Modified Agenda
City of Dunnellon
Special City Council Meeting
20750 River Drive, Dunnellon, FL 34431
November 21, 2016
5:30 P.M.

PLEASE NOTE: Individuals wishing to address the City Council please sign in. A three-minute time limit will be administered. PLEASE TURN CELL PHONES OFF.

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Opening Prayer/Moment of Silence (suggested time limit: 1 minute
Mayor to request if any invitee is present to open with prayer; if no invitee is present, Mayor will ask if a Dunnellon citizen will volunteer. If no volunteers, a moment of silence will be offered. If a citizen outside of Dunnellon requests to open with prayer, (s)he may so if no invitees/citizens volunteer.)

Roll Call

Proof of Publication (Posted on the City's website and City Hall bulletin board on Friday, November 18, 2016) Modified 11/21/2016 to add addition backup to item #1

Council's Comments Regarding Agenda
Public Comments

REGULAR AGENDA

1. **RAINBOW RIVER CORRIDOR ACTIVITY REVIEW - VICE MAYOR HANCOCK (Modified To Add Letter To Mr. Zalak & Mr. Steed And Presentation)**

   http://www.dunnellon.org/DocumentCenter/View/1404

   http://www.dunnellon.org/DocumentCenter/View/1405

   Documents:

   community letters.pdf
   20161118_CouncilRainbowRiverProtectionLetter.pdf

2. **BLUE RUN MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE - VICE MAYOR HANCOCK**

3. **BLUE RUN PARK REVENUE - COUNCILMAN DILLON**

4. **ADJOURN**

   PROPOSED MOTION: I move the City Council meeting be adjourned.

ANY PERSON REQUIRING A SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION AT THIS HEARING BECAUSE OF A DISABILITY OR PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT SHOULD CONTACT THE CITY CLERK AT

(352) 465-8500 AT LEAST 48 HOURS PRIOR TO THE PROCEEDING. IF A PERSON DESIRES TO APPEAL ANY DECISION WITH RESPECT TO ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT THE ABOVE MEETING OR HEARING, HE OR SHE WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDING, AND FOR SUCH PURPOSE, HE OR SHE MAY NEED TO ENSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE, WHICH INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED. THE CITY IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY MECHANICAL FAILURE OF RECORDING EQUIPMENT.

Villages of Rainbow Springs
Property Owners Association

October 2, 2016

Councilman Rick Hancock
Dunnellon City Council

At their Regular meeting September 20, 2016 the Board of Directors of the Rainbow Springs Property Owners Association discussed conditions on the Rainbow River. As you may know this community of approximately 6000 residents has small park on the west side of the river just south of the State Park. Some of our residents frequent this park for picnics, swimming, and launching of kayaks and, all too often, encounter non-residents attempting to enter our park to use our private facilities. This is a common complaint we hear from other private property owners along the river.

We also hear complaints from our residents about many pontoon boats and commercial dive operations parking offshore from our park and uprooting the river vegetation during their activities. Evidence of that can be seen in the large mats of grass floating down the river later in the day.

We also hear the complaints of our kayakers about the growing use of the Rainbow River and the disrespectful crowd of tubers as they ply the river, particularly on summer weekends and holidays. The kayakers usually avoid this river during these busy days because of the party atmosphere and interference with navigation on the river.

We also have several residents of our community who have volunteered to man the sheriff's river watch boat Since they are not allowed to monitor any of the behavior on the river, and are frustrated witnessing many violations of rules and safe practices on the water with no police backup, they are mostly choosing not to be on the river at the busiest times.

Clearly, there are far too many recreationists on the river, particularly with the great masses of tubers during the summer. The RSPOA Board feels that the Rainbow River is being abused and that some authorities need to show more responsibility for setting rules and limiting activities that are harmful to this great natural asset. We encourage your pursuit of a solution before it is too late.

Yours sincerely,

Burt Eno

Burt Eno, President
Rainbow Springs Property Owners Association, Inc.

Rick Hancock
Dunnellon City Council

Councilman Hancock,

Families residing in Blue Cove appreciate all efforts by the city and other public agencies to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods and along the Rainbow River. This starts with better management of the level of recreational activity occurring on our beautiful river.

The members of the Blue Cove Home Owners Association, representing more than one-hundred households strongly support all efforts to gain control over the excessive tuber traffic on the Rainbow River during the spring and summer seasons.

Though everyone should have access to public resources, the Rainbow River is a finite and fragile resource, and therefore careful management of the numbers of users at any one time is critical. Additionally, everyone using the river should have a socially acceptable experience of enjoyment for their particular use. This cannot happen when one form of use (tubing) overwhelms all other uses, to the detriment of all users.

The overwhelming volume of tubing creates public safety issues, and public nuisance issues along the river corridor and in Dunnellon, particularly at Blue Run Park. We do not want our outstanding waterway degraded in this manner, nor our neighborhoods, town, and park.

