

Daytona Beach News-Journal

April 22, 2009

Citizens group helps find NSB city manager

By MARK I. JOHNSON

Staff Writer

NEW SMYRNA BEACH -- The next city manager needs to be a mediator but have a backbone.

Be able to deal with New Smyrna Beach's neighbors to the north and south, as well as having strong labor relations skills. And be someone who can balance economic growth with preserving the charm of this historic, beachfront community.

"What we need is a real politician," said Don Campbell.

"But they also have to be independent and not a yes man," added Rosalind Little.

Campbell and Little are two members of a 10-person citizen's advisory committee appointed to assist in choosing New Smyrna Beach's next administrator. The group gathered for the first time Monday evening to provide executive recruiter **Colin Baenziger** with residents' perspectives of what the community wants in former City Manager John Hagood's replacement.

Hagood was removed from the top spot in February after the City Commission voiced a lack of confidence in his leadership abilities.

"Can you find someone who can do all that?" committee member Dick Abbott asked.

Baenziger said now that he has an idea of what they are looking for, his goal will be to come as close as possible to hitting that target.

"That is the trick," he said. "To find the best match and bring four or five (finalists) to the commission to choose." [CB&A Note: What Mr. Baenziger actually said was, "The trick is to find not the right person but the right people (usually five to ten) so the Commission can pick the individual it is most comfortable with and who will be the best fit with the community."]

Baenziger is taking the committee comments and melding them with the wants and needs of city staff and the commission to develop a manager profile, which he'll develop into recruiting materials. Based on that picture, he expects to receive about 90 applications, 50 or 60 of which will meet the city's minimum qualifications.

From there, Baenziger plans to trim the list down to a top 20 or 25 to present. [The Committee will then] reduce that to about a dozen candidates who will undergo background checks. That group will be whittled to a handful of finalists [by] the elected officials [from which they will select the next manager]. And all that's to be done before the commission goes on vacation in July.

"That is a bit tight, but that does not concern me," Baenziger said.

The salary range for the position is \$104,500 to \$166,000, with the probable pay scale between \$120,000 and \$140,000, according to Human Resources Director Carol Hargy. Hagood was making about \$120,000 annually when he was removed.