

SUMMARY OF MEETING
Glades Technical Advisory Committee
9:40 am March 12, 1998
Belle Glade City Hall

Participants:

Gwendolyn Asia-Williams, Remar Harvin, Pam Nolan, Ken Schenck, Carl Seibert, Sue Teets, and Deborah Thatcher

Staff:

Vicki Silver, Chair

CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Silver mentioned that several Glades-related items were discussed at the Overall Economic Development Planning Committee meeting on 3/11. First, Virginia Martin with the Glades Community Development Corporation presented a report on businesses developed in Belle Glade and Pahokee as a result of the County's Developing Regions facade improvement grants. To facilitate the Committee's review, OEDP members directed Economic Development staff to prepare recommendations on such projects and to provide background materials sufficiently in advance. Ms. Silver expressed concern about the need to provide information more clearly to the OEDP. Ken Schenck agreed to coordinate with Ms. Martin to ensure sufficient information is provided the County on the job creation resulting from Pahokee facade improvements.

Another item of potential interest to the Glades community is the proposed Economic Development grants to be awarded from an allocation of \$610,000 by Housing and Community Development. The OEDP members recommended restructuring this grant program to allow for a smaller minimum amount (less than the \$150,000 per applicant suggested by staff) and they questioned other aspects of the proposed program.

Thus, an advisory committee was suggested to work with staff on revising this program within the next few weeks for BCC approval. Mr. Harvin noted that in the past, advisory committee recommendations have been submitted with staff recommendations, and the staff recommendations have prevailed.

The Chair also solicited input on how GTAC can better serve the community and on the proposed BCC Glades tour. Mr. Seibert observed that all members need to participate, including for example, Glades Community Development Corporation. Ms. Nolan noted that the \$75,000 Developing Regions Grant for the entire area does not go very far with such disparate needs, compared to more similar urban areas on the coast. More community input will be needed to continue or increase this County allocation. Pam also is trying to access federal Rural Development loans for business development. She said that if the Empowerment Zone grant

program opens up again and awards 5 \$30 million grants nationwide, we will need to leverage federal dollars and submit an application by May. Ken Schenck and Sue Teets agreed to coordinate with the City of South Bay regarding drafting an itinerary for the County Commission's tour of Glades development activities. Ms. Teets emphasized the need to schedule the tour prior to June 1, when the Torrey Island Bridge will be closed for repair for 90 days.

CITY OF PAHOKEE

Ken Schenck reported that sidewalk and street improvements funded by the federal ISTEA program are in the design phase and construction will begin in October. Sidewalk subsoil subsidence is a challenge that requires filling of surrounding lands. To implement the Urban Forestry Master Plan, Florida DOT is in the process of permitting the planting of street trees in downtown; the MLK Park walkway and

Shive Island plantings are also pending, using Flo-Sun monies (arranged by the County) as a match. Road improvements underway include SR 15, a possible downtown roundabout, and 715 bikelanes and turn lanes with center islands. US 441 will become the truck route after straightening of dead man's curve. An 18-slip addition to the Marina is still awaiting state permits, delaying the Florida Inland Navigation District grant.

The hospital agreement may be final, although some administrative details are still being worked out. A Rural Network has been formed with Health Care District funding to provide health insurance and encourage use of local doctors. Pam Nolan noted that such a network is a good stakeholder for an Enterprise Zone. The Fire Department merger with the County has been completed, and a new fire station will be built at the old Farmers Market site. Grant expenditures for the Old Pahokee High School will be completed by painting ceiling and walls. The aquaculture entrepreneurs planning to locate along Farmers Market Road may get financing from the Farmers Home Administration. Carl Seibert observed that the challenge of finding financing to assist prospective entrepreneurs highlights the need for an areawide economic development organization in the Glades. Ms. Nolan noted that Belle Glade is considering applying for federal Economic Development (EDA) monies to create a technical assistance program.

WEST AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Area has received a \$500,000 technical grant to upgrade Pahokee Elementary and Middle/High Schools. A pathogen training program has been created for Glades workers. The Very Special Arts program was well attended, as was National Black Parent Involvement Day 2/9/98. A consultant is working with the 5 schools that have critically low test scores. A Creole interpreter hired at Lakeshore Middle

School has involved parents in a parenting course. All schools have received inservice training in truancy, consistent with the state program. AFDC is being tied to attendance of children under age 16; parents and police are now involved.

A teen forum is being organized, and parenting skills and pregnancy prevention are being taught through an innovative electronic baby checkout system. No timeline is available yet on the curriculum changes pending with regard to West Tech.

The meeting adjourned at 11: 35 am.