

**TOWN OF SOUTHWEST RANCHES VISIONING WORKSHOP**  
**MEETING I**  
**JUNE 23, 2001**  
**PEMBROKE PINES CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL**  
**8:30 A.M.- 4:30 P.M.**

**REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WELCOME**

The meeting was opened by Mayor Mecca Fink who thanked everyone for coming and introduced members of the Town Council as well as other dignitaries who were in attendance. Mayor Fink read a letter written to the participants by Commissioner Diana Wasserman-Rubin, who could not attend the meeting. (See Exhibit "A") As a final note to her opening, Mayor Fink extended a warm thank you to Pembroke Pines Charter High School for allowing the Town to use their facility for their meeting. A list of all attendees is attached as Exhibit "B".

The Mayor then turned the meeting over to the meeting Facilitator, Janice M. Fleischer, of the South Florida Regional Planning Council (SFRPC). As a first order of business, the Facilitator introduced the SFRPC staff in attendance with particular thanks to her partner in this endeavor, Carlos Gonzalez. She explained that the visioning process had two functions: one, to provide the Town with a formal statement of what the citizens of the Town see as the vision of their future; and, two, to provide the Comprehensive Planning Committee with a basis upon which they will develop the Town's Comprehensive Master Plan as required by the Department of Community Affairs.

**AGENDA REVIEW, DISCUSSION GUIDELINES**

Ms. Fleischer went over the Objectives and Agenda for the day. (See Exhibit "C"). She then reviewed the responsibilities of a Facilitator as well as the Guidelines for Discussion. (See Exhibits "D" and "E"). She explained the concept of the "Idea Parking Lots" which were large flipchart sheets that were placed in two areas of the room for participants to use to note any items they felt were not addressed during the day that they thought were important. Anything written on these "Parking Lot" sheets would be transcribed along with all other work produced during the day and would be included in the Report of Proceedings.

Lastly, the Facilitator thanked the Town Clerk, Arielle Haze Tyner, for all her hard work in arranging for the food for the participants and Chris, John and Sheri Canada for their assistance in serving during the day.

## **FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS PRESENTATION**

Ms. Fleischer turned the meeting over to Carlos Gonzalez, SFRPC, who introduced the first guest speaker, Charles Gauthier, Chief, Bureau of Local Planning, Florida Department of Community Affairs.

Mr. Gauthier delivered an informative presentation on the requirements and elements of a Comprehensive Plan which was followed by questions from the participants. A copy of Mr. Gauthier's PowerPoint presentation as well as the Department's written responses to the questions below are attached as Exhibit "F". The questions asked by the participants were:

1. How often do the DCA rules change within the legal framework?
2. What is the timeframe within which we are required to submit our plan?
3. From the DCA perspective, what opportunities exist for public participation in the comprehensive plan development process?
4. Can our land use plan be changed to increase the tax base?
5. Are land uses not considered "development" exempted from the plan?
6. Are open space tax credits inconsistent with the county plan? (The DCA representative said he would provide an answer later to this question)
7. What is the amendment process outside the town's process?
8. Is commercial land use mandatory?
9. Does DCA consider issues like water supply in its review of plans?
10. Does the Comprehensive Plan go through DCA directly or through the County?
11. What is DCA's definition of "sprawl"?
12. Town would like to look at a copy of DCA's 13 criteria for "sprawl".
13. What is DCA's responsibility?

Mr. Gauthier answered each question to the best of his ability and promised to provide answers to those questions he could not answer. The questions listed above will be submitted to Mr. Gauthier for his written response to be used for future reference and will ultimately be made a part of this Report.

At the end of Mr. Gauthier's presentation, the group took a short break.

## **NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES PRESENTATIONS**

Upon their return from their break, the Facilitator introduced the next two speakers, both representatives of neighboring communities: Matt Wood, Director of Growth Management, City of Cooper City and Adrien Catarzi, Economic Development Administrator, City of Pembroke Pines. Each gentleman delivered a presentation on the current and planned future growth conditions in their municipality. An outline of Mr. Wood's presentation is attached as Exhibit "G". In addition, although they were not able to attend, the Town of Davie submitted a paper which is attached as Exhibit "H". The two presentations were followed by a question and answer period.

