

**Minutes**  
**Charlotte Assembly 2013**  
**Steering Committee Meeting**  
**August 13, 2013**

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

In Attendance: Dr. Robert Peterson (Facilitator), Matthew D. Donatelli (Scribe), Elaine & Kelly, Mr. Bill Abbatematteo, Ms. Katherine Ariens, Mr. Scott Barber, Mr. Chris Beers, Mr. Andy Dodd, Mr. Barney Duffy, Mr. David Haynes, Mr. John Hitzel, Mr. Richard Hoagland, Mr. Howard Kunik, Dr. Pat Land, Ms. Julie Mathis, Dr. Thomas Noone, Mr. John Polk, Ms. Julie Price, Mr. Bill Schafer, Mr. John Stanwix, Ms. Susan Swanson, Mr. Joe Tiseo, and Mr. Steve Vieira.

Absent: Ms. Theresa Murtha, Mr. Lindsay Harrington, Dr. Joyce Cream, Dr. Thomas Rath, and Dr. Joseph Ravid.

3:05pm: Dr. Robert Peterson informed the committee that Mr. Ravid had dropped out of the committee.

3:06pm: Dr. Robert Peterson asked the group if they would like to continue with a committee of 24 members or elect another member. The committee agreed to continue with 24 members without electing another member.

3:15pm: Group started discussion concerning the 100 invitees to bring to the October Charlotte County Assembly:

Major points of interest included:

- Requesting a list of the areas covered
- Attendees should be part of the Banking, Finance profession
- Attendees should reflect the Demographic of the various parts of Charlotte County.
- Idea of a 'Reserve Pool' of candidates.
  - o People that show interest.
  - o 20 reserved spots for general public?
  - o 1 member from each Constitutional office.
    - Tax Collector, Appraiser etc...
  - o Youth needs to be represented.
- The Committee must decide who attends not Dr. Peterson.
- Demographic should be diverse.
- Members of Policy Enforcement
  - o Building Division
    - City and County
- Idea of a Form the public must fill out to attend

- Members of Team Punta Gorda and Team Parkside.
- Home Owners Association Members.
- Would it be simpler to nominate 12 or so people out of the Committee to pick the invitees?
- What will be the process?
- Dr. Peterson will provide a brief bio of the people selected.
  - o Committee must get a list of 5 or 6 names per member and send it to Dr. Peterson.
- All Invitees must commit to the 2 full days of discussion. (8 hour days)
- Send out Press Release
  - o Send out tomorrow
  - o Defining the requirements for the invitee
  - o Motion by Joe Tiseo for Press Release. Following discussion, motion was withdrawn
- What was the previous practice of collecting individuals?
  - o What if 100 homeowners show up?
  - o The committee must select the people.
- Idea of 10 'Public at Large spots' to be kept open?
  - o Filled by Press release submittals.
- The committee selected us understanding that we were a good representation of the public
  - o We should be trusted to choose
  - o The randomness will work itself out.
- Select a senior from each one of the High Schools.
- What about the 'Do the Right Thing' Children?
- A lottery seems to be the most fair process but it throws the 'controlling the demographic' out the window.
- Make it Simple = the best way to do it.
- Add 20 alternatives just in case others can't make it/Emergencies.
- Each member of the Steering Committee recruits 3 people and the rest goes to the lottery.
  - o The 3 names from the committee members must commit to attending both days of the Assembly (October 16 & 17) and for all day each day (8am-5pm).
  - o They must reflect geographically all around the County
  - o Bring names in Next week or email in advance to Dr. Peterson.
    - Include: Name, telephone number, address, e-mail address, and demographic information.

3:45pm: Committee ends discussion about October Assembly Inductees.

3:46pm: Group started discussion concerning "Where they see Charlotte County in 5 Years:"

Major points of interest include:

