



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 17-1115, **Version:** 1

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor & Members of the North Port Commission

**FROM:** Peter D. Lear, CPA, CGMA, Interim City Manager

**TITLE:** Update on the Three Graces Fountain and sculpture

### **Recommended Action**

None

### **Background Information**

The Three Graces Fountain and sculpture (Sculpture) was created in 1958 by artist Sophia Johnstone. It is located within the center median of Ortiz Boulevard near the Ortiz Boulevard/U.S. 41 intersection. This report provides an update on the status of the project to refurbish/rehabilitate the Sculpture and fountain, including:

- Define ownership,
- Review site safety issues,
- Stakeholder outreach,
- Draft cost estimates and funding options, and
- Ongoing operations and maintenance.

### **RELEVANT PRIOR BOARD ACTION:**

1. September 6, 2016 - The Board requested further discussion at the upcoming September 12, 2016 Joint Meeting with City of North Port.
2. September 12, 2016 (Joint Meeting with City of North Port) - both Boards requested additional information needed.

### **OUTREACH:**

Staff has met with the following archaeological groups plus numerous citizens:

- Sarasota County Historical Commission
- Historical Preservation Coalition
- Florida Anthropological Society (FAS)
- Warm Mineral Springs / Little Salt Spring Archaeological Society

Budget level estimates for renovation of the statue were received from the following, either in writing or verbally:

- Shellspen International, Inc.
- Dowd Studio and Artworks

- Precise Trim

## **ANALYSIS/NEXT STEPS:**

### ***Ownership:***

Sarasota County's Real Estate Services Division researched related deeds dating back to 1957 regarding Warm Mineral Springs. No references to the Sculpture are mentioned within the deed documents. The title policy from the County co-purchase and subsequent sale to the City of North Port does not include any exceptions relating to the Sculpture. As the owner of the right-of-way upon which the Sculpture sits and absent any demonstration of an affirmative adverse claim of ownership, the County is in a reasonable position to assert ownership of and to decide what to do with the Sculpture.

### ***Safety Review:***

Safety related issues with the Three Graces site were reviewed by County staff following the joint County and City meeting. Signage, clear zone and site distance were reviewed. It was determined that the sight distance at the intersection was not a safety problem and all roads have adequate sight distance per Florida law.

The roadside "clear zone" is the area between the edge of the travel-way and any obstruction along the roadway that could cause damage or potential injury should an errant vehicle leave the pavement. The typical urban treatment to accommodate elements close to the edge of travel-way pavement is to apply a 6-inch curb to help guide and/or redirect an errant vehicle. The minimum clear zone width with a curb is 1.5-feet. To bring the site up to current standards for an urban median, a 6" curb would need to be installed with minimum 1.5-feet of separation between the edge of fountain and the curb. This could be accomplished by reducing the pavement width at the intersection and restriping the lane assignments.

### ***Stakeholders:***

County staff contacted known archeological citizen groups that might have an interest in preserving the Three Graces site. These groups consisted of the following:

- Sarasota County Historical Commission
- Historical Preservation Coalition
- Florida Anthropological Society (FAS)
- Warm Mineral Springs / Little Salt Spring Archaeological Society

Although most groups expressed a strong interest in preserving the statue and fountain, all stated that they did not have the financial wherewithal to undertake the project. When asked if they would consider maintaining it after it was reconstructed, they advised that they would need to know the estimated cost and physical work requirements.

## **FUNDING:**

Grant funding options were reviewed by County staff. Based on preliminary analysis, it appears that the project may qualify for the Historical Preservation Small Matching Grant or/and the Certified Local Government Grant, both of which will be available for application during the early 2018 grant cycle. In addition, the county will work with interested community/neighborhood group(s) on pursuing County Neighborhood grant dollars.

## **SUMMARY:**

- As stated earlier, there is no apparent documented ownership of the Sculpture, other than the Sculpture's presence in the county right-of-way, which allows the County to make decisions related to the future condition and disposition of the Sculpture.
- It is estimated that the restoration of the Sculpture itself will range from \$10,000 for minimal surface work to \$40,000 for a more historically accurate reconstruction. The fountain base and water flow restoration, including permitting, is estimated at an additional \$15,000. Correction of the roadside clear zone violation is calculated at \$10,000. Therefore, total restoration cost is estimated to be between \$25,000 for the statue/fountain work only

and \$65,000 including clear zone correction. Should the County and/or city desire that the landscaping be reconstructed and upgraded, the associated costs would be approximately \$10,000. Ongoing maintenance costs are unknown at this time.

- A third-party, not-for-profit entity, Warm Mineral Springs/Little Salt Springs Archeological Society (WMS/LSSAS), previously offered to adopt the sculpture in its current location. Historical Resources staff met with the WMS/LSSAS as recently and discussed the project restoration requirements. Their board of directors indicated that they currently lack the financial capacity to assist with the restoration. Nevertheless, the board of directors expressed interest in assisting with some of the physical maintenance and up-keep. They could not commit to financial support until those costs are better defined and considered by their board.
- In November 2016, County staff also met with the History and Preservation Coalition of Sarasota County, which includes most of the historical societies and organizations in the County. None of the Coalition members offered to take on the reconstruction project and associated funding needs.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION(S):**

County staffs have met on several occasions to consider options for moving forward with rehabilitation/ renovation of the Sculpture and fountain. The City of North Port administration was also contacted for their input on options. The current best alternative is to seek grant funding from one or more sources to rehabilitate the site and then establish an on-going maintenance agreement with a local archeological association.

#### **Strategic Plan**

N/A

#### **Financial Impact**

N/A

#### **Procurement**

Attachments:

1. Presentation

**Prepared by:** Pete Lear for Sarasota County

**Department Director:** Pete Lear