

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**ALLIGATOR CREEK WATERWAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**June 5, 2014 – Regular Meeting**  
**10:00 a.m. – Public Works Conference Room**

**Attendees:** Howard Brooks, Ken Fahrbach, Ed Minzer, Michael Shaughness and Mark Vaivoda

**Absent:** Robert Robinson (unexcused)

**County:** Dawn Harrison, Chuck Mopps, and Sandy Wright

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. A roll call was taken. A quorum was present.

The minutes from March 12, 2014 were unanimously approved as written.

**Citizen Input:**

- Mr. Bettinson from Burnt Store Isles to talk about the proposed cut through into Alligator Creek. This MSBU formed in 1987 and in all that time nothing has changed until now. The City of Punta Gorda has invested money regarding the cut through. It will put an increase in boat traffic through Alligator Creek. The speed zone was changed and the sign relocated without any notice to or input from the community and he would like to see that that doesn't happen again in the future. He objects to the speed zone being changed at the request of one person with no notice to the Burnt Store Isles residents. This change results in him spending an additional 10 minutes of idling time. Mr. Minzer stated that he had no knowledge of the change; he searched and could not find where it was voted on in any of the MSBU's meeting minutes. The sign was in the area of marker 24 and was moved down to marker 21. Sea Edge Canal was also included in the slow speed minimum wake area. There was discussion regarding the blind side to the Committee members and there is no argument due to the amount of boats that fish in that area. The point is that the public should be made aware of those kinds of changes prior to them being made. He is concerned about an idle speed zone that will require him to travel at idle speed all the way out.
- Mr. Cassetta - The problem is nobody really knows what's going on. He is in favor of the Punta Gorda Isles and Burnt Store Isles section getting a shorter and faster way out but totally against other areas which would mean a few thousand other boaters using Alligator Creek. The number of boats using Ponce now is probably less than what would use Alligator Creek. The people in favor of the project are in favor because of the congestion in Ponce; they want to push that traffic to Alligator Creek instead. The project would alleviate congestion in Ponce and will push it to Alligator Creek. The pollution will not go away but will be moved to Alligator Creek. He wants to make sure that Alligator Creek residents aren't blind-sided again. This project would increase property values in the Bird Section of PGI because of a shorter path out to the harbor. Property values are clearly affected by the amount of time it takes to get out.
- Mr. Minzer said that impact studies would have to be done before this Committee can make any recommendations.

**Unfinished Business:**

- Dredging Update – Mr. Mopps said DEP is fine with the maintenance permit. The permit to increase the depth is in review; ACOE wanted to combine the two permits; however Mr. Mopps stated it should remain separate. The area that was previously maintained would be exempt from the small tooth saw fish restrictions. These are two distinct and separate projects that were permitted and paid for separately. ACOE and Coastal Engineering are currently working on separating the two. Staff is hoping to have something back by December on the 6ft dredge.

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The maintenance dredge should be done during the winter low tides. As soon as the maintenance permits are received the committee can agree or disagree to move forward. It would take 3-4 months to do the maintenance dredge. If both dredge permits are issued close together; it would be best to wait on the maintenance dredge and proceed with the 6ft instead. Committee would like to schedule a meeting at the end of August for a status on the permits.

### New Business:

- Cut through Punta Gorda Isles – Mr. Minzer said he thinks that the MSBU may be able to stop that project. Mr. Mopps stated state and federal permits would be required. There would be a 30 day comment period that must be posted to allow committees, groups and residents an opportunity to comment before a change like this is approved. A reduction in speed would be required if approved. If the project is approved, every house in Punta Gorda would have to pay into the MSBU due to their access. Staff would recommend to the BCC to expand the MSBU to include the Punta Gorda Isles residents; it would not be fair for Burnt Store Isles residents to pay into the MSBU and not Punta Gorda Isles residents. The decision would be with the BCC. This is a city project so they would have to form a separate MSBU. Anyone that has direct benefit could be taxed. Projects like this need to be in the public interest. The cities actions will not impact what the county does. The County doesn't know what the cities intentions are; only what is being talked about in the paper. Currently Alligator Creek is 5ft depth and Ponce is at 6ft; if the bigger boats require deeper water, Alligator Creek doesn't have the required depth. The Committee can draft a letter to the city and the BCC to be on their agenda which would allow citizens to be able to voice their concerns at the meeting. This idea was brought up in the past and never came to fruition; it keeps coming up because the council members change. Mr. Fahrback suggested the committee draft the letter. Mr. Shaughness stated it's a great idea to get on the BCC agenda and agreed to draft a letter to send to the BCC requesting information regarding this subject; he will send it to Ms. Harrison to send to the other members for review before Ms. Harrison distributes it. The city contacted Ms. Harrison to find out if the properties would be incorporated into the MSBU; the subject would be brought to the committee then sent to the BCC for approval. Ms. Harrison agreed to check the Punta Gorda website to see if there is any backup information that could be included with the letter. The width of the channel was discussed.
- Financial Reports – The 6 Month Actual and the Activity Reports were distributed for review and discussion.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday August 26, 2014 at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

Submitted by:



Sandy Wright - Public Works Department

**CHARLOTTE COUNTY  
PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION  
ALLIGATOR CREEK WATERWAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
ATTENDANCE ROSTER**

**MEETING DATE:** Thursday, June 5, 2014

**MEETING TIME:** 10:00 A.M. – Public Works Conference Room

**INFORMATION SUPPLIED ON THIS FORM BECOMES  
PUBLIC RECORD**

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