

MINUTES
SOUTH GULF COVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SGCAC)
Wednesday, May 9, 2007

Commission Conference Room 536 – 9:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Sandy Slater, *Chairperson*
Mike Post, *Vice Chair*
Kendall Leach
April Chattinger

STAFF

Jie Shao, *Staff Liaison*
Gayle Moore, Recorder

MEMBERS EXCUSED

GUESTS

Karen Ireland
John McGuire
Karen Price

I. **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Chair Slater called the May 9, 2007 meeting of the SGCAC to order at 9:00am in the Commission Conference Room 536 and it was noted a quorum was present. Staff liaison *Jie Shao* arrived later in the meeting, due to a scheduled conference with Commissioner D'Aprile.

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Slater requested a review and correction of meeting minutes for March 14, 2007. A number of changes were proposed, at the conclusion of which a motion was called and seconded to approve the minutes of the March 14, 2007 meeting as amended, with a unanimous vote.

Chair Slater then requested a review and correction of Town Hall Meeting minutes for March 17, 2007. A number of changes were proposed, at the conclusion of which a motion was called and seconded to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2007 meeting as amended, with a unanimous vote.

III. **OLD BUSINESS**

Scenic Highways, Stormwater and Growth Management

Mike Post reviewed the agenda items, starting with the Scenic Highway project which is moving ahead; *Mr. Post* stated that at this time, it looks as though the Scenic Highway designation will be awarded to the roads currently proposed. Finalizing of the Objectives and Strategy is expected to be finished shortly.

With regard to Stormwater, that Committee had a public meeting at Tringali the previous week, but Mr. Post did not attend and did not know the outcome. *Chair Slater* said she attended that meeting, and that it was a very small group. There was discussion and some questions regarding

the projects currently required, such as maintenance of the ditches. Ultimately, the question of support for an increase in fees was put to the group and attendees from South Gulf Cove indicated support, but a number of other attendees indicated they would not support it. Further discussion ensued regarding the information that citizens wishing to speak at the July meeting would need to sign up in advance in order to do so. **Chair Slater** urged attendance at the next public meeting on this matter; **Mr. Post** announced he had applied for a post on the Committee and had been accepted.

Mr. Post next discussed the road paving project having earlier noted, via email, that the Committee needed to decide how the matter should be sent on to the Streets, Roads and Drainage MSBU for consideration in the next budget session (08-09).

- With regard to the proposal for acceleration lanes on 771 from the four main boulevards in South Gulf Cove, this was rejected by Public Works with the comment that there is no benefit or convenience to this feature.
- Right-turn lanes on major boulevards entering onto 771 was considered both necessary and do-able by Public Works, with the suggestion that the community work with the MSBU aiming to get funds in the 2009 budget; the suggestion was also made to plan on a two-year basis, accomplishing one lane every two years.
- Right-hand turn lane, traveling north on 771, entering the major boulevards (deceleration lanes) which was also considered to be feasible at the time 771 is widened, or sooner if heavier traffic warrants it. There was consensus that this work would not be a cost to the community. Further discussion ensued particularly with regard to traffic counting in the community.
- Increasing the width of the boulevards to either 3 or 4 lanes; this would not be considered until it was deemed to be warranted based on the traffic flow. **Guest John McGuire** noted that such widening was an item in the Community Plan.
- One-way streets at the bottom of the major bridge crossings to create an entrance to the street at the foot of the bridge but move the exit to the further end of the circle. Public Works decided against this, at least in part because every property owner on the block would have to agree to the plan. As an alternative, they suggested signage indicating an entrance (“hidden entrance”) ahead. **Ms. Price and Mr. Leach** noted that existing signs note “limited sight ahead: 25 miles per hour” but no one slows down in response to those signs; **Mr. Leach** recalled Commissioner Moore’s suggestion that the Community use the electronic signs which indicate the driver’s actual speed compared to the posted speed limit. These radar-detector devices are available on request from the Sheriff’s Department. **Mr. Post** stated that the group would make their recommendations and approval to move ahead with this.
- **Mr. Post** gave brief review of the information on the funding of projects.

Mr. Post then discussed a suggestion he had received from Ms. Chattinger on the possibility of a link between the bicycle paths/walkways and the right-turn lanes; he polled the committee and received a few responses, mostly indicating that this linkage was not seen as part of the specific project. These matters were then discussed by the Committee and a motion was proposed by Mr. Post: A resolution recommending submittal to the MSBU for FY 2008/9 of a proposal for right-hand turn lanes, to begin setting aside the money for this paving project. Further discussion

ensued with regard to the advisability of beginning to accumulate money for the necessary projects, rather than being hit with a large MSBU assessment all at once, and the matter of presenting this to the MSBU Committee for their further action.

