

MINUTES OF MEETING THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2003

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Galberaith at 9:10 a.m. She welcomed the membership and expressed our appreciation to George and Joey Gallaher for arranging to let us use the Gulf-to-Bay Clubhouse once again. She also thanked Pete Willis for keeping an eye on the "Fishing Boy" statue and keeping him supplied with flags. She and Stan Parker, Vice President, then introduced our two Guest Speakers, Bob Markus, Englewood Fire Department Commissioner, and Michael J. Bonakoske, Englewood Area Fire Control District Fire Chief.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Chief Bonakoske began by explaining their purpose in coming: to discuss the 1/2 mill tax levy the fire department is requesting for the March 9, 2004 referendum. He then turned the meeting over to Commissioner Markus. The Commissioner's presentation started with the history of fire and emergency protection in Englewood from a small all-volunteer group in 1949 which grew as did the area until the first full-time paid service was established in 1980. In 1983 the Florida Legislature established the Englewood Area Fire Control District and set up funding. From that time to the present, service grew to the current 4 stations with a total of 9 "on-duty" staff, which serve the approximately 46,000 full time residents (80,000 in "Season") in our 83 square mile area.

He then showed us a number of statistics comparing our coverage to that of the surrounding communities, explaining that we were below average in men on duty as well as cost – currently a flat rate of \$78.89 per household per year. He mentioned that the Insurance Services Office rates us as poor. The additional funds, he said, would be used to:

- Training for bio-terrorism and hazardous material incidents
- Reduce response time
- Increased number of firefighters on duty
- Build and staff 3 additional fire stations (ours would be last – at least 5 or more years)

He explained that the proposed tax would start at 1/2 mill but could rise to 1 mill, although the higher rate might not be necessary, since rising valuations would probably keep the taxes rising without changing the rate. He said that he felt the new levy, based on assessed value rather than a flat fee, was fair, since valuable houses are usually bigger. There were several questions from the floor, particularly about valuations on the Key reflecting land value more than structure size. New taxes would be as follows:

<u>Valuation</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Total 1/2 mill</u>	<u>(Total 1 mill)</u>
\$200,000	\$78.89	\$100.00	\$178.89	\$278.89
\$300,000	\$78.89	\$150.00	\$228.89	\$378.89
\$400,000	\$78.89	\$200.00	\$278.89	\$478.89
\$500,000	\$78.89	\$250.00	\$328.89	\$578.89

There was a lengthy question and answer period, including a discussion of water pressure on the Key, after which BJ thanked Commissioner Markus and Chief Bonakoske for the excellent and informative presentation.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

There were no minutes read.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer being absent, there was no Treasurer's report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MSTU

Don Pease had to leave early, so the President summarized the MSTU report. Aluminum caps were designed, constructed and installed on those of our Acorn lights that were visible from the beach. Don managed the entire project, which ended up costing between \$5000 and \$6000, including labor. The caps or shields minimize sky glow but allow enough light for safety. Our benches were removed from the beach and eventually put into storage, because Coastal Wildlife felt nesting turtles might bump into them. We are having difficulty getting the DEP to release them.

WASTE CONTAINERS/MAILBOXES

Bonnie Littrell was not in attendance but left information concerning the Mailbox Program. Secure group mailboxes are still available, free of charge, to groups of 8-9 households grouped together. One homeowner in the group should compile the names and addresses of the group and contact Bonnie at 475-2533. She will need 3 or 4 committed groups to send in an order. She also wished to recognize all those who have volunteered to empty the trashcans we have had placed along the roads, as well as all of you who have been picking up trash.

#### MEMBERSHIP

Betty Sue Carroll reported that membership is now 325 and asked for help in recruiting new members. She explained that the \$10 annual dues (due before the January meeting) is used for mailings and for publishing our Membership Directory.

#### OLD BUSINESS

Henry Berthal mentioned the flooding on Little Court. BJ advised him of the procedures necessary to get this taken care of.

BJ said that the beach renourishment study is completed. Interested people may call her at 475-5997 to get the website covering the study.

BJ then announced that the Steering Committee for the proposed Community Plan has ongoing meetings the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of each month at 10:30 AM in the Clubhouse of Englewood Beach Villas. Any and all are welcome to attend. As soon as the Committee, with the help of representatives from Charlotte County, have the proposed plan outlined, three open meetings will be held to gather input from local businesses and residents. The Community Plan will provide South Manasota Key with guidelines for the future.

#### NEW BUSINESS

The President asked for volunteers for a nominating committee and to help solicit advertising for our Membership Directory. Anyone interested in helping or in serving as an officer or committee chairman should call Betsy McCallum at 460-9610 or Betty Sue Carroll at 475-8191.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Sue Carroll, Acting Secretary