- Use the laid back/retirement reputation of Charlotte County as a tool

- Rediscover who we are as a County.
  - o Blue Collar/White Collar Community.
- Establish who we want to be.
- 'Going Old' vs. 'Going Bold'
- Must stop division in the County.
- The retirement community can't sustain the economic development on its own.
- We must attract the youth.
  - o And it can't be McDonalds.
- We must expand the Economic Base of the County.
- There has been a change in the demographic in retired people.
- Florida is not a cheap place to retire anymore.
- Digital companies.
  - o Charlotte County vs. Silicon Valley
    - Not going to happen soon.
- Expansion of the University System.
  - o Could be an attraction for retirees.
  - o Good School = Good youth numbers.
  - o Medical University
    - Dr. Interns – Get residencies.
    - Then get them to stay.
- Expanding the Tax base is key to the Economic Development of Charlotte County.
- Businesses will not just come.
  - o They need Logistics and Demographics.
  - o We need to look like we're open for business and not in foreclosure.
- Looking back on the 17 year old report.
  - o They were talking about these issues.
  - o They didn't act on them.
  - o Specific things that are similar to now.
  - o We have a government of screaming.
  - o Must fix the core problems.
- Stabilization of Taxes.
- Government must team with the private sector.
  - o We must hold businesses and people accountable.
  - o Recognize efficiencies
    - Private sector will come.
- The origin of Port Charlotte is a Fishing Village.
- Hire the Locals
  - o Don't hire out of state professionals.
  - o How do we do it?
    - Local business website
      - Promote locals with stars.
      - Is there something already in place to do this?
- What is the Public Image of Port Charlotte?
  - o Our insurance is way too high.

- Are we the bedroom community of Fort Myers and Punta Gorda?
- Community Beautification
- We are seeing people stay for longer periods of time.
  - 6 months +
- Is retirement still affordable?
- Community Beautification.
  - National Airports and Hospitals.
  - Safety, Low Crime Rate,
  - What is Charlotte County's National Characteristic?
    - Best Waterfront in Florida
- Full timers get the benefit of paid taxes by the part time residents.
- Capitalize on current strengths.
  - "If you play golf well, don't play tennis."
  - We have roads that make sense.
  - Stop the Insanity.
  - Best retirement place in the South East United States.
- We should look at the data of pensioners.
- Can we be both a retirement community and new business community?

4:30pm: Group started discussion concerning Growth Management:

Major points of interest include:

- Water and Sanitation is a big issue.
  - It is as important as road issues etc...
  - We must clean up the water
  - The canals are stagnant.
  - This needs to change
  - The county and the city are walking in opposite directions on the issue.
- It's cheaper to buy a house to store a boat than it is to rent a slip.
- MSBU's and TU's
  - County is divided.
- Need to address the sewer and Water Utilities Expansion.
- How do we expand Utilities?
- TMDL (storm water) utility will be an issue down the road
  - Our runoff needs to be clean.
- Do we need a Private company to just manage utilities and sewer?
- Babcock Ranch
  - Where does it stand?
- Need for Consistency in Code Enforcement
- 2004 & 2005 re-write of the Land Development Regulations.
  - Needs amended and tweaked?
  - Difficult to be evaluated
    - 600 – 700 pages
  - Earth moving ordinance.
  - It seems that they are increasing regulations and not decreasing them.
- Employment of the Semi-retired.

- D. R. I.
  - o Large scope project
  - o 50% rule.
- Beautification of County
  - o Sign ordinance is in place
  - o Old signs grandfathered in.
- Idea to reduce taxes for businesses that want to beautify their facades.
  - o They must use the saved money for that purpose.
  - o The businesses will pay for it.
- County is giving more regulations
  - o Why?
  - o Why make it tougher to do business/live?
- The intent for the regulations is to express future visions.
  - o It may not be the intent to make it tougher but it is the result.
- Charlotte County must look 'Open for Business'
- It is the same demographic making these statements every Assembly.

4:50pm: Group started discussion concerning Quality of Life:

Major points of interest include:

- Code Enforcement
  - o Permit is more money expensive than renovation.
  - o Why file for a permit?
- Identify issues that require improvement
  - o CODE
  - o Sporting Aspects
    - Regattas
    - Boat racing
  - o Parks and Recreation
  - o Bird watching
  - o Geo-caching
  - o Restaurants
- Policies currently in place
  - o What's working?
- Water Quality
- Preserve land
  - o Maybe too many taxes are going to land for birds and turtles?
- Need for partnerships with county and private sector.
  - o Will help to pull/identify resources.
- Recreation
- Punta Gorda has the bicycle trails
  - o It was a 2 – 4 year project
  - o Is there something here?
  - o Can we market Eco-tourism?
- There's something for everyone in Charlotte County.
- Mega-Plex's

- Softball tournaments
- We have the complexes but they are not of regulation specs for national tournaments
  - Developed by both Private and Public sector.
- Bicycle Path extended from Punta Gorda across the bridge to Community park and pool.

5:00pm: Committee is adjourned and meeting is called to an end.