Mr. Leach raised the issue of variations on repaving, including a process known as “chip and seal” which is less expensive than a complete repaving. He suggested conferring with Tara Musselman as to the cost benefits of this method. Further discussion ensued. **Mr. Post** noted that Ms. Musselman had expressed an interest in attending a homeowners association meeting, to get a better understanding of the community and its processes; he stated he would be following up with her on these arrangements.

At the conclusion of discussions, **Mr. Post** stated the motion: We hereby approve by motion the sub-committee’s recommendation as to providing right-hand turn lanes from the four major boulevards in South Gulf Cove onto SR 771, commencing with fiscal year 2008/2009. Motion seconded by **Kendall Leach** and passed with a unanimous vote. **Mr. Post** stated he would write it up and send a letter; he requested the recording secretary to supply him with a copy of the motion, once transcribed, for this purpose.

Zoning and FLUM Report

Mr. Leach noted that he had addressed this topic at the Town Hall Meeting (THM) and there were no questions about the concept of the mixed-use for Key 90, 93 and 96, nor were there questions from the HOA meetings. He noted that staff liaison Jie Shao had suggested the three keys should be combined for a large-scale plan amendment, and that the target date for submittal of such an application would be November 2007. **Mr. Leach** suggested that Ms. Shao start working on letters to the property owners that would be involved; clarification of the letter content was given, that it should be soliciting a response from the property owner about going ahead with the proposed change.

Mr. Leach said community members had a better understanding now about the nature of mixed use developments, based on information they obtained at the THM; **Mr. Leach** and **Ms. Shao** discussed sending a letter to property owners to find out if there is any objection to the mixed use concept for future development in SGC. **Ms. Shao** recollected that the first changes would be to correct inconsistencies from medium density to low density; letters would go out soliciting property owners’ opinions on this change. There was some discussion about Coconut Point, a new mixed-use development in Bonita Springs; it was also pointed out by guest **Karen Price** that mixed-use development could be seen in downtown Fort Myers, at First and Henry Streets. Other suggestions for this type of development included Fishermans Village in Punta Gorda.

There was a brief review of Mr. Leach’s term on the Committee which, like the other members, expires on June 14, 2007. This compares with the sunset clause, a deadline that comes in May 2008. Discussion moved briefly to the topic of the sunset clause requirements, and the reappointments that need to be made this year. The recording secretary requested copies of any letters that members send to the Commissioners, seeking reappointment. **Chair Slater** said that she had previously submitted her request via email and would do so this time as well; she also gave a complete copy of the original appointment packets to the recording secretary to be copied

for the file. **Mr. Post** stated that he would not be requesting reappointment; **Mr. Leach, Ms. Chattinger and Chair Slater** stated they would be standing for reappointment. **Chair Slater** asked that Mr. Post or Mr. Leach take the subject of the vacancies on the Committee to the HOA Board and encourage people to apply; Mr. Post suggested that Ms. Chattinger be the one to carry this message to the HOA. There was agreement among the Committee members that their work has been of great benefit to the community and that effort should be made to recruit new members and keep the Committee going.

Mr. Leach continued his comments, noting that further work was being done on the issue of the stop signs; with regard to the suggested sign for the intersection of Calumet and Keystone, he noted that because of the lack of accidents there, Public Works felt that a sign was not yet warranted. He suggested getting Commissioner Moore involved again, since it was a letter from Tom Moore and Bruce Loucks that had made the difference on getting the previous stop sign installed.

A short break was proposed; the meeting resumed with Ms. Chattinger's report.

Public Safety and Health

April Chattinger discussed Cove Connection, a project which she presented to the CCT who approved it. She and Mr. McGuire have contributed an article on the project to the newsletter, and there has been a website created as well. She noted that the DVD featuring community highlights has been created and is being finalized for presentation to realtors and builders who may place ads and help support the production. The contents of the DVD show various aspects of the community in pictures with captions set to music; **Chair Slater** said that she had seen the DVD presentation and found it impressive.

With regard to the Fire Wise Community project, **Ms. Chattinger** reported that this will be a large project and a lot of work, so the idea had been proposed that each existing organization within South Gulf Cove should provide two members to assist. **Mr. Chattinger** is the person who will be making the proposal to each of the committee chairs. She noted that the current news of notable wildfire outbreaks in Florida, Georgia and other locations makes this project particularly timely. The key to the program's success will be making it a total community effort, **Ms. Chattinger** said.

Ms. Chattinger also reported briefly on the success of the Parrot-head Party, a fund-raising event.

Parks, Park Master Plan, Entranceways, Land Acquisition, Funding Resources

Chair Slater reported on her attendance at recent MSBU meetings that dealt with Community Plan funding, and her meeting with Laura Kleiss Hoeft to discuss budget matters. Ms. Kleiss Hoeft has agreed to produce a monthly report in order to help the Committee track the progress of park-related items; in furtherance of this, **Chair Slater** requested Jie Shao to add Ms. Kleiss Hoeft's assistant, Evangelina DiPiazza, to the distribution list for the SGCAC agenda and minutes. Projects, separated into MSBU and non-MSBU items, will be reported on by Ms.

