




Office of the
**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY
ADMINISTRATOR**

Jason E. Brown, County Administrator
Michael C. Zito, Assistant County Administrator

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Jason E. Brown
County Administrator

BY: William K. DeBraul, Deputy County Attorney 

DATE: March 8, 2017

SUBJECT: Offer to Purchase 16th Street Ballfields

At its meeting of February 7, 2017, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) discussed the current status of the 16th Street Ballfield parcel. The 11.57 acre parcel is located north of 16th Street between 20th Avenue and 17th Avenue within the city limits of Vero Beach. Improvements to the property consist of three softball/little league/baseball diamonds with lights, fencing, parking, concession, press boxes and announcers' booths. An aerial photo of the Property is attached as Exhibit A. The property is currently being maintained by the County and rented out to groups for baseball practices.

On December 20, 2016, the Board voted to obtain an appraisal of the Ballfield property in its current state and its value in a multifamily condition similar to neighboring property. The appraisal valued the Ballfield property in the "as is" condition at \$500,000 and, if rezoned and the underlying land use is changed, the appraisal offered a value of \$725,000. A copy of the appraisal is available for review in the County Attorney's Office.

At the February 7th Board meeting, staff was directed to contact the School District and the School Board members to determine if there was any interest in exchanging the Ballfield property for the District's "South County High School" property on the northwest corner of Oslo Road and 20th Street. A letter was drafted and sent to the School Board members. The proposed exchange was discussed by the School Board and the proposed exchange was rejected, as evidenced by the letter from the Superintendent, attached as Exhibit "B".

At the same time as staff was inquiring if the School Board was interested in the property, staff was directed to draft the documents necessary to sell the property via the sealed bid process. The Board directed staff to initiate the process of selling the property effective March 14, 2017. Drafts of those documents are ready to be distributed via Demandstar and the required public notice and advertising if the Board decides to sell the property on the open market.

After the February 7th Commission meeting, staff was contacted by Joseph and Carole Graves about purchasing the 16th Street Ballfield property. Their 15-year old son Jimmy died in a boating accident and a foundation has been established in Jimmy's name. Jimmy Graves was an accomplished multi-sport athlete and his family and friends wish to honor his life through his love for sports and fellowship. Staff met with the Graves family and has recently received an offer to purchase the 16th Street Ballfield property for \$250,000. The terms of the proposed purchase are set forth in a letter from Rebecca Emmons, attorney for the Jimmy Graves Foundation, attached as Exhibit "C". The Foundation seeks to keep the recreational nature of the property, focusing on fun and enjoyment for youth. Emerging trends in youth sports such as 3-on-3 soccer and 7-on-7 flag football were two ideas discussed at the recent meeting. Given the not-for-profit nature of the Foundation and the new sporting and fellowship ideas offered, staff supports the sale of the property at the proposed price.

Since the Foundation is a not-for-profit organization, §125.38 Fla. Stat. (2016) allows the County to sell the Ballfield property to the Foundation without the need for the public bidding process at a price deemed acceptable to the Board, without regard for the actual value of the property.

As was discussed at the February 7th Board meeting, a group led by Gene Waddell expressed interest in purchasing the Ballfield property. After learning of the Foundation's interest in the property, Mr. Waddell's group has decided not to go forward with their discussions and has expressed support for the Foundation's proposal.

Funding. There are no County funds impacted by this matter, however, if the sale is completed, staff wishes to earmark proceeds from the sale for recreational purposes.

Recommendation. Staff recommends the Board approve the terms of the proposed purchase of the 16th Street Ballfield property by the Jimmy Graves Foundation at a price of \$250,000 and authorize the Chairman to sign the attached letter and all other documents necessary to effectuate the sale. It is further recommended that the Board direct staff to negotiate the final terms of the Purchase Agreement and cooperate with the Foundation during the due diligence period.

Copies to: Rebecca F. Emmons, Esq.

Attachments: Aerial photograph
Letter from Superintendent
Proposed purchase letter
Resolution