

**MINUTES**  
**SOUTH GULF COVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SGCAC)**  
**Wednesday, September 10, 2008**  
Growth Management Conference Rm. B-207 – 9:00 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Sandy Slater, *Chairperson*  
April Chattinger  
Yvonne Erimirio  
Jim Benson

**STAFF**

Gayle Moore, Recorder

**MEMBERS EXCUSED**

Kendall Leach

**GUESTS**

Karen Ireland  
Karen Price  
John McGuire

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

*Chair Slater* called the September 10, 2008 meeting of the SGCAC to order at 9:10 a.m. in the Growth Management Conference Room B-207 and it was noted a quorum was present.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

After review of the draft minutes, *Ms. Chattinger* moved that the minutes of the June 25, 2008 meeting be approved as amended, and *Ms. Erimirio* seconded the motion.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

Public Safety/Health, Pedestrian/Bikeways, FireWise Community, Cove Connector

*Ms. Chattinger* began with the subject of FireWise Communities, reading from a communication from Steve Miller regarding a national FireWise program participants' meeting which he will be attending in Tampa November 6 through 8.

Cove Connector news: *Ms. Chattinger* reported that Sarah Katz handed in her resignation. Grants are currently an impossibility and the cost (\$12 million) for bike and pedestrian walkways is not achievable at this time. Therefore, as an alternative, the committee would like to focus on something "visible" so that the community can see progress. Other projects were described and discussed that might be more suitable for the present time (e.g., a Pet Park), with bikeways moved to a long-term project. Brunch is still scheduled, with ticket sales slowly increasing as residents of the area come back into town. *Ms. Chattinger* spoke about combining the efforts of several of the community's committees and groups (e.g., Crafty Girls, the children's organization) in order to maximize their efforts. Cove Connector and Crafty Girls are currently involved with pulling together the Harvest Festival on November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.

*Ms. Chattinger* also noted that the turn lane on 771 is coming close to fruition, and she recognized the efforts of Kendal Leach in pushing this along.

*Chair Slater* raised an issue out of agenda order because it relates to organizing the various projects based on suggestions from Mick Slater (she handed out a write-up of the suggestions.) The items on the print-out were discussed, including the idea of using "seed money" to design and print brochures showing the community's achievements and proposals, in the hopes of raising attendance at meetings or increasing memberships of the HOA.

**Ms. Ermirio** also asked to speak out of turn, to discuss the Master Park Plan progress; she focused on efforts to get community comments and suggestions considered for the final plan, which is thought to be going forward to an October Commission meeting. This was another project where, she said, community members just want to see some results for all the years of work; she noted that once the Master Park Plan was adopted the Parks sub-committee can finally begin to get to work on specific projects. In this regard, she raised the issue of planting native trees; she asked if there was a detailed plan for the pathways (widths and placement) so that tree planting could be done accurately. She stated that her goal was to get trees planted in advance of the creation of pathways, giving the trees time to grow and fill in. Further discussion ensued on tree planting topics.

**Chair Slater** offered her own Master Park Plan comments; she said that upon acceptance by the Commissioners, that would constitute a "lock-in" on those properties identified in the plan. She said that she felt that adoption of the plan will also signal support for the pathways because they are included in the Master Park Plan. This would be a fund-raising tool.

**Guest John McGuire** mentioned the beautification efforts along SR 771 which he felt would be very visible to the community; he felt it would be good to focus on that as something that will gain community support. **Mr. Benson** agreed, saying that many residents just want to see the entranceway signs come to completion. **Chair Slater** commented on the recent progress on these signs including questions she posed to Charlotte County Parks and Rec Director Laura Kleiss-Hoeft regarding landscaping and upkeep of the medians along SR 771; the response was that Public Works would be responsible for this. Chair Slater stated she felt this would be an improvement in terms of the relative responsiveness of DPW compared to the Parks Department.

**Ms. Chattinger** talked about the Scenic Highway program having an effect on the beautification project, which it seems to intersect with and which will be getting funds through grants. Further discussion ensued on this topic.

**Chair Slater** continuing on the subject of grants, asked: Are we teaming with CCT to look for grants? She noted that Sarah Katz stated there are none available right now, but said she didn't want to settle for "no". **Ms. Ermirio** said that she had been told that the only grants available via Scenic Highway are for education; **Ms. Chattinger** said that there are some but they all involve working with the county or the county has to apply for them. Further discussion ensued. **Chair Slater** said she would ask Staff Liaison Jie Shao to intercede as liaison to identify contact within the county to help apply for grants. **Chair Slater** said that they get no response from their contacts; in 2004 they were told they needed more detail but now when they call Mr. Bob Hebert's office, they leave messages and no one calls them back (according to Mr. Miller, who was quoted but who was not present at the meeting to discuss the matter.) Further discussion ensued, particularly about who is actually the overall grant coordinator for Charlotte County.

