

**Sun City Center  
Long Range Planning  
Committee  
2015 Final Report**

**September 8, 2015**

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## **Background**

Following the election of new CA Board Directors in December of 2014, Board President David Floyd named Richard Angerosa as Chairperson of the Sun City Center Long Range Planning Committee.

The Committee's mission is to evaluate potential large capital improvement projects and make recommendations as to which projects the CA Board should pursue. These projects are paid for from the Capital Improvement Fund, which utilizes an ongoing revenue stream derived from \$1,500 capital fund fees assessed to new home buyers in Sun City Center. Depending on home sales, between \$500,000 and \$600,000 goes into the fund annually.

The committee members were selected and appointed by Richard Angerosa, committee chairperson, following resume review and personal interviews. They represent a diverse cross section of the community.

Committee members for 2015 are:

Renee Bray  
Joe Michaliszyn  
William James  
Al Demarest

The committee met on the following dates.

February 16  
March 25 (realtor meeting)  
April 2  
May 7  
August 14

### **Guidelines**

**The overall objective is to recommend to the CA Board improvement projects that the committee feels would be most beneficial to the residents of SCC.**

**In determining which projects to recommend, the committee adhered to these guidelines:**

- **Cost will not be a determining factor.**
- **All suggested projects will receive an objective evaluation.**
- **Focus will be on projects that benefit the greatest number of residents.**

**Projects will be considered and prioritized according to their ability to attract new buyers to the community, increase property values, and improve the quality of life for the residents. Projects will accomplish this by doing one or more of the following.**

- **Enhance the aesthetic appeal of Sun City Center.**
- **Maintain/improve the safety of Sun City Center for the residents.**
- **Provide additional/improved recreational amenities.**
- **Provide additional/improved social amenities.**

## **Evaluation Process**

The first step in the planning process for 2015 involved obtaining suggested projects from as many sources as possible, and compiling a list of potential projects. In doing this, the committee used the following sources.

- Projects mentioned in the 2014 Planning Committee Report.
- Items from the 2012 survey which received significant positive responses (all items with 40% or more approval).
- Projects mentioned in the 2013 Master Plan.
- Projects mentioned in the Blue Ribbon Committee report.
- Information gleaned from interviews with Visitor Center volunteers.
- Information gleaned from local realtors.
  - Survey.
  - Lunch meeting on March 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Suggestions from residents.
- Suggestions from CA Board.
- Committee suggestions.

Consolidation was done where appropriate, and the initial list contained 25 potential projects. The committee then performed an initial assessment of each project. The disposition of each project fell into one of the following categories.

- Project already completed or in progress, issue addressed.
- Project does not fall within the purview of the CA.
- Project has been tried and was not successful, or otherwise is not practical.
- Project to be evaluated further.

When the initial assessment process was completed, there were 6 potential projects which required additional evaluation. These projects constituted what we refer to as the "short list", and were the subject of intensive fact finding and analysis by the committee. Final recommendations are from this "short list" of projects.

### Initial Project List and Disposition

The following table contains all of the projects considered, their initial disposition, and the reasons that those decisions were made

<b>Project</b>	<b>Source(s)</b>	<b>Disposition</b>
<b>North Course acquisition for park/recreational space, conservation area, hiking, biking, walking trails.</b>	<b>2012 survey, 2014 Planning Committee</b>	<b>Evaluate</b>
<b>Convert unused maintenance yard to additional RV/boat storage.</b>	<b>2014 Planning Committee</b>	<b>Address under North Course acquisition.</b>
<b>Café for light meals, coffee/internet café.</b>	<b>2012 survey, 2014 Planning Committee, visitor center interview</b>	<b>In progress. No further action required.</b>
<b>Additional multi-purpose room with kitchen ("banquet" facility), additional Florida room</b>	<b>2012 survey, 2014 Planning Committee</b>	<b>Evaluate</b>
<b>Additional outdoor pool</b>	<b>2014 Planning Committee, realtor meeting, visitor center interview</b>	<b>Evaluate</b>
<b>Rollins Theater improvements</b>	<b>2012 survey, 2014 Planning Committee</b>	<b>Completed. No further action required.</b>
<b>Expansion of CA office space</b>	<b>Master Plan</b>	<b>Not feasible. Per the community manager, the CA office building has a void beneath it similar to that found under the library. Any expansion would require filling in the void which would be cost prohibitive. It would be cheaper to bulldoze the existing building and start over. Internal reconfiguration has been somewhat addressed. One of the Director offices has been converted to a break room for CA office staff. CA president and CA board room space is sufficient. Board directors</b>

