

**MINUTES
PUBLIC MEETING FOR WEST HIGHLANDS SUDIVISION
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2006
6:30 PM
THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
975 EAST GRAVES AVENUE
ORANGE CITY**

A meeting was held with the West Highlands residents on Tuesday, November 14, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. at The First Baptist Church, 975 East Graves Avenue, Orange City.

➤ **Volusia County Staff Present at meeting included:**

Public Works Administration

George Recktenwald - Public Works Director
John Angiulli - Operations Manager
John Gamble - Special Projects Coordinator
Arden Fontaine - Special Projects Coordinator
Eileen Fyfe - Administrative Aide

Road & Bridge

Ginger Nogueira - Interim Director
Donna Letellier - Staff Assistant
Dave Millard - Services Supervisor
Susan Collins - Engineering Assistant
Marvin Jones - Materials and Equipment Supervisor
Amanda Vandermaelen - Staff Assistant

Construction Engineering

Todd Buckles - Construction Manager
Marcia Naber - Right of Way Specialist
Chris Fox - Engineering Specialist
David Kraft – County Surveyor

Traffic Engineering

Jon Cheney, Traffic Engineer
Mike Olson – Supervisor III

Also present at the meeting was Councilman Hayman, Mike Dyer, Assistant County Attorney, Kathy Weaver, Fire Services and Sheriff Deputies, Capt. Osowski and Deputy Laloo. Council Elect Andy Kelly was present at the meeting to listen and observe.

Approximately 550 West Highlands residents were present at the meeting. Meeting commenced at 6:47 pm.

George Recktenwald, Public Works Director, gave an overall review of the history of West Highlands. He explained why Council decided to go with a building moratorium in the area. He informed them that a committee had been formed to look at these issues and come up with a solution. He urged the residents to come together and try to come up with a solution. He advised them that Council is open to constructive ideas and that this issue will go before Council, December 21st.

He stated that it is the consensus of the residents that they do not want Option #1 which would comply with the Volusia County Land Development Regulations and pave all the roads. Estimated cost \$50 million. Residents feel that this would be much too expensive.

He introduced Mr. Jereme Brown who represented a group of the residents (these residents all wore red shirts). Below are some of their issues:

- 1) They pay their fair share of taxes and don't want to be taxed again.
- 2) They claim they pay the same as owners in developed areas but don't receive the same services.
- 3) They believe that the gas taxes are being misspent.
- 4) They want to know why building permits were issued and stated how the number of permits has grown so much over the years.
- 5) They brought up the fact that Orange City doesn't want to annex them in.
- 6) They feel it has taken ten years for the County to form a plan and now the County expects the residents to come up with a plan in a few weeks.

Because of these issues they are asking for more time to develop a plan. Stated that the letter just sent out last week, not enough time to address issue. They are requesting that Council hold off until owners can come up with a consensus. Asked at least 120 days for negotiations. Stated that residents won't accept options without entire input from neighborhood. It was suggested that they want a ballot vote with final costs laid out before deciding anything.

One of the residents asked the question on how much money has been spent so far for the emergency repairs they are doing out at West Highlands at the present time. George responded that it is around \$32,000.

Another resident stated he would like to just keep the same maintenance they had 15 – 20 years ago. Just basic service to get in and out. Keep it maintained for a safety level. He also mentioned that the Garbage trucks use to be responsible to fill in the holes periodically and run a grader over it.

Some other issues that were brought up were:

- 1) Seminole County is now paving all their dirt roads and residents want to know why Volusia County can't do the same. George explained that Seminole County has a 1 cent sales tax that funds routine maintenance. He also mentioned that Seminole County is one of the smallest counties in Florida.
- 2) One of the residents brought up the issue of the Senate 360 bill and said it is the County's responsibility to pay for the roads. Questioned why they can't obtain a block grant. George explained block grants are tied to income levels as reported in the census. Census done every ten years. Subdivision did not qualify for the Community Development Block Grant because the income levels for the area exceeded HUD criteria. He further explained that the Senate 360 bill is for new construction.
- 3) Another concern is why the County is focusing on the 20 miles in our subdivision versus the 500 miles of other dirt roads? The subdivision residents indicated there was a problem, public protection services sited delivery issues and Council directed us to find a solution. This will be the first subdivision of potentially others that will be addressed. George explained that Council represents everyone in the County. Also, have to be careful setting precedent for others to follow. He explained that there are other developments out there that would expect the County to do the same for them. This cost would exceed what the County could afford.
- 4) One resident questioned about Daytona Park Estates. George explained that Daytona Park Estates is different because all roads were accepted for maintenance back in the 70's due to a higher population/density.
- 5) Some residents feel that Council is not responding. Some residents strongly disagree on building moratorium. Feels Council is taking away their land rights. Blaming County for failing to plan for growth. Wants to know how much money is available for maintenance and why isn't county providing information.
- 6) Residents feel County should help them out. Says 17th street looks like 17/92 with traffic problems. Can't let kids go out to play.
- 7) Someone questioned where the money from impact fees are spent. George responded that impact fees are used for improvements to and expansion of transportation facilities associated with the thoroughfare system as a result of new development. Not for maintenance activities.

Below are some options that the residents would like considered:

- 1) Keep the same maintenance they had 15 – 20 years ago. Just basic service to get in and out. Keep it maintained for a safety level. Mentioned that the Garbage trucks use to be responsible to fill in the holes periodically and run a grader over it.
- 2) Wants cost put on the builders of new homes and before the house is inspected make the builder responsible for fixing up the roads.
- 3) Why can't we pave 3 or 4 roads a year?

- 4) Need to just address Emergency issues.
- 5) Why not spread payment over 20 or 30 years instead of 10 years.
- 6) Use millings.
- 7) Use road tax. Annual road tax not a gas tax.

One resident stated that they need to work together to find a solution. He stated that he works hard, has 4 kids and doesn't want to lose his home. He advised that Council needs to think about families. Why not a 20 year or 30 year payment plan? He doesn't mind helping but some people are struggling very hard. He stated that he is paying almost \$900 to \$1,000 now. Worried about losing his house. He feels that if Council has made up their mind already, then will he has already lost his home. He also noted that if the road is paved then people will be speeding up and down.

George stated that the \$50 million plan is off the table. He will put together a report for Council. If that stands then it will go to Council December 21st. At which time a new letter will be going out with more details and costs. If for some reason Council changes and is moved from December 21st then will notify committee members.

He also noted that he may hold another meeting with the committee members prior to the 21st Council meeting.

Resident requested copies of the minutes. Minutes will be posted on web site. He stated that we cannot mail them to everyone. However, they will be mailed to the committee members and he urged the residents to contact their ward representative. He also advised the residents that they can go to Public Works web site at <http://volusia.org> under Public Works, Construction Engineering and view the 2006 Five Year Road Plan and the Dirt Road Reduction Plan to help answer some of their questions on how the money is spent.

Mr. Recktenwald thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting and added a special thanks to the residents who are serving as committee members for all their hard work.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.