

## S.M.K.A. MINUTES OF MEETING THURSDAY, March 11, 2004

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President B.J. Galberaith at 9:30AM. She welcomed everyone and thanked Gulf-To-Bay for allowing us to use their clubhouse. She mentioned that George Gallaher, long a member of SMKA and President of GTB's Recreation Council, was in the hospital and that we all wish him a rapid and full recovery.

### SECRETARY'S REPORT

The minutes from the last meeting, January 22, 2004, were read and accepted.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

Judy Hoffstatter reported that all outstanding bills have been paid, and there is \$6580 in the Treasury. She said revenue is primarily from the \$10/year dues, plus extra donations from some members.

### MSTU

Wayne Largent reminded everyone that the MSTU meets the first Wednesday of each month at Gulf-To-Bay Clubhouse. He said that the largest project MSTU was working on was the Beach Road/Gulf Blvd. roundabout. Construction is expected to commence in May with a completion schedule of 300 days. The plans call for sidewalks from the Swepson Bridge to the White Elephant. MSTU has budgeted money to conduct a feasibility study on underground utilities. Larger, easy to read street signs have been approved and will gradually replace those we currently have.

### MAILBOXES AND TRASH CONTAINERS

Bonnie Littrell reported that she has nearly finished contacting residents in areas with bunched mailboxes about the opportunity to replace them, free of charge, with secure, cluster mailboxes. Funded by MSTU, the large cluster boxes must be ordered in groups of three or more. She is nearly ready to place an order for 4 cluster boxes, so anyone interested should contact her as soon as possible. A few of the clusters have unused boxes and individuals may contact the post office about obtaining one if their neighborhood cannot support a cluster box of its own. She added that there will be a segment on the 6:00PM news about identity theft.

Bonnie expressed appreciation to the walkers on the Key for picking up trash. She said there is one extra trash container available. As well as a good location, a year around resident will be needed to empty the container periodically and place the bag outside with their trash for pickup.

### COMMUNITY PLAN

In Betsy McCallum's absence, Wayne reported for the Community Plan Steering Committee. Two of the three public visioning sessions will be held this weekend – Friday, March 12, 6:00 to 8:00PM and Saturday, March 13, 9:00 to 11:00AM. Both will be at Tringali Center. The third session will be scheduled for later this year. Wayne explained that the Steering Committee and a number of subcommittees have been examining issues regarding the future growth of our area, preparatory to developing a Community Plan for the Charlotte County portion of Manasota Key. The Plan, once approved by the County Commissioners, will be the basis for County Ordinance and possibly even zoning changes. The Committee expects to have the Plan completed by summer and approved by the County Commissioners by fall, 2004. Wayne repeated that, in addition to the Tringali sessions, all Steering Committee meetings are open to the public.

### MEMBERSHIP

Betty Sue reported that membership has reached an all-time high of 415. She stressed the importance of our organization as the single entity of representation for our island and a valuable liaison with the County. She urged everyone to help make their friends and neighbors aware of SMKA.

### OLD BUSINESS

Stan Parker brought up the recently proposed fire levy and said that SMKA members should be given some credit in helping defeat the effort. BJ mentioned that she hoped a more equitable way could be found to raise the needed funds, and added that the fire chiefs of both Sarasota and Charlotte Counties were against putting a fire station on the Key. She added that we currently have excellent fire service but that we do need improved Emergency service, currently supplied by Grove City/Placida or Rotunda. Because EMS response time is 9-11 minutes or more, Fire trucks are usually our first responders. Betty Sue suggested that a fair assessment could be based not on property value but on structure value or on square footage as is done in East Manatee.

BJ passed around a drawing of the proposed shell sculpture planned for the center medallion of the roundabout. She and Tom Dignam had met with the County's traffic engineer, who said the sculpture would need to be placed on a break-away base in case a vehicle runs into it, but otherwise gave us heads-up to look for funding. The shell will be set in a base of rocks no more than 2 ½ feet high, with low lights and seasonal flowers.

Wayne called our attention to the large number of angry people at the Roundabout meeting who claimed that the traffic circle would be dangerous and that they had never been made aware of the plan. He again stressed publicizing the Community Plan meetings. Stan told us he had researched roundabouts on line and found they were 75% better than other traffic solutions.

Small no-parking signs have been placed on the side streets on the south end of the island. Bonnie asked if anything had been done about illegal parking near the beach. BJ knew of no progress on that problem but said that sidewalks, when completed, will help.

The issue of street lights was once again addressed. BJ noted that our acorn lights were suffering a lot of damage from vehicles and some had to be replaced each year. We discussed the frequent and expensive changes demanded by Coastal Wildlife. Apparently last year's solution, installing shields and raising bulb level on 19 lights, is no longer satisfactory. Don Pease gave us a review of the Turtle Ordinance and the suggested inclusion of public safety in setting up lighting guidelines. The County is again planning to hire an Enforcement Officer from among the members of the Coastal Wildlife group.

#### NEW BUSINESS

BJ reported on research she has done concerning fire hydrants and water pressure for the Key. She said, according to Code, all properties should be within 500' of a hydrant, as the crow flies. However, for practical purposes, 200' would be better. The Steering Committee would like to recommend that MSTU budget funds to add to our 33 hydrants by one or two each year. They cost about \$4000 each, installed. She advised everyone to check for the fire hydrant nearest their house. If the arms are green, they supply 1000 gal/minute; if orange, between 500 and 1000 gal/min; if red, they supply less than 500 gal/minute and the need for a close-by hydrant is greater. It was also mentioned that more development on the Key will further tax our water pressure problems.

BJ announced that the County is planning to close the boat ramp at the west end of the Tom Adams Bridge. It is in disrepair, possibly dangerous, and there is not enough parking. Barry Dasher asked if there had been any accidents there and said it was a shame to close a boat ramp when there are so few available.

#### GUEST SPEAKER

BJ then introduced our guest speaker, Wayne Sallade', Director of Emergency Management for Charlotte County. In his 17 years on the job, Mr. Salade' has seen Emergency Management evolve to its current function, which includes Homeland Security in addition to the coordination of services dealing with natural disasters. He gave us an overview of the types of emergencies and challenges his office deals with and provided handouts on emergency preparedness and evacuation routes. By way of emphasizing our vulnerability, he said the Charlotte County Airport is one of a very few scheduled stops for the hurricane hunter airplane. It will be here May 21, with public tours from 2:30 to 4:00PM. He looks forward to the 2005 completion of the County's new Emergency Center, which will greatly facilitate planning. The essence of Mr. Sallade's message to us, as barrier island residents, is to **be prepared and evacuate early**. He gave us many dramatic examples of past hurricane damage in South Florida and said those storms, recently clustering in the Carolinas, could easily return to cluster in our area, with far more devastating effects. The difference, of course, is the tremendous current and anticipated increase in population. The entire county is at risk for severe flooding and tidal surge as well as wind damage. There are no shelters that can offer hurricane protection. Because these storms tend to change course and develop rapidly, our single line of defense against what could easily be our country's worst disaster, is timely, well-prepared, orderly evacuation. Thoroughly convinced, we all resolved to make our preparations and plans.

The president thanked Mr. Sallade' for the excellent, if frightening, presentation, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 Noon.

Respectfully submitted,  
Betty Sue Carroll, Secretary