

SALES TAX FOCUS GROUP MEETING MINUTES
February 20, 2014 – 3:00 pm
18500 Murdock Circle, Room B106, Port Charlotte, FL 33948

In Attendance:

Bill Abbatematteo, Donna Barrett, Ruth Bromberg, Rick Brunette, Tom Cavanaugh, Marcia Cullinan, Judy Malbuisson, Julie Mathis, Gary Quill, Jim Quinn, Tom Rice, Kevin Russell, Dr. Doug Whittaker, Brian Gleason – Moderator
Charlotte County Government Staff: Kelly Shoemaker, Hector Flores, Dan Quick, Terri Couture, Jason Stoltzfus.

Opening Remarks:

Kelly Shoemaker, Deputy County Administrator, opened the meeting at 3:00 p.m. and made the following housekeeping announcements.

1. An updated agenda that included the addition of public comment after all presentations. She will send a list of all members of the Focus Group.
2. A spreadsheet that shows the Road Projects from the 2008 Sales Tax collection of approximately \$108 million with \$26 million spent as of January 27, 2014, and the relationship to the projects (roads & utilities) that will be presented at this meeting.
3. A reminder to the Group to make sure to clearly write number of the Criteria Score (weight) numbers in each box so that staff can tally the scores to produce a finalized sheet with those weights.
4. Handout materials from last week's meeting have been posted on the County website along with a list of the Focus Group members.

Road Project Presentations:

Dan Quick, Director of Public Works, presented six (6) Road Projects with a brief overview and description of each followed by questions.

Olean Boulevard

- Identified in the Parkside Citizens Masters Plan, along with Harbor Boulevard, as an opportunity to develop multi-mobile, multi-purpose bicycle and pedestrian friendly boulevards.
- Portion of Olean between 41 and Harbor Major roadway is a major corridor for businesses and health care facilities.
- Propose to eliminate two (2) merging lanes for traffic turning from 41 to a single thru-way.
- Improvement would reduce traffic congestion at intersection of driveway to Promenades Mall.
- Increased pedestrian and bicycle usage would reduce traffic congestion.
- Plan would maximize existing road right of way
- Some drainage and retention ponds may be required by Southwest Florida Water Management District.
- Add six to eight foot multi-use and bicycle paths on both sides.
- Widen existing cross section to four-lane divided boulevard with landscaping and lighting.

Moderator Brian Gleason and the group asked and discussed related questions on the project.

Burnt Store Road, Phase 2

- History of the construction and maintenance of Burnt Store Road by FDOT and development of area.
- Traffic volumes and safety needs have increased over the last decade.
- Charlotte County completed Phase I in 2012, widening the road from U.S. Hwy. 41 to south of Notre Dame Blvd., partially funded by a grant from a \$4 million FDOT grant and \$3 million from 2002 Sales Tax.
- Contract just awarded for construction of Phase 3, south of Tern Bay to Lee County line.
- Phase 2 is widening the section between Phases 1 and 3. Construction was expected to be funded by developers but the economic downturn stopped that plan.

Questions were asked by the group on the priority and various sources of funding for this project.

Piper Road North

- To realign and extend existing road to attract new development and support existing business.
- 2012 Charlotte County and FDOT completed section between Henry Street & North Jones Loop
- This proposal will continue construction from Henry Street north to U. S. Hwy 17.
- Will provide direct access to U.S. Hwy 17 and 41 from airport and surrounding area.
- County has 100% complete engineering construction drawings and Southwest Florida Water Management District approval
- Cost share agreement signed in 2009 with a developer to build roadway thru Punta Gorda Country Club with condition that if County constructs the road alone the developer must grant the county all right of way for the road.

Questions and discussion ensued about growth and job creation for existing businesses as well as potential new ones.

Toledo Blade (through Murdock Village)

- Considered a part of Murdock Village development.
- Also considered as an enhanced hurricane evacuation roadway

There were no questions.

Harborview Road, Phase 2

- Part 1 of “trilogy”, a U.S. Hwy. 41 bypass from Melbourne under I-75 and connect to Rio de Janeiro.
- Pure traffic flow and traffic volume and connectivity.
- Connect to Kings Hwy. and State Rd. 776 from I-75.
- FDOT is interested in this project – important to area network and long-range transportation plan, would help with study & feasibility.

