

Charlotte County Weekly Department Highlights

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Community Development

A roundtable discussion is set for March 27 on revisions to the Smart Charlotte 2050 Comprehensive Plan. The proposed revisions can be viewed online—visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click Comprehensive Plan Revisions in the Hot Topics list. Staff is seeking comments and suggestions from the public in order to successfully complete this revision. A roundtable discussion and public input is scheduled for 2 to 5 p.m. on March 27, 2014 in Room B-106, Charlotte County Administration Center, 18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte. Please e-mail all comments and suggestions for the revisions of Smart Charlotte 2050 to Lynda.Lafferty@charlottefl.com.

Community Services

Charlotte Sports Park

The Charlotte Sports Park hosted the following Tampa Bay Rays Spring Training home games (attendance is noted in parenthesis): Monday, March 3 – Philadelphia Phillies (3898); Wednesday, March 5 – New York Yankees (5704); Saturday, March 8 – Pittsburgh Pirates (4668).

Upcoming Activities: The Charlotte Sports Park will be hosting the following Tampa Bay Rays Spring Training home games this week: Tuesday, March 11 – Minnesota Twins @ 1:05 PM; Thursday, March 13 – Pittsburgh Pirates @ 1:05 PM; Saturday, March 15 – Toronto Blue Jays @ 1:05 PM; Sunday, March 16 – Boston Red Sox @ 1:05 PM.

Harold Avenue Recreation

Last Monday residents were given the opportunity to jump start their day with a Zumba Party! Class participants were greeted by Zumba Instructor Celina Rodriguez eclectic and bright personality. Over the course of an hour Celina led her class through low impact, easy to follow, calorie burning dance moves to the latest Latin hits. Low Impact Zumba is held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:30-10:30 am at the Harold Avenue Recreation Center in Port Charlotte, Florida. Celina invites all that have a desire to become physically fit while having fun to come join in.

Port Charlotte Beach and Recreation

Port Charlotte Beach Recreation held a wedding and reception on Saturday, March 8, with an estimated 120 guests. Every Thursday during season the Promenaders hold a dance with participation increasing every week.

Looking ahead on March 15, we will have the Irish American Club here for an afternoon of fun! Celebrating St. Patrick's Day with food, entertainment and dancing! Expected attendance 120 plus.

Port Charlotte Beach Pool had 327 paid admissions, was visited by 121 pass holders and 140 water aerobics participants. Approx. 30 tickets have been sold for the Tropical Sunset Cocktail Party scheduled for March 22.

South County Regional Park

Spring Break camp comes to an end on 3/14. The program was 2 weeks long and there were a total of 75 children registered with a waitlist of approximately 15. The campers utilized South County swimming pool 4 times and took a field trip to Escape Zone in Port Charlotte.

Oyster Creek Regional Pool

For the week of 3-5 through 3-11-14, Oyster Creek pool had 341 paid admissions, was visited by 168 pass holders and had 191 water aerobics participants. The Charlotte County Blue Fins held 5 swim practices resulting in approximately 100 "splashes".

Extension Services

Newspaper Article for March 10 – “Can a marigold help?”

2014 Master Gardener Training “Peaches and Blueberries” – Dr. Robert Rouse, Immokalee – March 11

2014 Master Gardener Training “Citrus I & II” – Dr. Mongi Zekri, Hendry County – March 13

Facilities Construction & Maintenance

Repairs and Maintenance

The HVAC systems at Fire-EMS Station #5 in Punta Gorda have been replaced with new energy efficient systems.

Operations

Facilities installed new signs in the Murdock Administration Lobby. This included removing many old redundant signs and installing new ones that incorporated rules and wording from these onto larger signs. We also cleaned up doors to Room 119 and only placed signs on them to identify this room as Rm. 119 Commission Chambers. We will continue to improve access by finding and removing cluttered signs within this space so it will become easier and less distracting when entering this area.

Project Management

Siemens has completed the insulation upgrades in the Sheriff’s Administration building, Justice Center, South County Annex and the Eastport Administration campus. This portion of the work is now 100% complete. The lighting upgrades are 99% complete.

