

Glades Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC)

Meeting of January 22, 2004

9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Belle Glade City Hall – Commission Chambers

Minutes

Present at the meeting:

Duane Gainer, P.B.C. PZ&B, Planning Division
Alejandro Ulloa, P.B.C. PZ&B, Planning Division
Don Brown, P.B.C. Convention and Visitors Bureau
Pam Nolan, P.B.C. Economic Development
Michael Sklar, P.B.C. Housing & Community Development (HCD)
Felicia Everett, City of South Bay
Tammy Moore, South Florida Water Management District
Denny Abbott, P.B.C. Workforce Alliance
Douglas Green, Workforce Development Center
Caroline Tompkins-Blell, Glades Community Development Corp. (GCDC)

Absent:

Steve Cramer, Metropolitan Planning Organization
Kelly Johnson, Glades Initiative
Andrea Stephenson, Glades Initiative
Raoul Pierre-Louis, Business Loan Fund (Representative for John Brown)
Kay Zaccagnino, P.B.C. School District
Lori Hart, The EDGE Center
Wendell (Bil) Phillips, P.B.C. Metropolitan Planning Organization
Doug Chozianin, Construction Arts Associates
Barbara Spence, City of Belle Glade
Alice Thompson, Pahokee Chamber of Commerce
June Howard, EDGE Center
Theresa Newton, USDA Rural Development
Lelia Menefee, Workforce Development Center
Sue A. Bailey, Commissioner Tony Masilotti's Office
Henry Bittaker and Carolyn Williams, South Florida Water Management District
Jerry Brownlee, Palm Beach County Library Department
Sandra Chamblee, The Glades Health Survey
Helen B. Franke, Palm Beach Community College
George E. Gadson, Florida Atlantic University
Remar Harvin, Palm Beach County Housing and Community Development

Absent: (Cont'd)

Clayton Hutcheson, Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension Service
Carol Ann Huysse, Housing Partnership
Gwendolyn Johnson, School District of Palm Beach County
Chris Jones, Palm Beach County Department of Public Affairs
Arthur Kirstein, IV, P.B.C. Cooperative Extension
Ken Montgomery, Workforce Development Board
Autrie Moore-Williams, Glades Community Development Corporation
Angela Morlok, Palm Beach County Metropolitan Planning Organization
Curt Thompson, Army Corps of Engineers
Greg Vaday, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
Leigh Woodham, Dolly Hand Cultural Arts Center,
Palm Beach Community College

Welcome and Introduction

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. Duane Gainer welcomed those present to the first 2003 GTAC meeting. He stated there was no meeting scheduled for December 2002. He reviewed the minutes from the November 2002 meeting and asked if anyone had corrections. No one had corrections.

Review and Discussion of Committee Role and Tasks

Mr. Gainer stated that he would like to bring up an issue discussed at the November meeting regarding FCAT Testing. Members attending had a concern with the number of students projected to fail the test throughout the County and the number of students projected to fail in the Glades. The members further asked what is being done to assist those students, and what are the options for those students that graduate with a GED or Certificate of Completion. At that time, Mr. Gainer contacted Ms. Kay Zaccagnino, School Board Representative to GTAC, to address this issue. Ms. Zaccagnino attended the November GTAC meeting to address questions pertaining to the FCAT Test.

Denny Abbott stated he received a call from Caroline Tompkins-Blell, GCDC regarding GCDC's contract to renovate the old City Hall Building. They will be hiring approximately sixty (60) youth already out of high school. Ms. Tompkins-Blell inquired if the Workforce Development Board would provide a training program for these youth as well as provide academics in math and science. Mr. Abbott met with Ken Montgomery, Director of Workforce Development Alliance to get his input. Mr. Montgomery's response was the workforce program has provided this type of job training in the past; along with the academic training. Mr. Abbott contacted Ms. Tompkins-Blell informing her that the Workforce Development Board could provide the training. Ms. Tompkins-Blell will contact Mr. Montgomery to put together a proposal. Mr. Green commented that the

youth should be monetarily compensated appropriately. He referred to one of the summer youth program's that operated in the Glades.

Tammy Moore commented regarding the discussion at the GTAC meeting concerning the FCAT Test. She stated that although this topic is important to everyone, this is not the committee that needs to be discussing this issue. The problem cannot be solved with only the people attending the meeting. Other people should be included in the discussion that may have more knowledge about this issue. She feels this is not the goals and the objectives of GTAC. Mr. Green disagreed and stated that if the Glades is going to be successful and with the Glades having failing schools, every organization must be involved with raising the standards of education in the Glades. Ms. Zaccagnino is aware of the concerns and this issue should be addressed at every level. Further discussion entailed whether the GTAC should be discussing issues of FCAT Test. Mr. Gainer stated that GTAC does not have a mandate to follow. He further stressed that Craig Bencz also tried to offer assistance in establishing a mission for GTAC.

Pam Nolan commented regarding the FCAT discussion. She stated that Ms. Zaccagnino feels that GTAC should lower their standards by asking members to lobby against the FCAT Testing according to the minutes. Ms. Nolan stated that she would have difficulty agreeing with her.

Mr. Gainer stated based on the information he has studied since employed with the County, the following policies are the only things written in the books pertaining to GTAC. He passed out copies of the policies and briefly reviewed how or why GTAC was established. Mr. Gainer stated that it looks like when GTAC was setup in '97, GTAC was envisioned as "an executive level group" that would basically be the point of contact or information for the Glades from the County. Since that time, it was requested of the Planning Department to write a statement to be included in the Comprehensive Plan that will solidify the group's existence. Mr. Gainer further mentioned that he is the support person for the group. Again, he expressed that the group needs to form a committee with a Chair Person, & etc.