Please coordinate with all public agencies to unify ordinances, enforce the rules and regulations, and work together to improve the overall river experience for all users by limiting activities to a manageable level.

On behalf of the Blue Cove Homeowners Association, thank you for all efforts to responsibly manage the river uses and protect our premier river resource.

Thank you

Jim Petersen
President,
Blue Cove Home Owners Association

Rainbow River Conservation

www.rainbowriverconservation.com

October 2, 2016

Councilman Rick Hancock
Dunnellon City Council

Thank you for your observation of conditions on the Rainbow River and your expressed desire to open lines of communication with all entities that should be involved in a cooperative effort to protect the river and develop a suitable recreation management plan. As you know, Rainbow River Conservation, Inc. has long been a watchdog over the river and has sought to not only protect the ecology of the river but also to bring about improvements to allow humankind to passively enjoy the beauty and serenity of the river.

In 2006 RRC derived the Rainbow River Corridor Project, a proposal to the Florida Forever Program, to acquire remaining parcels of land along the east shore of the river to preserve them and protect the river. The first such acquisition was the 32 acre parcel now known as the Blue Run Park of Dunnellon. The Florida Communities Trust contributed $2.9 million, the county provided the 10% match, and RRC wrote the proposal and management plan. RRC subsequently acquired a SWFWMD grant with an in-kind match to improve the parking lot and alleviate direct storm water runoff to the river. RRC assisted the city with other improvements in the park and, along the way, assisted with writing the River Protection Ordinance and the Tree Ordinance.

Unfortunately, what was to be a passive park and river access consistent with the FCT Management Plan has now turned into a carnival of commercial use with little concern for the resource. Many thousands of tubers during the summer are allowed to enter the river at KP Hole and the State Park. Very few of these tubers actually come to enjoy the serenity and beauty of the river and its surroundings. They dominate the river and force diversion of other water craft into shallow areas where they tear up the natural vegetation and scare off the wildlife. Although KP Hole and the State Park have limits on parking there are no limits on the number of tubers or other craft and off-site vendors are popping up all over to get a piece of the dollar pie. The congestion at Blue Run Park is outrageous.

There is no management plan for traffic on the river. There is inconsistency in city and county ordinances applicable to the river and there is effectively no enforcement of these ordinances or navigational rules. No single agency seems to be in charge and sheer havoc is the result. Clearly, there needs to be cooperation between governing agencies and there needs to be an enforceable management plan for recreation on the river. At their meeting of September 19, 2016 the RRC Board of Directors discussed this matter and declared their support of your initiative and stated their readiness to help.

Yours sincerely,

Burt

Burt Eno, President
Rainbow River Conservation, Inc.

P.O. Box 729 • Dunnellon, Florida 34430
A Guidestar "Gold" Not-for-Profit Organization

Councilman Rick Hancock
Dunnellon City Council

Thank you for inviting Sateke Village to be a part of the discussion regarding the impact of commercial use on the Rainbow River.

Sateke Village is home to approximately fifty families located along the east side of the Rainbow River. The state parks tubing entrance along SW 180th Ave. Rd. is approximately a half-mile south of the Sateke Village entrance. Road traffic is a great concern to our residents. During peak times of the state park shuttle business, more vehicles than the state park facility can handle congest SW 180th Ave. Rd. Sometimes law enforcement is called out to observe the traffic, but even so, it has become increasingly difficult for Sateke Village residents to enter our own neighborhood. This is a 55 mph zone with too many cars for road safety- an accident waiting to happen.

One way to control the volume of traffic showing up at the tuber entrance is to require reservations made by tubers either by phone or online; a system the state parks use for camping already. Another idea is to move the existing tollbooth further in to get vehicles off of SW 180th Ave. Rd.

Often people travel a long distance to float the river, and when they are turned away due to full capacity, they seek river access in our neighborhood, often parking in front of homes and walking past our Private Property signs to access the river. Many of these people are irritated with the long wait time at the state park and on occasion they are belligerent to our residents when asked to leave. To remedy this problem the state park should provide Sateke Village with appropriate signage so the traffic can be made aware that our neighborhood does NOT provide public river access or parking.

Over the years, our Sateke Village residents have noticed an increase in traffic on the river every spring/summer. With the increase of human traffic on the river, there is an increase in trespassing on all of the private residences along the way. We have also noticed that laws for the river are no longer enforced, and we witness people drinking and eating from disposable containers that they then discard in the river. One of our residents did a turbidity study comparing the water turbidity during peak use and non-peak use, and found the turbidity was negatively impacted by higher human traffic on the river. Between floaters and boaters the water quality is threatened. Again, the combination of too many floaters and boaters is an accident waiting to happen.

We appreciate any efforts to reduce and manage the traffic along the river and the roads. We would be willing to be a partner in figuring out ways to improve the quality of recreational river use for all of us.

