Agenda Item #: 34/

PALM BEACH COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

| Meeting Date: Department | July 8, 2008 | (X) Consent() Workshop | () Regular() Public Hearing |
|------------------------------|--------------|--|--|
| Submitted By Submitted Fo | | l Resources Management l Resources Management | |

I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Motion and Title: Staff recommends motion to approve: the Environmental Resources Management's (ERM) recommendation to demolish the residential structure at the County's Jackson Riverfront Pines Natural Area at a cost not to exceed \$30,000.

Summary: On February 8, 2007, the County finalized the purchase of the Jackson Riverfront Pines Natural Area for \$3,600,000. This approximately 3-acre property, on the north fork of the Loxahatchee River, consists of three parcels with a single family residence on one of the parcels. On October 17, 2006, the Board directed staff to investigate the feasibility of utilizing the existing house as a nature center. Subsequent discussions with contractors indicate that the cost to bring the building up to code and American with Disabilities (ADA) requirements would be approximately \$119,950. This price does not include any interior renovations for space reconfiguration other than those required by ADA. Demolition cost estimates for the structure, including asbestos abatement, are under \$30,000. Because of the high cost to bring the structure up to code and the lack of designated positions, volunteers, or another agency to staff a nature center, ERM recommends demolition of the house and garage, and filling in of the swimming pool on the property. Demolition of the existing structure would not preclude the County from constructing an environmental education/nature center in the future. <u>District 1 (JMB)</u>

Background and Justification: The BCC approved the purchase of Jackson Riverfront Pines Natural Area on October 17, 2006 (R2006-2315) and the first amendment to the option agreement for Sale and Purchase on February 6, 2007 (R2007-0173). The site was purchased from Thomas C. and Sharon Whitesell, James J. and Tallulah L. Whitesell, and Dorothy J. Whitesell. This property, located at 19745 North Riverside Drive in Jupiter, has a one story, three bedroom house that is approximately 2,500 square feet and has an attached two-car garage, a screened-in pool enclosure (Continued on Page 3.)

Attachments:

1. Location map.

| Recommended by: | FalmelE-Walnuty | 6)4/08 |
|-----------------|----------------------|--------|
| Approved by: | Bepartment Director | Date |
| | County Administrator | Date |

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II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

А. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

| Fiscal Years | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|------|
| Capital Expenditures | 1 20 222 | | · | | |
| Operating Costs | \$30,000 | | | | |
| External Revenues | | | | | |
| Program Income (County) | | | | · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · | |
| In-Kind Match (County) | · · · · · | | | · | , |
| m-Kind Maten (County) | · | | <u></u> | | |
| NET FISCAL IMPACT | <u>\$30,000</u> | | | | |
| # ADDITIONAL FTE | | | | | |
| POSITIONS (Cumulative) | | | | | |
| rosirions (Cumulative) | | | | | • |
| Is Item Included in Curren | t Budget? | Yes | $\mathbf{J}^{\mathbf{r}}$ | No | |
| Budget Account No.: | Fund <u>1226</u> | Department | 380 Unit | 3162 Object | 3401 |
| 5 | Program | E450 | <u> </u> | <u> </u> | |

В. **Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:**

Funding for the demolition will come from the Natural Areas Fund.

Department Fiscal Review: C.

III. REVIEW COMMENTS

A. OFMB Fiscal and /or Contract Dev. and Control Comments:

Atwillhite 6.19.08 OFMB 6 6/11/08 6/19/8

OP Contract Development and

B. Legal Sufficiency:

Assistant County Attorney

C. **Other Department Review:**

Department Director

(Continued from page 1):

and a boat dock. A pre-renovation survey of the house completed by Morse Zehnter Associates in October of 2007 revealed that the structure would require asbestos abatement for any renovations involving the walls, ceilings or sheet vinyl. To bring the house up to current Florida Building Code Standards for occupancy by employees and public access (group assembly of less than 50 persons), the building would also require structural repairs, demolition, ADA accommodations, plumbing, electrical and life safety upgrades. According to Gartek Engineering Corporation estimates calculated in October of 2007, the minimum required renovations would cost approximately \$119,950.

At the time of purchase, ERM was directed by the Board to evaluate the feasibility of using the property's single family residence as a nature center. The factors considered in determining the feasibility included both the costs of renovations and the presence of an agency to operate the nature center. ERM had preliminary discussions with the Loxahatchee River Environmental Control District (ENCON) to discuss their interest in using the house to operate an environmental center with public education components and research facilities. In November of 2007, ERM sent ENCON a letter officially offering use of the house at Jackson Riverfront Pines Natural Area along with a draft interlocal agreement outlining each agency's responsibilities for the management of the environmental center and natural area. In the months following the letter, ENCON declined the offer and no other agency or non-profit group has expressed an interest in the development or operation of a nature center at this site.

On May 19, 2008, Commissioner Marcus held a public meeting at the Jackson Riverfront Pines Natural Area to discuss the future plans for the house with the surrounding community. Because of the high cost of renovation, combined with the absence of an agency with interest and staff to operate a nature center, the best course of action was determined to be the demolition of the house. An environmental education/nature center could be constructed at the site in the future upon the recommendation by the Natural Areas Management Advisory Committee, and the approval of a natural areas management plan and the necessary budget appropriations by the BCC.

Attachment 1





