

WHIDDEN INDUSTRIAL PARK OWNERS MEETING  
CHARLOTTE HARBOR CRA Advisory Committee  
**Wednesday, July 30, 2014 – 5:30 p.m.**  
Charlotte Harbor Event Center, 75 Taylor Street, Punta Gorda, FL 33950

**Members Present**

James Herston, *Chairman*

**Members Absent**

Garland Wilson, *Vice Chairman*

Charlotte Ventola, *Secretary*

Michael Haymans

Delmar Wooden

**Staff Present**

Debrah Forester, *Redevelopment Manager*

Kathy Knee, *Recorder*

Commissioner Ken Doherty

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**I. Welcome**

Debrah Forester welcomed everyone to the July 30, 2014 Whidden Industrial Park Owners Meeting which began at 5:40 p.m. at the Charlotte Harbor Event Center, 75 Taylor Street, Punta Gorda, FL. Ms. Forester asked all attendees to introduce themselves and mention where their property is located in Whidden Park. Ms. Forester distributed the jump drives to those who were not at the last meeting.

**II. Whidden Park - Discussion**

Ms. Forester gave a brief overview of Whidden Park noting it is split between private ownership and condo ownership. There is concern with the road conditions. The roads must be brought up to standard before the County will accept them and take over maintenance. Jim Herston arrived 5:50 p.m.

A property owner asked where their tax money is going because it is not going into park improvements. Commissioner Doherty advised that ad valorem taxes are based on the value of property and those monies go to public safety, parks and recreation, and the general benefit of the County. Greater Mid County takes care of primary drainage such as canals, not street drainage. Once roads are accepted, property owners become a part of an MSBU and taxes are collected to pay for the local roads and drainage. The approved construction plans need to be found and then an engineer/surveyor needs to be consulted. Infrastructure needs to be brought to the standard of the approved construction plans. As an alternative, a quote for a band-aid plan to correct some of the problems at the owners' expense was distributed at a previous meeting; this Band-Aid might ease the situation for about 10 years.

At the last meeting, the condominium owners were asked to try to learn the status of the POAs. Nothing definite was determined. It was mentioned that there are too many property owners and not everyone wants to pay out money for the necessary improvements.

**III. Next Steps**

Commissioner Doherty noted the County once had special drainage areas and the County would get involved and charge an assessment to all property owners if 51 percent of the improved property owners were in agreement. He will check with the Attorney's Office to see if this is still possible and if so the exact criteria; if not, can this ordinance be resurrected. The Commissioner noted that even if this is possible it could be expensive. It may be better to pool the resources of the property owners to hire an engineer and determine where needs are and then fix it piece meal.

A property owner asked if SWFWMD could enforce compliance. Discussion followed and included:

- There may be a charge for SWFWMD to send out letters.
- Some properties may have been grandfathered in because SWFWMD only came in existence during the 80s.
- Not everyone gets notices that inspections are needed.
- Ms. Forester will get the information that has been sent to a few property owners and contact SWFWMD to ask about inspections.

Commissioner Doherty will research with the Attorney's Office but thinks it would be to the owners benefit to go out on their own with an engineer/survey firm. The CRA Advisory Committee will continue to look for grants to help pay for engineering/surveying but many grants have a job creation specification. Jim Herston and Patrick will talk and try to coordinate.

**IV. Adjournment**

Mr. Herston thanked everyone for coming. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m. The next meeting will be held in about 3 months.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Charlotte Ventola, Secretary

/kmk