

# **Glades Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC)**

**Meeting of February 26, 2004**

**9:30 – 11:00 a.m.**

**Belle Glade City Hall – Commission Chambers**

## **Minutes**

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### **Present at the meeting:**

Gary Burroughs, Pahokee Fire Department  
Kathleen Cole, P.B.C. Human Services  
Steve Delai, P.B.C. Fire Rescue  
Dale Erickson, Erickson Farms  
Felicia Everett, City of South Bay  
Duane Gainer, P.B.C. Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)  
Roswell Harrington, Sam's Investment Corporation  
Edward Lowery, P.B.C. Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)  
Sandy Mercer, Canal Point Citizen  
Angela Morlok, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)  
Kathleen Owens, P.B.C. Fire Rescue  
Clifford Stuart, Stuart Farm  
William Wynn, P.B.C. Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)

### **Absent:**

Denny Abbott, P.B.C. Workforce Alliance  
Sue A. Bailey, Commissioner Tony Masilotti's Office  
Debbie Blauvelt, Glades Community Development Corporation  
Caroline Tompkins-Blell, Glades Community Development Corp. (GCDC)  
Ralph Butts, City of Belle Glade Community Development  
Doug Chozianin, Construction Arts Associates  
Felicia Everett, City of South Bay  
Joe Glucksman, Florida Housing Corporation  
Douglas Green, City of Belle Glade, Workforce Development Center  
June Howard, EDGE Center  
Kelly Johnson, Glades Initiative  
Lillie Latimore, City Manager, Pahokee  
Raoul Pierre-Louis, Business Loan Fund (Representative for John Brown)  
Lelia Menefee, Workforce Development Center  
Matt Mills, City of Belle Glade

**Absent:** (Cont'd)

Tammy Moore, South Florida Water Management District  
Pam Nolan, P.B.C. Economic Development  
Michael Sklar, P.B.C. Housing & Community Development (HCD)  
Barbara Spence, City of Belle Glade  
Andrea Stephenson, Glades Initiative  
Alice Thompson, Pahokee Chamber of Commerce  
Autrie Moore-Williams, Glades Community Development Corporation  
Kay Zaccagnino, P.B.C. School District

**Welcome and Introduction**

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. Mr. Gainer welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced himself and asked everyone to introduce himself or herself.

**Review of Minutes (January '04 Meeting)**

Mr. Gainer asked if there were corrections to the minutes. There were no corrections. Angela Morlock noted that the members contact list needs updating.

**Group Discussion**

Mr. Gainer stated that a few months ago, a concern about fire department service in the Glades was brought up. Kathy Owens, CCRT member, contacted him after reading the minutes wanting to address some of those concerns. Mr. Gainer very briefly reviewed what the CCRT does and its mission. Mr. Lowery commented that it is the Office of Community Revitalization's job to make sure that questions are answered, and suggestions or descriptions of needs are communicated to County Administration in regards to the Glades community's future as it relates to economic development. We are also here to recommend remedies or strategies to some of the concerns that may be afflicting the Glades community.

Mr. Gainer mentioned that OCR would like to have a "FYI" presentation for each meeting. Today, OCR invited Mr. Steve Delai, Deputy Chief, from P.B.C. Fire Rescue, to give a presentation about the P.B.C. Fire Rescue Department.

Mr. Delai started his presentation by discussing in general what is happening regionally with fire service in Palm Beach County. The Board of County Commissioners, League of Cities, and the Fire Chiefs have been having some interesting discussions on the level of services to the community. It seems that some sort of an agreement will be going forward, over the next couple of months, to implement a voluntary process to establish a minimum level of service for fire rescue providers. Also, to establish work plans and criteria to help all the different agencies get to that level. There are a number of different models today in Palm Beach County and nationally for providing fire and rescue services to communities. One of the analysis that came out after 9/11 was that in order to protect all of our communities, we really need to be able to put together personnel, to make sure equipment is compatible, to put together all the resources, be able to communicate, and to have personnel that are trained at the same level so that they can work safely together. All the discussions after 9/11, showed that some of the above-mentioned things are shortcomings.

