

MEETING MINUTES
MID CHARLOTTE STORMWATER UTILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
April 11, 2012
2:00 p.m. in B106 Conference Room

Attendees: George Kearns, Bob Logan, Douglas Tucker, and Steve Vieira

County: Judith Nothdurft, Joanne Vernon, and Sandy Wright

Absent: Bob Logan (excused)

Guests: Rhonna Adams, Hank Camacho, Donald Duet, Mary Duet, Luigi Dunskirchen, Rick Jackson, Mickey Kindle, Noah Kubis, Gabriel Kubis, Joanne Mulvaney, Buddy Palma, Bill Southwick, and Helen Woodall

The meeting was called to order at 2:04 p.m.

Minutes: The minutes from the February 29, 2012 were unanimously approved as written.

The status of Committee membership was reviewed with one vacancy for an alternate member reported.

Unfinished Business:

- Sunshine Lake/Sunrise Waterway Study – The Atkins team presented their draft study. The blue green algae contains a wide variety of bacteria. The tests of the surface water taken in January returned normal results. The pollutants are in the algae at the bottom of the lake. The algae is so thick in some areas the lake appears to have only a foot or so of water, however, if a person stepped into it they would sink into several feet of algae. It is difficult for boots to move through the algae mass. The algae can produce toxins that smell like raw sewage. The staff from Atkins stated that this is the worst case they have ever seen. It's worse than the infamous Hancock Lake which has been widely known as the worst case in the state of Florida. The Atkins consultants believe that the the algae bloom was caused by leaking sewage and stated that it would do no good to remove the algae if the sewage problem was not been fixed. Charlotte County Utilities relined the nearby lift station in 2006, possibly correcting the leaking problem. That does not address the residents' lines from their houses into the main sewage line. One resident reported a 3-foot deep sink hole in their yard with another reporting a collapsing driveway. The consultants stated that this will not be an easy or inexpensive fix pointing out that this polluted water drains into Charlotte Harbor. This is not an aesthetic issue; it should be a health concern as well. Citizens coming in contact with water from the lake reported coughing and sinus issues as well as red bumps on their skin.. The Citizens suggested blocking off the lake to prevent children from coming in contact with the water. There should be other organizations interested in partnering for this project. Southwest Florida Water Management District may be one of those partners. The consultants recommend whole lake aeration after the removal of the algae which would allow for the lake water to be used for irrigation instead of using drinking water. This report is only a draft. The consultants are waiting input from the County.

Mr. Vieira inquired about the time line for the project. The consultants stated they can have a final report turned around in approximately one week. They have been ahead of schedule for this study due to the severity of the conditions. Permitting the project will take time.

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After the sewer system has been verified and any corrections made, the Committee will have to decide which sediment removal system they want to use. Cost will depend on which method is used. The Parkside Project had visions for this lake, with a bridge to allow for fishing. The consultants concluded the presentation by stating that this is a very big problem that should be taken seriously due to drainage into Charlotte Harbor. Mr. Tucker made a motion to have the consultants present a final report to the Committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kearns with discussion to add recommendations to identify activities to be taken to correct the problem. All Committee members are in favor. Comments should be submitted to the Engineering Department by the end of next week and the final report back to the Committee by the end of the following week. Mr. Kearns suggested inviting a representative from Utilities, the Health Department and Commissioner Constance to the next meeting.

- Desoto Canal Project – The letters of interest will be received in the Engineering Department this Friday who will then make a recommendation by Monday or Tuesday. The scope of work will be to find out how bad it is and to make recommendations if the project has to be done in phases. Mr. Sandrock and Commissioner Starr were both surprised at the conditions and are concerned about the financial impact. Mr. Kearns stated that in 1990 or 1991 there was a day when 15 inches of rain caused the water to come over the top of the ditch. It is extremely important for the cost estimates to be true and accurate. Ms. Vernon will stress the importance of pushing this through by the end of next week.

New Business:

- Activity Report – The Activity Report was distributed for review and discussion. Mr. Kearns asked if the Engineering Department can provide a copy of invoices to the Committee as they come in. Ms. Vernon stated that she would be willing to send a copy, however, she could not wait for the before approving the invoices.
- Draft 2012/2013 Budget – The unused funds allocated for the Desoto ditch in 2012 rolled over into the next year's budget. Mr. Vieira wants the project identified on the budget so it is visible. There is currently \$1.25 million available that is not shown on the report. The Committee is requesting the \$350,000 be changed to \$1.25 million and identified as Drainage on North/South Canal Construction. There was discussion regarding funding for the Sunshine Lake Project. Ms. Vernon suggested the Committee budget for the monitor wells, design and permitting phases of the project and explained that most agencies won't provide funding until the project is designed and permitted. The Committee does not want to be the sole funding source for this project; Parkside Project should also provide some of the funding. Ms. Vernon will look into grants for the project and stated that Utilities may provide some of the funds since the problem was caused by a sewage problem. Mr. Kearns made a motion to budget \$200,000 for the Sunshine Lake Project. Mr. Petrone seconded the motion with all members were in favor. Mr. Kearns made a motion to approve the budget with these two changes. Mr. Petrone seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 p.m.