		can work remotely.
<b>Putt-putt Golf Course and practice putting green</b>	<b>Resident suggestion</b>	<b>Evaluate</b>
<b>Solar power</b>	<b>Resident suggestion</b>	<b>Evaluate</b>
<b>Energy efficient renovations, environmentally friendly campus</b>	<b>2012 survey</b>	<b>Ongoing. No further action required. All new buildings designed energy efficient. Old buildings have been upgraded. Using programmed thermostats and energy efficient bulbs. New AC units are high efficiency. Pool chlorine system replaced with salt system.</b>
<b>Hurricane shelters</b>	<b>2012 survey</b>	<b>Not under CA jurisdiction; this is a county responsibility. Several hurricane shelters close by. Attempting to build our own hurricane shelters on site would open us up to all sorts of regulatory issues.</b>
<b>Parking lot expansion</b>	<b>2012 survey, Master Plan</b>	<b>Completed. No further action required.</b>
<b>Sports bar/wine bar/casual dining</b>	<b>2012 survey, realtor meeting, visitor center interview</b>	<b>Evaluate</b>
<b>Farmer's market</b>	<b>2012 survey</b>	<b>Not feasible. Was tried and was not successful.</b>
<b>Security cameras in major buildings</b>	<b>2012 survey</b>	<b>Not feasible. There is not a problem with thefts and assaults in the major buildings. Also, residents are sensitive to privacy issues. Putting cameras inside the buildings raises privacy issues as technically the CA buildings are not "public space".</b>
<b>Shuttle transportation service</b>	<b>2012 survey</b>	<b>Transportation has been addressed. We have HART bus stops, Samaritans, mini-bus. Survey question was vague; not clear what was requested.</b>

<b>New or expanded library</b>	<b>2012 survey, Master Plan</b>	<b>Completed. No further action required.</b>
<b>Community wide Wifi</b>	<b>2012 survey</b>	<b>In progress. No further action required.</b>
<b>Improved campus lighting</b>	<b>2012 survey</b>	<b>Completed. No further action required.</b>
<b>Social services office</b>	<b>2012 survey</b>	<b>Not considered under the purview of the CA.</b>
<b>Unified look of buildings.</b>	<b>2012 survey</b>	<b>Completed. No further action required.</b>
<b>Improved directional signage around campus</b>	<b>2012 survey</b>	<b>Completed. No further action required.</b>
<b>Modern facades on old buildings</b>	<b>2012 survey</b>	<b>Completed. No further action required.</b>
<b>Improved CA website</b>	<b>2012 survey</b>	<b>In progress. No further action required.</b>
<b>Outdoor exercise area</b>	<b>2012 survey</b>	<b>Not practical in the Florida heat. Fitness center more than adequate for exercise needs.</b>

**"Short list" resulting from the initial assessment:**

- 1. North Course acquisition for park/recreational space, conservation area, hiking, biking, walking trails.**
- 2. Additional multi-purpose room with kitchen ("banquet" facility), additional Florida room.**
- 3. Additional outdoor pool.**
- 4. Putt-putt golf course and practice putting green.**
- 5. Solar power.**
- 6. Sports bar/wine bar/casual dining.**



