

# Charlotte County Weekly Department Highlights

Published 9/29/15

## Community Development

On Thursday, Sept. 17, 2015, Maryann Franks and Shaun Cullinan gave a presentation to, and answered questions for, a micro-entrepreneur class sponsored by Goodwill at the Charlotte Technical Center. This was the fourth time the presentation has been made to the classes, which are offered twice a year. Staff gave a brief presentation on the process for starting a business, mostly small home based businesses, and about the purpose of Planning and Zoning, as well as Community Development as a whole. They then had a question and answer period so that the answers could be tailored to what the individual students were looking to do, from home based business, to store-front operations. Over the course of the classes that Staff have spoken at, there have been a number of success stories including “ACE Drums” located on US-41, the owner took the class and has started a very successful business. There have also been ones that after the presentations realized what they were looking to do was not feasible, so they did not expend the money after getting the information. The biggest thing that is impressed on the classes is that the County is here to help, and that we need to be their first stop before signing any papers and trying to start a business so that we can help them through the process.

## Community Services

### Harold Avenue Recreation Center

Harold Avenue is continuing the trend of a solid turnout for our daily drop-in Pickleball and Table Tennis. The Adult Basketball Open Gym in the evenings is continuing to do well. Weeknights have also seen a good number of turnouts for Charlotte County’s Wellness at Work Yoga and Jazzercise classes. The staff is sending out reminders and making calls to players, coaches, and sponsors about the upcoming season of Youth Basketball.

### Port Charlotte Beach Recreation and Pool

There was a “Lobster Bake” last Saturday with 165 people hosted by the Charlotte County Historical Society. There is a Charlotte County Utilities meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 23 at 4:00 through 9:30pm. Saturday is booked for a large wedding with 150 guests.

For the week of 9-16 through 9-22, Port Charlotte Beach Pool had 80 paid admissions, was visited by 27 pass holders and had 36 water aerobics participants. Unfortunately the pool was closed Wednesday and Thursday due to a power failure which caused the pool pump motors to burn out.

### South County Regional Park and Pool

For the week of 9-16 through 9-23, South County Regional Park Pool had 105 paid admissions, was visited by 124 pass holders and had 68 water aerobics participants. The Charlotte County Blue Fins held 7 swim practices resulting in approximately 140 “splashes.” The Charlotte High Swimmers returned with 7 swim practices resulting in 413 “splashes.” Saturday September 19 we hosted the “Tarpon Invitational Swim Meet” where over 400 swimmers swam and 25 divers competed. During this event we had more than 750 spectators, coaches, and participants throughout the day.

## Extension Services

- Limited Commercial Landscape Management Training – September 18

- Managers Meeting (if Limited Training is canceled due to no sign-ups) – September 18
- Home and Garden Show – County Event Center – September 19 and 20
- Newspaper Article for September 21 – “Pretty pentas provide plenty of posies”
- FNP Interviews – September 21
- Horticulture Team Meeting – September 21
- MG Radio –September 22

### **Parks (As of Wednesday, 9/23)**

- Installed new tennis net at Rotonda Park
- Installed two new park entry signs at McGuire Park
- Painted outside of restroom building at PCB pavilion area to eliminate graffiti
- Foreman and 4 staff members attended CS team builder event, Monday, 9/21/15, at CSP

### **Historical Center**

The Charlotte County Historical Center presented “A Pirate’s Life for Me” program at Florida Southwestern State College on Saturday, September 19. The 96 participants enjoyed a lecture from Mike Daniel (discoverer of Blackbeard’s pirate ship), local history and legends of piracy, and pirate games! Comments attached.

### **Natural Resources**

This week Staff participated in various activities.

Staff has been working toward permitting Phase II of the Blueways Trails system in Charlotte Harbor. The Blueways Trail system is a state wide eco-recreational trail system that guides kayak and canoe users through the inter-coastal waters of Florida. This process is not easy as much of the habitat is critically sensitive and/or part of endangered species’ habitat. Species such as the Small Toothed Sawfish utilize these waters as habitat. As habitat for endangered species any alteration must be approved through FDEP and ACOE. The initial step in the permitting process has been made and FDEP has approved the permit application, next county staff will work with ACOE to secure final approval for the installation of pilings for signage. After ACOE has approved the permit application staff find a suitable contractor to install the pilings.

