

**Wellington  
Equestrian Preserve Committee Meeting  
June 17, 2014  
Village Hall  
12300 Forest Hill Boulevard**

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## **MINUTES**

### **I. Call to Order**

Mayor Margolis called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Council Members Present: Mayor Bob Margolis, Vice Mayor John Greene, Howard Coates, Matt Willhite, Anne Gerwig

Equestrian Preserve Committee Members Present: Chair Linda Elie, Vice Chair Michael Whitlow, Dr. Kristy Lund, Houston Meigs, Linda Smith-Faver, Maryjo Shockley

Equestrian Preserve Committee Members Absent: Richard Ellis

Staff Members: Paul Schofield, Laurie Cohen, Tim Stillings, Robert Basehart, Michael O'Dell, Bill Riebe, Jim Barnes and Kelly Ferraiolo

### **II. Introductions**

Mayor Margolis made an introduction to the committee and provided ground rules for the meeting. Special interest or particular project discussion was not allowed.

Ms. Elie noted that the Committee represents the equestrian community and the small number of residents within it.

### **III. Discussion – Equestrian Preserve: Vision, Needs and Pressures**

Staffs expectation was for the Committee and the Council to discuss what the Equestrian Preserve is today and where will it be tomorrow. There are issues, needs and pressures that need to be considered including; traffic, trails, equestrian services district, commercial orientation relative to the venues and to commercial stabling, etc.

The Mayor asked what exactly are we protecting. Michael O'Dell reviewed the statistics on the EPA. The venues are the major draw to the community and they are there for people to enjoy and utilize.

Councilman Coates stated there are no issues more contentious then the EPA. One of the reasons there never has had a coherent master plan at a Council level is that there has never been consensus amongst the equestrians with the issues coming forth. The

real issue is not infrastructure related, it is how far do we allow the commercialization of the EPA to go to before it endangers the preserve. They need to decide what we are protecting today as it may be different from what the architects did yesterday. He felt they are trying to protect the equestrian industry, not just the equestrian preserve.

Councilwoman Gerwig stated the problem is there are many of individual owners and unrelated interests making it difficult to create a master plan. The bridge trails were high on her list to work towards to improve. Data gathering is important for conflicts in traffic.

Mayor asked when Wellington was first developed, was it developed as an equestrian community or an equestrian community with the purposes of venues. Mr. Schofield stated when Wellington was originally planned, a small component of it was equestrian (Saddle Trail and Paddock Park. Palm Beach Polo was originally planned as a waste water plant for the Village. The property was changed to Polo by Gould. Polo fields stretched to Lake Worth Road. Hunter Jumper came up as a follow on. They happened in the grass parking lots in 1989. The expansion of PBIEC drove the development of Saddle Trail and Paddock Park. Palm Beach County referred to the south part of Wellington as large lot agricultural rural.

Mayor asked if there are various opinions on the type of venues depending upon the type of disciplines. There needs to be consensus of what the EPC wants. Linda Elie stated depending on the discipline, depends on the needs and there will not be a consensus amongst the equestrian community. Before the Winter Equestrian Festival, they were showing at the fairgrounds for a number of years. The infrastructure is what drove people to Wellington. The more development, the more the trails need to be improved. The stress level of the horses is very intense at the WEF. Other communities within the world were built around a community where the main purpose was the breeding and training of the horses. The WEF is one of the longest shows in the world. There needs to be a balance of the venues and maintaining a year round infrastructure.

Dr. Lund doesn't think there is a division between the types of discipline. Every person in Wellington that owns a farm wants that farm and equestrian use preserved. They have to balance the commercial venues with the residents that are here. Coral Springs used to be an equestrian community but is not anymore because there is no venue.

Michael Whitlow stated we do not need overdevelopment and we need space. Before there was Wellington, the people wanted to preserve the equestrian. Wellington has to make sure that they don't do anything that pushes the horse industry away and the Village needs to fight very hard to protect and preserve.

Mr. Meigs stated the EPA is like an Ecosystem with the common denominator is the horse. Preserving the infrastructure and open space is critical. He requested a map of the density/roads/infrastructure that exists today, and what they will look like if all the lots were built out. They need to be able to look at the broader picture and know that doing one thing in any part of the EPA will potentially affect the entire EPA.

The Mayor asked can conflicted philosophy regarding the commercialization can coexist.

Linda Smith Faver was here when the shows first start and where they crossed south shore. Currently the facility, grounds and acreage around it is getting smaller. Most don't want to live on the horse show. They are going to keep horses off the horse grounds. They need to preserve the space so they can continue for that to happen. People will continue to buy acreage and barns and will develop it depending on the discipline. The competitors are going to buy properties that are in close proximity to the horse show.