## **"Short List" Detailed Analysis and Recommendations.**

- 1. North Course acquisition for park/recreational space, conservation area, hiking, biking, walking trails.**

### **Analysis:**

The North Lakes golf course is owned by Clublink, a Canadian company. WCI, the previous owner, closed the course in 2009. Clublink since the acquisition has performed minimal maintenance on the property, as it is classified by Hillsborough County as "abandoned" land, and the county requirements for maintenance are very minor. Basically, Clublink mows the course monthly in the summer, but does not perform any extensive maintenance of the trees and course infrastructure. This has led to complaints from residents, in particular those who live adjacent to the course.

Given the location of the course property, essentially right in the middle of Sun City Center, residents have continually questioned why the Community Association has not done anything to obtain ownership or access rights to the course, as it is ideally suited for use as a private park or conservancy area. If there is one issue that almost all residents seem to agree on, this is it. The 2012 survey asked residents if they favored "Acquisition/access to the former North Lakes golf course for recreational purposes". 62.15% of survey respondents agreed with this idea, only 19.78% disagreed. A closely related survey question asked if residents favored "Trails throughout the CA property for biking/walking/jogging". In fact, the centrally located North course contains approximately 6 miles of paved cart paths which would serve this purpose. 67.46% of residents agreed, while only 15.64% disagreed.

The CA Board has been in regular communication with Clublink as to the disposition of the property, yet Clublink has consistently declined to indicate any future definitive plans for the course. The Board was successful in obtaining 5.23 acres of land through a donation from Clublink on August 21, 2012. The land was part of the old driving range and 9<sup>th</sup> hole, and a portion of it has been used for new construction and a significant parking lot expansion. It should be noted that even though the land was donated, the CA incurred expenses of approximately \$60,000 for surveys, document preparation, and attorney fees. In addition, it is estimated that the annual cost to maintain the 5.23 acres is approximately \$7,000.

It is believed that Clublink has recently explored the possibility of selling the North course to a developer, however due to multiple infrastructure and legal issues, the land as it sits currently is not considered suitable for new housing construction.

The most recent meeting with Clublink was held in June of 2015. Salient points from the discussion are as follows:

- Clublink said they are not sure what the ultimate disposition of the North course will be, and that they will probably not know for at least 2 years.
- Clublink feels the weirs are sufficient in their current state and do not require any repairs.
- The CA expressed interest in obtaining additional land adjacent to the 5.23 acres for future development. Clublink would want to lease the land to us, this would not be acceptable to the CA since we would be reluctant to build on land we do not actually own.

The CA followed up with Clublink by letter on June 30, 2015 and indicated an interest in obtaining land for the CA members to expand amenities and recreational facilities. Clublink replied on August 12, 2015 and said they are not interested in selling any portion of the old North Lakes golf course at this time.

The financials involved with the CA acquiring the old North course are not encouraging. Hillsborough County tax records show the 170 acre North course property valued at \$8,700,000. This is clearly beyond the scope of what the CA can afford, yet it is not the whole picture. Once acquired, the land would need to be maintained. If maintenance on the 5 acres is \$7,000 per year, extrapolating that to 170 acres yields an annual cost of \$238,000. Thus, even if Clublink were to give us the entire 170 acres at no charge, with the current resident count, that would mean a dues increase of about \$22.50 a year for each resident.

Given the popularity of the idea of acquiring the North course, residents have been very creative in coming up with ways that might happen. Unfortunately, their suggestions, though creative, are not workable when held up to scrutiny. Following are 3 of the recent suggestions from residents:

- Crowdfunding to purchase the North course.
  - "Crowdfunding" involves getting citizens involved in projects in small dollar amounts. There are techniques like selling personalized bricks, chairs, or benches, or selling municipal bonds in very minimum denominations so there is wider access to them. One of the reasons crowdfunding does not match up well with a North course purchase is that it is usually reserved for smaller cost projects. \$8,700,000 is well beyond what 11,000 residents could raise through crowdfunding. Although it might be possible to obtain financial assistance from local, county, state, or federal agencies, they typically cap their contributions at 30% of total project costs, so that would not get us there either. The municipal bond approach presents problems as well. No matter how small the denomination, selling a bond means the CA would be taking out a loan which would need to be repaid with interest. That would be contrary to the "pay as you go" approach that Sun City Center residents have demanded.