Follow-up questions and discussion were about traffic volume, design, access to landfill and waste management facility

Edgewater Drive, Phase 3

- Continuation of Harborview, Phase 3.
- Currently as a sales-taxed project doing Edgewater Phase 2, from Harbor to Midway.
- Phase 3 is extension from Midway To Collingswood.
- Widening would make it a part of a U.S. Hwy. 41 bypass and help with gridlock.
- Many vacant lots available for development in area.
- Important for future planning.
- DOT funds not identified for it

Questions were asked about other funding sources, future development, and priorities.

Edgewater Drive, Phase 4

- Wrap-up of Edgewater project
- To Flamingo and State Hwy. 776 corridor
- County has 75% to 80% of right of way for roadway as well as drainage.
- Is permitted and ready to go.

There were no questions on this proposal.

Utilities Water Presentations:

Terri Couture, Utilities Director, presented two water projects for consideration.

Punta Gorda Water Transmission Interconnect

- Connect Burnt Store water treatment plant to the Punta Gorda plant (Phase 1).
- Would bring two and a half million gallons of water supply per day to the region, eastern and southern Charlotte County area.
- Future plans call for extension to the Babcock Ranch well field which would bring an additional 10 million gallons per day.
- Project is 22 miles of pipe with 24 inch pipe and the total cost is \$22.5 million.
- Is part of Utilities Master plan presented in April
- Would be a regional project to provide emergency water supply back up to PG, mid and west county and Burnt Store and would eventually inter-connect to Port Charlotte.
- Proposal has 100% certainty of meeting demands for quality water supply for drinking, irrigation and firefighting.
- Overall water quality meets standards for primary and secondary and would help Punta Gorda to satisfy its water quality issue.
- Would connect with the Peace River Authority system which connects Punta Gorda with Charlotte County.
- Would reduce reliance on surface water supply by bringing in ground water supply to the system.

Questions were asked on regulations, collaboration with City of Punta Gorda and Florida Water Management District's involvement.

Potable Water Storage Tanks

- Low pressure event in January of 2012 at the Peace River facility in Desoto County resulted in a three-day boil water notice in Charlotte County because it caused a “shut-down” of our plant.
- Charlotte County was the only member of the Authority required to do so because we do not have storage tanks. The water supply is injected directly into the distribution system.
- Propose two tanks for 10 million gallons storage: height of each tank would be approximately 160 feet and estimated cost is \$10million each
- Is part of Utilities Master Plan presented in April
- One location is in the Boston tract at Harbor Blvd. & Veterans Blvd. and near entrance of the water system
- Second location is at the Environmental Center where CCU main office is.
- Will be connected to a regional pipe line.

Questions asked about other funding sources, affect on customer rates, and long term planning.

Public Comments:

Joan Fischer and Percy Angelo offered their opinions and objections on the proposed road projects.

1. Joan Fischer – Charlotte Assembly didn’t want to include Sales Tax extension in discussion. County is becoming dependent on Sales Tax income. Developers should fund Capital Improvements with impact fees. Ms. Fischer spoke about Murdock Village CRA and the lack of any movement with the project. She also spoke against funneling traffic off of US 41 because it directs traffic away from businesses.
2. Percy Angelo – Residents were not happy with the process when the Placida Road widening was underway. When the opportunity for public input was opened, the public was not allowed to comment or offer an opinion of what they considered to be major elements of the project, just minor items such as the style of light fixtures. Opinions of residents of an area should be considered when making decisions.

Closing Instructions and Remarks:

Brian gave instructions to the Group on completing the scoring sheets correctly for these projects and time was allotted for each member to complete their individual sheets. Kelly collected the completed sheets and distributed copies of documents for next two week’s meetings. The Group decided to hold on the Water Interconnect project until after time is allowed for further collaboration with City of Punta Gorda.

Kelly noted the following and answered procedural questions:

1. The presentations made at this meeting will now be added to the County web-site.
2. Results of scoring from each meeting will be made available at the following week’s meeting.
3. Review minutes from previous meeting (2/13) and notify Kelly of any corrections before next week’s meeting.
4. Ranking of projects will be done at last meeting on March 21.

Adjournment:

Brian adjourned the meeting at 4:46 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 27 at 3:00 p.m. in Room B106.

Minutes prepared by Bonnie Leroy.