The construction documents for the Anger fishing pier and parking improvements project has been submitted to purchasing for bidding.

The contractor completed the tree removal task at the Fleet Maintenance facility. The stump removal, clearing, and grubbing has begun. The interior change of occupancy work started with the walls framed. The contractor is completing the rough in of plumbing and electrical. Rough-in inspections should be completed by end of week.

Human Services

Case Management Supervisor attended the ‘Preparing Environments That Meet the Needs of Elders’ at the USF Campus Auditorium in Sarasota. Handouts were provided and will be shared with division managers. Very good session; knowledgeable presenters. Side note: Met Buddy Cloud from CFAL/Tallahassee at session; Buddy will be primary speaker at the ‘Safe Homes’ event in Charlotte County on April 3rd.

Family Services Staff met with representatives from Team Parkside to plan the Phase II Community Garden Dedication. The dedication has been scheduled for April 3, 2014 at 4pm. Commissioner Duffy has been confirmed to attend.

Family Services staff met with Charlotte County Public Schools to review the written standards for the Emergency Solutions Grant. A follow up meeting has been set to meet with all school social workers to provide information on program guidelines and the referral process.

Housing staff is continuing to process the eligibility determination for the CCU Hardship program. Over 200 calls received to date.

Public Safety

Radio Communications just completed the installation of a 2ND VHF radio in our Mobile Command Center which will be used for communication with Dept. of Forestry, Offshore Boat Races and Coast Guard Marie Operations. We have also used VHF in drills with the State of Florida. This will serve to improve communication and therefore safety for the upcoming Super Boat races.

Emergency Management Staff and CERT volunteers were speakers and manned tables at the annual Disaster Planning Day at Heritage Oak Park in Port Charlotte. More than 150 community residents attended and heard a presentation that focused on the evacuation collars and how they might be used in advance of an approaching hurricane.

The Emergency Management Director and staff participated in our annual meeting with representatives of Florida Power & Light to discuss any necessary changes which might be required for critical facilities in case of a general power outage caused by a large windstorm such as Hurricane Charley. We have established a power restoration priority plan with the electric utility, to assure that those needed facilities (hospitals, public safety sites, radio towers, etc.) are quickly returned to working order. They have always been very responsive to our recommendations.

Public Works

Active Construction Projects (may affect vehicular/boater/pedestrian traffic patterns)

Burnt Store Road Phase III Construction – Construction consists of widening Burnt Store Road, between the Lee County Line and a point north of Zemel Road, from a two-lane undivided rural typical section to a four-lane divided suburban typical section including stormwater management, drainage improvements, street lighting, 6' sidewalks on both sides of the roadway, utility relocations and additions.

The construction contract was awarded to Gibbs & Register, Inc. at the January 28, 2014 Board of County Commissioners meeting; construction began March 10, 2014.

The contractor is working on the detailed construction schedule. Construction warning signs are going up and the contractor is conducting survey work, installation erosion control barriers along the right-of-ways, removal of all obstructions within the rights-of-way including trees, shrubs, brush, buildings, landscaping, signs, etc. Once the rights-of-ways are cleared, the contractor will begin installing new utility lines along the east side of the new roadway.

During the construction period there will be heavy equipment, construction vehicles, supplies, workers and other construction activities adjacent to the traffic on Burnt Store Road. Sometimes the activities will require the blocking of traffic for short periods of time. To enhance the safety of the motoring public as well as the contractor's personnel, the speed limit within the construction zone will be reduced during construction. If the speed of the traffic becomes a safety hazard, the Charlotte County Sherriff's Office will be asked to enforce the reduced speed limit.

Harborview Road Bridge Replacement – This project is to design and construct a replacement Bridge over the DeSoto Canal on Harborview Road approximately 0.35 miles east of Rio de Janeiro Avenue. The new Bridge will be constructed with a precast concrete deck and a temporary bridge with related structures.

The temporary bridge is in place across the DeSoto Canal and traffic has been routed onto the temporary bridge. A progress meeting was held January 15, 2014; a representative of the school board attended and was very pleased with the safety of the children traveling to school through this construction zone.

