

Special Council meeting – July 22, 2008.
Approval of filing municipal charter school application.

Transcript of discussion on consulting schedule at the request of Vice-Mayor Jorge Mendia:

Refer to video of meeting: <http://www.keybiscayne.fl.gov/clientuploads/Video/spcm072208.htm>

50:10

BOB VERNON: Vice-Mayor, you have the floor.

JORGE MENDIA: You know, for us up here, as we go through this process, and I hope the consultants are both listening, there is so much information that we need up here to make this decision, some of the same things Charles mentioned earlier. The big questions are going to be first the facilities, because of the cost that those are going to bring to the Village, temporary facilities in the first two or three years and forget (50:34).....about putting up a HS. So the facilities question needs to be addressed long before we decide that we are going to open a school because you are tying the community into a concept that you need to plan for, that needs to be part of your capital improvement plan, so I think that is a huge question that needs to be discussed, and two day workshops I don't know if they are going to be able to do that for us. The second question that I think our consultants need to answer for us and I am not sure you may not be the right consultant for this question is how charter school funding is going to be affected by changes that are happening in Florida in the next few months. I think we know that the school board is Millions of dollars - has a huge budget shortfall, the State has a 500 Million dollars budget shortfall, and that is going to get worse. On top of that you know that there is a constitutional amendment coming in November that is going to remove funding for school districts from property taxes to sales tax. And we know what happens with sales taxes, they go up and down, you know, so funding for our system is so fluid that we need to know what is going to happen, what happens if the numbers are not what we think. So we need our consultants to really give us information on this. This is critical to us (51:57). Cause that is, you know, we are managing people's monies. Not just the parents' whose kids are going to be go going to this school. Just like the gentleman said, 90% of people in this community don't have High School kids. So, you know, it's their monies. So I think it is really critical that the process that moves forward takes its time and brings us the information that we need and I see that we are looking at workshops over a two day period, is that right?

LEO BRITO: No, no, no, we got an earlier....(52:25)

JORGE MENDIA: I mean it says Sep. 10, 3 presentations, Sep. 11, 4 presentations. And that is a real difficult time for us because that is our budget time.

LEO BRITO: We have a different presentation.

JORGE MENDIA: I don't know that we need to do that in the middle of our budget hearing.

LEO BRITO: Oh, that... you would have to tell us about it. Let's see – is Prakash here? Prakash? Prakash are you there?

PRAKASH NAIR: Yes, can you hear me?

LEO BRITO: Vice-Mayor Mendia was mentioning that there are some issues with the 10th and 11th because of the budget hearings.

BOB VERNON: You need to put him on the screen so they can see him

LEO BRITO: Oh, do we need to see him because we are going to....

BOB VERNON: People at home do.

LEO BRITO: Oh, OK. Prakash...so we...and unfortunately I cannot share with the rest of you the revised schedule but...you may have to coordinate I guess with the village staff the dates that you are going to be holding the initial workshop presentations to talk about Visioning and to talk about educational facilities planning only because they have a budget workshop going on simultaneous Steve Liedman so that will have to be worked out with Jud. Jud (53:43)..... it will have to be done some other time in September based on your collective schedule but what I wanted to get into maybe is specific have them go over this planning process and all of the workshops that both Prakash and Doug will be spearheading right through October and November which you don't have a copy of .

BOB VERNON: OK

LEO BRITO: But it is going to be up on the screen so should we put the process up on the board...

CHIP IGLESIAS: Just for clarification, Leo, I'm sorry, we had some dates of Sep. 10th and 11th, and you are saying that there are some different dates – different dates for other workshops or...?

LEO BRITO: Additional workshops.

CHIP IGLESIAS: Additional workshops. Make sure we understand that because they have a copy before them of sort of tasks and workshops for Sep.10th and 11th - that still remains?

?: Is that a week-end? (54:40)

LEO BRITO: No, the idea for the 10th and 11th is that now you are raising the issue that there is a budget workshop.

JORGE MENDIA: No, no, not a budget workshop, there are budget hearings which is a very busy time for us.

STEVE LIEDMAN ? (54:53) We got Sept. 9th which is oBob VernoniouSteve Liedman Tuesday and then you are setting Wednesday and Thursday.

LEO BRITO: We're ...(55:02) this process now we only have a copy of it ... all I am suggesting is that discussion as to the actual dates for those first two workshops is that it be worked out between staff and Prakash so it coincides and works out better for you, the Village Council in terms of their other demands of their budget workshops, but more importantly is the context of what will be discussed at these workshops I think is probably more relevant than the actual dates, we can fix the dates later. And, while they are printing a copy now – and I wanted maybe with Doug, who came in from Minneapolis, get into a discussion – Prakash are you there?

PRAKASH NAIR: Yes, I am here.

LEO BRITO: Ok, great, why don't you tell them a little bit about the scope of the visioning aspect of the workshops so they understand what will transpire (55:55) in that period of time..

