

## Board asks for more help with fair proposal

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Commissioners once again discussed the creation of a permanent site for the Santa Rosa County Fair with even greater far reaching plans.

The expansion of the fairground was brought before commissioners Monday in hopes to see a sign of closure for the proposed grant, which the fair board is hoping to receive for the project.

Rick Paschall, project manager for the fair expansion asked commissioners at Monday's meeting for a resolution, which would allow the fair to move forward with applying for a grant for the project.

Paschall, along with the fair board subtracted five acres off of the previously proposed 25-acre lot in East Milton Park saying there wasn't a need for that much land.

The facilities that Paschall and his team proposed will be used for emergency management teams, and a possible Panhandle Fresh Distribution Center.

Pachall said he met with TEAM Santa Rosa and discussed the possibility of a permanent home for Panhandle Fresh Center.

"Team Santa Rosa wanted to get a permanent home for Panhandle Fresh," said Paschall, "We believe that the promotion of agricultural business will help Santa Rosa County."

Salter said he hopes this new site will be more than just a proposed fairground, and will be a stronghold for the county's agriculture business.

"We need this to be something endorsed by agribusiness," said Salter.

Salter wanted to make sure the county agribusiness and emergency management had an input on the new grounds before a grant approval was met.

That agribusiness would help generate money for local farmer's to ensure their crops were distributed to locals. As of now, Salter said he needed further input from emergency management and agribusiness to help move his decision along.

Commissioner Bob Cole said this move for the proposed buildings could grow into something bigger for the county, and would help business flourish.

"The worst that can come out of this is the county can give the land back," said Cole, "This thing will be beneficial to everyone in the county."

If and when the grant is approved, the fair board already has their blue prints for their proposed facilities.

The two buildings will house events throughout the year and should bring in more revenue because of its multitude of uses. The buildings will also ensure a safe haven during hurricanes, and in turn, are a short distance from I-10.

As of now, Salter wanted the fair board to get more input from emergency management and local agribusiness before a decision could be made. Unfortunately, that decision has to be made before the 1<sup>st</sup> of October.

“I don’t see a true plan here,” said Salter, “We need more input before we can move forward.”

Cole said he hopes the decision will be moved along, in hopes to save the county a bit of money.

“If this plan proceeds, this will save us \$35,000 a year from rentals,” said Cole. “Everyone knows rental money goes away and doesn’t come back.”

If and when the buildings go up, rentals will be a thing of the past for the fair board, and should save them lots of money in the long run.

On the note of land issues, discussion on lease fee refunds to leaseholders at Summerwinds Condos on Navarre Beach was brought before the committee. That proposal was also set and approved for further discussion on Thursday