Kleiss Hoeft. **Chair Slater** also provided some details on work still to be done at the Linear Park; mowing will commence once rainfall warrants it.

With regard to pathways, she reported that Parks and Rec had been scheduled to meet with Ian of Public Works to develop a strategy using a contract that Public Works has for sidewalks, to get pathways put in for the Linear Park at a substantial savings compared to contracting the work out.

On the subject of mangrove trimming, **Chair Slater** noted that a letter had been received by Parks and Rec from DEP which states that mangroves may not be trimmed until they reach 12 feet in height; she stated that Ms. Kleiss Hoeft said she would be trying to minimize the fact that two years ago, those mangroves had been trimmed down to six feet in height, which should not have been done. **Mr. Post** asked about trimming options other than topping the plants, e.g., trimming the lower branches; **Chair Slater** reiterated that trimming up is also governed by the plant's having reached 12 feet high. She also said it would be beneficial to have an article in the community newsletter, so that residents can better understand why nothing is being done with the mangroves; Parks and Rec staffer Tina Powell will be working on this article.

Regarding the Boat Ramp Park, **Chair Slater** said the concept drawings were done and there is money in the budget for the work; the permit was submitted to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for approval. The project may go to the Board of County Commissioners for final approval in August or September, which would be bad timing due to the anticipated budget cuts; money for the project comes from impact fees. In response to the her suggestion that community members could turn out in force for the meetings, **Chair Slater** said that Ms. Kleiss Hoeft suggested that might not be a good strategy at a time when the entire County might be facing budget cuts and layoffs.

The contract for the park Master Plan has been awarded to Ecology Group; the team has had its first meeting, including a visit to the community's park sites.

On land acquisition, **Chair Slater** noted she receives a monthly report from the County's Real Estate Services office; she reported on their efforts in contacting lot owners of the properties that had been identified as desirable for acquisition. Further discussion ensued. With reference to the future need for a fire station in the south end of the community, **Mr. Leach** noted that some of the acreage being considered for parks might work for that facility instead.

Guest John McGuire asked about the status of lots for parking adjacent to the Learning Garden. **Chair Slater** stated that was a bit further down the list of priorities; **Mr. Post** noted that there were other considerations regarding turning residential lots into parking lots, including changing the zoning and getting the consent of neighboring property owners. **Chair Slater** agreed that the County had indicated this might be a problem; **Jie Shao** stated that it would be necessary to change the zoning and Future Land Use Map in order to place a parking lot there. Further discussion ensued.

On the subject of budget as it pertains to the entranceways, **Chair Slater** noted there had been no further communication from Lennar since March at which time they had said they planned to start on the amenities in the fall of 2007, which would include the entranceways. **Mr. McGuire** asked if an alternative design had ever been investigated and priced by Mr. Paine; **Chair Slater** said that SignMasters had given a quote for small signs at \$10,000 each. She gave her opinion that, with all the various fund-raising efforts currently going on, donations for entranceway signs would probably be minimal. It was noted that Lennar, like many other builders, has been substantially impacted by the overall real estate slow-down and there is a lack of money to spend.

Guest John McGuire asked about the status of San Domingo Park, and **Chair Slater** answered that, based on its size of under three acres, it was a neighborhood park; only mowing would be performed there. **Mr. McGuire** asked where funding would come from for that park and was told from the MSBU. **Chair Slater** noted that, in South Gulf Cove, only the Boat Ramp Park qualified as a Regional park; if the 20-acre parcel was developed as a park it would also qualify as a Regional park. Disappointment was expressed that parks which had been in the planning stages for so long might now be put off due to budget cuts, even though money has been available for several years.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Post raised the issue of the State Legislature's suggestion of a cut-back in taxes and the possible chaotic impact on local governments; he mentioned a conversation he had with Commissioner Loftus on this subject and his opinions on the subject. Further discussion ensued.

Town Hall Meeting: Feedback and Next Steps

Chair Slater commented on the light attendance at this year's Town Hall Meeting (THM); Committee members gave their points of view on this development, including the lack of novelty for community members compared with last year's meeting. **Ms. Chattinger** noted that the Fire Wise program arose from the THM, as did Cove Connection. **Chair Slater** said she had gotten feedback from people who wanted to see work continue on the parks, this was primarily the same people who had always expressed support for parks.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VI. STAFF COMMENTS

None.

VII. MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

VIII. NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the **South Gulf Cove Advisory Committee** is **Wednesday, June 13, 2007** from 9:00 a.m. until 12 noon in the **Commission Conference Room**.

A motion was presented by Kendall Leach, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 11:15.