PRAKASH NAIR: Yes, ???(56:04)there are three components to the visioning workshops. The first one is called "Best practices" – can everybody hear me?

Voices: Yes.

PRAKASH NAIR: Best practices is basically - sharing information about what the rest of the world is doing. And I had talked earlier about the fact that there was some write-up at your last meeting about guinea pigs and I just wanted to make it absolutely clear that there is no, there is never an aspect of experimentation - almost anything, not almost –

everything that we recommend has been tried and tested somewhere – very often there is a school that you can actually go and visit if you want. So, back to Best Practices??? (56:50) You are creating a sort of a menu based upon the ingredients that best fit Key Biscayne teens, so since we don't know what those are, so when we present the best practices workshop we do ... (57:09) imaginary ... understanding that will lead to the visioning portion where the stakeholders will sort of get to participate in very interactive ways and begin to express what they envision for their communities and from there we will ... down a little bit and how the change from, you know people's perception from what their school might be to the kind of school you might actually be getting – how you get from point A to point B and then we get into a little bit more in depth things for example what are the desirable outcomes that you'll be looking for, what are the ... (57:56) private schools, what kind of curriculum you will be picking, do you want nationals (58:01) ... state curriculum, student center curriculum, whether it is a project based curriculum, you know, whether it is (58:12) input from the outside community outside of the school, we'll be discussing things like where you find the teachers, we talk about how you schedule the school, which will then lead into the facilities portion. We'll also be talking, along those lines we'll also be talking about various things that others are doing, for example there are 30 strategies that communities across the US and other countries are doing in 21st century schools and we'll discuss those and see how many of those apply to KB. We do something called a credit card survey which we kind of already began doing with those 25 sites. I want to stress that when we were looking at the 25 sites, we weren't looking at them from the aspect of where a typical school can go, we were looking at them as (59:05) resources. And I mentioned when I was first talking to the community out there saying that KB has an incredible rich place when looking at kind of (59:18) ... they have oceanography, you know, everything connected to ocean, oBob Vernoniou Steve Liedmany, but also meteorology, weather business there, tennis facility, so many different opportunities, we were basically looking at these facilities not necessarily as a place to locate the school but as spaces that could augment the curriculum of the school. We do something called a signature workshop in which we basically say Ok, that is great, that is a wonderful school in Singapore, but it's not the kind of school you want in KB, so what is your ethos, what kind of school would resonate with your community. We have something called a blink exercise which gets to be a very emotional ?? (1:00:06) response with different kinds of learning and teaching going on all across the world. So we have most of this down to a science (1:00:13), done this dozens and dozens of times with communities all around the world and so these workshops are very hands-on, very interactive, everyone wants to be a part and what comes out of it would truly be your voice, I mean we are facilitators, we are not going to tell you what to do.

And that's it, that's the purpose of having these workshops (01:00:35).

BOB VERNON: What are the workshops in October, November? He just went through it, the workshops he is talking about.

LEO BRITO: ??????? (01:00:54)

DOUG THOMAS: Good evening, good evening, greetings from Minnesota. I came down here to warm up. I just wanted to give you a little information. I e-mailed Jud and Prakash about two weeks ago and suggested that we do some follow-up workshops to this approval process and going forward to get to the nuts and bolts of how the school would operate and what are the actual practices of teaching and learning and so on, so I added that to this visioning part which is typically what Prakash and his colleagues do in most of the settings they go into is this visioning process as a precursor to the facilities design and so on. We do a lot of stuff with the actual learning program and so I suggested that we come in in late September or early October whenever is convenient and have a series of three community planning meetings. We probably would spend some extra time working with the planning group. The first one would be looking at the various model choices, looking at the results of those models, talking about the variety of different choice schools around the country and then sort of prioritizing those outcomes. What does KB really want out of a school. Does it want a 95% college attendance rate those sorts of things find out what.....and then the next part is figuring out how to get there, looking at the various design components, establishing whether those components are feasible. There may be

situations where literally there will not be enough money to offer everything. In a 400 student high school we know there are going to be certain limitations. And then applying the models to operations, looking at the budget, how we are going to actually be able to make this happen. So the model that gets chosen or the kind of school that KB wants we can then go forward with and try to figure out whether that is feasible to answer some of your questions, Mayor, in the future. And then we would bring this plan to the community and present it to the community and then we would also establish some sort of survey after that, some sort of process to survey the community to find out whether or not kids are going to like this, we got to know if kids are going to show up for the kind of school that you folks want and I am assuming that we will come up with a model after those three meetings and these are not at an additional cost by the way, these are part of, what I was explaining to Prakash, I felt as though (1:03:49) since the earlier school....could and should have been answered back in February or March....I didn't really think and it was waterI am more than willing to get a couple of my colleagues and we'll come back for at least three sessions this fall. That's really what this is about.

JORGE MENDIA: I think what you are proposing is more of what we are looking for.

