

## **SUMMARY OF MEETING**

### **Glades Technical Advisory Committee**

**Belle Glade City Hall 9/28/2000**

**Present:** Gardenia Banks Long, Bonnie Kranzer, Jerry Krenz, Carolyn Williams (South Florida Water Management District or "SFWMD"), Karen Batchelder and Phyllis Lilley (PBC Library Department), Barbara Bell-Spence (City of Belle Glade), Don Brown (PBC Convention and Visitors Bureau), Peter Burnett (Street Beat, a Glades youth arts provider), Doug Chozianin (Construction Arts, Inc.), Art Kirstein (PBC Cooperative Extension Service), Jay Mendell (Florida Atlantic University), Sandy Mercer (Glades Community Development Corp.), Pam Nolan (PBC Economic Development Office), Ken Schenck (City of Pahokee), Carl Seibert (Enterprise Development for Glades Entrepreneurs or "EDGE Center"), Houston Tate (Belle Glade Water Utilities), Alice Thompson (Pahokee Chamber of Commerce), Curt Thompson (Army Corps of Engineers/SFWMD)

### **Staff:**

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

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

Ms. Nolan reported that the 3 Developing Regions grant agreements for the Glades area have been executed, and renovations of these businesses (an inn, a clothing company, and a grocery store) are underway. She also described, with input from the Chair, the concepts being considered by staff for a USDA Rural Business Opportunity Grant proposal. Ideas for this proposal, which staff was encouraged by federal Rural Development staff members to pursue, include training entrepreneurs and residents for opportunities associated with Everglades restoration and other environmental management activities, and hiring a redevelopment expert to attract needed business investment. A draft conceptual proposal will be distributed for GTAC members' review prior to the 10/26 GTAC meeting.

Mr. Brown expressed concern about today's article on the condition of Lake Okeechobee in the *Palm Beach Post*. He recommended that representatives from the lakeside communities familiarize the newspaper's editors with the development activities underway and progress being made, in order to "set the record straight". More balanced press coverage would make tourism promotion and development easier.

## **CITY OF BELLE GLADE**

Ms. Bell Spence reported that infrastructure for the Business Park will be bid out next week. A request to dig the retention pond deeper to provide fill, reducing demucking costs, was rejected by South Florida Water Management District. Ms. Williams asked for further details and asked that the staff person handling this matter contact her to see if this situation can be resolved. The youth organization, Glades Positive Alternatives Partnership is pursuing a Hewlett Packard grant to create a “digital village”. In responding to this opportunity, GPAP welcomes collaboration with non-profits and agencies in the community from the School District to Street Beat.

### **COUNTY LIBRARY DEPARTMENT**

Ms. Lilley reported that the Library system received one of the only Gates grants in Florida, for purposes of literacy training using computers. She stated that Libraries staff can also help support community-based development efforts by publicizing and hosting meetings and partnering on grants. Members were urged to contact her to participate in a focus group being formed by Libraries Director Jerry Brownlee.

### **CITY OF PAHOKEE**

Mr. Schenck noted that the State has agreed to pay a greater percentage of the costs incurred from Hurricane Irene. Ms. Thompson described the 9/26 City Commission workshop at which County Commissioner Masilotti asked the City to take actions to adopt and carry out the Marina and City Hall Redevelopment Plan funded by the County. Needed actions include endorsing a roundabout for consideration by the County’s Metropolitan Planning Organization and seeking grant monies for facilities including a nature classroom/concession building and walkways. The New York-based canal boats will arrive at the Marina in October. Mr. Brown emphasized the opportunity to inform the media about this positive development when the newest boat, *the Okeechobee*, will be brought down the Intracoastal Waterway from Jacksonville. Three stops are scheduled, in Jacksonville, Cocoa, and Stuart, from which the press will sail to Pahokee. Representatives of private attractions in the western communities have been invited to join the boat in Stuart at Pirate’s Cove Marina October 30.

### **EDGE CENTER**

Mr. Seibert reported that tonight is the last seminar in a series of small business development training sessions at PBCC conducted by FAU and co-sponsored by EDGE. During the last 3.5 years, the Center has helped create more than 42 jobs and 18 new businesses, and they have increased entrepreneurial awareness. Ms. Williams expressed interest in collaborating to inform entrepreneurs of opportunities related to the Everglades restoration. Participants agreed that one or more public meetings at PBCC would enable the Everglades restoration partners to reach a broad audience regarding contractual and job opportunities, and a mailing list can be compiled with input from GTAC members.

### **AGRICULTURAL ENHANCEMENT COUNCIL**

Mr. Kirstein announced that the AEC has awarded a \$15,000 grant to a company in Pahokee which processes beans. The activities supported by this grant will create 6

jobs. He hopes this will be the start of other value-added initiatives in the Glades.

### **GLADES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

Ms. Mercer stated that the historic preservation grant request was submitted last month to design and renovate the old downtown Belle Glade City Hall as a heritage center. Pot Luck in the Muck, the oral histories-based play, is still seeking performers and additional writers. The Chair expressed an interest in making Pot Luck a sustainable part of the heritage tourism offerings at local campgrounds and downtown areas to encourage redevelopment.

### **MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS**

Ms. Kranzer related that the 9:30 am meeting this morning between Water Management District staff and water supply interests was very productive. She suggested that the District will investigate ways to improve issues such as taste and appearance in addition to the health and safety issues already being addressed.

Mr. Chozianin reported that he had brought a group of non-profits to the Glades area recently with the intent of implementing redevelopment projects, and they will soon report back on the projects they are undertaking "at their own expense". The group also discussed meeting at or with the South Florida Water Management District to obtain an update on their activities such as Everglades restoration. The Chair agreed to schedule an upcoming meeting at the District's West Palm Beach offices.

Ms. Silver also reported that, pursuant to a collaboration between the lakeside communities and Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council, the National Park Service Florida Office has agreed to assist in developing the Big Water Heritage Trail. This facility will guide visitors from the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST) to points of interest in the communities using a variety of signs on area roadways. A standardized logo for the signs will be approved by a regional task force, with local determination of points of interest and—for educational signs—text. Upon completion of the Heritage Trail within the next year, the task force from counties and communities lakewide will be ready to participate in guiding development of the LOST the following year.

The meeting adjourned at noon.