

BRAC Commission
September 3, 2005

SEP 08 2005

Received

Mayor John Peyton
4th Floor, City Hall at St. James
117 W. Duval St.
Jacksonville, Florida 32202

Dear Mayor John Peyton,

I am writing in regards to the Navy returning to Cecil Field. My husband and I attended the meeting at the Equestrian Center last Thursday night. My husband spoke with you but I have a few things myself that I would like to say. We were disappointed that the meeting was not advertised. I found out about it by reading Ron Littlepages article in the Florida Times Union. Also the meeting was set for 6:00 pm we feel to keep as many people as possible from attending. This time did not allow people enough time to get there from work. My daughter and son-in-law wanted to attend but working in Baymeadows and the Northside made it impossible to get there by 6:00 pm. Luckily 500 people did manage despite the situation. But I guarantee you that the Arena would not have held all the people if conditions had been more favorable. Also the location was very insulting. I am not a horse enthusiast so to meet in a horse arena with 90 degree sweltering heat was a slap in the face. The maps that were presented at the meeting were outdated. Development is taking place by leaps and bounds in this area. My street is developing two subdivisions at the moment with more soon to start at each end. We are in Duval County 1 mile from Cecil Field. Bent Creek on the side of us is built up to Brannon Field Rd. A large shopping mall is breaking ground on Oakleaf Plantation Parkway right now. Tons of houses and schools are going in that area.

Mr. Mayor it is easy for you and the other sections of town to say let's bring Cecil Field back. You have not lived under the F-18's flying. My husband and I lived under them from the moment they came in 1984 until they left in 1999. The day they left was one of the happiest days of my life. Living under these planes is like living in a war zone. It is **NOT** a little bit of noise. It is pure **HELL**. I have called the base on many a night begging them to **do something so that we could sleep**. The hush house that was mentioned at the meeting was built two years before the Navy left. It did muffle the noise some but it did not take it away. What we would like is for you and the other officials to bring in a few of these planes to Cecil and come spend a day at our house, fly them out and see for yourself what it really is like. We are not against the Navy. We thank God that we have them. But what you are asking us to do is more than being patriotic.

I am sending the article that was in the Florida Times Union Friday to the Govener and Brac along with a copy of this letter. I want to make sure that they know how the people of the Westside feel. As we believe they are being misled.

Mayor Peyton I voted for you and I am asking you as our mayor to stop this action before it goes any farther.

Waiting your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Boyett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

Sharon Boyett
10037 Sandler Rd.
Jacksonville, FL 32222



HURRICANE KATRINA

◀ How you can help victims of the storm PAGE B-4

LAW & DISORDER

Motorcyclist loses control, killed PAGE B-3



FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 2, 2005

THE TIMES-UNION ★★

Budget snips take \$13.3 million

Panel restores truancy, canning centers funding

By GREGORY RICHARDS
The Times-Union

The Jacksonville City Council's Finance Committee has trimmed about \$13.3 million from Mayor John Peyton's proposed \$887 million budget while managing to restore money for truancy centers, for a popular Westside canning center and for various non-profits that receive some city dollars.

The seven-member committee wrapped up its review of the budget Thursday, after spending the last month intensely reviewing it. Councilman Daniel Davis, the committee's chairman, described the process as "grueling." "I'm very, very proud of the committee," said Davis, who led

the council's budget hearings. "It's been tough but I'm excited about where we are."

The entire council still needs to approve the budget before the new fiscal year begins Oct. 1. But Davis said he expects few changes.

Council President Kevin Hyde said he is "very pleased" with the Finance Committee's work with the budget.

That \$13.3 million in savings is less than the \$15 million Daniels said last month he hoped to wring from the budget. But Council Auditor Richard Wallace said it's rare for the council to extract so much money from the mayor's budget.

"This budget starts moving the city in a more fiscally conservative fashion where we're living more within our resources," Wallace said.

The reduction came in part by removing nearly \$3 million of the

BUDGET continues on B-3



Mayor John Peyton is proposing grant cuts to balance the city's budget, among them a \$30,000 grant to the Salvation Army for its homeless feeding program. Working the counter are cook Pearlina Sirmmons (left) and volunteer Joyel Saunders. Fifty-three people took advantage of the program on Tuesday.

BOB MACK/The Times-Union

Cecil: Westside residents suspect 'done deal'

Continued from B-1

standards.

"Unfortunately, what we may have here this evening is packaged information made to sell an already-made decision," Katja Palmer said.

After pitching the idea July 21, Peyton and Gov. Jeb Bush had several meetings and a hearing with BRAC commissioners — but no public meetings like the one Thursday. Peyton said he had no time because the city never planned to bid for the Navy base.

The swelter inside the equestrian center on the former Cecil property failed to dull lines — or angst — of people three hours into the meeting, which was moved Thursday from a smaller community center.

Nearly 500 people attended the meeting, part of appearances Peyton is making to seek support for the Navy's return to Cecil Field. The proposal has split the Westside, which was key to Peyton's 2003 election.

"I can't wait to see who runs against him, and hopefully I

can put my hat behind him," said Alex Deutsch, who moved into the Cecil neighborhood about three months ago.

He pointedly asked Peyton if he lied about letting the community decide.

Peyton noted that the City Council and the state Legislature still must vote on promised financial aid.

"This is not a dog and pony show," Peyton said later.

City officials and lawmakers say the move is best for the community, even popular city-wide, but a growing number of residents have criticized the proposal. City Councilman Daniel Davis has come out against it, and a fledging opposition group has formed as Say No To Cecil.

"You have conveyed the message to Washington that our area is eager for the Navy to return. This letter is to inform you that these positions do not properly represent the citizens of this area," wrote group leader Vickie Grant of Middleburg, who lives near southern parts of the flight patterns.

Yet a few people supported the proposal, including former City Council member John Draper. Several lauded Peyton's quick response to the chance to land a major economic engine and the duty to train fighters on the F/A-18.

Top Navy officials repeatedly have said they prefer keeping Oceana open, a fact resident Richard Clements noted to greater applause than Peyton received all night.

"I want you to explain why you're right and all of the military experts are wrong," Clements said.

As retired Adm. Robert Natter said, the Virginia Beach base has been swarmed by development, worrying commissioners over pilots' ability to train. The plan has to be approved by Congress this fall, and an independent agency will decide by June 1 whether Cecil or Oceana will have the base.

The Oceana base has 12,000 military and civilian jobs and nearly 250 aircraft. But more than 145,000 people live around Oceana, and only

10,000 live near Cecil, according to city statistics. Up to 5,000 homes are in Oceana's crash zones, while none is in Cecil's, according to the city.

"It's about our Navy. It's about our national security, and for me, it's about something patriotic," Peyton said.

But even that backfired; several residents rejected the patriotism argument — one calling the argument "horse manure."

Navy policy says residential housing is incompatible with the jet base, but local governments handle most building decisions.

Yet residents worried about property values falling.

Some noted that Peyton, Natter and most other advocates with the mayor don't live where the jets will rumble.

No relocation spending is planned for residents, Peyton said. Peyton and Jeb Bush offered \$200 million to relocate businesses at Cecil, plus another \$100 million from the state to help provide housing.

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