

## Water control board to provide feedback on proposed fossil dig near Vero Beach airport

By Janet Begley

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VERO BEACH — The Indian River Farms Water Control District Board will get a chance Thursday to weigh in on a proposed fossil excavation on land the district owns near Vero Beach Municipal Airport.

The Old Vero Ice Age Sites Committee is seeking approval from all landholders to excavate the Old Vero Man site, which is between Aviation Boulevard and U.S. 1. The site is considered by scientists as having a high probability of containing significant fossils and artifacts.

The Vero Beach City Council approved a memorandum of understanding Tuesday with the committee that will allow for excavation on any city-owned land.

But additional approvals from the Water Control District — which will discuss the matter Thursday — the Federation Aviation Administration, Indian River County and the Florida East Coast Railroad must be received before any excavation can begin, city Planning and Development Director Tim McGarry said. The city of Vero Beach is the permitting agency for the excavation.

At Tuesday's City Council meeting, Vero Beach Mayor Pilar Turner thanked the committee for steering the excavation project.

"This memorandum of understanding is great public-private cooperation," Turner said. "We wouldn't be able to develop this site without private interest stepping forward and being willing to put forward the effort to do the fundraising and coordination."



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