

**MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS MEETING
CITY OF REHOBOTH BEACH**

November 5, 2012

The Special Meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners of the City of Rehoboth Beach, was called to order at 9:01 a.m. by Mayor Samuel R. Cooper on Monday, November 5, 2012 in the Commissioners Room in City Hall, 229 Rehoboth Avenue, Rehoboth Beach, DE.

City Solicitor Glenn Mandalas gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present:	Commissioner	Patrick Gossett
	Commissioner	Bill Sargent
	Commissioner	Pat Coluzzi
	Mayor	Samuel R. Cooper
	Commissioner	Stan Mills
	Commissioner	Lorraine Zellers
	Commissioner	Mark Hunker

Also in attendance were: City Manager Gregory Ferrese
 City Solicitor Glenn Mandalas

The purpose of this Special Meeting was to consider approval of the construction of a garden consisting of a seating wall, plaza, walkways, pergolas and other associated amenities in Cranberry Park, at the intersection of Third Street and Olive Avenue, as proposed by the Rehoboth Beach Sister Cities Association, including the possible approval of a Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the Rehoboth Beach Sister Cities Association regarding same.

Commissioner Pat Coluzzi noted that copies of the Memorandum of Understanding had been provided to the Commissioners prior to this meeting. She summarized what the plans are for the garden. There has been concern about the size of the garden. The Sister Cities Association has agreed to start with the Phase 1 approach.

Commissioner Stan Mills said that this would be two-part discussion with (1) being to discuss the merits or not of this particular design in this location and then if the Commissioners are comfortable with that to (2) then take up the MOU. Within the MOU, the garden would essentially be a gift to the City, and then it would be given to the City and all the maintenance would be in the City's hands. He has not changed his views with regard to the garden. The garden should be downscaled and consideration should be given to relocating it to Mariners' Park north of the Henlopen Hotel or located on the north side of the pavilion at Olive Avenue and the Boardwalk near the Verrazzano monument. A smaller scale of the compass with an educational sign could be just as successful located at the end of Olive Avenue and the Boardwalk.

Commissioner Lorraine Zellers said that Cranberry Park looks good with the recent trimmings. She supports the Sister Cities Association and the concept. It is a generous gift that the Association is willing to give to the City. The City is only one square mile, and open spaces are very limited and should be protected. She has received emails and has talked with constituents who are concerned about losing open space in this park. Some people do not feel a formal garden fits the City, and they do not get the connection to Verrazzano, the explorer. Many of these people do not understand the sense of urgency with the proposed project. The proposed garden is more excessive than the garden in Greve-in-Chianti, Italy. Cranberry Park is 16,000 square feet, and the garden would be utilizing 9,000 square feet. The Planning Commission has indicated that the biggest threat to the lakes is runoff, and the compass and seating would consist of a lot of impervious surfaces. This is a City park, and it is the City's responsibility to hold onto the open space areas. Commissioner Zellers wants to have a garden, but it needs to scaled down and located in another place.

Commissioner Mark Hunker said that the compass is impervious surface but the remainder of the area will be grass. Phase 1 is small, it will still remain a park. This will not be a 9,000 square foot takeover, it will remain grassy with trees and bushes, and the MOU addresses that. This garden would be a gift from Sister Cities Association. There would be no more runoff that what currently exists, and the compass would be located 95 feet away from Lake Gerar. There should be no environmental impact, and no green space will be taken away. Commissioner Hunker supports this project.

Mayor Cooper said that there are a lot of people who can be honored in the City who have a lot more impact on the City than Giovanni Verrazzano. Something could be very tastefully done at or near the monument at the end of Olive Avenue and the Boardwalk that would be just as successful and beautiful; and keep Cranberry Park as open space.

Commissioner Coluzzi noted that one of the issues with the area at the monument is that nothing will grow there. That area would not be an option which would be reciprocal in terms of what the City of Greve has planted.

Commissioner Bill Sargent said that this is a generous gift of \$40,000.00 and potentially more, and could add to the beauty of the town. Someone from the community had presented the argument this is a positive contribution towards understanding between countries, cultures, languages and attitudes. The intent of the Sister Cities Association is to have cultural, educational and trade exchanges so the likelihood of another war would be lessened. The garden would be a considerable sacrifice in open space area. If this would be a gift from individuals, it would have a different quality. Phase 2 will possibly need to rely on obtaining grants, and the gift would not be as pure as if it would be the entire gift from the hearts of individuals. Commissioner Sargent wished that whatever is done in the garden would become just part of the City and not have identification with one particular individual group and no other groups. The City is being asked to surrender land, but the title would not be passed on. If the garden would be placed in Cranberry Park, there is an element that the City would be giving up something. This proposed project would be setting a precedent for other groups to ask for pieces of the City.