Councilman Willhite stated his concern of over commercialization of the EPA and how will it affect the rest of the commercial areas of Wellington. The mall businesses can't sustain more than 5 months of the year. The entire Village needs to sustain. The equestrians show other places. He didn't see it being a year round community because other communities are fighting for it to be year round too. Things are always changing which effect the EPA. Each venue does not have their own unique traffic problems on a certain day as they have been overlapping. Everyone wants their unique sport to be the biggest and best. They allowed the economics of it to tear the community apart. They can't just keep growing.

Councilwoman Gerwig wanted to know what the master plan is going to show. They need to be restricted to some things. Councilman Willhite believed there shouldn't be any more commercialization and they should limit the increase of traffic.

Houston Meigs stated they needed to define growth and commercialization. It doesn't mean just more roof tops. There needs to be an understanding of what the terms mean and what they want them to mean.

Councilman Coates thought a master plan is appropriate because it needs to be consistent. There is complete vagueness of what the EPA is. If the people don't have a regulatory environment, thing will change if they don't adapt to meet the needs of the industry. There is a friction in the community. They need to preserve the event facilities of they will go elsewhere and what they built will be in danger. The Master Plan should show an integrated bridle trail system, discuss hoe to preserve the event facilities, the issue of paving roads, etc.

How much development could happen in the EPA; there are 1600 PCN and about 800 stables which could potentially double. There are 300 acres of commercial recreation. There are some stabling densities at almost 25 horses per acre or 50 horses per acre. Section 34 still retained their underlying approvals. Mr. O'Dell stated 14% of farms are non-competing. Ms. Smith-Faver stated those non-competing farms are here because of the horse show. There does not need to be more commercial centers in the EPA. Most people get everything they need from the vendors at the horse show. Ms. Smith0Faver stated trail riders are more year round people.

Mr. Schofield stated a Master Plan is usually done before the first development is started. They rely on the LDR to develop the EPA. There is a limited public trails system. It makes it easier to dedicate bridle trails if they are identified in the Master Plan. There is no limit on the number of stalls other than Saddle Trail/Paddock Park and limitation by FAR/Building Coverage. The Comprehensive Plan is very vague. There needs to be enforceable parking separation of horses and vehicles.

Mr. Meigs asked if they could prioritize the routes. Mr. O'Dell stated his main focus has been on Pierson Road from Flying Cow Road to 120<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Meigs stated they haven't created an annual report so they didn't know the \$400,000 existed for annual trail maintenance. The committee needs to get involved so they can focus and prioritize what is important.

Vice Mayor John Greene stated this was a continuation of what they have been talking about. They don't have predictable environment for people to continue to invest knowing that what they are investing in will be protected. There is a good blue print but the regulations and goals are very vague. We need to learn from the other communities mistakes. They need to limit the development to protect the value. Wellington's value is the EPA. The very broad terms need to be clarified.

Councilwoman Gerwig asked if there was already a limit on how much commercial was in the EPA. Mr. Schofield stated you can't prevent someone from asking to add more commercial. The key is for the EPC to understand how Land Use Regulations work. He provided a brief explanation of Land Use and the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Schofield wanted to distribute the material they developed with Ken Adams, Staff will need to work with EPC. MR. Meigs stated they need to develop a set of measurable time frames to achieve certain goals. Mr. Schofield provided the next steps:

1. Distribute to Council and the Committee basic packet form Ken Adams and data collected.
2. Stated at the next EPC meeting with data presentations.
3. Staff and EPC to develop the Master Plan
4. Joint meeting with EPC and Village Council.

Linda Elie stated paving and horse don't go together. When Paddock Park II was paved, it stopped horse development at that point. The trails are not connected in Paddock Park II. By the end of the season, the tails that haven't been widened are a mess and are dangerous. She requested information from horse communities outside of Florida including Rancho Santa Fe. Mr. Schofield stated they were developed as horse communities first. Ms. Elie stated they are wanting the EPC to do a Master Plan bu they are not planners. They can give them what not to do. She asked are there equestrian planners. Mr. Schofield stated they have been down that road three times.

Mr. Meigs asked if the discussion of the Master Plan have to be in a public meeting. Ms. Cohen stated the committee must talk to the other EPC members in a public hearing

setting. Committee members can speak to staff or Council Members not in a public setting.

**II. EPC MEMBER COMMENTS**

None

**III. COUNCIL COMMENTS**

None

**IV. ADJOURN**

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor Greene to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm.**

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**Linda Elie, Chair**

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**Kelly Ferraiolo, Recording Secretary**