

Minutes
Charlotte Assembly 2013
Steering Committee Meeting
August 1, 2013

3:00pm: The steering Committee Meeting was called to order

In Attendance: Dr. Robert Peterson (Facilitator), Matthew D. Donatelli (Scribe), Ms. Elaine Jones, Ms. Kelly Shoemaker , Mr. Bill Abbatematteo, Ms. Katherine Ariens, Mr. Scott Barber, Mr. Chris Beers, Dr. Joyce Cream, Mr. Andy Dodd, Mr. Barney Duffy, Mr. Lindsay Harrington, Mr. David Hayes, Mr. John Hitzel, Mr. Howard Kunik, Dr. Pat Land, Ms. Theresa Murtha, Mr. John Polk, Dr. Thomas Rath, Mr. Bill Schafer, Mr. John Stanwix, Ms. Susan Swanson, Mr. Joe Tiseo, and Mr. Steve Vieira.

Absent: Mr. Richard Hoagland, Ms. Julie Mathis, Dr. Thomas Noone, Ms. Julie Price, and Dr. Joseph Ravid.

3:05pm: Dr. Peterson instructed the attendees to complete the Steering Committee Information Form

3:06pm: Steering Committee members introduced themselves.

3:15pm: Dr. Bob Peterson reviewed the ground rules

3:20pm: Elaine Jones briefed the Committee about Florida Sunshine Laws.

3:30pm: Dr. Peterson reviewed the Charlotte Assembly process and discussed and set the schedule of Steering Committee meetings. The next meeting dates were August 13, 20 and 27 all from 3-5pm in Room B-106 at the Charlotte County Administration Center.

3:35pm: Dr. Peterson reviewed the 5 areas of concentration for the upcoming Charlotte Assembly:

- A. Economic Development
- B. Public Safety
- C. Growth Management
- D. Quality of Life
- E. Water Resources

3:40pm: Group started discussion concerning Economic Development of Charlotte County:

Major Points of Interest Included:

- Taxes
- Electronic Transportation
 - o Small Items (Fed Ex)
 - o Digital Transportation of information.
 - Medical needs.
 - Beaches
 - Need to bring professionals that deal with digital media.
- Promote the County
 - o How?
 - o Identify potential businesses
- Tourism
 - o History / Identity
 - 500 year History
 - Ponce de Leon
 - Push History
 - We have no Monticello, etc...
 - We do have Indian Village.
- Promote Infra-Structure
- Location (Punta Gorda City/Charlotte County)
- Where do we have shovel ready property.
- Promote/Enhance the Quality of Life
 - o Visibility
 - o Do we look like a 'Player' in the State.
- Retention
 - o Talent, etc...
- Needs and wants of the community
 - o What are they?
- Transportation
 - o Airport, Rail, I75, etc...
 - o Transit Buses
- Fishing, Golf, Beaches
 - o Promote these
 - o Use as tools
- Can we compete with surrounding Counties?
 - o What can Charlotte County do?
- Utilize
 - o Get Away from "I" & "Me"
 - o Boost Community Pride
- Governance
- Arts
 - o Theater
 - o Symphony

- Must develop
- (Water)
- Infra-Structure
 - Key to have Infra Structure in Place.
 - Need a long term plan
 - How much will it cost?
- The Dollar is more costly today compared to 2007
- “Brand”
 - Need to find Charlotte County’s (Port Charlotte’s) brand
 - What direction do we want to head.
- Scorecard
 - There isn’t one.
- ‘Pure-Water’s’ Program
 - Federal Funds
 - Are there any?
- Need to research other counties.
- Growth Management
- Need Direction
- What is the “BEST” Port Charlotte?
 - Medical Profession
 - What was Port Charlotte “Meant to be?”
- PRIDE in Port Charlotte
 - Enhance what we have
 - Retirement community, etc...
- The negatives of County vs. City relations.
- Ombudsman for County
 - Partnership
 - Need a relationship with the County
- Community Beautification
- County Government:
 - How do government employees view themselves?
 - Their job?
- OUR TAXES
- The City is Incorporated
 - It doesn’t seem like the County is Incorporated.
- The means to accomplish this.
 - Start with Top down Leadership.
- Developers are not Coming
 - Developers are not interested in Charlotte County.
 - Developers are met with a ‘no’ and have to work towards a ‘yes’.
- NO IDENTITY
- IS THE ECONOMY SUSTAINABLE?
- Additional Incorporated Cities
 - Goes Hand in Hand with Economic Development
 - Get back what we’ve put in. (Taxes)
- ‘Education’ should be added to the Topics

- Why is it not one of the topics?
 - Kelly Shoemaker explained there are only 5 focus areas and that education is not part of the County Commissioners role.
- Retirement
 - Best Asset for Port Charlotte?
 - Can it solely be the best asset?
 - Can we survive on it alone?
- West County
- Port Charlotte is in a difficult county.
- Reputation of the county is poor with regional developers
- Retirees are paying Taxes for services they don't use.
- The Demographic needed in Port Charlotte needs to support the local business model.
- Port Charlotte is, "Not just cheap land."
- Need for local professionals
 - Bring more professionals to Port Charlotte.
- What are the amenities and luxuries of Port Charlotte?

4:30pm: Group started discussion concerning the Public Safety of Charlotte County:

- State Police
- Neighborhood Watch
- C. A. P.
- Coast Guard
- Juvenile Justice
- Civil Air Patrol
- Excellent Emergency Service
 - Ambulance Service not covered.
 - Why is it so expensive?
 - Seniors/Retirees on a fixed income cannot afford it.
- Private Companies.
 - Do they Count?
- Need a study of where Port Charlotte 'stacks up' among other Florida counties.
- How do we compare to other Counties?
- Prevention
 - Street Lights
- New Road in Englewood
 - Need to think about roads.
- New Harbor
- Children's Safety in Parks
 - Drug use in Parks
 - Solutions:
 - Make it an active park.

- Establish open container laws.
 - More traffic = Less drug use.
 - Put up signs that say "Call 911!"
- More Policing the parks
 - Sheriff's Department and City Police
 - Need to know the status of man power
- Other Unlawful activity in parks?
 - Advertise policing on local news.
- Hole in the Demographic: 0 – 24years () 40+years
- Homeless problem?
 - Compassion for the Homeless?
- Lack of Mental Health Facilities in County
 - Could be contributing to the lack of Public Safety
- Needs to refocus the discussion towards Mental Health
- What is the Cost of the Operation?
 - Police getting equipment from Government (bayonets)
- Has to be a Community and Police Effort
- It's All Relative
 - No muggings
 - No Gang Tags
- Charlotte County is a relatively "Safe Community"
 - Shoplifting seems to be one of the biggest problems.
- Bike Patrols
 - Talk to Sherriff's Department
 - Needs to be more active
- Police
 - Do they know what we want?
 - Police need to be told what we want
 - Police send out surveys to find out what the citizens want.
- Issue of Drug use and crime in High school & Middle School
 - Documentation?
 - Is it being reported?
- Children's Services Council
 - Have a load of information.

4:55pm: Discussion of topics concluded.

4:57pm: Dr. Bob Peterson went over the schedule with members of the Committee.

5:00pm: Meeting was adjourned.