

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

MEMBERS PRESENT

April Chattinger
Yvonne Erimirio
Kendall Leach
Jim Benson

STAFF

Gayle Moore, Recorder
Jie Shao, Staff Liaison

MEMBERS EXCUSED

Sandy Slater, *Chairperson*

GUESTS

Karen Ireland
Karen Price
Jack Paine

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Vice Chair Kendall Leach called the December 10, 2008 meeting of the SGCAC to order at 9:02 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, ***Mr. Leach*** moved that the minutes of the October 8, 2008 meeting be approved as amended, and ***Mr. Benson*** seconded the motion.

Guest Karen Ireland arrived at 9:20 a.m.

III. OLD BUSINESS

Scenic Highway

Mr. Benson commented on Scenic Highway matters, specifically the provision of signs by FDOT; these would be limited to state roads but would not be provided for county roads, e.g., the Cape Haze loop. He then described the ribbon-cutting ceremony and celebration held for the Scenic Highway project.

Recent road clean-up activities were described next; more trash was then generated during utility installation work. A new clean-up session will be scheduled in January, covering the section south from Keystone; later, the group will go back to the area where the utility work took place, once that is complete.

Mr. Benson next described what is involved in adopting a highway, and what the requirements are once a road has been adopted, which includes a clean-up four times a year and quite a bit of paperwork to complete. He noted that they would need to clarify who the sponsoring organization will be, especially for purposes of the sign that will be posted along the route.

Guest Karen Price arrived at 9:29 a.m., and joined the discussion about whether the homeowners association should be the sponsoring organization; ***Ms. Price*** suggested the sign should reference the South Gulf Cove Community. ***Ms. Price*** also said she had previously tried to get interest going on such a project among the HOA membership but the group was not responsive to this project. More details about the project were discussed,

including the fact that a five-mile stretch of road was actually ten miles, for clean-up purposes, and the possibility of working with residents of the Rotonda communities.

Mr. Benson raised another question regarding the availability of MSBU money for trash pick-up along the community frontage, each time the mowing is done. **Ms. Ermirio** said she thought MSBU money could only be used within the community, not on the main road.

Zoning and FLUM: Stormwater Report

Mr. Leach reported on the situation with the prior attorney who failed to do work on the Deed Restrictions, and spoke briefly regarding the new attorney who had been selected for the job.

Regarding stormwater, **Mr. Leach** said that he had a number of people lined up to be volunteers, and one person has stepped up to work on the project for water sampling. **Mr. Leach** said he felt this project was now well under way.

He next commented on the Stock Mining Permit Hearing on December 5th, which was well attended by community members who testified about noise from the dewatering pump, the trucks, and the dirt. It turns out that some of the mined material has a high radon content, making it suitable only for roadways, but not for house pads. With regard to the material being left out to dry, the question arises: does radon evaporate and then come back down on pools, canals, etc.? **Mr. Leach** clarified that he had received new information that the current permit does not expire at the end of December, but rather on Dec. 18th. The hearing officer has said to expect a decision within a few weeks on the new permit. **Mr. Leach** thinks there may be no overlap between the expiration and the new permit, if granted, so that the operation may have to cease for a period of time. **Mr. Leach** felt the turn out was good and was significant to the hearing officer. Further discussion ensued regarding the concern over radon in the area dirt.

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

Ms. Chattinger began by noting an increase in crime due to the increasing number of vacant houses. She then spoke about the most recent brunch, which had exceptionally good turn-out; there will be another one scheduled for February. **Ms. Chattinger** thought there had been about \$800 profit generated to be put toward tree purchases; she noted that she is waiting for Chair Slater to return and help determine extent of maintenance that County is offering to provide on the trees. **Mr. Leach** asked about the intended placement; **Ms. Chattinger** mentioned a plan being created by Ms. Ermirio to site the trees. She also suggested the concept of "family tree" purchases that would be available to the community members. Six trees at each entryway was contemplated as a beginning. **Mr. Leach** noted best time to plant trees is end of June (the beginning of rainy season) and he noted that he would like to "piggyback" the purchases in order to get trees for other locations at the same rate/savings. **Ms. Ermirio** asked about the possibility of advance purchases with a later pick-up date, but **Ms. Chattinger** expressed concern over the amount of places going out of business these days and she was reluctant to put down deposits and lose money; **Mr. Benson** suggested the group wait for going out of business sales. **Ms. Ermirio** agreed that winter is a bad time to plant. Further discussion ensued over what county maintenance would involve; **Mr. Leach** described the drip barrels that might be utilized but warned that they are desirable objects that tend to disappear. **Mr. Benson** noted there is a more aesthetic alternative to drip barrels now, which he described. **Ms. Chattinger** suggested people who purchase trees might also be willing to maintain them by weeding or mulching, and the like. She also noted that there would be no assistance this year from Kid Connection, but maybe next year.

