

SUMMARY OF MEETING
Glades Technical Advisory Committee
Belle Glade City Hall 8/31/2000

Present: Barbara Bell-Spence (City of Belle Glade), Don Brown (Convention and Visitors Bureau), Greg Carothers (USDA Rural Development Office), Doug Chozianin (Construction Arts, Inc.), Douglas Green (Workforce Development Board), Anna King (Ark Development Corp.) Jay Mendell (Florida Atlantic University), Sandy Mercer (Glades Community Development Corp.), Theresa Newton (USDA Rural Development Office), Wendell "Bil" Phillips (PBC Metropolitan Planning Organization), Pam Nolan (PBC Economic Development Office), Ken Schenck (City of Pahokee), Alice Thompson (Pahokee Chamber Director)

Staff:

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

ARK DEVELOPMENT CORP.

Ms. King stated that they are a South Florida-based non-profit organization exploring foster care needs of the Glades area with the Florida Department of Children and Family Services, in partnership with Construction Arts, Inc. The Chair encouraged Ms. King to coordinate with Ms. Bell-Spence, due to her participation in existing social service networks in the Glades, to minimize duplication of efforts.

COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Ms. Nolan noted that although the federal Empowerment Zone application was not approved in 1998, she and Ms. Silver have been preparing and periodically updating a project data base known as "benchmarks". This is a system created by USDA Rural Development to document local governments' eligibility for Champion Community status (giving them potential priority for federal funding). To keep the benchmarks up-to-date, GTAC members' input is needed. She also reported that the County Commission is scheduled to approve the Developing Regions grant awards on 9/26; this grant program encourages business expansion.

CITY OF PAHOKEE

Mr. Schenck reported that the City was awarded a second state grant to rehab their Old High School, and the SR 715 improvements are underway. The City continues to await the status of their Front Porch Florida proposal. County bond issue-funded water improvements to the Campground are underway, matched with a recreation grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

CITY OF BELLE GLADE

Ms. Spence reported that the City is awaiting the status of their Front Porch Florida request, and they continue to pursue other revitalization activities such as public meetings to identify neighborhood concerns, needs, and available resources. The City Commission has approved hiring a grantswriter, and will soon hire a new City Manager.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Mr. Green reported that they are helping hire employees for the new Walgreens in Belle Glade, and they are interviewing candidates for the new 10,000 square-foot custard apple processing plant in Clewiston.

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Carothers encouraged members to pursue a Rural Business Opportunity Grant, a new program aimed at technical assistance and training for entrepreneurs. Ms. Nolan discussed some possible project ideas for such a grant, and several members noted the importance of coordinating with the EDGE Center (absent because their offices were being relocated this morning).

WESTERN COUNTY TOURISM

Mr. Brown reported that a tourism marketing plan has been prepared and distributed to a newly formed working group which includes representatives from various western county tourist attractions and facilities, Pahokee activists, and County Commissioner Masilotti. The draft plan was also distributed at this meeting, and members were invited to become involved in the upcoming PalmsWest Chamber of Commerce event, West Fest.

GLADES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Ms. Mercer mentioned that GCDC has prepared and will submit today a state preservation grant application to design rehab of the Old Belle Glade City Hall for community uses.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 am.

