

City of DeBary
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL JOINT MEETING
WITH SCHOOL BOARD OF VOLUSIA COUNTY

Wednesday
March 23, 2005

4:30 PM

Florence K. Little Town Hall
12 Colomba Road DeBary, Florida 32713

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Ms. Candace Lankford called the meeting to order and thanked the City of DeBary for hosting the meeting.

II. Opening Comments **Ms. Candace Lankford, School Board Chairman**
Mr. Carmen Rosamonda, Mayor

III. Introduction of Council Members and School Board Members

Introductions were made by Ms. Lankford and Mayor Rosamonda.

IV. School District Initiatives and Priorities - Dr. Margaret A. Smith, Superintendent

Dr. Smith stated that the District's main priority is to provide the best possible education for each student in Volusia County. She gave an overview of the grading system used to rate the schools in Volusia County; 89% of all schools in the County are graded either A or B. She discussed accomplishments in different areas such as SAT scores, graduation rate increasing, dropout rate decreasing, etc. She noted a concern with the way the federal government rates school districts because each state submits its own plans, making comparisons between states impossible. The federal rating system makes Florida schools look like they are not doing well. She further discussed the importance of good schools to parents, businesses, etc., and that schools play a major role in economic development.

V. City Initiatives and Priorities - Mayor Carmen Rosamonda

Mayor Rosamonda discussed the City's priority of controlling density in local schools; that most residences in DeBary are single family; that DeBary will be kept as a bedroom community; and that most of DeBary is built out. He discussed federal funding for the Saxon Boulevard extension and stated that the City is still interested in obtaining additional schools. Pending the signing of the interlocal agreement, he discussed the City's partnership in the DBCC conference center and said it would seat approximately 5,000 in its auditorium. He said the City would like to discuss DeBary Elementary and the school district facility on E. Highbanks Road, which was formerly a DBCC site.

VI. Discussion Topics:

Development issues/Class Size Reduction/Impact on Capacity and Response to Growth

- New Schools Under Construction
- Location of New Schools

Ms. Patricia Drago, Executive Director for Facilities Services

Ms. Saralee Morrissey, Director for Site Acquisition and Intergovernmental Services

Ms. Drago discussed class size reduction as mandated by the Constitution; that Elementary School X located at Sparkman Ave. in Orange City will help to accomplish the reduction and is under construction. She explained that Middle School DD and High school DDD would also be opened soon after School X in Orange City at the extension of Rhode Island Avenue.

Ms. Morrissey discussed the ongoing search for property to build new schools throughout the County and the difficulties encountered due to the booming real estate market.

Mayor Rosamonda initiated the discussion regarding improvements needed in athletic facilities; the Board and the Council discussed various partnership possibilities to resolve the disparity in access to athletic facilities. The Board stated that these new facilities would need to be located in a neutral independent area and not belong to any one school.

VII. Comments from Council and School Board Members

Mr. Kelley, Deputy Superintendent for Financial Services, spoke to the group about financial issues facing the School Board; that sales tax collection directly affects the school district; and that the Board has maxed out its capacity to borrow for the next 5 years.

There was discussion regarding placement of the high school that had been previously proposed for DeBary. Ms. Morrissey explained that the Council had another vision for the proposed site and did not support the placement of a new high school in that location. Mayor Rosamonda discussed that the Council had wanted to place the school at the Saxon Blvd extension but was unable; that the location was the issue with the 2nd site; and that Council voted 4-1 opposing the school in that particular spot. Council Member Tillis noted he was willing to work with the Board to bring new schools to the City.

Mayor Rosamonda discussed the importance of sales tax, and stated that the reason for variation in sales tax is residents spending outside of Volusia in Orange and Seminole Counties. There was a discussion on Lottery money and how it is allocated to the District.

Mayor Rosamonda initiated the discussion on traffic issues at DeBary Elementary. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the gridlock that occurs on Highbanks Road and possibilities for alleviating this congestion.

A discussion followed on the proposed use of the school board facilities on E. Highbanks Road. Ms. Conti explained that the School Board has been looking at various ways to provide alternative education. This site will be used for middle and high school at-risk students who get in trouble for the first time; these would be children without a significant discipline history, and none with level 4 offenses. She explained they would like to open in August for a semester or full year program with a competency based curriculum. There was a discussion that followed on the security involved with the school.

The School Board then answered some questions from the Public regarding busing and traffic issues at the new facility, the GED program, hours of operation, and staffing and budgeting issues.

VIII. Comments from Dr. Margaret A. Smith, Superintendent

Dr. Smith assured the Council that they will be good neighbors and will work with the community to provide an appropriate situation at the new facility.

IX. Closing Comments from Mayor Carmen Rosamonda and Ms. Candace Lankford, School Board Chairman

Council Member Tillis, Council Member Carson, Council Member Fulton, and Vice Mayor Gunter individually thanked the School Board for the meeting and voiced their hopes for continued cooperation in the future.

Ms. Bumpus, Dr. Williams, Ms. Conti, Ms. Lankford, and Ms. Morrissey individually thanked the City for inviting the Board to have a meeting; that the meeting had been valuable; and that they too hoped to continue working together.

Mayor Rosamonda then thanked the Board and said he would do as much as he could in the next nine months to work with the Board.

X. Adjournment

**APPROVED May 4, 2005
CITY OF DeBARY
CITY COUNCIL**

Carmen Rosamonda, Mayor

ATTEST:

Stacy Tebo, City Clerk