

HIRING OF AN ATTORNEY FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY

At the April 10, 2006 meeting of The St. Johns County Civic Association Roundtable, it was recommended that the appointment of a County Attorney should be the result of a general search for a Florida Bar Certified attorney, rather than an internal appointment. The process is flawed. The Roundtable should request that a citizen screening committee be appointed to assist in the process to help provide an impartial selection and do so at public comment.

Resolution made, seconded and unanimously passed: (See Below)

Following is a Report from RT Secretary Sacha Martin, from a Presentation made before BCC April 18 during Public Comment.

To The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners:

At our meeting on April 10, the Roundtable passed the following Resolution, which is a suggestion and proposal to assist the Board of County Commissioners in their search for a new County Attorney. Appointing a Committee without conflict of interest may help the BCC provide a fair and objective system with standards of impartial selection where everyone is treated fairly.

“The Board of the St. Johns County Civic Association Roundtable recommends to the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners that they appoint a CITIZEN’S COMMITTEE without conflict of interest to SCREEN APPLICANTS for the position of County Attorney and then to RECOMMEND THREE NOMINEES to the Board of Commissioners.”

Commissioner Rich asked if the Roundtable could submit suggested names for members of a Citizens Committee. This request was not affirmed by the entire BCC, but it appeared that suggestions would be welcome. The Board commented that a selection committee should have some professional attorneys on it to evaluate professional standards, which normal citizens don't have the capability to do. Such a committee should have at least 5 members, preferably 7. Also there was a question of being able to research whether resumes are accurately reported. In the search for County Administrator there were 10 final resumes and many had "discrepancies".

The Commissioners deeply regretted the action on this issue and stated that there was no racial issue here, but a procedural one, and a series of mistakes had been made. They asked retiring County Attorney Bosanko to draft Policies and Procedures for a good independent evaluation.

Mr. Hunt spoke on his behalf and said that he still feels he is the best candidate for the job with 27 years in the Florida Bar. He also said that he did not think the present policy of rotating the Deputy County Attorney was right, that the attorney with the most experience should always be number two.

Commission Chair Bryant wanted to be certain they could go forward with an outside search or whether they were bound by a contract first offered to Michael Hunt, whether once offered could be retracted, and asked Mr. Bosanko to research this. The BCC later voted 3 to 2 to conduct a statewide search.

The Roundtable should poll its membership for suggested names for a Selection Committee that would be impartial, and this list should include attorneys.