Guest Karen Price asked about a comment she heard Ms. Chattinger make regarding "trees in the thoroughfare". **Ms. Ermirio** clarified that the intended meaning was "in the median" of 771. **Ms. Chattinger** asked whether Ms. Ermirio would have the time to come up with the design for where these trees should go, which Ms. Ermirio agreed to do.

FireWise

Ms. Chattinger then spoke about the excitement of the event organized by Steve Miller; mulching / clearing was done for nearly two weeks. A lot of work done at the Pavilion; further discussion ensued about the effort and it was noted that this will become a cyclical event, that will come up again in about 2-3 months. The hope was expressed that Steve Miller will continue to lead this effort. **Mr. Leach** commented that there was no confirmation until the Thursday before the Monday they appeared (Dec. 1st) and that they had forms when they arrived, which people could fill out for having adjacent property cleared; where the owner was not the person who filled-out the form, the process became a little more complicated. Thus, the project started at the pavilion so people could see what was involved. **Mr. Leach** also observed that, under the Hawkins Act, if an ad appears ten days prior to such a community event, no consent forms would be needed; he therefore requested from Steve Miller a bit more advance notice of the next event, so that it could be properly advertised by the Forestry Department, and thus cut down on the need to obtain consent forms.

Guest Jack Paine joined the meeting at 9:56 a.m. **Ms. Ermirio** expressed concerned about the amount and quality of the debris left on ground after mulching, noting it would impede future mowing. Further discussion ensued about these considerations.

Mr. Paine reported on the progress of the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting that was going on concurrently, at which the Community's request for a Special Exception for the entranceway signs was scheduled to be heard.

Ms. Ermirio and Mr. Paine briefly reviewed his comments from last month in order to clarify the minutes.

Park Maintenance & Development; Master Park Plan

Ms. Ermirio reported on the changes at Parks & Rec, referencing Ms. Kleiss Hoeft's participation in the process, only to find out she was leaving. Discussion was held on who would be heading the Department in Ms. Kleiss Hoeft's absence; Assistant County Administrator Kelly Shoemaker is said to be stepping in to Ms. Kleiss Hoeft's position, and the division heads will assume more day-to-day responsibility. **Ms. Ermirio** reported that Mr. Milligan expressed some excitement about how things would progress in the future.

The next subject raised by **Ms. Ermirio** was the \$100,000 item discussed at the last meeting, which seemed to refer to the Linear Park; it has since been clarified that the item had nothing to do with as-built plans as the group previously thought but will go toward San Domingo Park. **Ms. Ermirio** reported that she had set up a meeting with David Milligan and a number of Park Subcommittee members, to review current options for San Domingo Park, on Jan. 15th at 2 p.m.

Also discussed during the meeting with Mr. Milligan were the signs intended to go on 771 for the Learning Garden and the Neighborhood (Boat Ramp) Park; P&R agree that signs would be done for those projects.

The dock for the Learning Garden was also discussed and drawings were provided to Mr. Milligan who will be meeting with people at the Learning Garden to review those plans.

Ms. Ermirio also described media coverage which Ms. Slater appeared in, but which did not run on television due to other world situations of greater importance. **Mr. Leach** said he followed up to find out if it had ever appeared on television, which it did not; he also inquired whether there was a film clip the group could obtain but did not get anything from the station. **Ms. Ermirio** stated she thought the material might be available online and that Ms. Slater might have that information.

Ms. Ermirio gave Parks & Rec personnel a list of parks to be cleared. **Guest Mr. Paine** stated that he had heard from P&R through Ms. Musselman of Public Works that County staff would not be available to do the work; **Ms. Ermirio** asked if that means the community could hire someone to do it themselves. **Mr. Paine** suggested that it would have to be done thru the purchasing process which exists for county projects. **Mr. Leach** suggested contacting the district's Commissioner to smooth the way and get things moving. **Ms. Ermirio** stated she will research the matter further.