- **Have Hillsborough county use a portion of the \$23 million from BP to purchase the land.**
  - **The CA Board meets with county officials on a regular basis to discuss issues and concerns regarding our community. As might be expected, many are queueing up for a piece of the \$23 million BP windfall. Indications are that the county will be using that money for conservation and road construction projects. Additionally, even if they did purchase the land, it would not be a private park for Sun City Center Residents only; it would be open to the public. That is not something our residents want. In 2009 when the closing was first proposed, a survey asked Sun City Center residents if they favored having the county take over the land and turn it into a public park. 83% of the respondents were opposed to this.**
- **Have the state purchase the land and turn it into a public park.**
  - **This scenario presents the same issues as are detailed above.**

**Recommendations:**

- **The CA Board should continue to keep the communication channels with Clublink open. While acquisition of the entire 170 acres is not practical, the area adjacent to our 5.3 acres (old driving range and holes 1 and 9) present the most optimal space for construction of new amenities and recreational facilities.**
- **The CA Board may want to get a more detailed analysis from a qualified professional on the land lease option. While cheaper than purchasing the land, the major drawback to a lease is that ownership of any land improvements reverts back to the lessor at the end of the lease. However, land leases are typically long term (50 to 99 years), so there may be options.**
- **Although we may not be able to acquire the entire North course, there may be a way to address the maintenance issue and get some relief on that front. The North course is currently classified by the county as "abandoned" land. As such, county standards for its maintenance are not very stringent. Apparently, several surrounding counties have modified their county regulations such that land in this status is subject to tighter standards regarding ongoing maintenance. From a common sense perspective, these counties are taking the position that land developed for a golf course or other aesthetically pleasing purpose, even when "abandoned", should still be maintained to standards close to what it was when operational. Obviously, if Hillsborough county were to adopt similar regulations it would force Clublink to take better care of the North course. It has been mentioned that a group of Sun City Center residents is organizing to approach the county about doing that. Their efforts should be encouraged.**

**2. Additional multi-purpose room with kitchen ("banquet" facility), additional Florida room.**

**Analysis:**

Sun City Center has 3 multi-purpose rooms with kitchens ("banquet" facilities). For catered events, the Eberhardt building can accommodate groups up to 64 people, the Florida room can accommodate up to 160, and Community Hall, being much larger can handle up to 480 people at one time. These facilities are popular with clubs that wish to conduct catered events and parties.

The 2012 survey showed support for an additional banquet type facility, and the 2014 Planning Committee recommended that the need for a new Florida room should be assessed.

In order to evaluate this properly, the committee first obtained actual usage statistics for a full year from the Sun City Center Event Room Coordinator. The statistics are summarized below.

**Facility available hours 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. (15 hours)**

**Full year 2014 Availability: 365 days x 15 hours = 5475 hours available**

**Full year 2014 Actual Usage:**

**Eberhardt**

**275 reservations (less than 1 per day), 1446 hours  
26.4% of available time**

**Florida room**

**283 reservations (less than 1 per day), 1165 hours  
21.3% of available time**

**Community Hall**

**541 reservations (1.48 per day), 1659 hours  
30.3% of available time**

Since the full year statistics include the summer months when much of Sun City Center's residents are not here, we also obtained statistics for the first and last 4 months of calendar year 2014. Although there is a slight uptick in usage, it is not dramatic.

