely come into play.

Q: A SDBE sub-contractor is having difficulty getting paid in a timely fashion.

A: Mayor recommended the COC member and the sub-contractor meet with Rex Holmlin to address his specific concern. Mayor continued to say that he has a committee that is in the process of revising the current SDBE program, with the knowledge that small businesses like the one in question do not have the ability to support themselves if they are not paid in a timely fashion.

BJP ACTION: Rex Holmlin held a meeting with the COC member and the sub-contractor, and that situation has been resolved. Work continues on the revisions of the current SDBE program.

Q: What is the status of a new Mathews Bridge?

A: Mayor explained that it will likely be the next major transportation project. While the BJP has \$20 million for design, it will need substantial federal money, but none is forthcoming in the immediate future. There are a number of immanent projects – the 295 beltway, JTB-95 interchange, Branam Field-Chaffee – that are ahead of the bridge. The bridge project will take strong federal leadership.

Q: Is it still planned to divert money [in Branam Field-Chaffee deal]?

A: Yes, we plan to loan around \$12 million from BJP projects and provide an additional \$20 million to move up the schedule on Branam Field-Chaffee. If the city does not commit its share we would lose \$50 million offered by the state. The Cecil area is the next major industrial space, and we felt it was a project that needed to be done quickly. Since BJP funds are involved it will take a super-majority vote by Council.

SUBSEQUENT ACTION: City Council approved the loan of BJP funds for the Branam Field-Chaffee project.

Chairman Salem asked JTA deputy director Matt Dominy to provide a brief update on the interchange improvements.

Mr. Dominy said the JTA Board asked to see a broad network study of the area south and east of the river. A consultant has been hired to perform a traffic analysis of the area, to determine how the intersection improvements would interact. JTA is cognizant that the recommendations may not be constructed, given the ordinance stipulation of “just cause” and the public vetting of the proposed changes. But the goal of the JTA is to improve the flow of the entire corridor. This work really needed to be done before the BJP was developed, but JTA board decided it best to at

**BJP Citizens Oversight Committee
Quarterly Meeting 1-29-04
Meeting Minutes**

least go back and do it now. Work in the program is continuing; this study is a side-item.

Q: What is happening at US 17 at Timuquana?

A: Mr. Dominy said that intersection project has not started – he is not aware of any work, but it is probably FDOT.

Chairman Salem asked Mr. Dominy to keep the COC informed of the developments. The committee is sensitive to the situation and would like to stay aware of any changes. Chairman Salem stated he believes it right to fulfill the BJP obligations to the fullest extent.

Mr. Dominy stated that since he has not been with JTA from the beginning, he is trying to understand what, exactly, the citizens voted for. The JTA Board's concern is that the independent evaluation is objective, thorough and reasonable.

The Mayor thanked the Citizens Oversight Committee and invited them to continue to contact him with their questions and comments. The meeting was adjourned.