Commissioner Patrick Gossett supported the concept of the park. This would be a gift given to improve park land in the City. This would stay as a park. Other cities have established public-private partnerships. The City has never entered into a joint relationship with a non-profit organization to redesign a park in the City. This is an opportunity the Commissioners need to look and go forward with because there may be other opportunities to enhance or encounter. The concept is good, and redevelopment enhancement of the park is a fine thing. Commissioner Gossett was concerned with regard to the details, and that was the reason he wrote the MOU. When the garden is completed, the attitude of people in the future will be that this is a city park. He would like to see the Sister Cities Association take the responsibility in perpetuity of helping to maintain the park, but this was removed from the MOU. It is the Commissioners' responsibility to develop a process for the future. This project should move forward.

Commissioner Coluzzi said that the sources for funding are the State Commission on Italian Heritage and Culture, private donations, The Da Vinci Society and The Da Vinci Foundation. The Association has applied to the The Longwood Foundation for a grant of \$50,000.00. The entire plan could possibly cost \$100,000.00. Phase 1 of the plan would cost approximately \$44,000.00 would not be dependent upon The Logwood Foundation grant. In the MOU, no construction of any phase of the garden may begin before financing for that phase of construction is secured by Sister Cities.

Commissioner Hunker said that the City would still own the park, and it would not be expanded or contracted. Sister Cities will not control the park.

Commissioner Zellers noted that people have said that the proposed garden is too formal for Rehoboth, and it is not the look of Rehoboth. Commissioner Coluzzi said that the garden Greve is not typical of Greve, and it has a Rehoboth Beach feel about it. Discussion ensued.

After discussion, it was determined what the objections to the garden are, and suggestions were made to make it a reciprocal garden in the manner that Commissioner Coluzzi has presented it.

Commissioner Zellers' suggestions were: 1. Move the compass back from the street. 2. Not have all the circular movement around it. 3. More open space in front of the garden, and the trees could be a nice backdrop. 4. Re-scale the size of the garden. 5. Work with Parks & Shade Tree Commission to get its input.

Commissioner Mills' comments were: 1. Locate the garden to the end of Olive Avenue and the Boardwalk at the monument or Mariners' Park. 2. The design for Mariners' Park would include an education program or signage or a half-moon seat wall. 3. He had anticipated a 100 to 200 square foot garden from the outset. 4. He was uncomfortable with making an overlay of the existing conditions and seeing that trees need to be removed in Cranberry Park to facilitate the proposed plan. 5. Leave the green, plainer surface of the grass in Cranberry Park alone.

Commissioner Gossett did not have a problem with the design as presented, and he is in support of

the garden. His issue is with the process with Phase 1 and Phase 2. The purpose of the Parks & Shade Tree Commission is to bring feeling, involvement and understanding of City to the table to design something. He would like to design a process for the future.

Commissioner Sargent suggested embarking on a process to find something for everybody that entails the Sister Cities' mission.

Mayor Cooper said that the garden seems to be creating a lot of animosity or significant enough that the project should not go forward in its present form, but should be looked at as to how more people can be brought onboard with something a little different or a different place, etc.

Commissioner Coluzzi said that from the outset, the Board of Sister Cities wants to work with the City. The idea of this process the Commissioners are currently undergoing is why the Association cannot do it. The Association would like to see an agreement to move forward with a park. She will go back to the landscape architect to see if he can incorporate the suggestions that were made. The garden would be another place away from the Boardwalk that would be a destination with educational and historical components. Commissioner Coluzzi would like to move forward with a vote to accept the garden and the Sister Cities' board will work with the City to come up with a new design.

Commissioner Hunker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Coluzzi, that the Board of Commissioners accept the gift from Rehoboth Beach Sister Cities Association of a garden to be installed at Cranberry Park and for the new design to have involvement by the Commissioners and final approval by the Commissioners and to maintain a best efforts pace to allow installation to be complete by June 22, 2013 and the Memorandum of Understanding is not part of this motion but could be incorporated as part of the Commissioners' final approval of the revised plan.

Commissioner Sargent wished that the Commissioners would look at alternatives to the location of the garden.

Mayor Cooper thought that the MOU should not be voted on at this time.

City Manager Gregory Ferrese said that if the MOU is approved, he and Mayor Cooper would work on the project.

Commissioner Sargent said that the MOU must be passed before construction begins.

Commissioner Mills said that if the motion would be to support Sister Cities and the garden, he would vote yes, but he would hesitate to vote yes because of all the controversy. He would rather see the final design and discuss alternates particularly near the Verrazzano monument. He was not comfortable with voting yes without the MOU details being completed.

(Gossett – aye, Sargent – aye, Coluzzi – aye, Cooper – aye, Mills – no, Zellers – aye, Hunker – aye.) Motion carried.

Mr. Walter Brittingham, 123 Henlopen Avenue, voiced concern that no background has been provided regarding the Sister Cities Association. Mayor Cooper recommended the he contact Commissioner Coluzzi for this information.

There being no further business, Mayor Cooper adjourned the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

(Patricia Coluzzi, Secretary)