Staff also responded to a concerned citizen report regarding gopher tortoises. Mr. Stanley Forrester contacted the county with concerns surrounding his local population of gopher tortoises in the Rotunda Area. Mr. Forrester has lived in the area for many years and enjoys watching several particular tortoises in the neighborhood. Mr. Forrester has not seen these tortoise in nearly a month and was concerned that something may have happened to Jasmine. Staff met onsite with Mr. Forrester and talked with him about his tortoises and concerns about possible illegal activity in the area. Specifically, Mr. Forrester was concerned by the “berry pickers”. Staff spoke with Mr. Forrester at length about the habitats of gopher tortoises and advised that the tortoises may still be in the area even if they haven’t been visually observed in some time.

Staff continued the ongoing effort of over-story reduction at Amberjack Environmental Park this week. The number of over-story trees was reduced by 12 trees. Contractors removed several loads of downed trees.

## Facilities Construction & Maintenance

### Operations

Facilities is looking at possibilities of providing a "Video Wall" which will be placed in lobby of the Administration Building. This will serve as an information venue for a multitude of information that can be posted. The concept is to have video streaming along with static information like employee recognition and government postings but have the capability to flash emergency information and any videos of interest that may be useful for public or employees. We have received quotes and information from two reputable companies and we will be making comparable assessments of each quote and determine which is reasonable and accommodating for our needs.

### Project Management

- The Fire Training Building pre-construction meeting was held at Purchasing. The notice to proceed date was established with the contractor starting on September 21st with a 240 day construction duration. The contractor will complete the site work before the facility delivery in early 2016.
- Franz Ross Park: Most of the drainage structures have been installed and base material for the parking lots has been delivered.
- Franz Ross Football Field: The engineer of record will share his draft plans by meeting with the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners.
- Harbour Heights Boat Ramp: The SWFWMD application has been submitted and an exemption has been granted. The application has been forwarded to Army Corps of Engineers for their review.
- North Charlotte Regional Park new recreation center: The pre submittal meeting for the RFP has been held.
- El Jobean Fishing Pier: The design has been reviewed with the goal of developing a cost effective piling repair method to avoid pile replacement and save money. Although a repair of the pilings is possible CC is being advised by the engineer of record that it will not save money. Community Services will be involved to determine how we are going to proceed.

## Public Works

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

**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 includes the installation of sidewalks and bicycle facilities. This 790 calendar day project is funded by the 2009 Sales Tax, Road Impact Fees, Gasoline Tax and a State Grant. Construction Contract: Construction Manager at Risk, Halfacre Construction, Woodruff and Sons, Inc. will be performing on-site construction, Construction Schedule: 7/7/2014 – 9/4/2016.

- Woodruff and Sons' Crew #1 is scheduled to pave the intersection of CR 771 and San Domingo Boulevard next week.
- Crew #2 is scheduled to pave the new northbound lanes across the bridge and shift traffic to the new lanes next week.
- Crews #3 and #4 are scheduled to cross CR 771 in multiple locations with utility lines to complete the connections to existing services.

Please note that planned construction activities are contingent upon weather conditions.

**Edgewater Drive Widening Phase 2** – 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. The project will include replacing three bridges (West Spring Lake Waterway, East Spring Lake Waterway, and Sunrise Waterway) and improve five intersections, four of which will be roundabouts. Improvements include a raised median, curb and gutter, sidewalks/bike lanes, and landscaping.

This project includes Construction, Engineering and Inspection (CEI) services to ensure compliance with federal rules and requirements. The Board of County Commissioners approved the CEI contract with Southwest Engineering & Design on November 12, 2014. Construction Contract: Owen-Ames-Kimball, Construction schedule: 1/5/2015 – 2/5/2017.

**Excerpts from [www.GoEP2.com](http://www.GoEP2.com)** – LOCAL TRAFFIC will be shifted to a temporary roadway from Midway Boulevard to Lake View Boulevard. Edgewater Drive remains closed to thru traffic.

Altoona Street will be closed indefinitely from Edgewater Drive to Webster Avenue as crews continue work in the area.