**January to April 120 days x 15 hours = 1800 hours available**

**January to April 2014 Actual Usage:**

**Eberhardt**

**110 reservations (less than 1 per day), 687 hours  
38% of available time**

**Florida Room**

**138 reservations (1.15 per day), 577 hours  
32% of available time**

**Community Hall**

**175 reservations (1.46 per day), 570 hours**

**32% of available time**

**September to December 122 days x 15 hours = 1830 hours available**

**September to December 2014 Actual Usage:**

**Eberhardt**

**119 reservations (1 per day), 587 hours**

**32% of available time**

**Florida Room**

**122 reservations (1 per day), 510 hours**

**28% of available time**

**Community Hall**

**194 reservations (1.59 per day), 637 hours**

**35% of available time**

At first glance, it appears that these facilities are only used about 1/3 of available hours, and that there is plenty of available time remaining. Nonetheless, statistics do not always tell the whole story, so the committee contacted the Event Room Coordinator directly to get a better overall picture of how the facilities were being used.

With over 150 Sun City Center clubs, it is expected that from time to time more than one club might require the same facility at the same time. Although these conflicts do occur, as long as the clubs are reasonable and somewhat flexible with their requests, the Event Room Coordinator can usually accommodate their needs.

There is one time of year in particular that this problem becomes more acute. As you would expect, during the holiday season in December, many clubs schedule Christmas parties and other events, and the demand on the banquet facilities is at its greatest. Unfortunately, everyone cannot get exactly what they want, and it is physically impossible to accommodate everyone when over 150 clubs are vying for 3 facilities.

**Recommendation:**

The committee thinks that the statistics and the information obtained from the Event Room Coordinator do not support the construction of an additional banquet room facility. While the committee recognizes and appreciates the difficulties in accommodating all club requests during December, we feel that it is neither practical nor efficient to plan and build for worst case scenarios. Instead, a more reasonable goal would be to be able to accommodate most if not all of the clubs most of the time, and deal with the peak usage time in December as best we can. The committee feels that this goal is being met.



### **3. Additional outdoor pool.**

#### **Analysis:**

The 2014 Long Range Planning Committee report recommended that we look into the addition of a second outdoor pool. Sun City Center currently has an outdoor pool on the North campus. There are also two indoor pools on the North campus, a lap pool and a walking pool.

When the committee met with Visitor Center volunteers, mention was made that an outdoor swimming pool was routinely expected to be one of the amenities in a 55+ community. During our meeting with local realtors, they indicated that for prospective home buyers, an outdoor pool was perhaps the most important amenity. In addition, there was discussion in that same meeting that quality and number of pools was a factor that prospective home buyers considered as well.

When evaluating the need for another outdoor pool, it is useful to look at other 55+ communities in the area. The committee understands that all 55+ communities are different, and that direct comparisons are not always valid. However, we are in effect in competition with other 55+ communities. Sun City Center represents the "low cost alternative", with annual dues less than the monthly dues of many other 55+ communities. We also tout the fact that we have many dedicated facilities, all completely paid for. There is no doubt that an additional pool would enhance Sun City Center, but the committee tried to quantify that argument a little more definitively.

There are 19 different 55+ communities in the Tampa area. All of them have outdoor pools. Four of them have two outdoor pools, and almost all of them describe their pools as "resort style". By any objective standard, Sun City Center has the oldest and least attractive pool in the area.

To begin with, our pool is approximately 2,740 square feet. That is smaller than all the similar pools we looked at. By comparison, here are a few other 55+ community pools in the Tampa area:

Kings Point	4,162 square feet
Valencia Lakes	4,572 square feet
Highland Lakes	4,057 square feet
Lake Jovita	4,267 square feet
Cascades	4,908 square feet

With regard to aesthetics, our pool is severely lacking. The pool itself is a sort of "L" shape, designed completely with straight sides. There are no attractive features of any kind. More importantly, the pool is located in an area where it is surrounded on 3 sides by buildings, with an iron fence on the fourth side. There is minimal greenery/landscaping around the pool.