Feb 24, 2014: All production piles have been installed and the sheet pile installation is underway on the east side of the Bridge.

March 10, 2014: Sheet piles are being installed on the west side of the bridge.

PSA issued 11/14/13: Construction of a new Bridge on Harborview/Sunnybrook Road, between DeSoto Drive and Discovery Drive, will begin on November 18, 2013. Variable message boards are in place to notify the public that stop signs will be installed on Sunnybrook Road at the intersection of Highlands Road on Tuesday, November 19, 2013. The contractor will begin with the construction of a temporary road and a temporary Bridge to divert traffic for the demolition of the existing Bridge. The school zone is being extended to the east of Highlands Road and the speed limit is being reduced in the construction area to 15 miles per hour for the safety of the traveling public and school children. Please exercise extreme caution while traveling through this area.

US 41 Microtunnels / Weirs – This project involves engineering and permitting for the directional drilling of culverts under US 41 at the Fordham, Elkcum, and Pompano Waterways, replacement of culverts at the North and South US 41 Access Roads, within the Pompano Waterway, replacement of a stand-alone weir across the Elkcum Waterway, north of the US 41 Access Road, and replacement of a stand-alone weir across the Fordham Waterway, north of the US 41 Access Road.

The US 41 Access Roads at the Pompano Waterway were closed the week of January 6, 2014.

Week ending March 2, 2014: Huxted Tunneling is working on the back thrust wall and hydraulic jacking system in the Microtunnel launch pit. Zep Construction completed the headwall/endwall for the receiving pit on the U.S. 41 southbound side, poured the concrete footer for the 60" triple barrel headwall on the northbound side, removed 9,180 cubic feet of unsuitable material, poured 2,970 cubic feet of concrete and placed 2,382 cubic feet of bedding stone.

PSA issued 1/23/14: The sidewalk along the U.S. 41 Access Road between Gardner Drive and Conway Boulevard (US 41 Southbound side) is closed to pedestrian traffic in conjunction with the U.S. 41 Stormwater Structures - Microtunneling Project. While the US 41 Access Roads are closed only at the Pompano Waterway, the pedestrian sidewalk must be closed from traffic light to traffic light. Pedestrians should seek alternate routes as "No Trespassing" signs are posted at this location; pedestrians are not allowed to travel through this construction zone.

Construction Projects in Design or Negotiation

CR 771 (Gasparilla Road) Widening – The purpose of this project is to widen CR 771 (Gasparilla Road) to a four-lane divided roadway, from SR 776 to the vicinity of Rotonda Boulevard East. The project will include the installation of sidewalks and bicycle facilities.

Halfacre Construction submitted the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) to Charlotte County for review and is now obtaining pricing from additional contractors to modify the GMP. The Charlotte County Real Estate Services Department is currently working on Right of Way acquisitions which must be acquired prior to construction for utility relocations. This project is on schedule.

Edgewater Drive Widening Phase Two – This project will widen Edgewater Drive, between Harbor Boulevard and Midway Boulevard, to a four-lane arterial roadway, designed to better serve the central portion of the County and accommodate anticipated traffic growth in the corridor. The project will include replacing three bridges (West Spring Lake Waterway, East Spring Lake Waterway, and Sunrise Waterway) and improving five intersections, four of which will be roundabouts. Improvements include a raised median, curb and gutter, sidewalks/bike lanes, and landscaping.

The BCC approved a change order to include a round-about in the design of the West Tarpon Intersection; the revised design requires a permit modification. With all known utility conflicts resolved, the design team

made final edits to the plans and submitted them to the County for review on February 21, 2014. Once the final review is complete the Bid Package will be submitted to the Purchasing Department in preparation for bid solicitation. Charlotte County Utilities' staff submitted permit applications for the construction of the proposed water distribution and wastewater collection systems. Construction is estimated to begin in the summer of 2014.

Midway Boulevard Widening Phase Two – This project will complete the widening of Midway Boulevard between Sharpe Street and Kings Highway. Downstream stormwater improvements must be made before widening this section of the corridor. This project includes increasing the drainage capacity under US 41 at three locations in addition to the widening of Midway Boulevard from Sharpe Street to Kings Highway. The first phase of the project was completed under project c419005.