In Palm Beach County, the Fire Chiefs and different leaders have been looking at ways to narrow the gap so that all fire rescue providers, in big emergencies, can work together and can provide better services. In the Glades, lines of demarcations are a little clearer because the communities are spread out and the population centers are separated by some distance as opposed to on the coast. The Board, league of cities, and municipalities have been working toward this goal and they came up with a plan that would set a minimum level of service criteria, such as: staffing, equipment, training, command system, radio communications & dispatching. This goal would set a common safety net, so that everyone in this business would be compatible. It seems that the plan will be to adopt this criteria of minimum level of service and then embark upon a three (3) year voluntary plan, so that everyone can put in place the mechanisms to bring their agencies up to those standards. This will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners on March 30, 2004 for approval. The cities are asked by July 1<sup>st</sup> to take this model of resolution and adopt those criteria back to all their jurisdictions. Most of the providers already meet this level of service. The cities that are not at this level are already evaluating what it is going to take to accomplish this.

Mr. Delai discussed what all of this means to the Glades. Palm Beach County Fire Rescue has been in discussion for approximately the past five (5) to eight (8) years on ways to enhance fire rescue service in the Glades area. There are four (4) agencies in the Glades that currently either provide or have coverage issues: the County, Pahokee, Belle Glade, and South Bay. The County contracts out with these three municipalities to provide the fire rescue services to the unincorporated areas. The provision of having fire rescue services are very costly. In most cases, the office is personnel driven because you have to have personnel 24 hours a day to respond to the calls. In order to do this economically, the discussion has been having a single provider; whether it is

County, Belle Glade, Pahokee, or another organization is probably the most effective way to run an organization like that.

Mr. Delai further discussed the level of service option criteria, as it stands now. In order for an agency under a common dispatch system or under a common protocol to have the ability to respond to an emergency, there would need to be eleven people on duty. If each agency in this area had to meet this level of criteria or standard, it would not be economical or feasible. In some other areas, the cities are looking at partnering, contracting with a neighbor, or merging two departments together to provide this type of service (manpower and equipment) under one control. The discussion is if this is adopted, the County, league of cities, and municipalities may need to readdress this issue as far as the Glades meeting that standard.

Mr. Delai stated that P.B.C. Fire Rescue is not a service provider for the Glades area. Fire Rescue does not have a lot of the unincorporated area but they do have a MSTU (Municipal Service Taxing Unit) that covers the area as far as generating tax revenue. The money is used to contract with Pahokee and Belle Glade to provide services generally north of State Road 180 and south of State Road 180. MSTU is taxes collected for municipal services.

Edward Lowery commented that all three (3) of the communities are actively pursuing revitalization/redevelopment activities. The City of Belle Glade is looking to within the next two to three (2 to 3) years having a few hundred single-family housing units. The City of Pahokee is interested in adding a few hundred housing units, multi-family and single-family. Mr. Lowery inquired with this type of project if this would mean an increase in cost relating to Fire Rescue services. Mr. Delai responded no, not an increase in personnel type numbers. He explained that whether you have one (1) call or ten (10) calls a day, you have to be at that readiness level to respond. Whether it happens once or twice, the cost is no different. It is the readiness factor that you pay for. Fire Rescue strives to have a fire station site in a location that will be efficient in responding to a large percentage of the calls, in the least amount of time possible. He further commented that if you look at the concentration of the population, the majority of the calls are centered around the current fire stations.

Mr. Lowery inquired about the communities near the County border next to Clewiston (Bean City, Lake Harbor). He inquired if the County has ever contracted with a fire rescue agency outside of Palm Beach County to provide fire service for a Palm Beach County community. He further asked if Bean City & Lake Harbor were closer to Clewiston or South Bay. If there is an emergency this could become a factor. Felicia Everett answered they are both closer to South Bay. Mr. Harrington commented that, at one time, Lake Harbor had its own volunteer Fire Station. There was group discussion about fire service rendered and the coverage area.