## **CITY OF PARKLAND PRESENTATION**

The next speaker was Bradford Townsend who was introduced by Robert Daniels, SFRPC. Mr. Townsend is the Planning Director of the City of Parkland, a community very similar to Southwest Ranches that incorporated in 1963. An outline of Mr. Townsend's presentation is

attached as Exhibit "H". Parkland's vision was to remain an equestrian community and Mr. Townsend spoke about the successes and challenges they have had in attempting to maintain a rural equestrian lifestyle. His presentation, too, was followed by a question and answer period.

At this point in the day, it was close to lunchtime. The Facilitator directed the participants to their program packets and the "Future Worksheet" (Attached Exhibit "I"). Participants were asked to complete this worksheet during lunch and turn them in when deliberations commenced after lunch. She explained the results of this Worksheet would be compiled by SFRPC staff and presented at the end of the day.

### **CONTINUED STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION**

Upon their return from lunch, the participants were asked: "Is anyone missing from this discussion? Are there other presentations you would like to have for next time?" The responses to these two questions were:

- Flood control/Water Management District-Presentation
- Transportation Agencies-Presentation
- Emergency Management-Presentation
- Property Appraiser-Presentation
- Weston-Presentation
- Parks and Recreation-Presentation
  
- Input from Kids-Missing
- All Religious Organizations-Missing
- County Commissioners-Missing

### **"WHAT MAKES SOUTHWEST RANCHES UNIQUE?"**

The participants were then asked: "What makes Southwest Ranches Unique?" Responses were recorded and are listed below:

- ❖ No street lights
- ❖ Private dirt roads
- ❖ Peaceful
- ❖ No sidewalks
- ❖ Horse and neighborhood friendly
- ❖ No major developer (?)
- ❖ Large amounts of wildlife
- ❖ Free lifestyle
- ❖ Common wants
- ❖ Slow streets
- ❖ Total international and inter-racial community
- ❖ Two lane roads
- ❖ No churches in residential neighborhoods
- ❖ No walled communities
- ❖ Large residential lots
- ❖ Chickens, ducks, peacocks
- ❖ Low taxes
- ❖ No more commercial areas
- ❖ Limited sidewalks

- ❖ Limited government
- ❖ No sewers and city water infrastructure
- ❖ No city employees
- ❖ Loose animals
- ❖ No mobile home parks
- ❖ Farm animals and barns
- ❖ No commercial vehicles
- ❖ No apartment buildings
- ❖ Ok to have boats/RV's/motor homes, etc.
- ❖ Non-manufactured homes/no tract homes
- ❖ Pioneer mentality
- ❖ Airplanes

## **IDENTIFICATION OF CORE VALUES**

The Facilitator explained that the goal of the three Visioning Meetings (this was the first in the series) was to have the participants produce an overall vision statement for the Town as well as statements of goals or visions for each element required to be included in their Comprehensive Plan. She reiterated to the group that the purpose of these exercises in identifying the different aspects of their Town was to gain information that would help in drafting an overall Vision Statement. She explained that she and her colleague, Carlos Gonzalez, would develop a draft Vision Statement based on the information contained in this Report for the participants to consider, refine and approve at their next meeting.

In the next exercise, the group was directed to the worksheet in their packet titled: "VALUE" which contained the definition of a value as "a principle, standard, or quality considered worthwhile or desirable". After allowing a few minutes for the participants to reflect on this definition, the participants responded to the question: "What do you think are the core values of Southwest Ranches?" After recording all the responses, the Facilitator instructed the participants to vote for their seven (7) top items. Each participant was told he/she had seven votes and they could place only one vote per item. Voting was done by a show of hands and the raised hands were counted. The results of the voting are shown below.

