

# DELRAY BEACH INTELLIGENCE REPORT

MARCH 2011

Speaking of Spending and Pet Projects...

Did you know that the long awaited MLK Drive project has ballooned to \$1.2 million...

Now we love MLK, but \$1.2 million sounds like a lot of money in a time of fiscal struggle.

Speaking of handouts...

The Chamber of Commerce is asking the CRA to pay for its move into new digs at the Old School SquGarage. No one seems to know the exact cost, but it is rumored to be between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000.

Is it proper for an independent business organization to make this request?

So much for not being beholden to government.

The initial request was made of the city commission, but the chamber envoys were sent to... you guessed it... the CRA.

Originally, a private developer was supposed to pay for the chamber re-location and build out the new space so a hotel can be built on the "Old Library " site.

That deal is in limbo due to the economy, but the chamber wants to move anyway. So if the deal at the Old Library site does not proceed, Delray taxpayers will be stuck with a huge bill to move the private Chamber of Commerce.

Does this bother anyone?

Beach Fundraiser

Recently, the good folks at the Beach Property Owners Association hosted a fundraising event called “Delray's Got Talent”.

It's sort of a local American Idol emceed by our mayor.

The funds will be used to pay for a Beach Area Master Plan.

Funny, you'd think the enormous taxes paid by beach area residents might pay for such a study.

But nobody seems to be complaining.

#### South Federal Study Update

Four long years ago, Mayor Rita Ellis called for a study and plan for South Federal Highway.

Despite a sluggish economy that should have freed up capacity in the city's Planning Department, no such study was completed or to our knowledge even launched.

Then along comes a proposal to open a Wal-Mart and all heck breaks loose.

Wal-Mart might have been dissuaded from even applying had a plan been done or was even under way, especially if the plan discouraged big box retail as is expected.

Fortunately, for opponents of the store, Wal-Mart pulled its application.

You'd think that would have been a wake-up call--but you'd be wrong.

Months passed and no word of a study—until now. Finally, an effort is under way.

Now a few years back, the city completed a Downtown Master Plan, Northwest/Southwest Neighborhood Plan, Parks Plan, Cultural Plan, Congress Avenue Corridor Plan and a Four Corners Plan (for Military Trail and Atlantic Avenue) in the midst of the largest real estate boom in history when the planning department was busy.

You'd think there would be time to plan South Fed from U.S. 1 to the Linton border.

And so it goes...

Kudos

The Intelligence Report tries to stay positive despite the news we feel you need to know. We love our town and that's why we care to report the items that concern us. Our goal is to wake-up the citizenry and bring accountability back to Delray.

Kudos this month to Nancy Stewart whose vision and energy has enabled The Garlic Fest to take root and raise money for non-profits in Delray.

Kudos to the Delray Public Library for hosting interesting talks that stimulate our minds.

Finally, kudos to those citizens who care to read and hopefully take action. Forward to a friend.