

## **Update from The Virginia Key Task Force:**

- A. Formulate a plan to design the 77 acre 'Old County Park'
  - 1. Organized the community and design professionals to begin the process of planning the park
  - 2. Included the public, city staff, interested parties, and architects in a design charrette that initiated the plan for the 77 acre park site.
  - 3. Worked with the City Parks and Public Works Departments to estimate costs to restore/repair the existing structures, some of which need immediate attention.
  - 4. Worked with the City attorney, the Parks Director, a city grants writer and others in devising a funding and non-profit structure to assure the enhancement of the park as a major attraction for residents and tourists alike.
  
- B. Identify sources of funding
  - 1. \$1.5 million in county Safe Neighborhood Bond funds earmarked for Va. Key.
    - a. \$500,000 for a nature center
    - b. \$1,000,000 for shoreline stabilization
  - 2. \$4,025,000 Army Corp. beach mitigation grant committed to Va. Key shoreline erosion. Rep. Carrie Meek asked the Corp. to put Va. Key on the fast track. The money is funded and available after an agreement with the city is signed.
    - a. The plans provide for the corps to design a safe swimming beach.
    - b. All permits, expenses and work to be done by the Army Corp.
  - 3. \$7,000,000 Army Corp. environmental restoration, a large portion of the work is slated for the 'Old County Park'. The money recently funded by congress is ready to be spent after an agreement with the city is signed.
  - 4. Tropical Audubon has committed paying for nature trails on Virginia Key.
  
- C. The Va. Key Task Force requests City Commission approval to become a more permanent city entity. The second reading of the ordinance forms a Trust to continue the work and funding sources detailed above as well as identifying other funding sources.
  
- D. The need for this meeting
  - 1. Three weeks ago, the City Manager informed the Task Force that only about half of the park would be under the Trust. No explanation was given other than the City did not want to 'lose control of its property'
  - 2. The second reading forming the Trust was taken off the past City Commission agenda without notification of the Task Force.
  - 3. A recent meeting with the City Manager and staff indicated they have not yet accepted the Army Corps \$7,000,000 environmental restoration project that the Task Force worked so hard to get for Va. Key.
  - 4. City staff has attended many meetings and the charrette. No mention was ever made that we were not to work on a plan for the entire park.

The 1982 deed from the County gives a 77 acre park to the City with the following restrictions:  
**"The City agrees to keep the property for public park purposes only. ...open to the public, provide maintenance and a level of services equal or better to that which was provided by the County. In the event the City does not use the property as a public park, or conveys or attempts to convey all or a portion of the property, then the property will revert back to the County...."**