**Midway Boulevard Widening Phase 2** – This project will complete the widening of Midway Boulevard from Sharpe Street (just east of Harbor Drive) to the intersection of Kings Highway (about 2.25 miles). Design includes four lanes of traffic with center turn lanes, new sidewalks on both sides, a closed drainage system, new traffic signals at Beacon Drive, new pedestrian crossings at the schools, new lighting, and a new water and sewer system along the corridor. Temporary sidewalks, meeting the ADA requirement, will be installed during construction to maintain all pedestrian access. Midway Boulevard may be closed to through traffic at times however mail delivery, emergency services and access to local residences will be maintained during construction. This project was selected for inclusion in the 2008 Sales Tax Referendum. Construction Contract: Forsberg Construction, Construction Schedule: 6/30/2015 – Summer 2018

Silt fence installation and clearing of pond sites will begin in areas east of Achilles Street to Kings Highway the week of Sept. 28, 2015.

Construction is scheduled to begin at Achilles Street moving towards Kings Highway in mid-October.

### **Projects in Design or Negotiation**

**Parkside - Gertrude Avenue/Aaron Street Multi-Use Path** – This project will provide for a 10' multi-use path, landscaping, decorative lighting, a pocket park and signage along Gertrude Avenue, from Caring Way to Aaron Street, and along Aaron Street from Gertrude Avenue to Harbor Boulevard. Design Contract: Johnson Engineering, Design/Permitting Schedule: June 2015 – Fall 2015, Procurement Process: TBD, Projected Start of Construction: TBD

A Parkside Community meeting was held July 30, 2015 to review the conceptual plan. Johnson Engineering is expected to have 30% plans submitted for staff review in September 2015.

**Parkside - West Tarpon Boulevard/Ambrose Lane Multi-Use Path** – This project includes a 10' multi-use path, landscaping and decorative lighting along West Tarpon Boulevard from US 41 to Ambrose Lane and on Ambrose Lane from West Tarpon Boulevard to Elcam Boulevard. Design Contract: Johnson Engineering, Design/Permitting Schedule: June – Late 2015, Procurement Process: TBD, Projected Start of Construction: TBD

A Parkside Community Meeting was held July 30, 2015 to review the conceptual plan. Johnson Engineering is expected to have 30% plans submitted for staff review in September 2015.

**Placida Road Safety Improvements Phase 1 (Rotonda Blvd. West to Cape Haze Drive)** – Safety improvements include: a 2.9 mile bicycle-pedestrian path from Rotonda Boulevard West to Cape Haze Drive, intersection improvements at Lemon Bay Golf Course, Bantry Bay, Cape Haze Drive and Panama Drive and

resurfacing of Placida Road from Rotonda Boulevard West to the Boca Grande Causeway. Design Contract: Giffels-Webster Engineers, Design/Permitting Schedule: through Fall 2015, Procurement Process: Late 2015, Projected Start of Construction: TBD

Charlotte County Utilities is adding a reclaimed water line to this project, which was approved by the Board of County Commissioners on Sept. 23, 2014. Conducting utility work in conjunction with construction of the multi-use path and safety improvements will minimize disruption to residents and businesses within the project limits.

Construction plans are on hold at approximately 80% pending completion of utility plans. 90% utility plans are in progress and should be complete by the end of September. Utility design is expected to be complete in the fall of 2015.

**Placida Road Safety Improvements Phase 2 (Cape Haze Dr. to Boca Grande Causeway)** – This project provides for a continuous walkway along Placida Road from SR 776 to the Boca Grande Causeway. This multi-use path will run along the northwest side of Placida Road and will be 10' wide to accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists. Design Contract: Giffels-Webster Engineers, Design/Permitting Schedule: through Fall 2015, Procurement Process: Late 2015, Projected Start of Construction: TBD

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**Sidewalks - Burnt Store Lakes** – The South Burnt Store MSBU Committee requested sidewalks within the Burnt Store Lakes subdivision. This project will design and construct approximately 1.5 miles of sidewalks: Vincent Avenue from Boca Vista Road to Burnt Store Road, Saragossa Lane from Cape Horn Boulevard to Burnt Store Road, and Rio Togas Road from Cape Horn Boulevard to Burnt Store Road. Design Contract: Banks Engineering, Design/Permitting Schedule: 1/6/2014 – Late 2014, Procurement Process: Fall 2015, Projected Start of Construction: Late 2015

Budget adjustments have been made allowing for construction to begin on Vincent Avenue, Saragossa Lane, and Rio Togas Road this year. Bid specifications are being finalized by staff. This project is expected to be submitted to the Purchasing Department in September 2015.