By way of comparison, other 55+ communities in the area have "resort style" pools. What this means is that the pools are irregularly shaped, with curved perimeters and attractive features like wide walk in steps and seating areas. In addition, many are surrounded by lush tropical landscaping.

One more factor to be considered pertains to the rules regarding pool usage. Children are allowed in the pool from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. This is an issue which has divided the community, and there appears to be no clear consensus. Some residents are adamant that pool hours for children be expanded, some want the rules left as is, and others don't believe children should be allowed in our pool at all.

Having two separate pools would enable the CA to accommodate everyone on this issue. The existing pool could be designated as a "family" pool, with expanded hours for children, and the new pool could be designated "adults only".

**Recommendation:**

The committee feels that a new "resort style" pool would greatly enhance Sun City Center, provide a welcoming and attractive new amenity, and solve the "children in the pool" issue by actually giving both sides what they want. The new pool could be built on the vacant land that remains from the original 5 acres acquired from Clublink.

The committee recommends a 3000 square foot pool surrounded by 7000 square feet of decking (roughly the equivalent of the current pool and surrounding decking). A maximum depth of 5 feet should be sufficient, as there does not need to be a diving area. This would also help to keep costs down. We do not think that a larger pool is required, since we still have the original pool, and this new addition would focus on aesthetics, overall attractiveness, setting, and relaxation.

State law also requires that the pool have dedicated bathroom facilities within 200 feet, so that would be part of the construction as well.

In terms of quantifying this project, the following costs are "ball park" estimates:

<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>Pool construction including equipment</b>
<b>\$ 84,000</b>	<b>Decking (7000 square feet of pavers at \$12/square foot)</b>
<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>Landscaping</b>
<b>\$ 75,000</b>	<b>Bathrooms</b>
<b>\$ 30,000</b>	<b>Pool heater (gas)</b>
<b>\$489,000</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>\$ 60,000</b>	<b>Estimated total annual maintenance cost</b>

**An additional consideration might be a solar heating system which would help minimize use of the gas heater during most of the year. Solar panels could be optimally oriented at ground level adjacent to the pool, but hidden from view by attractive landscaping. Initial costs could be significant, however long term savings might provide a beneficial return on investment.**



#### **4. Putt-putt golf course and practice putting green.**

##### **Analysis:**

A resident suggested constructing an 18 hole putt-putt golf course and practice putting green adjacent to the old North course clubhouse. In evaluating this suggestion, the committee focused on the following areas.

**Footprint** – We have limited land remaining from the 5 acres we obtained from Clublink, and since there is no guarantee that we will ever be able to get more land for North campus expansion, we need to be prudent about how we use what we have. A putt-putt course would take up between 6,000 and 8,000 square feet. A practice putting green, in order to be large enough for multiple individuals would probably need to be at least 2,000 square feet. Thus we would be occupying a space of approximately 10,000 square feet that could alternatively accommodate a large new building.

**Cost/attractiveness** – Estimates for a mini-golf course range from \$75,000 to \$350,000, depending on features and complexity. In terms of attracting people to the facility and exactly how much use it would get, there are basic tradeoffs to consider. The low end estimate of \$75,000 covers a basic 18 hole course and walkways. That means 18 holes of straightforward putting. No elevation changes, no water features, no landscaping, no electrical components, no windmills/tunnels/waterfalls. That type of course would have very limited appeal, especially to visiting children. If we considered building a putt-putt course with elaborate features and variety that would attract more people, costs would increase significantly.

**Operation/maintenance** – A putt-putt course would require ongoing maintenance to keep it attractive and playable. People would not want to play on a course that is covered with debris. In addition, you need putters in various sizes, balls, scorecards, and pencils. Dispensing of these items and their return would need to be addressed (an "honor" system, for obvious reasons, would not work). We could construct a small shed adjacent to the course for this purpose, but it would have to be staffed. An alternative would be for the CA to dispense the items from the CA offices, but that is not what the offices are intended for, and the idea of having to go somewhere to get the necessary items, traveling over to the putt-putt course to play, and then returning the items is not an attractive approach.