✓ Free country living within the city	3
✓ Freedom	23
✓ Independent	18
✓ Rural	49
✓ Honesty	6
✓ Nature	16
✓ Wildlife	15
✓ Space	17
✓ Family	4
✓ Preservation	45
✓ Individuality	4
✓ Neighborly	3
✓ Clean Air	3
✓ Cooperation	4
✓ Open skies/stars	4
✓ Tolerance	6
✓ Community and Lifestyle	0

✓ Equestrian	23
✓ Fairness	2
✓ Respect	4
✓ Minimalist	3
✓ Sincerity	1
✓ Sustainability	7
✓ Self-sufficiency	1
✓ Perseverance	1
✓ Green	5
✓ Animal Life	5

Seven items were chosen as the top seven core values of Southwest Ranches. They are listed in order of priority:

VALUE	PRIORITY
Rural	1
Preservation	2
Equestrian	3
Freedom	4
Independent	5
Space	6
Nature/Wildlife	7

The group then took a break.

### **STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS, BARRIERS**

During the break, five tables were each assigned a number and a color. A flipchart with a worksheet attached to it was set by each table. Each table had a different category on the worksheet: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, and Barriers. The group was instructed to join one of the tables, keeping each table at approximately the same number of members. Each table was instructed to “brainstorm” a list of items pertinent to their category. They were told to take a few minutes to think, then pick someone in their group to record their responses on the worksheet as well as someone to report the results of their work to the whole group at the end of the small group work time. The small groups worked for approximately 45 minutes in this manner.

When the group was assembled again as a whole, the Reporter for each group went over their results. At the end of each small group’s report, the Facilitator asked the whole group if they had any items to add. The result in each category is as follows:

#### *STRENGTHS*

- Entire council and staff live in the Town and know the area
- Common goals and vision of the people in our town
- Most of the community is already built out
- We can plan our future from the ground up
- Very good taxes, low
- Long history of community activists, politically astute
- Residents long term, roots are here

- Already have a rural lifestyle and we will preserve it
- Big voter turn-out
- Conducive to equestrian activity
- Pride in maintenance of homes and land
- Diversity
- Family and community commitments
- Low density housing
- Abundance of wildlife and open spaces
- Low demand and public services and facilities
- Vested interest in the community and home
- Residents are self-sufficient
- Recognizable unique character
- Location, location, location

Added during discussion:

- Uniqueness of each Homeowner group
- Safe community

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- Non-compact community
- Lack of diversity
  - Tax base
  - Demographic
- Small
- Newest municipality
- Vulnerable
- Divisiveness
- Inexperience
- Unique vs. neighbors
- County influence
- Zoning
- Tax exempt property
- No control on borders
- Pre-existing conditions
- Drainage
- Lack of political impact
- No traffic plan/control
- No town staff
- Us vs. them mentality

#### *OPPORTUNITIES*

- Preserve rural appearance
- Equestrian link to trail system
- Prove limited growth works
- Preserve our lifestyle
- Establish rural style parks
- Minimize change
- Limit road building/ Interior expansion

- Affordable tax rate
- Preserve open space/Wildlife
- Improve landscape codes
- Safe environments for children
- Neighborhood parks
- Seek more grants
- Write new codes, ordinances, and laws
- Improve drainage

Added during discussion:

- Buy open space now

### *THREATS*

- Government
- Commercial
- Invasion
- Large undeveloped parcels of land
- Missing out on Broward County and \$400 m bond issue money
- Internal issues not resolved
- Division or divided as a community
- I-75 and Sterling Road intersection
- Over development
- Church acreage
- Change
- “Miami Vice” homes and lifestyles
  - People moving into the community and not sharing our community lifestyle and interests (and then changing streetlights, sidewalks, etc.)
- Larger public throughways
- Losing space for trails (horse and other)
- Excess traffic

Added during discussion;

