

Charlotte County update for 1/27/16

## **Comp plan changes reinforce county vision**

By Raymond Sandrock, Charlotte County Administrator

Charlotte County's comprehensive plan establishes the County Commission's intent and overall vision for future development and redevelopment within the county. Land development regulations adopted by the board implement comp plan goals, which include discouraging building in hazardous or environmentally sensitive areas and providing tools for developers to build more sustainable projects that also help fulfill goals set out in the plan.

The comp plan must be amended periodically as part of a state-mandated evaluation process and to react to and anticipate changes in regulatory, environmental and development realities. Staff and the county commission are currently in the process of making those changes through a process that has included substantial opportunities for public input.

Among the changes attracting comments from the public is the county's transfer of density units policy, which encourages the removal of outdated platted lots and subdivisions while preventing density increases within hazard-prone coastal areas. Density refers to the number of housing units a property owner is allowed to build on a parcel. Density can be transferred within coastal areas, with exceptions, but the proposed changes to the comp plan will continue to prohibit adding density within the coastal area as a whole.

Another proposed change would update the comp plan to reflect changing realities regarding hurricane evacuation. For example, since the county conducted its most recent evacuation study in 2010, additional road capacity has been added on the Cape Haze peninsula. Once the comp plan amendments are adopted, any new development will continue to trigger an evacuation study — paid for by the developer — and, if needed, mitigation to prevent an increase in evacuation times in the event of an approaching hurricane. Such mitigation — again, funded by the developer — could include onsite shelters for residents.

We welcome input on the above and other changes to the comp plan as we update it to continue to fulfill the county's vision for not only development, but for conservation and environmental stewardship.

### **Air show**

Like many county residents, I was pleased to learn about the return of the Florida International Air Show in October. This event right in our backyard draws visitors from all over the world. I look forward to working with air show officials to explore ways the county can help make the show a resounding success.

As in past years, we stand ready to provide in-kind marketing and public relations assistance to the air show. Additional assistance could come from the tourism bureau's event promotion budget, while other support, such as covering the cost of Fire/EMS and Charlotte County Sheriff's Office services, would require approval from the Board of County Commissioners.

I encourage local businesses and individuals rally behind this great local event that has done much for local charities while showcasing Charlotte County to tens of thousands of visitors over the years.

### **Fit for Life**

Registration is open for the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Charlotte County Fit for Life Senior Games, which will be held March 1 through March 27. The competitions in track and field, pickleball, tennis, cycling, golf, swimming, bocce, table tennis and other events are open to amateur athletes 50 years of age and over as of Dec. 31, 2016, regardless of residency.

The entry fee is \$12, plus \$4 for each event. For some events, there are additional fees to cover venue charges. Participants will be divided into five-year age categories (for example, 50 to 54 years of age). The deadline for registration is Feb. 17, but you must register by Feb. 5 to ensure you will receive a Fit for Life Games t-shirt.

Gold, silver and bronze medals will be awarded for each age division and the event serves as a qualifier for the Florida Senior Games State Championships.

For information on the Games and sponsorship opportunities, call 941.681.3742 or 941.625.7529, send an e-mail to [padmini.sooknanan@CharlotteCountyFL.gov](mailto:padmini.sooknanan@CharlotteCountyFL.gov) or go to our website at [www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov) and click on the Fit for Life Senior Games banner at the top of the home page.

### **Spring training**

For baseball fans, the four most anticipated words in the English language are “pitchers and catchers report.” That key spring training date for the Tampa Bay Rays is Feb. 19, but the activity at Charlotte Sports Park has already begun. The Rays’ winter development program took place earlier this month and Rays staff will descend on the sports park next week for preparations. “Truck Day,” when semi-trailers full of equipment and supplies arrive from Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg, is Feb. 10.

Full squad workouts start Feb. 26 and the first Grapefruit League game against the Washington Nationals is scheduled for March 2. The public is welcome to watch team workouts and, of course, spring training game tickets are on sale now at [tampabay.rays.mlb.com](http://tampabay.rays.mlb.com).

Charlotte Sports Park was named the best spring training venue in America in USA Today’s 10Best Readers’ Choice contest in 2014. Despite the recent cold snaps and blustery weather, spring is right around the corner and fans from around the country and the world will be in Charlotte County soon to celebrate the “boys of summer.”

*Ray Sandrock is the Charlotte County administrator. Readers may reach him at [raymond.sandrock@charlottecountyfl.gov](mailto:raymond.sandrock@charlottecountyfl.gov).*