

MINUTES OF MEETING THURSDAY, November 18, 2004

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President B.J. Galberaith at 9:05AM. She welcomed everyone and thanked Gulf-To-Bay for allowing us to use their clubhouse. She turned the meeting over to Stan Parker, Vice President, who told a couple of jokes leading up to his introduction of Mac Horton, our past County Commissioner and new Supervisor of Elections. BJ then complimented Mac on his years of service and pointed out many of the benefits he had brought to Englewood and to Manasota Key. She then presented him with a plaque in the shape of a key – “the key to our Key.”

GUEST SPEAKER

Mac thanked all of us for our support of his campaign, and said that his new job did not mean that he wouldn't care about our concerns anymore. He asked us to give him a call any time we needed his help. He spoke of Manasota Key as being the heart of Charlotte County and of the importance of our stewardship. There was a question from the floor about Stump Pass. Mac answered that the County hopes to do the next dredging in 2005, rather than 2006 as originally scheduled. We are hoping to get some help from FEMA on this project. The permitting process is underway. Mac was given a big hand by the group.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The minutes from the last meeting were summarized and accepted. Betty Sue Carroll described a new email system of distribution for notices from SMKA. Anyone who would like to receive their notices electronically may note that on their 2005 membership application. This will be especially useful for people who are not here continuously from November through April.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Judy Hoffstatter reported that we have about \$3000 in the Treasury, after making a \$2000 donation to the Hermitage to help fund the Horse Conch sculpture for the Roundabout.

ADVISORY BOARD

Betsy McCallum gave us an update on the Community Plan project. The plan was accepted unanimously by the Commissioners on September 21 and is now in the process of being written into an overlay section of the County Code, a laborious process. We are hoping to get some outside legal help to ease the burden on the County lawyers. The Commissioners are considering an Interim Development Control, to put a temporary stay on permitting until the plan is codified. (Projects designed in line with the new restrictions may be permitted). The second hearing on the IDC will be November 23, at 10:00AM in the County Administration Building, Room 119. All are urged to attend. Betsy said that the Advisory Committee meets at 9:30AM Wednesday mornings in the Englewood Beach Villas clubhouse and that all are welcome to attend.

Betsy asked everyone to help the Committee identify easements and deeded access points to the Gulf and Bay. Traditionally, the County does not enforce these issues, since they are considered to be agreements between individuals, and there have recently been instances of new developments attempting to restrict or deny access. Please send a copy of the front page of your deed and the portion describing your access points to Pat Musto, 2779-B N. Beach Rd.

There was a question from the floor about rebuilding after a disaster and the 50% rule. Betsy explained that voluntary re-construction has always required compliance with current codes, but that the Plan was worded to accommodate older structures and condos by allowing the same number of units to rebuild, as long as the new units were their original size and other requirements such as permeable parking and green setbacks were observed. No one would be left homeless. In the aftermath of Charley the County developed a new formula to allow certain repairs that exceed the dollar limitations. This prevented the needless destruction of many homes. She added that the County would take a pragmatic approach to recovery after a major disaster.

MSTU

Wayne Largent briefly described the role of the Municipal Services Taxing Unit, which allocates that portion of our taxes that pay for streets, drainage and certain improvements in the area covering the Charlotte County portion of Manasota Key and Sandpiper Key to the western end of the Tom Adams Bridge. He had missed the last MSTU meeting and asked BJ to fill us in. She said the Roundabout project was proceeding in stages, and the Beach Road portion is finished despite hurricane delays.

She said that the larger than expected increase in our taxes was an error but that it could not be refunded. She said that the extra money might be used to fund additional sections of the costly study of our flooding and drainage problems. She said she expected that the assessment rate would go back to .6 mil for future years.

Our ongoing problem with lighting on the Key was then discussed. A \$300,000 project some years ago, and modified at our expense a number of times, we are now being told the lights were improperly permitted and must all be replaced. It was pointed out that the County endorsed the project and subcontracted their installation and should thus be held accountable.

BJ told us that our benches are still in storage and permission to retrieve them is still tied up in Tallahassee. She asked people to start an email campaign to try to resolve this. Call BJ at 475-5997 for information.

FIRE HYDRANTS

Mary Capecci reported on a study she had done to identify the existing hydrants in Englewood and on the Key. Our area is woefully short of hydrants, which should be within 500 feet of each residence. More hydrants could be placed in the Northern part of our area, but the Southern tip of the Island is serviced by inadequate water mains. Further, although MSTU offered to fund one new hydrant per year, we have been told that it is not a permissible expense for that group.

MAILBOXES

Bonnie Littrell reported that she has three more secure cluster boxes ordered and that they should be installed by the end of the year, thus completing the project. She was given a hand by the group for all her work on this project.

OLD BUSINESS

BJ thanked the group that gathers to put out our mailings to some 435 members. She said she would welcome more volunteers.

Wayne reported on the Candidate's Forum which was held on the Island last Fall. The format was excellent, though turnout was slim, and we learned a lot. All candidates for Commissioner had planned to come, but hurricane Charley interfered. We did have in attendance the three candidates for the West County slot. By way of demonstrating the importance of making our presence known, Wayne mentioned that one candidate had called him to ask if there was a toll bridge to this island.

NEW BUSINESS

BJ asked for volunteers for a nominating committee. Carol Kennett, Anita Largent, and Walt Bartnik came forward. She also set up a committee to look at a new format for our membership booklets.

OTHER BUSINESS

There were questions about the motor scooters being rented by the new Sunset Restaurant and about any plans to upgrade some of the buildings near the Roundabout. BJ announced that the County had agreed to lengthen the time of the turn signal at the corner of Hwy 776 and Beach Road.

BJ thanked everyone for coming, and, there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Sue Carroll, Secretary