

**Wellington
Equestrian Preserve Committee Meeting
May 14, 2014
Village Hall
12300 Forest Hill Boulevard**

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Cynthia Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

A. Roll Call:

Members present: Linda Elie, Michael Whitlow, Linda Smith-Faver, Carlos Arellano, Cynthia Gardner and Dr. Kristy Lund.

Members absent: Myles Tashman

Staff present: Robert Basehart and Kelly Ferraiolo

B. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Basehart explained that anything that is not specifically on the agenda cannot be voted on because the public was not given proper notification of items on the agenda.

C. Approval of Minutes – April 9, 2014

The committee listed various changes to the minutes.

A motion was made by Linda Elie, seconded by Michael Whitlow, approved (6-0) to approve the April 9, 2014 with changes.

II. New Business

A. General Discussion

Dr. Lund stated Palm Beach Little Ranches is trying to work on their trail system so she spoke with residents.

Ms. Gardner stated in the last couple of years, the Property Appraisers have been treating Wellington differently than the rest of the county. They changed the assessed value of agricultural land to \$15,000 per acre for Wellington only. The rest of the County's agricultural land is assessed \$7,000 per acre. Mr. Basehart stated the

Property Appraiser is a constitutional officer and is not subject by control to the County Commission.

Ms. Gardner stated one of the reasons the Equestrian community is so successful is because they receive the agricultural classification. If this was changed significantly, it would have a damaging impact on property values and people would start locating outside of Wellington. Mr. Basehart stated the increase in assessed value was not staff driven. The memo Mr. O'Dell sent out to Council was to elaborate on the procedures of the Property Appraisers Office and how they operate. They also discussed criteria and the need for a Business Tax Receipt for all agricultural classified properties by definition.

Ms. Gardner stated they always had to show proof of agricultural income. It has never been a requirement in the past to have a BTR. The committee needs to watch this very carefully and need to know why Wellington is being treated differently and if it is legal.

A motion was made by Ms. Elie, seconded by Mr. Whitlow, approved (6-0) to open for public comment.

Art Kirstein, oversees Palm Beach County's Office of Agricultural Economic Development, stated you can have differentiated rates for equestrians because they do have it for every crops. Ms. Elie stated she called the Property Appraisers Office and it was based on income received when leasing property. They felt it was appropriate and legal to raise the rates. Mr. Kirstein stated they are seasonal rates and not year round rates. They don't have that much property in the County to compare the land to. Ms. Elie stated the Property Appraiser is based on a rolling 5 year average. As Wellington develops, the number could increase. Ms. Gardner stated the Village should try to protect the properties from that happening.

Dr. Lund asked if she goes to sell her property with an agricultural building on it, and the new owner doesn't maintain the agricultural classification, what happens to the building. Mr. Kirstein stated they are grandfathered in.

Mr. Basehart stated under Florida Law, property owners can request to be exempt from the requirements of the LDR and the Building Code. One of the requirements is that they must have an agricultural classification from the County. They are not allowed to impose the building, fire or land development codes. If the property ceases to maintain its agricultural classification, then it would lose its agricultural exemption and the building would be non-conforming. An exemption is not allowed for any residential structure. One component to use when appraising a property is its potential income it can produce. Dr. Lund didn't feel it was right that she was being taxed the same amount as Grand Prix Village.

Mr. Basehart stated he would arrange for Mr. O'Dell to attend a future meeting.

Ms. Elie wanted to see if it was possible to ask Council to send the Saddle Trail Paving to EPC to discuss the pros and cons of asphalt paving. Mr. Basehart will request direction from the Council. Ms. Gardner mentioned Council did state at a meeting that the paving would be coming back to EPC. Mr. Basehart stated this was initiated by a property owner petition and they will be assessed for the paving. Mr. Whitlow stated there are directives protecting the EOZD. At the meeting Councilman Green asked Mr. Riebe if the issue would go back to the committee and Mr. Riebe said yes. He thought this was a major legal issue and it would go against Councilman Green. Ms. Elie stated it was Council that stated it wasn't going to come back to EPC and she thought that was a mistake.

Mr. Arellano asked if 120th was going to be paved. Ms. Basehart stated it was put off. Mr. Gardner stated there were five people that wrote letters to the Village that they wanted it paved from residents in the Isles. Mr. Basehart stated he hasn't heard that it was dead but it has been put off for a few years as they deal with other issues.

Dr. Lund stated in a vet journal, there was an article of the average age of a horse owner was 50-60 years old and they are losing kids. They need to encourage horse shows like Nona Garson's who encourage kids to show.

III. Staff Comments

None

IV. Board Comments

Ms. Elie, Mr. Whitlow and staff thanked the members that will no longer be on the Committee for their service.

V. Public Comments

None

VI. Adjournment

A motion was made by Ms. Elie, seconded Mr. Whitlow, approved (5-0) to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Cynthia Gardner, Chair

Kelly Ferraiolo, Recording Secretary