Mr. Green stated that he would like to make a resolution. On The Workforce Board is a Glades employer that has been active for the past seven (7) years. They have a large participation and last month forty-five (45) people attended from different County organizations. A variety of issues were discussed. He commented that the employer was not aware of these issues with the educational system in the Glades. They invited Kay Zaccagnino to discuss the educational issues in the Glades and the presentation was an eye opener. Therefore, we need to address this issue on an organizational level.

Don Brown commented that he understands what Ms. Moore is saying. But it has been his experience over the years the people that have been involved with

the GTAC organization are substantial people and have their own spirit of influence in different areas. He has seen where members of the GTAC group have gotten things done through their own influence with other organizations.

Mr. Gainer stated that most of the people are here because they really care about what happens to the community and the future of the community. He feels that if GTAC was functioning properly, we might have an educational committee, economic committee, & etc. It may not be necessary to go into detail in these types of meetings, but there could issues of concern presented from all the GTAC committees. He thought the FCAT Testing was an issue of everyone's concern and he hoped we would get more participation from other Departments or organizations attending the GTAC meetings and bring other issues of concern.

Mr. Gainer again, mentioned the Glades Tier and how it affects GTAC, and his temporary involvement with the Glades Tier Project. He talked about things that would be considered revitalization, such as infrastructure, parks & recreation, social issues, water, and paving & drainage. Mr. Gainer asked for comments.

Caroline Tompkins-Blell commented on the quality of education and the number of students that graduate without a High School Diploma. She stated that the census is 60%. She cannot relate to not discussing how to change this. There was discussion and dispute whether GTAC should be discussing the FCAT Test, how it is affecting student's future and also the fact that the Glades schools are considered failing schools academically.

Mr. Green briefly reminded the group of past GTAC meetings and the impact it made on resolving issues in the Glades.

Ms. Tompkins-Blell had a concern with the students drop out rate and no job training skills. She asked how could the Glades move forward.

Participant Updates and Comments

Pam Nolan, Economic Development reported on the following:

- UFCA Grant for \$114,000, The Edge Center, and Workforce Alliance (Denny Abbott) assisted 125 businesses in the Glades with technical assistance. They have completed the Glades business plan approved by Tri-City and is scheduled to be presented to the BCC in March '03. They have secured a \$125,000 grant to continue assisting businesses in the Glades.

- The Development Regions Grant Program began January 21st. Applications are to be submitted to the Economic Development's office by March 14th, 5:00p.m. All contracts will be submitted for BCC approval in June. You may contact June Howard, The Edge Center if anyone needs assistance in completing the application. There is no fee.
- She met with TKM Firms. This firm is building a packing-house in the Glades and will be hiring sixty (60) people.

Alejandro Ulloa inquired if there is a policy for job creation when a company gets approval for a grant. Pam Nolan responded yes, but in this area it is difficult sometimes to create jobs. This is the only area that is allowed retention. The County regulation is one job per \$10,000 of the funds received.

Duane Gainer inquired if Canal Point was funded by a grant. Ms. Nolan responded the Canal Point grant is for sewer. A Sewer Study was just completed for Canal Point. They are requesting Board approval for \$190,000 through the CCRT. Also USDA and State funds will be used to provide sewer in the Canal Point area commercial district. It will be available later to the residents, if they want to connect. Discussion ensued regarding fees and policies involved with connection of sewer.

Don Brown, P.B.C. Convention and Visitors Bureau reported on the following:

- They are marketing the Lake Region as part of the Conventions and Visitors Bureau Marketing Program worldwide.
- The Everglades adventure in Pahokee, is basically the privatization of the Pahokee Marina and Camp Grounds, is going very well. They have increased the number of campers in the area. They are building a number of permanent structures, plans for a restaurant, and other projects.
- In Belle Glade there is movement to improve campground facilities and long range plans to do projects around the Lagoons for a nature trail.
- Recently secured plans to host the amateur bass fishing event to be held in Lake Okeechobee during Labor Day holiday. This will be considered the largest fishing event and will be advertised worldwide. He is anticipating 25,000 visitors from outside Palm Beach County. The bounty is \$8,000,000 for the largest bass caught. He discussed phases of preparing for this event. He is looking forward to working with all the different communities in the Glades area.

Alejandro Ulloa inquired if there is a five-year projected plan for Lake Okeechobee. Mr. Brown responded that the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail is going to cause an increase in tourism in the Glades. Discussion ensued regarding being prepared to accommodate the needs of the people that will be visiting the Glades area.

Mr. Green commented regarding the entrance to the Glades. He stated that the entrance is a turn-off. He mentioned that other towns in the Glades are making an effort to enhance the entrance.

Mr. Gainer mentioned a study he read about that was professionally done by Mahoney Consultants with pictures of the entrance. Ms. Moore commented that the study and the design of the study are included in the Belle Glade Master Plan. Discussion ensued regarding the study and funding the implementation of the project.

Pam Nolan inquired if there are impact fees charged to the businesses. Therefore why isn't the money being used to construct the area of the entrance to the Glades? Discussion ensued regarding beautification funds already allocated for the beautification of the entrances into all the cities in the Glades area.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.

Next meeting is on February 27, 2003 at 9:30 am.

Minutes prepared by:

Duane R. Gainer, Senior Planner