**Sidewalks - Cape Haze Drive** – Design and construction of approximately 3,400 linear feet of sidewalk along Cape Haze Drive, from Arlington Drive north to approximately 450' north of Links Lane, where Cape Haze Drive becomes a four lane road. Design Contract: Johnson Engineering, Design/Permitting: March 2015 – Fall 2015, Procurement: Fall 2015, Construction: Early 2016

Staff met with the Engineering firm to confirm the scope and fee for the project. 30% design plans have been received and are being reviewed by staff.

#### **Maintenance & Operations (for Sept. 16 - 22, 2015)**

A total of 91 new requests were received related to drainage, brush, and asphalt repair.

Drainage line & grade:	7,000 SF in Punta Gorda Non-Urban 16,260 SF in Greater Port Charlotte 6,900 SF in Northwest Port Charlotte
Small pipe install:	180 LF in Greater Port Charlotte
Menzie ditch cutting:	120,000 SF in West Charlotte Stormwater

Boom mower:	40,000 SF in Lemon Bay 21,500 SF in Mid Charlotte Stormwater Cut 19,951 CY in Greater Port Charlotte Cut 15,659 CY in Northwest Port Charlotte Cut 16,934 CY in Rotonda West Cut 15,920 CY in Punta Gorda Non-Urban
Culvert cleaning:	Cut 1,665 CY in Englewood East Cleaned 17 culverts in Greater Port Charlotte Cleaned 3 culverts in Northwest Port Charlotte Cleaned 1 culvert in Rotonda Lake Cleaned 6 culverts in Gulf Cove Cleaned 33 culverts in Deep Creek Cleaned 15 culverts in Punta Gorda Non-Urban
Sidewalk Maintenance:	Maintained 1,040 LF of sidewalks in Greater Port Charlotte
Asphalt repair:	Utilized 6.94 tons of material to repair locations throughout the County
Shoulder repair:	Maintained 0.1 miles of shoulder on Neal Road

### Landscaping Services

Basic landscape maintenance was performed at: Manasota Key; South Gulf Cove; Grove City Park; US 17 medians in Cleveland; US 41 Revitalization phase I; Charlotte Harbor Gateway; Melbourne Street Bridge and all County-owned fenced retention ponds.

### Mosquito & Aquatic Weed Control (for Sept. 16 - 22, 2015)

#### Mosquito Control

- Acres treated: 49,347
- Landing rate counts taken: 26
- Traps set: 34
- Service requests: 32

#### Aquatic Weed Control

- Sites treated: 14
- Sites inspected: 19
- Mitigation sites maintained: 0

### Other Projects

**Rotonda West Bridge Lighting** – The Rotonda West Street and Drainage MSBU requested the installation of decorative lighting to the five bridges over the Rotonda River. Bridge Locations: Rotonda Boulevard East, Rotonda Boulevard West, Rotonda Boulevard North, Cape Haze Drive, Rebel Court. Wright Construction completed the installation of an electric power system to feed the decorative lighting planned under the first phase of this project. Design Contract: Florida Transportation Engineering, Design/Permitting Schedule: through Spring 2015, Procurement Process: Summer 2015, Projected Start of Construction: Fall 2015

The construction contract was awarded to Solo Electric on Sept. 22, 2015. The Pre-Commencement Meeting is scheduled Thursday, Oct. 1.

## Tourism

Earlier this month, the Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau hosted three journalists on two separate trips to showcase the destination. Ashley Gibbins and Ann Mealor are UK-based travel journalists for the publication AllWays Traveller and visited Sept. 15 – 18. German-based writer Holger Jacobs on assignment for the German travel publication American Journal visited Sept. 20 – 23. During both trips, the journalists were provided with itineraries and suggested places to visit with an emphasis on ecotourism since those activities resonate with international visitors. Activities varied during both trips and an example of activities included a Snorkel & SUP trip with Hooked on SUP in Englewood, a sunset cruise in Punta Gorda with King Fisher Fleet, visit to Florida Tracks & Trails in Punta Gorda and fishing with Capt. Rhett Morris of Beyond Borders Outfitters. The three journalists were in Florida for about three weeks conducting research. Although they have been to Florida several times, this was the first visit to Charlotte County for the UK-based journalists and a return visit for Mr. Jacobs. When editorial content is generated, it provides a third-party endorsement about the destination and enhances the Bureau's marketing efforts in promoting the area. Pictured is German-based travel writer Holger Jacobs and Capt. Rhett Morris with Beyond Borders Outfitters.

