

**SUMMARY OF MEETING
Glades Technical Advisory Committee
Belle Glade City Hall 11/16/2000**

Present: Barbara Bell-Spence (City of Belle Glade), Doug Chozianin (Construction Arts, Inc.), Helen Franke (Palm Beach Community College), Douglas Green (Workforce Development Board), Theresa Newton (USDA Rural Development), Pam Nolan (Economic Development Office), Ken Schenck (City of Pahokee), Carl Seibert (EDGE Center), Michael Sklar (Housing and Community Development)

Staff:

Vicki Silver, Chair (PBC Planning, Zoning, and Building Department/Planning Division)

PAHOKEE

Mr. Chozianin reported that he has been working with Nova University to expand their aquaculture program to facilitate the development of a tilapia processing plant near Farmers Market Road. Mr. Schenck noted that the Hospital Corporation which owns the 15,000 square foot medical building near the former Everglades Memorial Medical Center is considering making that building available to the City to lease for possible reuse as City Hall or Everglades restoration offices. The County will consider deeding approximately 13 delinquent tax parcels to the City for affordable housing construction by February. The city would pursue demolition dollars from HCD and seek developers for each parcel. The Chair recommended bidding out all the parcels to one developer to provide a more consistent development, rather than replacing blight with haphazard construction.

BELLE GLADE

Ms. Bell-Spence reported that the City Commission will obtain bids on Business Park construction next week, and a groundbreaking is tentatively scheduled for 12/1/00. Other members pointed out the need to inform local businesses of opportunities to serve the Business Park. Street paving is underway in the downtown area.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Mr. Green noted that their weekly orientations have met with a great response from employers such as the new Walgreens in Belle Glade, which hired 30 WDB trainees, and Wackenhut. The Huffy bicycle manufacturer recently arranged to hire numerous temporary employees to assemble bicycles in West Palm Beach retail stores during the holidays.

Mr. Seibert started a discussion about the pros and cons of transporting Glades residents to coastal employers such as the pending Wellington Mall. He noted that some downtown Belle Glade merchants believe such bus service, being encouraged through County grants, robs local businesses of potential customers. Ms. Bell-Spence contended that the County's transit grants and facade improvements were designed to support local businesses, not to divert local shoppers, and several members agreed with her that in the short term, until the Glades economy diversifies, some residents will

need to access jobs outside the community. Discussion also raised the issue of the need for merchants to learn marketing techniques to make their stores more attractive to specific market niches.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Ms. Nolan reported that it is time for communities that received Developing Regions grants to request reimbursement from the County. The EDO is requesting County Commission approval of assigning a staff member from the Business Loan Fund of the Palm Beaches to assist Glades residents two days a week for 18 months. Also, staff is awaiting the County Administrator's signature so they can transmit the Rural Business Opportunity Grant proposal requesting job and entrepreneurial training monies and revitalization assistance in order to capitalize on opportunities related to the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project and the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 am. The next meeting will be January 25 at South Bay City Hall.