Giffels-Webster Engineering will submit the 100% roadway design plans by the end of March 2014 for County staff to review. The 90% utility plans were submitted to CCU for review. The Final Resolution for Temporary Construction Easements was approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Charlotte County Real Estate Services is currently working on all Temporary Construction Easements needed for construction. Construction is projected to begin in the fall of 2014.

Parkside - Harbor Boulevard Improvements (US 41 to Olean Boulevard) Phase 2 – The Road Feasibility and Traffic Study (Phase 1) is complete on Harbor Boulevard from US 41 to Olean Boulevard. Phase 2 design includes roadway improvements consisting of a four lane divided roadway with a 16' – 20' raised median that will provide for safer turning movements, 8' – 10' multi use paths on both sides, landscaping, decorative lighting, wayfinding and a gateway feature. Utility improvements are included in this project.

Survey work is nearing completion and the subsurface utility engineering (SUE) and borings will be complete within the next three weeks. Stormwater and SWFWMD permitting are pending survey completion.

The team met with CCU to look over utilities to prevent potential conflicts with existing conditions. As planting shade trees is one of the most important goals to the Parkside CRA, research is being conducted to identify potential conflicts with existing FPL overhead lines, which are located on both sides of the road.

The design team expressed creative ideas for the design and placement of the gateway signage. Staff will present design options to the Board of County Commissioners on March 25, 2014.

Drainage Projects

Stormwater Control Structure Replacement - Sunset Waterway at Forrest Nelson Blvd SUN 3.65 – This project provides for the construction of a stormwater control structure under Forrest Nelson Boulevard, between Quesada Avenue and Corktree Circle, at the Sunset Waterway. As a result of the Stormwater Master Plan that was completed in 1998, it was determined that many of the existing water control structures were either undersized or had deteriorated since the 1960's when they were originally built. This particular structure will be replaced with three 8'x10' box culverts to increase flow capacity.

Bid opening was held January 29, 2014 and the construction contract was awarded to Quality Enterprises on February 25, 2014. The Pre-Construction meeting is scheduled March 12, 2014 at which time the Notice to Proceed will be established. Construction is projected to be complete 115 days after commencement.

Forrest Nelson Boulevard between Quesada Avenue and Corktree Circle will be closed during construction. Public service announcements will be published and a signed detour will be in place in advance of the road closure.

Maintenance & Operations

- a. 6,980 lbs of debris was removed from the rights-of-ways throughout Charlotte County.
- b. A drainage crew completed 3,000 square feet of line and grade swale work on Allworthy St. and completed another 4,000 square feet on Spring Lake Boulevard.
- c. An Outfall Crew completed the 6521 Riverside Drive driveway pipe replacement project (28 linear feet of 12" x 18" of reinforced concrete pipe), concrete drive was re-poured; awaiting slope pads and sod.
- d. An outfall crew finished three swale intersection conversions (piped the swale area of road & paved over it) in Northwest Port Charlotte.
- e. An outfall crew installed 20 linear feet of pipe and a catch basin on Cannolot Boulevard.

Tourism

Social media continues to strengthen as a marketing tool and the Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau hosted a Tweetup during the Saturday, March 8 Tampa Bay Rays game. A Tweetup is a gathering of people of use Twitter to share in real-time what is happening. The purpose of the event was to generate interest in Charlotte County as a destination during spring training. Commissioner Chris Constance, chair of the Charlotte County Tourist Development Council, joined the group at the Charlotte Sports Park. The Tweetup was attended by 10 Twitter users from Charlotte County, Tampa Bay and one attendee from Orlando. The event generated an estimated 1.4 million impressions on Twitter, reaching more than 63,000 individual Twitter accounts. Participants also shared the experience on their Facebook and Instagram accounts.

Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau staff spoke to about 100 members of the Sarasota Singles on the Go group on Sunday, March 9 about things to do in Charlotte County. Attendees were unaware of the area's renaissance since 2004 and abundance of things to do and see. Most attendees said they will visit the destination soon.