

MINUTES OF MEETING Wednesday, November 15, 2006

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Wayne Largent at 1:30PM. He welcomed everyone and remarked on the large crowd, which included a surprise visit from Commissioner Adam Cummings. He then turned the meeting over to Stan Parker, Vice President, who introduced the speaker, Stuart DeCew of the Sierra Club, with a series of humorous anecdotes.

GUEST SPEAKER

Mr. DeCew's Power Point presentation was a comprehensive analysis of Red Tide in Southwest Florida. He explained that the organism *Karenia Brevis*, although naturally occurring, appears to have increased in frequency, duration, and intensity in a pattern paralleling the population growth of the area and the increase of nutrients in the coastal water. A great deal of research is being done on Red Tide and its effect on humans, and it is known to devastate the coastal economy and to jeopardize the health of coastal inhabitants. He referred to the increased manatee mortality rates as the "canary in the coal mine". While the scientific community studies the problem, the Sierra Club recommends acting according to the Precautionary Principle, citing an example in Japan where the local community reduced fertilizer runoff by 50% in a lake area plagued by algal blooms and found the blooms rapidly reduced by 70%. While the state of Florida uses 2 million tons of fertilizer each year, at least 500,000 tons are purchased for residential use. He then told us what each of us can do: 1) Use no fertilizer in summer, 2) Use Florida Friendly fertilizer when necessary – 0% Phosphorus, time-released, climate appropriate, non-urea, 3) Plant a 15' buffer zone of specific native plants near waterways and retention ponds, and 4) Use only landscape or lawn care companies with Best Management Practices Certification. Mr. DeCew then patiently fielded questions from the floor until time became a concern.

SECRETARY/MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The minutes from the last meeting were accepted.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer was not in attendance but had reported a current balance of \$7747.85.

MSTU/BEAUTIFICATION

In BJ Galberaith's absence, Steve Stump reported that the Roundabout shell sculpture and landscaping of the area is complete. The drainage project for the Little Court area is entering the Engineering phase and will start the Construction phase in about 12 months. Phase 2, Gulf Blvd., is about 6 months behind.

MEMBERSHIP

Betty Sue Carroll reported that total membership was 448. She asked everyone to bring their dues up-to-date and to be sure to give their correct email addresses.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Steve Stump reported that security cameras were planned for the Roundabout area, and that the Advisory Committee was looking into implementation of the Environmental and Landscaping section of the Community Plan.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Bonnie Littrell asked for volunteers to help with a SMKA picnic planned for January 20, 2007, at Chadwick Park. Tom Dignam is circulating a petition to ask the County to do something about the Sunsets building. Jack Landis is retiring from the Beaches and Shores Committee and is looking for a volunteer replacement. There is a vacancy on the Manasota and Sandpiper Advisory Committee (MASKAC), and interested parties should send a short resume to the County Commission. With the passing of the Environmental Lands initiative, the County is open to suggestions about parcels to purchase.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40PM.

The next meeting will be January 16 at 1:30PM at Gulf to Bay. The program will be a continuation of environmental awareness, with a presentation from the University of Florida Agricultural Extension Service on Florida Yards and Neighborhoods.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Sue Carroll, Secretary