Sincerely,
Sateke Village HOA

CITY OF DUNNELLON

20750 RIVER DRIVE DUNNELLON, FLORIDA 33431
(352) 465-8500 FAX (352) 465-8505

November 21, 2016

Carl Zalak, III
Chairman
Marion County Board of County Commissioners
601 SE 25th Avenue
Ocala, FL 34471

Larry Steed
Park Manager
Rainbow Springs State Park
19158 SW 81st Place Road
Dunnellon, FL 34432

Chairman Zalak and Mr. Steed,

Please find enclosed home owner association letters representing thousands of households from communities located along the Rainbow River corridor and from Rainbow River Conservation, Inc. Though most of these folks do not live along the river, they care deeply about its protection and preservation. And, they expect their public officials and public agencies to protect their interests regarding the river, as well as their quality of life.

We fully understand that everyone should have access to public resources, like the premier Rainbow River. However, we also understand that unlimited public access to a finite resource is detrimental to that resource, and therefore public access needs to be managed.

We know that the County's KP Hole Park, Blue Run Park and Rainbow River State Park control the majority of public access to the river corridor. How we manage this dominance of public access is critical to properly protecting the river, and for providing a socially acceptable experience for all recreational users along the river corridor.

The current business models of KP Hole Park and Rainbow River State Park appear to allow for unlimited tuber access to the river for a fee. Based on these business models, this past season along the Rainbow River had a "spring break" atmosphere every weekend. Unlimited tubing along the river corridor overwhelmed every other type of river recreational use, and quite often resulted in a detrimental experience for many recreational users.

In addition, this excessive volume of tuber activity creates public safety issues and public nuisance issues. The Rainbow River communities of Dunnellon, Blue Cove, Rio Vista, Sateke Village and Rainbow Springs do not want the type of tourism that overwhelms the river on summer weekends and holidays. We do not want this premier, outstanding waterway degraded in this manner.

Revenues from these parks should solely support the resource, and enhance the specific parks where the revenue is generated. The Rainbow River should not be used as a "cash cow" to fund better experiences at other parks, while the public experience on this river is a quagmire of congestion, on the river and in our local communities.

The current business models for each park needs to incorporate a “best practices”, eco-tourism model for their park and the river as a whole; A business model that puts the preservation and needs of the Rainbow River first and one that allows all river users a socially acceptable experience along the entire river corridor.

The Rainbow River communities want unified ordinances, unified rules and regulations, and unified law enforcement along the entire river corridor. Our publicly supported parks should reflect these views and provide for them.

This should not be a dispute between various points of view regarding “capacities”. The City, Marion County and the State should cooperate to learn; what is the right balance of socially acceptable outdoor experiences along the river? Revenues from the public tuber operations should support independent, professional studies that can determine a reasonable river carrying capacity, a facility capacity analysis for each park and a social carrying capacity that speaks to the quality of the outdoor experience along the entire Rainbow River.

The Goals of each park management plan should include:

- Promote the protection and preservation of the Rainbow River
- Provide a safe and secure environment along the river corridor
- Provide a quality social experience for all types of recreational users

The management plans of each park should be organized to accomplish the following objectives:

- Establish facility processes that balance the use for all activities, and to preclude one activity from overwhelming other activities
- Ensure that each park facility manages all recreation activities to the capacity levels for which they are safely capable of providing
- Provide for periodic facility, social and physical capacity studies for each park, and the Rainbow River; to ensure effective levels of total recreational use, while preserving and protecting the river resources

The City will be updating our operating plan for Blue Run Park to accomplish these goals and objectives. We encourage you to work along with us through the Blue Run Park Advisory Council to provide the quality experience that every resident and visitor deserves, and adopt this management approach.

In summary, the City, County and State Park systems should want the same things that their constituents want, and should work towards providing a management plan that will accomplish the following:

Ensure that every recreational user enjoys their experience all along the river corridor in a safe environment, without interference, while appreciating the natural beauty and the wildlife that is part of the Rainbow River. And, support a community that enjoys the quality of life that comes from living in a natural environment, and protect the natural resources that provide for these outdoor experiences.

So, let's agree that we will work together, and do what it takes to find out what the appropriate capacities should be, and then agree to manage to those capacities. We look forward to a positive response, and stand ready to partner with you to accomplish what the river, and the public deserve.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Walter Green
Mayor, City of Dunnellon

Cc:

Billy Woods, Sheriff, Marion County Sheriff's Office
Mike McQuaig, Chief, City of Dunnellon Police Department
DEP / Aquatic Preserve
Shannon Wright, Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Jennifer Carver, Florida Communities Trust
Southwest Florida Water Management District
State Representative Charlie Stone
State Representative Stan McClain
Pat Gabriel, Chair, Marion County Parks and Recreation Advisory Council