Ms. Ermirio advised the group that Doc Pickhardt will do a workshop on insects at the Learning Garden around the first of the year, as well as a mangrove project involving Johnny Hunter with Charlotte County Environmental and Extension Services. Doc Pickhardt and some other gentlemen came out to the community on Dec. 1st to discuss aqua-scaping the shoreline. **Ms. Ermirio** noted how helpful these people were; she said they indicated they would do a PowerPoint presentation at the Extension office for people who are interested in learning more about aqua-scaping. There turned out to be some problem with presentation about whether money would be available from stormwater utility money, when apparently, it would have to come out of MSBU funds instead. Further discussion ensued about the significance of the Learning Garden being a "public educational facility" not a South Gulf Cove park and how this affects the availability of funds.

Ms. Ermirio announced there would be an Arbor Day celebration and CCT annual meeting on January 24th; she suggested inviting Ms. Musselman. **Guest Karen Ireland** suggested that having staff present would result in a charge against their MSBU funds.

Ms. Ermirio noted that she did a design for the plantings around the lift station and just needs to confer with Mr. Paine (who had already left the meeting) to discuss how the budget funds would be applied especially with regard to pepper bush elimination. She felt there was no reason it should cost \$5,000 to accomplish pepper bush elimination or \$24,000 for the whole project. **Mr. Leach** said anyone can go on any property for the purpose of killing pepper bushes because it is a priority in the State of Florida and Charlotte County to do away with these invasives, which are also "obnoxious vegetation". Further discussion ensued about what would be required for such a project.

Mr. Leach asked Mr. Benson to research the drip-bag alternative to the rain barrel for future irrigation.

Mr. Leach gave basic information regarding when FireWise came to do the mulching; apparently a map that was handed out with "priority areas" marked. However, their efforts are not available if there are no homes; mulching on vacant land is considered to be "beautification" instead.

Mr. Leach said there had been some confusion over the location of Arlewood Park and the area to be mulched; the workers needed really specific information in order to proceed. His point was that things work better when there is a community member available to assist the workers.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Chattinger took the opportunity to thank all the Advisory Committee members for supporting her brunch fund-raising efforts.

Mr. Leach raised the issue of timing of electing the slate for the new year. Later research indicated that the new slate is chosen in June of each year.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Guest Karen Price spoke about the Tim Krebs parking plan and interaction with the deed restrictions and the question of who has authority over these issues; her concern was that Growth Management Director Jeff Ruggieri had said that such a parking plan had to go through the Advisory Committee regarding commercial guidelines, which **Ms. Price** pointed out was not correct. **Ms. Shao** agreed that the County did not interfere with deed restrictions and described how a parking plan comes under both Public Works and Growth Management via the Zoning regulations. She stated that the Advisory Committee became involved because they wanted to present something and needed to know if it did or didn't meet the county's regulations.

Further discussion ensued with Ms. Price objecting to the way the matter was handled, stating that the Architectural Committee was told they needed to come before the Advisory Committee for approval of their architectural commercial guidelines, which she states is absolutely not the case since the Advisory Committee has no authority over the HOA. **Ms. Shao** reiterated that the Committee is the department's point of contact with the community, and the department is involved because parking is a zoning issue.

Mr. Leach asked if the rewritten deed restrictions adopt the county's LDR, does that solve the situation? **Ms. Shao** said no, it would not; this is a separate issue, involving parking and landscaping regulations as well as access easements. It is a matter for both Growth Management and Public Works; she said she had also invited Dan Quick of DPW to come to the Jan. meeting, but noted that if the group still is not ready to present, she can change the invitation to reflect a more suitable date.

Ms. Price said clearly there was a misunderstanding on the part of the Architectural Committee over what group does what approval.

VIII. STAFF COMMENTS

Ms. Shao commented on the West County Town Center large-scale plan amendment ORC report, noting that the petition was scheduled to be heard by the Commissioners on Jan 20th. It was noted by Committee members that work was being done on that property but there was no reliable access in order to go back there and see what is going on.

Next, **Ms. Shao** commented on the sea wall issue, asking for the status. **Mr. Leach** said there had been no progress. **Ms. Price** noted the matter was unresolved, due to DEP requirements for more land for percolation; she and Ms. Shao agreed that they will discuss the matter further.

VIII. MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

IX. NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the **South Gulf Cove Advisory Committee** is **Wednesday, January 28, 2009** from 9:00 a.m. until 12 noon in the **Growth Management Conference Room (B-207)**.

At 10:33 a.m. ***Vice-Chair Leach*** stated: There being no further business to come before this committee, I declare the meeting adjourned.