

# **SOUTH GULF COVE WATERWAY BENEFIT UNIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**April 25, 2012**

**10:00 a.m.in the San Casa Conference Room**

**Attendees:** Ron Bick, Clarence Brosmer, Joe Giraldi, Tom Ireland

**Absent:** Richard Redican (excused)

**County:** Judith Nothdurft, Sandy Wright, Matt Logan, Barry DeMello

**Guests:** Kevin Rainey – Southwest Engineering  
Don Ross and Tammy Lyday – Earth Balance

Meeting was called to order at 10:00 am

**Minutes:** The minutes from the April 3, 2012 meeting were not reviewed or approved. The Committee will review them at the next meeting.

- This meeting was called to meet with Southwest Engineering and Earth Balance to provide input on the Committee's vision for a new and additional lock project.
- Mr. Rainey stated that the consultants are on a fact finding mission to get information on the boat usage in the South Gulf Cove Waterway. He asked about the number of boats, size of boats and boat traffic. Mr. DeMello stated that according to the log, the existing lock opened 629 times between April 4, 2012 and April 25, 2012.
- Mr. Ross gave a review of the background history of the existing lock and surrounding area. The community was platted and recorded with the County by General Development in the 1960's. Lots were sold sight unseen at that time and in the early 1970's new federal and state regulations were adopted which prevented the original plan for the area from being carried out. When the developer got to the permitting process, the plan failed. There are 15,000 lots in the community that presented a huge contract liability to the contractor since lots already sold with promises that could not be kept. An alternative plan was developed to build an interceptor waterway with a lock. The permit required the community to be on sewers. The waterway and lock was designed to go around environmentally sensitive vegetation with the plan for a marina to service the area. The developer went bankrupt in 1990. The County did not want to follow through with the construction of a marina which is how the area came to be what it is today.
- Mr. Rainey asked the Committee for their vision for the future. The current lock is 60'X20'. The Committee agreed that a new lock closer to the south end of the community would be the most desirable. There are boat owners who won't use the waterway due to the length of time and gas it takes to reach the harbor. It takes approximately 45 minutes to go 6 miles to the lock by sailboat and 25 minutes by power boat. The longest point to reach the lock is 9 miles. The Committee stated it would be helpful to the commercial fisherman if a new lock was 60'x30' with a 5-6 foot draft to accommodate the larger boats. Sailboats currently hit bottom when coming out of the existing lock. The lock has been maintenance dredged twice. There was discussion regarding the operation of the lock. It takes approximately 10 minutes to get through the lock, however, if there are two boats at the same time with both boat operators pushing their remote openers, it causes the system to go into a timeout mode. The key to the operation of the locks is being able to open them remotely. They do not want to have to get out of their boats to open the locks. The way the locks are set up now works well for the community. Packets of information on how to operate the locks is handed out to new property owners.

## **SOUTH GULF COVE WATERWAY BENEFIT UNIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**April 25, 2012**

**Page 2**

- Having a lock on each end of the community would be an ideal situation not only for convenience but to allow water to flow in faster. The community desires higher water levels, especially during the winter low tides.
- An area was identified at the south end of the waterway on the aerial map showing electricity in close proximity. Mr. Ross stated that he doesn't believe the numbers using the current lock openings and current number of lots, will warrant a new lock, however, if the number of waterfront lots is used instead the number may be achievable. He said that if there is a safety concern it will be easier to get through permitting. The Committee will have to build an argument as to why a new additional lock is needed. Fuel economy and public good may be used to help build the case. Mr. Ross stated that mitigation will be required to replace the wet lands that will be destroyed during the construction. This may be very expensive and he warned the Committee to be prepared for a major expense. Earth Balance has been able to negotiate mitigation items on other projects that were items of concern and were items that the County wanted to address anyway.
- Mr. Rainey stated Southwest Engineering appreciates the input from the Committee. There will be a round table discussion to see if a path can be identified. The committee told him that although there are not presently any financial or time constraints, they would like to start planning for it financially.
- Southwest Engineering will do an analysis and report their findings.
- Mr. Logan explained that now is a good time to try to get permitting through the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) since our relationships have improved.
- A second lock in the same location as the existing lock is not needed at this time.
- Mr. Rainey stated they would hold the round table during the second week of May and meet with DEP within 30 days after that. They should be able to have something prepared to report back to the Committee in July or August.
- There is a marine watch group that serves the community in the same capacity as a neighborhood watch group. The Committee has a sign created by the County that they would like to have installed on the back side of the existing sign located at the Butterford end of the connector waterway. Mr. Logan will contact the Sign & Marking Department about the installation. If the County can install the sign, Mr. Ireland will drop the sign off with Mr. DeMello to be picked up by the Sign department.
- Mr. DeMello offered to help test the remotes at the locks but Mr. Brosmer reported the problem is mostly operator error.

**April 25, 2012**

**Page 3**

- Regarding cattail removal, Mr. Logan reported that most of the canals are clear of cat tails except the one that the citizen is complaining about. The citizen was hoping for cat tail clean out and dredging to be done to allow him sailboat access to his property. Mr. Logan said that dredging would not be done, however, cattail clean out would make his canal consistent with the other canals in the area. Aquatic Weed Control Section said that they were asked not to spray the cattails. This leaves 8-foot dead plants laying and rotting in the water. Mr. Logan suggested hand removal, then spraying after the plants start to grow back. They grow back quickly. Cat tails used to be considered an invasive species; now they are a naturalized plant that is good for cleaning up the waterway and are good for the fish. They actually remove toxins from the water. The Committee asked if it is their responsibility to pay for the removal by this citizen's lot. Mr. Logan will research the County easement to see who should be responsible for funding the removal. It will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.
- Mr. Ireland reported broken wood slats in the lock. Mr. DeMello stated the locks are going to be opened again to allow water in. After it is open, Maintenance & Operations will replace the rotting and broken wood slats.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:29 a.m.