



PARKS, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES
PASCO COUNTY
4111 LAND O' LAKES BLVD., SUITE 310
LAND O' LAKES FL 34639
(727) 847-2411

July 6, 2016

To: THE GULF HARBORS-FLOR-A-MAR COMMUNITY

RE: Supplemental Letter for the GULF HARBORS/FLOR-A-MAR PARK AND CONSERVATION MUNICIPAL SERVICES BENEFIT UNIT, a Jointly Funded Project Between Pasco County's Environmental Lands Acquisition Management Program and the Residents of Gulf Harbors/Flor-a-Mar

Dear Property Owner(s):

You should have received an initial letter and ballot regarding the jointly funded project between Pasco County's Environmental Lands Acquisition Management Program (ELAMP) and the Residents of Gulf Harbors/Flor-a-Mar (the Community) to acquire the defunct golf course within your community. The County also held a Public Workshop on June 13th to further discuss the initiative. Based on information received during the initial meeting, it was determined that an additional meeting should be held to provide the residents with additional information prior to the Board hearing on this matter. **All dates have been extended.** Changes to the ballot deadline and BCC hearing date have been rescheduled in an effort to ensure all residents petitioned are involved and have sufficient time to ask questions. In addition, the information contained in the subsequent pages will attempt to clarify and further define the parameters of the conceptual passive park plan proposed for joint acquisition.

A second **Community Workshop will be held on Monday, July 18, 2016, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.** in the Commission Chambers at the West Pasco Government Center, 8731 Citizens Drive, New Port Richey, Florida. The workshop is designed to provide information and respond to questions.

The deadline for the ballots has been extended to Monday, August 8, 2016. The ballots, which were contained in the initial mailing, are to be mailed to: Natural Resources Division, 4111 Land O'Lakes Blvd, Suite 310, Land O'Lakes, FL 34639. If you wish to change your vote, please contact us at 727-847-2411 and reference the project for a new ballot.

The Board of Commissioners Public Hearing on this matter, which was to be held on July 26th, **has been rescheduled to Tuesday, August 23, 2016, at 1:30 p.m.** in the Commission Chambers at the West Pasco Government Center, 8731 Citizens Drive, New Port Richey, Florida. On this date, the Board will consider the adoption of an ordinance creating a MSBU Boundary and establishing the assessment amount to be included in the MSBU. This assessment will not be listed on resident's tax bill until the Fall of 2017.

Should you have any questions regarding the MSBU ballot or any of the above listed dates, please contact the Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources Department at 727-847-2411 and reference the project name.

Public Comments and Questions

Summary

There is a defunct golf course within the Gulf Harbors/Flor-A-Mar Community (the Property), which some residents have asked the County to purchase. Pasco County operates a program called the Environmental Lands Acquisition and Management Program (ELAMP), which is designed to protect natural communities and conserve natural resources. The ELAMP program would contribute 50% of the initial cost of the land acquisition of the golf course. The residents of the Community would pay the other 50% of the land acquisition cost, as well as the annual maintenance costs of the property via a Municipal Services Benefit Unit (MSBU) assessment. An MSBU is a non-ad valorem tax that will appear on each resident's tax bill each year. The estimated cost is \$100.00. The Community is asked to vote YES, to support the creation of the MSBU so that the residents and the County may purchase the golf course, or NO, in opposition of creating an MSBU to purchase the golf course, in which case the County will not close on the purchase. The outcome of the ballot will be considered when the Board of Commissioners meet on Aug. 23, 2016, to decide whether to approve or deny an ordinance that would create this MSBU.

Although there are other functioning MSBU models in Pasco County, this is the first time a community would partner with the ELAMP program to buy and maintain a parcel of land.

History

1. Where did the idea to purchase this land originate?

The land was nominated by the seller's agent for acquisition by the Pasco County's Environmental Lands Acquisition and Management Program (ELAMP) in 2013. Support for the nomination was based on the fact that a significant number of migratory birds had been observed utilizing the site, as indicated by a letter of support from the West Pasco Audubon Society.

2. Why can't ELAMP purchase this land?

The County has been actively negotiating the acquisition of the property for the last few years. Unfortunately, a purchase price could not be agreed upon.

3. Why is the community being presented with an MSBU?

Some members of the Gulf Harbors Civic Association, Inc. have asked if the residents could participate in a joint acquisition of the Property, in which the County and the residents of the community would share in the total cost and maintenance of the Property. The residents' share would be created by forming an MSBU.

Land Use

4. What is the current and future land use zoning designations of the Property?

The Property is currently zoned Agricultural. The future land use is designated RES-9. Development of the Property is plausible if it is in compliance with the land development code and approved by the Board of Commissioners.

5. Would future land use of the property be determined by the residents? Will there be a public hearing or vote anytime something is proposed/changed?

If a future private land owner proposed any zoning or land use change that requires a public hearing, the Board of County Commissioners would have the final decision, but public comment would be accepted and considered. If development is proposed based on the current zoning, the County would have to issue a permit that complies with the Land Development Code, and no public hearing would be required.

6. Can the owner of the defunct golf course be forced to mow the property?

For a parcel this size, the Land Development Code only requires a 30-foot buffer be maintained where the parcel abuts developed property.

7. Will the community have a say if maintenance charges were to change in the future? What is the process for an increase?

Yes. The actual amount of the assessment would be determined after an advertised public hearing. It would be based on the maintenance needs or requested service increase.

Conceptual Plan and Passive Park Elements

8. What will the park look like?

The physical appearance of the majority of the park will not change much at all. ELAMP funding must be used for conservation purposes, so only passive recreational amenities would be compatible with such a purchase. A conceptual plan for the passive park includes a protected preserve, open space areas, dog park, improved parking lot, restrooms, benches, and a multi-use trail that will surround the preserve. **See attached exhibit.** Capital improvements will be restricted to the open space areas of the property.

