

Minutes

Little Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee
Friday, November 14, 2008 – 1:00 P.M.
Charlotte County Administrative Center
Cedar Point Environment Park
Port Charlotte, FL

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bob Hill, Chairman
Ken Bonds
Carolyn Dupree
Barry Hurt

STAFF PRESENT

Jie Shao, Growth Management

GUESTS

Midge O'Hara
Chuck O'Hara
Judy McCoy
Chief Richard Pepper, North Captiva Island
David Haynes, LGPOA

Members Excused

Bill Dallas

- I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**
The **November 14, 2008** meeting of the **Little Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee** was called to order at 1:00pm by **Chair Bob Hill** noting a quorum was present.
- II. INTRODUCTION OF GUEST**
Chair Hill introduced **Chief Pepper** of the North Captiva Fire Department.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
Following a discussion, **Chair Hill** announced the **October 10, 2008** minutes of the **Little Gasparilla Island Advisory Committee** were approved with corrections. It was stated that Jie Shao will be responsible for recording the meeting and transcribing the minutes this month.
- IV. OLD BUSINESS**
Chair Hill announced there would be a change in the order of business on the agenda.

Fire Rescue Update

Midge O'Hara made known that voluntary contributions and efforts over the past six years have been insufficient and she feels there is a moral obligation to all Islanders to provide immediate EMS capability and a fire suppression delivery

system. She stated the Community Plan has referred to the lack of EMS and fire protection as a weakness of the island and explained that to solve staffing, equipment, and location needs, funds will need to be obtained from every parcel owner. **Ms. O'Hara** confirmed that although startup costs will be significant, once in place future costs will be noticeably reduced. She suggested a 1.5 mil ad valorem and discussed how this figure was acquired. Handouts from Fire Chief Dennis Didio were provided to members showing Charlotte County's full support of an independent staff.

Chief Richard Pepper made introductory remarks and provided a brief history of the North Captiva Island Fire Department and the process of becoming an independent taxing authority. The benefits of becoming a viable fire department as set by ISO standards were discussed and a handout from Citizens Insurance Group showed a substantial savings. **Chief Pepper** went on to explain the advantages of having a fire department in place to prevent and/or reduce damage caused by island fires and discussed the issue of medical emergencies and the importance of receiving immediate care to reduce loss of life. A discussion of costs and benefits continued and a question and answer period ensued.

Chair Hill advised he is fully onboard for firefighting ability on Little Gasparilla Island and is especially in favor of acquiring EMS capability, but expressed concern as to whether an independent taxing authority would be the best way to accomplish this. **Rande Ridenour** stated a quick poll in his area showed that residents were against the idea and added that he would need to see support by Islanders before he could vote for an ad valorem. Members offered their opinions and concerns and additional questions were addressed.

Midge O'Hara made known the Little Gasparilla Property Owners Association voted to contribute \$5,000.00 towards the efforts to establish an independent district. **David Haynes** received confirmation that although this board's approval is desired, it is not required to request an independent fire district from the County. It was further stated that the legislative delegation will need a request to sponsor a bill by January 12, 2009, to avoid the delay of another year. It was indicated that if approved, it would be November of 2010 before residents would see an assessment. Discussion continued and alternative ideas were addressed. **Chief Pepper** presented closing comments and exited the meeting. **Chair Hill** led a discussion regarding the potential savings on property insurance and tax assessments and residents raised their concerns. It was the overall feeling that more input is needed from the community before a decision can be reached.

Chairman Hill entertained a motion to recommend to the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners that they consider establishing an independent taxing district. Following a discussion, **Judy McCoy** announced she would like to withdraw the request for a vote from the Committee at this time and instead would like to request a meeting on the Island to allow residents the opportunity to

provide further input on this issue. Chair Hill proposed holding a working meeting between the LGI Advisory Board and the Fire Board beforehand, which would be open to the public but would not address public comments. **Chair Hill** added he would also like to see an informative Comprehensive Survey distributed to the community and it was agreed two separate meetings would be the best solution. Further discussion resulted in a joint meeting being scheduled for Thursday, November 20, 2009 to discuss the issue further and to finalize the Comprehensive Survey.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at _____.