Mr. Del Erickson inquired about the Fire Rescue contract for the northwest part of the County. Mr. Delai responded the contract is with the City of Pahokee. Mr. Erickson asked who determines the budget. Mr. Delai responded the budget is submitted for P.B.C. Fire Rescue Department's review. He also inquired about oversight the County has on the budget. Mr. Delai responded that Fire Rescue requires the City of Pahokee to do certain things, such as: provide a certain amount of people, equipment, responses, and training. We fund a portion of the total contract. At the end of the year, an audit is done. If there are any funds that were not expended, Fire Rescue will get a credit the next year.

Mr. Erickson commented that Chief Burroughs showed him a picture of a promised new Fire Station to be in a more advantageous area. The current location is limited by expansion and next to the water plant. This is not a very good location. He further commented that the promise of upgrading service has not been great. Mr. Harrington shared an experience involving an emergency situation and the response time took twenty (20) minutes.

Mr. Harrington stated that the Canal Point Alliance Club started the northwest fire district. His family was involved with setting up the district and served in the fire department. He expressed that there is a problem with the service. When the district was absorbed by the City of Pahokee, there were two (2) community meetings held: one in Canal Point and one in Pahokee. They were promised that a new fire department would be built and level of services would be maintained. Mr. Harrington also shared an incident involved calling emergency service and the department had a problem responding because they were not familiar with the addresses. This incident was prior to the addressing system totally done in-depth. The paramedics went five (5) miles past the distance he provided. The addressing system used in the Bell South phone book and the Palm Beach County Tax website is not correct. Someone asked what could be done to correct the addressing issues. The group discussed places with discrepancy of addresses.

Mr. Gainer commented that the CCRT has addressed issues of this nature in Limestone Creek, Jupiter, FL. Mr. Gainer asked what could OCR do to assist with this issue. Mr. Erickson commented that the County did grid this area and everyone was given an address. One of the problems is getting the correct addresses to the agencies, such as 911, Bell South, FPL, etc. The group discussed the problems with the addressing system.

Mr. Cliff Stuart, from Stuart Farms Service, inquired about the distance between fire hydrants. Mr. Delai responded 500 feet for residential. Mr. Stuart made a suggestion to place numbers on the fire hydrants to assist with direction for the fire department and the ambulance service.

Someone inquired about Chief Burroughs having an acceptable fire station. Mr. Delai responded that the department has been looking for an acceptable site for a fire station. The existing fire station is old and he is looking at expanding the site. Mr. Harrington commented that fire rescue stated that Canal Point would be getting a new fire station at the location off of Farmers Market Road. However, he recently heard of other plans for the property.

Someone asked Chief Burroughs how much urgency is there for a new fire station. Mr. Burroughs commented that they have outgrown the station and there are some situations that need to be addressed. Expansion would resolve most of those issues. He discussed ways that the expansion could be done. He was asked if the fire station location is centrally located. Mr. Burroughs responded that more than sixty two percent (62%) of the calls volume is within three (3) minutes of the station. There was discussion if the station was centrally located.

Edward Lowery stated that the OCR would look into the issue with the 911 system, Southern Bell, & FPL regarding the addressing system used and hopefully he will have an answer by the next GTAC meeting.

Mr. Harrington mentioned another issue in Canal Point, such as the upgrading of the Water Department facilities or systems (water lines & fire hydrants) not completed. He inquired about the nearest fire hydrant to the police station. Mr. Delai commented that the fire department just came in possession of the new tanker. Mr. Delai commented that the Fire Rescue Department does not totally depend on fire hydrants. This is why the tankers are available. The Fire Rescue Department has the ability to draft trucks out of impound water supply, to bring their own water, and to drop a pump.

Mr. Lowery thanked Chief Delai for coming and meeting with the citizens. It is good when the citizens get a chance to hear directly what is going on. Chief Delai commented that Chief Burroughs is the Fire Department representative in the Glades. He does a very good job relaying issues or when issues need to be addressed to the department.

## **Participant Updates and Comments**

### **Dale Erickson, Erickson Farms, reported on the following:**

- Canal Point School – This property is an opportunity and it has potential. Something needs to be done as soon as possible with the property.