(01:04:13)

DOUG THOMAS: And I think they will be useful, they will be interactive, we'll get as many community people as we can to these meetings. Following that in November and December these are issues that I think are more local and that's deciding how and what kind of governance system you want and then of course, making that decision about temporary facilities. Not to say that both those won't be going on continuouSteve Liedmany ??? (01-04-38) through the fall because I think they really have to but I think at that point you are talking about deadlines. In our planning process I would pick January 1st as your drop date to have some major decisions made so you know whether you can move forward or not. Questions?

MIKE DAVEY Do we want to set a schedule now or do we want to..... (01:05:01)

JORGE MENDIA: I think there are a couple of things we need to consider. Number 1, September is always tough because we have our budget hearings and those are all-consuming for the community. November we have an election, you know, and I think this process is so important that it needs to stand on its own and can't be split into segments, you know, you can't have a Board before the elections and a different Board, you know, you guys have to think about what you, you know, but I understand your concern about January 1st, but the process is more important than the product at some point, if you want this community to buy into this. I know you guys have bought into it and some of us up here have, but the process needs to be wide, broad and transparent and it can't be rushed, you know, I think that the idea that we are doing this so we can open next year starts creating the deadlines that are going to get us in trouble again. I think we need to let the process go in the way it makes more sense and gets the most attention from everybody and if you try to rush in two workshops on a Wednesday and Thursday in September and then a couple right in the middle of election season with people campaigning, ah, you guys tell me (01:06:22)

MIKE DAVEY I think this is totally right, and it is absolutely true, we don't know what's going to happen in November and I think it's right that we don't have one group coming and saying this and then we get to December and another group saying "no, we don't want this". I think that's absolutely right. You start at a smart starting point and you go from there.

STEVE LIEDMAN: And I think you have to realize that November 4th with the tax issue that will have some great significance and for us to go through a whole process before we know what funds are going to be available would really be problematic.

MIKE DAVEY Because once we know with certainty what has happened in that election, we can make determinations as to what we want to do, how we want to react to that. If the school tax is gone, what are we going to do as a community? I mean, you know, what's going to happen? We will have options.

BOB VERNON: I think what I'm hearing is, the later these start, the better. Not the sooner they start, mainly because of the questions that were risen by Vice-Mayor and Councilmember Davey regarding, you know, possible change up here, regarding budget numbers through the county, you know, so everything might change and it would be a shame to go through three months of workshops and, you know, all of a sudden it all crumbled because, you know, of things outside of anybody's control.

MIKE DAVEY I think, what we could do, is some of the process, the visioning and those sort of things that if you are talking about doing those things first, **start those in October**, because the community's ideas are not going to change, but I think once you start looking at **the budgeting and that sort of thing with the sites and all of that, we got to wait until December on that.**

LEO BRITO: That's what I was hoping that we would go because we have to first find out the level of need...

JORGE MENDIA ???(01:08:44): There is a lot of work to be done...

STEVE LIEDMAN: **You can start that in October**

MIKE DAVEY **In October I could see starting that**, there is no way during budget time, we've got to have full focus on that...

LEO BRITO: We'd have to find some dates that would work for Prakash, I know he has some issues in October, but yes, definitely, and then **what month would you recommend with regarding both the budgeting and the governance and facilities would be appropriate...**

BOB VERNON: **I would think after Nov. 4th,**

MIKE DAVEY **Mid November, early December.**

BOB VERNON: When is our last meeting in November?

Conchita: November 25th. Because I have the first council meeting on Nov. 18th because of the elections and then the installation of the (01:09:35)

BOB VERNON: And then we have one council meeting Dec. 9th and then we are off the rest of the...

JORGE MENDIA: Yes, but these are not council meetings

BOB VERNON: But it is also a travel period, holiday period...

MIKE DAVEY People start taking off and then all of the people with kids are going to be traveling because school is off...

BOB VERNON: **I think January is a great month to do it** (Budget and Facilities)

EG: Yes, January is a good point

LEO BRITO: **October, the time when we figure out the need, the council figures that out, where we are going with this thing in terms of overall demand and January and February facilities and budgeting**

BOB VERNON: **Yeah**

MIKE DAVEY Yeah. **I think that's more realistic**

LEO BRITO: That's fine. We'll work at that. Any more questions that you have for me?

MIKE DAVEY I don't think so, not right now.

JORGE MENDIA: I think you'll have a lot more information at that point, as far as how school districts are going to function, how they'll be funded, I mean, they don't have any idea how they are going to be funded.

BOB VERNON: That's a big concern, that they themselves don't know how they will fund themselves, so if we are counting on them for money, and they can't find it for themselves, you know, I think we might be the last person they are going to give it to.

LEO BRITO: We hope that's not the case. Legally that's not the case either, but we'd have to go through that as well

LEO BRITO: Thank you very much

BOB VERNON: Thank you, Leo (01:11:11)