- Convenient dumping site (trash and animals)
- Uncontrollable build up on borders
- Light and sound pollution
- Lack of maintenance
- Suburban sprawl
- Change of land use
- Animal abuse (run over animals)
- Property valuation leads to higher taxation (could lead to subdivision of properties)
- Having to sell if property values go too high
- Government overspending
- Not having PC/WEB access to town information
- Long term bond debt
- Water supply (water table)

## *BARRIERS*

- Division within community
- Neighboring communities (incompatibility)
- Distrust
- Finances
- Lack of infrastructure
- Stubbornness/Intolerance
- Priority of differences
- Size of town
- Inexperience
- Politics
- Negativity
- Lack of consensus
- Apathy
- Communication
- Paranoia
- Dishonesty
- Greed-self-serving
- Over-development/Development
- Roads/Traffic
- Dwindling open space
- Inadequate information
- Special interests
- Outside pressures
- Unknown future

Added during discussion:

- Not knowing your neighbor
- Depression over threats and barriers (not a positive attitude)

There is a great deal of overlap between the “Barriers” section and the “Weaknesses” and “Threats” section.

## **“FUTURE” WORKSHEET RESULTS**

At this point in the day, Carlos Gonzalez, SFRPC, showed the group the results of their work on the “Future” Worksheet which they had completed during their lunchtime. A copy of the worksheet is attached as Exhibit “J”. The adjectives listed and the number of times they appeared is listed below:

ADJECTIVE	NUMBER OF TIMES LISTED
Rural	19
Open/ Equestrian	9



Green	7
Peaceful/Quiet/Tranquil	6
Friendly/Harmonious/Unified	4
Spacious/Agricultural/Private/Varied/Abundant Wildlife	3
Community/Moonlight/No Light/Slow traffic/Landscaped	2

The following adjectives were each listed once:

Restful  
Vibrant  
Two lane roads  
Tree canopy  
Berms  
Trails  
Unique  
Scenic  
Very low taxes  
Horse trails  
Horse friendly  
Diverse  
Clean  
Pristine  
Free from government  
Commitment  
Home  
Outlook  
Residential  
Park-like  
Country  
International  
Modern  
Cohesive  
Uncrowded  
Aware  
Free lifestyle  
Tolerant  
Desirable  
Utopia  
Pedestrian friendly  
Unchanged

This brought the day to a close. The Facilitator reminded the participants to complete their Evaluation Sheets and turn them in. The results of the Evaluations are in Exhibit “K”. The Facilitator also explained the “Kids Survey” Form. (Exhibit “L”) It will be distributed to kids within the Town between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades in order to give them a voice in this process. Further, at the next meeting there may be a few representatives from the school community chosen to work with the adult participants. This form is attached as Exhibit “L”. Ms. Fleischer then turned the meeting over to Mayor Mecca Fink.

Mayor Fink all the participants for working so diligently. The meeting was then adjourned.

## **IDEA PARKING LOT AND OTHER COMMENTS RECEIVED**

Child sponsored Child-care

Letter to Facilitator received from Karl Lairtus, AICP, Town Resident (Exhibit "M")

"Missed important outside representatives (Weston, Davie, Tax Office, etc.). Found leadership very good. Meeting quite informative and productive regarding general consensus of those attending on the outlook for the Town's future. Will be interested in next meeting. Need more mikes (microphones) to speed up the interactive part of the discussions." David Longstaff [luchow@aol.com](mailto:luchow@aol.com)

"This is a great process and I'm thrilled to be a part of it. Well done." Dr. Win Green, 15701 SW 51<sup>st</sup> Street Manor, Southwest Ranches, Fl. 33331, 954-252-5319

"Four lanes on Griffin to 27

Round about at 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue

Traffic calming devices on streets

4 Neighborhood parks

1 Community park in the west

Some commercial on H27

City Hall on Dykes Road

Multipurpose trails around town and branches into areas like Rolling Oaks and Deems Ranches

Landscaped bridge over 75 on Sterling

Some type of limited commercial property on SW corner of Dykes and Griffin

A horse farm on the SE corner of Dykes and Griffin, still with white fences." Anonymous