Mr. Harrington commented that the property is entitled. The School Board does not own the property outright. The School Board has use of the property as long as it is used for educational purposes. They cannot sell the property nor dispose of it. Once the School Board tries to do any of those things mentioned, the property goes back to its heirs. Mr. Erickson stated that one of the family members told him that a release was signed and the School Board can sell the property.

Mr. Lowery asked if anyone had a name and contact telephone number for the School Board. No one had a number available. Mr. Lowery commented that he would follow up on this.

Ms. Morlock inquired about the distance of the school building to the railroad. Mr. Erickson responded that the basketball court is within twenty-five feet (25 ft) of the railroad. Ms. Morlock stated that she asked because they (MPO) are identifying property for two (2) sites: 1) historic transportation railroad museum, and 2) maintenance facility to rehabilitate rail cars. Mr. Harrington briefly gave a description about problems with the structure of the school's building and the property. Ms. Sanders is interested in looking at the building and she asked for a contact name and telephone number. Mr. Lowery responded that she could contact Palm Beach County Property & Real Estate Management (PREM).

Mr. Stuart mentioned another problem existing with the water and there is a need for a water plant in the Glades. He described the design of a water system in another area and believes this system could work for the Glades also. Mr. Lowery commented that he would contact Gary Dernlan, Director of Water Utilities, to respond to this issue or he will have an answer by the next GTAC meeting.

## **Participant Updates and Comments** (Cont'd)

### **Felicia Everett, City of South Bay, reported on the following:**

- On March 9<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00a.m., a strategy meeting (economic development master plan for S.R. 80/U.S. 27) for the City of South Bay will be held. Mr. Lowery will be attending the meeting. The property along U.S. 27, they are getting ready to develop infrastructure. They would like to bring in proper commerce in order to make South Bay grow.
- Housing Development - Dominion Housing is in the process of signing the contract to develop 96 single-family homes. The project is located off of U.S. 27 north on the eastside, near the old Head Start Center.
- Completing the construction of the two (2) buildings on U.S. 27, in front of the RV Park. She further discussed other visions regarding the project.

Mr. Lowery asked if Villa Largo was inside of the City limits of South Bay. Ms. Everett responded yes, but it is privately owned. Mr. Lowery also inquired about the status of the completion of the project. Ms. Everett responded the homes would be selling for approximately \$95,000. Issues with the project were discussed.

Ms. Mercer asked if it were true that, once the development was 100% occupied, the City of South Bay would be responsible for the maintenance of the streets, etc. Mr. Lowery responded the County has already made a commitment to assist the City in upgrading the roads.

- The old barracks of US Sugar (located at the end of NW 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup> Streets) – Mr. Dale Austin has purchased the property. Mr. Austin is in the process of submitting a proposal to have the area rezoned for multi-family and to rehab the building to develop upscale apartments.

Mr. Harrington inquired about whether State Roads 441 & 98 are going to be re-paved in Canal Point. Someone responded that she would get back with him.

Mr. Harrington commented that he has one to two (1 to 2) people a day coming into his store asking for directions. He is passing out the Heritage Trail maps. The map has several errors: Belle Glade Marina is located at Canal Point Alliance Club Park, and State Road 80 is labeled 441. Mr. Lowery stated that he would contact Jennifer Pellechio, South Florida Regional Planning Council, in reference to this concern.



### **Angela Morlok, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

- Still working on the three projects. The third project is the Steam Locomotive. They have contacted Tallahassee requesting funds to get the project moving. Ms. Morlock asked to be notified whenever another tri-city meeting is being held to discuss this issue again. She mentioned that Allan Harper, who owns the Silver Tune Durango and Smokey Mountain Railroad, the American Railroad Preservation (private non-profit organization), and the FEC Historian of the Country are involved in this project. Ms. Morlock discussed the project in detail.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Gainer stated that if there are no other questions or comments, the meeting is adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.

Minutes prepared by:

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Joyce Harrell, Secretary  
P.B.C. Office of Community Revitalization

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