9. How will the passive park be maintained?

Landscape services would be provided for the community common areas. This includes basic mowing and maintenance of all designated open space, trails, etc. The protected preserve would be maintained in its natural state. Herbicide and mechanical removal of nuisance and exotic species would be incorporated into a management plan.

10. Who would be allowed to access the Property?

Access would be restricted to members of the Community as well as ELAMP staff and guests. Guests could include those interested in nature hikes or bird watching, in coordination with a designated Community representative.

11. Would the Property be fenced with a gate and passcode?

The property could be fenced and gated. A survey would be used to determine fence location. If desired, a gate with passcode could be incorporated for added security. Fencing would be purchased under the MSBU capital improvement revenues.

MSBU Specifics

12. How were the numbers of units represented determined?

All tax parcels (associated with homes or vacant lots) are listed by the Pasco County Property Appraiser in a County parcel database along with the associated owner. All residential codes listed in the database associated with the Gulf Harbors/Flor-A-Mar Community were used to create the MSBU mailing list. Over 1,842 letters with ballots were mailed via certified mail on June 3, 2016.

13. How much does this parcel of land cost?

The County has an appraisal valuing the Property at \$600,000. The seller has an appraisal valuing the property at \$1,700,000. The seller’s asking price is \$1,200,000. ELAMP would pay \$600,000 and the difference between ELAMP’s contribution and the final selling price would be paid by the residents of the Community, via the MSBU.

14. What is the cost of the MSBU?

There would be two parts to the MSBU cost. The first is the cost of acquisition (the capital cost), which is \$600,000. The second part is the cost needed to maintain the passive park and to fund additional capital improvements. This is estimated to be \$60,400 per year.

<u>Land Acquisition (Residents’ contribution via MSBU)</u>	\$600,000 (\$67 per year)
<u>Total Annual Maintenance and Capital Improvements</u>	\$60,400 (\$33 per year)
- Annual Maintenance (mowing/landscaping)	\$14,400 (\$8 per year)
- Capital Improvements (Fence, restrooms, dog park, trail, parking, etc.)	\$46,000 (\$25 per year)

These costs equate to an estimated annual assessment of \$67.00 for the capital portion and \$33.00 for annual operations, maintenance, and capital improvements, or \$100.00 total per Assessment Unit (AU). Each single family residence is considered to be one AU. The capital annual assessment of \$67.00 for the residents’ share of the acquisition would terminate after five (5) years. Capital costs for

additional park elements may be included at a later date, upon request of the residents and after an advertised public hearing. The \$100 estimate does not include the interest accrued at 3.25%. However, each resident may elect to pay their share of the capital cost up front, to avoid paying interest, and only the annual maintenance fee and capital improvements would be included in their MSBU assessment.

15. Will the MSBU be mandatory?

If the Project is approved by the Board of County Commissioners at the public hearing on August 23, 2016, the MSBU will be created and payment of the assessment will be mandatory. If the MSBU is created, the Board would adopt a resolution authorizing the use of the uniform method for collecting the assessment, so that the MSBU amount will be added to your property tax bill and will be payable annually in the same manner as your property tax. Failure to pay the assessment will cause a tax certificate to be issued against the property which may result in a loss of title, in the same manner as non-payment of property taxes. You have a right to appear at the public hearing on August 23, 2016, and file written objections with the Board if you do not support the resolution.

16. Who would be responsible for any liabilities related to the property?

To the extent that the “owner” of the property would be deemed liable for any claim, the owner would be the County.

17. How are the funds managed?

If the ordinance is approved by the Board of County Commissioners, a management plan would need to be fully developed. This management plan, prepared by the ELAMP staff in coordination with an advisory board would specify the work to be performed and authorizing use of MSBU funds., The Clerk and Comptroller will create separate fund that will only be used for the MSBU. The County staff would oversee the maintenance contracts.

18. Where can I see a copy of the existing ordinance?

A copy of an ordinance creating an MSBU will be made available on the County’s website at <http://www.pascocountyfl.net>. The ordinance for Gulf Harbors MSBU will be modified to meet the particular conditions of the Gulf Harbors property, but most of the implementing language will be the same.

19. How will the Advisory Board be formed?

The composition of the Advisory Board would be outlined in the MSBU ordinance. Board positions would be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners.

IMPORTANT DATES

The County will hold a **Public Workshop on July 18, 2016, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.** in the Commission Chambers at the West Pasco Government Center, 8731 Citizens Drive, New Port Richey, Florida. The purpose of the workshop is to provide additional information and respond to additional questions regarding the **GULF HARBORS/FLOR-A-MAR PARK AND CONSERVATION MUNICIPAL SERVICES BENEFIT UNIT.**

The previously mailed ballots are due Monday, August 8, 2016. If you have not yet voted, please mail your ballot to: Natural Resources Division, 4111 Land O'Lakes Blvd, Suite 310, Land O'Lakes, FL 34639. If you have already voted, you do not need to vote again. If you wish to change your vote, please contact us at 727-847-2411 and reference the project for a new ballot.

The Board of County Commissioners of Pasco County, Florida, will hold a **Single Public Hearing** on the **GULF HARBORS/FLOR-A-MAR PARK AND CONSERVATION MUNICIPAL SERVICES BENEFIT UNIT** in the Commission Chambers at the West Pasco Government Center, 8731 Citizens Drive, New Port Richey, Florida on **August 23, 2016, at 1:30 p.m.**

Exhibit A – Conceptual Plan