**Longevity** – We can't cite scientific reasons for this one, but the committee's general feeling, in addition to quite a few people we spoke with, is that a putt-putt course would initially be a curiosity that would get some use, only to be largely forgotten and abandoned after a while. We would tie up 10,000 square feet of prime real estate with a little used facility.

**Practice putting green** – The suggestion indicated that the practice putting green be constructed with artificial turf, the same as the putt-putt course. This would

**allow the golfers in our community a place to practice their putting skills. The committee questions the usefulness of this. First of all, golf course putting greens are grass, not artificial turf, so there is not a direct correlation of skills from artificial turf to grass. Also, there are several golf courses and real grass putting greens right here in Sun City Center, easily accessible by golf cart. Why would a golfer want to practice on artificial turf when real grass putting greens are available.**

**Recommendation:**

**The committee does not feel that this suggestion is worth pursuing.**

## **5. Solar power.**

### **Analysis.**

One of our residents suggested that now is the time for Sun City Center to begin making more extensive use of solar power. Follow up on this was assigned to a committee member, who met with the resident personally to listen to his ideas. The committee also did a fair amount of research on this suggestion.

The original suggestion was to investigate the use of something called a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), where the provider owns and maintains the equipment, and the customer pays them a set rate for the power used from the system. This eliminates the need for a solar user to make an initial investment with regard to purchasing equipment. Unfortunately, Florida does not allow PPAs, so that idea is a nonstarter right now.

The second option was to install our own system. The resident correctly pointed out that TECO allows "net metering", which is a billing mechanism that credits solar energy system owners for the electricity they add to the grid.

In a follow up email, the resident provided links to a company called "Solarcity". In researching customer reviews of that company, there seem to be a lot of bad ones. Consumer Affairs rated them 1.6 out of 5. There also seem to be a lot of unhappy customers (9/21/2014, American Consumer article cites a number of bad reviews, 2/26/2014, California Watchdog, "Customers tell horror stories of solar company that gets \$422M in tax dollars").

The committee learned from the Community Manager that we had tried solar panels for pool heating some number of years ago and had a bad experience with them, eventually abandoning that project. There were mechanical issues with the installation, and the expected cost savings were not realized.

Given that Florida does not allow PPAs, we would need to install our own system. Florida is not the best state for that, as they do not currently provide any incentives for prospective solar companies.

### **Recommendation:**

The bottom line is that solar may well be an attractive option at some point in the future, but we don't feel we are there yet. Most of the solar success stories involve a large amount of government subsidization. If solar was truly reliable and cost effective on its own, it would likely be further along than it is. There is nothing wrong with being on the leading edge of technology, however we would caution against Sun City Center getting involved with solar at this juncture and risking being on the "bleeding" edge.

SCC has been fairly proactive recently with respect to energy conservation and keeping costs down. All our new construction utilizes energy efficient equipment and energy saving practices, and we are replacing inefficient power utilization

**with better choices to the extent possible. We will probably make more use of solar in the future, however the committee doesn't feel that the time is right today to make that move.**

## **6. Sports bar/wine bar/casual dining.**

### **Analysis:**

When we look objectively at what major amenities Sun City Center lacks, this one tops the list. There was significant resident support for a sports bar/wine bar facility in the 2012 survey. During our discussions with visitor center volunteers, it was indicated that many visitors felt it was important to have a central socialization/dining area.

When we surveyed local realtors and asked what specific amenities prospective buyers thought Sun City Center was lacking, a gathering place with a bar/pub and a casual dining facility were prominent on a short list of items. We subsequently met with the realtors, and they reinforced the idea that Sun City Center not having any kind of bar/casual dining facility was viewed negatively. They also pointed out that we cannot avoid comparisons to Kings Point and their "sports bar" facilities which are extremely popular and very impressive to prospective buyers. There was agreement in the group that this is something which should get a serious look.