**Ms. Ermirio** raised a question about getting other Committee members attending sub-committee meetings, under the requirements of the Sunshine Law. **Chair Slater** gave her opinion, based on her prior activities, that it was OK to attend such meetings but not to participate in any decision-making that occurred at such meetings, but could provide information and answer questions. Further discussion ensued on matters of the Sunshine Law, particularly with regard to public notice requirements about such committee meetings.

**Ms. Moore**, the Recording Secretary, returned to the room to report that she had spoken to the secretary in the County Administration office, who confirmed that Mr. Hebert is in fact the Grant Coordinator; Administration personnel asked for the names of any people who had called and not gotten a call-back so they could research the matter. She further reported that Mr. Hebert would be joining the staff of Human Services and his office would move to Punta Gorda. **Chair Slater** asked that Mr. Hebert be invited to the next Committee meeting on October 22<sup>nd</sup> and Ms. Moore left the meeting to speak to his office again.

Discussion returned to the subject of grant funds and what they can be used for, and also to the subject of displays to illustrate Committee achievements; road clean up was also discussed.

**Chair Slater** then asked for a review of the golf-cart community proposal, which had originally been put forward by Mick Slater; Ms. Chattinger was not prepared to discuss it and the matter was set forward to the next meeting. It was proposed that a sub-committee be formed to pursue this idea; **Ms. Ermirio** also suggested a sub-committee be formed for Bird Island issues. Further discussion ensued regarding whether county or state officials are in charge of the island; **Ms. Ermirio** said that it is a state-owned island, not county-owned.

#### Scenic Highway

**Mr. Benson** reported that he did not attend the recent Scenic Highway Committee meetings so he had nothing to report and no copy of the minutes to hand out. He reported next on trash pickups along the SR 771 roadside. Regarding the community event signs, **Mr. Benson** reported further on Code Enforcement suggestions for legal sign placement; Ms. Nicolosi of Code Enforcement had told him that sign size is not a big problem.

**Chair Slater** asked Mr. Benson about his willingness to be in charge of getting a group together to discuss events signs going forward; on the subject of whether these signs could be part of the proposed entranceway signs, it was noted that the ultimate decision was that they should be separate. There was a review of the discussion regarding whether event signs should be posted at all, with **Ms. Chattinger** speaking in support of those who don't have online capability and are not members of groups where they would get this information otherwise. **Guest Karen Price** talked about restrictions on sign placement (County rules and deed restrictions.)

The big question remains: Who is going to tackle this issue? Further discussion ensued; Mr. Benson was asked to pursue this issue with Darcie Nicolosi, looking for a solution. **Mr. Benson** commented about the virtues of centralizing the placement of the information rather than put signboards at every entranceways.

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

On the subject of the Boat Ramp Park, **Chair Slater** commented regarding the July 22<sup>nd</sup> park report from the Parks Department; she noted that the mid-August completion date was missed, nothing had been done. She said she had spoken to David Milligan of the Parks Department, who admitted he had been "the hold-up since spring". It appears that a buffer has been required and the contractor has been on hold since March waiting for the situation to be resolved, and will now need additional money. She stated that Mr. Milligan had promised action by Sept 5<sup>th</sup> but nothing has been heard from him to date. She then discussed in detail the funding of the park and the timeline to date, and her frustrations with the process.

With regard to the Entranceway signs, **Chair Slater** reported on an article in the August News and Views, discussing the new project manager and Chairman, Joseph Berios. She also reported on the new Public Works Project Manager.

Moving on to a discussion of funds available in the Native Tree Fund, **Chair Slater** noted that she had a number of communications outstanding with Tara Musselman requesting additional Native Tree Fund money, who reported that the County Attorney's office had the application forms and they have not released them. She expressed frustration that the forms had not been handled in over six months and asked staff to exert some pressure on the legal staff to uncover the reason for this. Further comments ensued from the Chair regarding the entranceway signs project and the need for one of the signs (at Keystone) to be placed on the west side of SR 771 instead of the east side, and getting an easement from the property owners; Mr. Elias of Public Works is involved in this matter.

There was discussion of the West County Town Center application that came before the Planning and Zoning Board; Chair Slater appeared at the public hearing to speak against the construction of docks as part of that project.

Real Estate Services completed the land trade concerning McAlester park (Resolution 2008-054); **Chair Slater** gave additional details about the concluded exchange and the exchange that is still pending. She also recognized the efforts of staff member Hugh Meade in pushing this project along.

**Chair Slater** asked for guest **Karen Price** to lead a discussion on Section 97, to update the committee members; she noted that Commissioner Moore had received a letter request for information, because Real Estates services had negotiated the sale of a strip of parkland in Sec. 97 on St. Paul, near the vacated 30 acres known as "land abutting Cays Cut". **Chair Slater** related her conversation with Real Estate Services staff who noted that the reverter clause was removed from this property in 1998; she relayed the information to Ms. Price who knew about a DEP meeting coming up and wanted land identified that would help in sea wall negotiations. **Ms. Price** also spoke about her research on the issue; she stated that the parcel was not 4 acres but rather just one acre, and was not on the water, but on non-existent St. Paul Drive. Meantime the sale was being pushed forward; Ms. Price got it pulled from the Commission agenda while Real Estate Services investigated further and they ultimately determined that the land had already been sold back to Atlantic Gulf Communities (AGC) and therefore the County didn't have title to sell to Greg Eagle anyway. However, AGC subsequently sold the parcel to Mr. Fullenkamp who has since sold it to Greg Eagle, who is now selling it to someone else. **Ms. Price** said that one good outcome of the exercise was to demonstrate how responsive the Commissioners and other staff were to these concerns. Further discussion ensued.