Similar to our analysis on the need for an additional pool, the committee looked into the facts of how Sun City Center stacks up against other 55+ communities in the area. Out of 19 different 55+ communities in the area, 15 of them have a bar/casual dining facility on the premises as an integral part of the community.

Historically, there have been two consistent objections to building this type of amenity in Sun City Center, however the committee's research indicates that the common objections may not be based in fact. Assuming that the facility would be built on what is left of the 5.23 acres obtained from Clublink (a logical location and the only one we currently have available to us), we looked at the two objections.

It is commonly stated that we cannot build a bar in Sun City Center because of proximity to churches. Hillsborough county regulations stipulate that a bar cannot be within 500 feet of a church. Furthermore, the 500 feet is not measured "as the crow flies", but along the shortest pedestrian route, with corners and street crossings. Initial observations confirm that there is plenty of land to build on that is well outside of the 500 foot limitation.

The other objection is that many catered and BYOB events are scheduled in Sun City Center, and if we built a bar here, we would legally lose those privileges. That regulation pertains to a bar in the same building as that which is hosting the catered or BYOB event. If we built a standalone facility, those privileges in all other Sun City Center facilities (Atrium, Community Hall, Eberhardt, etc) would not be affected.

**Recommendation:**

**The committee feels that a pub/casual dining facility in Sun City Center would be the single most effective addition we could make to attract new buyers. In addition, it would provide a socialization center for current residents and their visitors.**

**Cost estimates for building a bar/restaurant from the ground up range from \$170,000 to \$600,000. Obviously there is a wide range here depending on the overall design, special features, and quality of interior decoration.**

**While the committee is aware that this type of project often provokes a knee jerk negative reaction and comes with problems which must be addressed, it nonetheless presents significant upside potential and should get an honest detailed assessment. While project specifics are beyond the scope of this committee, there are a few questions/issues that are obvious:**

- Size and type of facility must fit the community. We interpret casual dining as a menu with what is commonly referred to as "pub food".**
- The best approach might be for the CA to lease the facility to an experienced company or individual, however it would be worth looking into if it is feasible for the CA to run the facility themselves, hiring a manager.**
- Obviously the process, logistics, and specifics of obtaining a liquor license need to be researched. Our local government contacts may be able to provide some advice in this area.**

### **Additional Recommendations.**

- **The committee recognizes that any new construction on what is remaining of the 5 acres would necessitate additional parking. Obviously those requirements need to be calculated specifically and factored into the overall space planning.**
- **The two main recommendations (pool and pub/casual dining facility) could increase each other's overall appeal if they were combined into a single project, developed in phases. The committee possibly envisions an "entertainment complex" with the resort style pool adjacent to the pub, which would have both indoor seating and outdoor seating facing the pool.**
- **The "entertainment complex" approach would make it possible to have indoor/outdoor bathrooms constructed in the pub. This would meet the requirement for pool bathrooms while eliminating the need for a standalone pool bathroom facility.**
- **Since we are constructing a new building from the ground up, we may want to consider expanding the size of the pub building somewhat to encompass additional meeting rooms or possibly a larger meeting room. While the legalities of such an arrangement must be researched, it opens up several possibilities. Events could be scheduled in the meeting room with food and drinks provided by the bar, or the bar could be rented out for parties and events.**
- **Finally, Sun City Center definitely represents the "low cost alternative" with regard to 55+ communities in the Tampa area. With the lowest annual dues in the area, consider the relative attractiveness of Sun City Center as it currently exists, with all its fully paid for amenities, PLUS a new resort style pool and a pub/casual dining facility. No other 55+ community would come close to matching our amenities at such a low cost.**