Discussion of the budget followed, including questions about the application for native tree fund money, which seems to have "disappeared in the system". She stated the group needed help from Jie or from the Department to find out what the status is. **Chair Slater** also discussed money that did not get spent last year that will roll over to next year and be available in October 2009. Comments followed on the need to spend money that has been allotted so it doesn't disappear; also mentioned was the Streets and Drainage MSBU committee's confusion over funding that had been identified for the clearing, though **Chair Slater** noted that Ms. Musselman had stated specifically that funds were available for clearing. Ms. Ermirio will meet with her Parks Subcommittee to prioritize park projects and make a schedule for the clearing.

Zoning and FLUM; Stormwater Report

**Mr. Leach** was on vacation and excused from the meeting.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**Chair Slater** referred to Mick Slater's list of "to-do's" and the need for a project management tool; she asked for feedback on whether or not the County has such software. She stated that she has it but doesn't know how to use it, but believes such software would be useful to use to create a timeline with deadlines for spurring people on to complete their obligations. **Chair Slater** requested that Jie investigate the availability of such software, and she described the purposes she envisions for a timeline-based approach to the Committee's projects. Further discussion ensued, particularly regarding the timeline for having budget projections ready.

SGCAC Displays for Parks Pathways and Entranceway signs.

**Mr. McGuire** asked what the subject of the displays should be; **Ms. Chattinger** responded, suggesting a map of present and future parks and pathways. **Ms. Price** mentioned the map created in support of the Scenic Highway project as a good example; creating brochures was also mentioned. Further discussion ensued.

Regarding the upcoming Government Day observation and the Growth Management display, **Recording Secretary Gayle Moore** described a proposed facet of the exhibit which would encourage citizens to sketch out an entranceway sign for their own neighborhoods, with the design sketch of the South Gulf Cove entranceway signs on display to provide inspiration to others. She thanked the committee members for their permission to use their sketch for this purpose.

HOA Initiatives

**Chair Slater** had comments and questions for Ms. Price on HOA desire for SGCAC assistance with regard to the underground utilities project. Ms. Price stated that there was nothing to report at this time since it revolves around new construction which is currently at a standstill. The next step would be putting all existing utilities underground, but that would require a 100% consensus of the residents of each block. **Ms. Ermirio** noted there would also be a charge, and asked if anyone knew how much it was; no one had that information. **Ms. Price** concluded by saying that, given the magnitude of the undertaking, the group had not moved forward with any more effort, needing to consider what would happen if only some blocks chose to sign on for underground utilities. She stated that FPL definitely would not take on the entire project.

**Ms. Price** then discussed the Commercial and Architectural Standards, noting who the HOA members are who are handling this matter, e.g., there is a committee already. **Chair Slater** stated that Jack Paine doesn't want to be a member but has said he would be available if needed. The comment was made that while the market is down is when the new standards should be developed, to be in place for the upturn.

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Ms. Price** commented that she felt you need to advise the Commissioners about the cooperation you are not getting in order to get things moving. Taking for example the seawall issue, she noted that there has been a resolution for a long time, but there is another problem and no one knows or has been informed what it is. There needs to be

some responsiveness or members need to go to the Commissioners with a complaint. This is particular also to the situation with the Boat Ramp Park.

**Chair Slater** said that she went to the Commissioners and to the Administrator when they got no support from the Parks & Rec Department on the Linear Park; Carol Reynolds and Ray Warner also went. They got some response, but **the Chair** said she doesn't know that any progress was made. Parks and Rec is the most frustrating department; their response is always that they don't have staff and don't have time. **Ms. Ermirio** notes there will be a new Commissioner soon and suggests meeting with that person to inform them what the history has been. Further discussion ensued.

**Staff Liaison Jie Shao** joined the meeting at 11:20 a.m. She reminded the Committee members that the West County Town Center plan amendment was due to come before the Commissioners at their land use meeting next Tuesday, and mentioned the timeline of its submittal to the Department of Community Affairs.

**VIII. STAFF COMMENTS**

*None.*

**VIII. MEMBER COMMENTS**

*None.*

**IX. NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting of the **South Gulf Cove Advisory Committee** is **Wednesday, October 22, 2008** from 9:00 a.m. until 12 noon in the **Growth Management Conference Room (B-207)**.

At 11:44 a.m. **Chair Slater** stated: There being no further business to come before this committee, I declare the meeting adjourned.