

Glades Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC)

Meeting of January 27, 2005

9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Belle Glade City Hall – Conference Room “B”

Minutes

Present at the meeting:

Denny Abbott, Employer Services Executive, P.B.C. Workforce Alliance
Dante Bowers, City of Belle Glade
Duane Gainer, P.B.C. Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)
Roswell Harrington, Canal Point Resident
Kevin Johns, P.B.C. Economic Development Office
Lillie Latimore, City Manager, Pahokee
Pam Nolan, P.B.C. Economic Development
Barbara Spence, City of Belle Glade, Community Development
Houston Tate, City Manager, City of Belle Glade
William Wynn, P.B.C. Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)

Absent:

Debby Blauvelt, Glades Community Development Center
Ralph Butts, City of Belle Glade Community Development
Albert Dowdell, Police Chief, City of Belle Glade
Dale Erickson, Erickson Farms
Joe Glucksman, Florida Housing Corporation
Douglas Green, City of Belle Glade, Workforce Development Center
Mark Huggins, USDA Rural Development
Diana Hughes, City of Belle Glade
Renesheia Inman, City of South Bay
Iris Jackson, City of Belle Glade, Community Development
Kelly Johnson, Glades Initiative
Arthur Kirstein, P.B.C. Cooperative Extension
Raoul Pierre-Louis, Business Loan Fund (Representative for John Brown)
Sandy Mercer, Canal Point Citizen
Matt Mills, City of Belle Glade
Tammy Moore, South Florida Water Management District
Angela Morlok, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Absent: (Cont'd)

Theresa Newton, USDA/Rural Development
Michael Sklar, P.B.C. Housing & Community Development (HCD)
Stephanie Rice, Belle Glade Fire Dept.
Alan Schafler, CEO, EDGE
Andrea Stephenson, Glades Initiative
Clifford Stuart, Stuart Farm
Alice Thompson, Pahokee Chamber of Commerce
Autrie Moore-Williams, Glades Community Development Corporation

Welcome and Introduction

Mr. Gainer thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. Mr. Gainer asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Review of Minutes (November '04 Meeting)

Mr. Gainer distributed copies of the November '04 minutes. He asked if there were corrections to the minutes. There were no corrections to the minutes.

Participant Updates and Comments

Mr. Gainer stated that during the November '04 meeting, a suggestion was made to invite Mr. Kevin Johns, Economic Development, to address concerns regarding Canal Point.

Mr. Harrington had a concern about major layoffs that have occurred in Canal Point. He mentioned that Bryant Mill will be closing in two (2) years; Bryant Village closed in June '04, which displaced families; and Atlantic Sugar will be closing. This will not only affect Canal Point, it will affect all of the Glades areas. They will be losing two (2) major mill operations.

Mr. Johns stated that it is imperative that the group come together as a team and start implementing action that will bring employment to the area.

Mr. Johns mentioned the business plan that was put together about two (2) or three (3) years ago. It was recommended that a leadership frame of mind be established to bring a regional farmers market, which would generate agricultural business and also create a few hundred businesses. Mr. Johns further discussed the plans of the project and then he asked the group for other ideas or suggestions.

Participant Updates and Comments (Cont'd)

Mr. Harrington mentioned a study done in central Florida. The study started in Melbourne about ten (10) years ago regarding taking a look at doing something with phosphate mines. They should begin by looking at bio-mas/recycling/energy; basically meaning eco-production on the reclaimed phosphate land mines, which included looking at the sugar cane. It was suggested by Tom Shuman to do a study here in the Glades. The cost factors are included in the report. Also in the report, it was mentioned that a grant is available for doing research.

Mr. Johns suggested that the group take on the responsibility of coming up with and presenting the initial idea to the sugar cane companies from a county perspective and requesting if whether the county would be willing to do a joint venture on a pilot project. He asked Pam Nolan to help out with setting up a meeting with one of the sugar companies.

Mr. Harrington mentioned that the study should include Clewiston. He suggested contacting Stewart Martin, Stewart Martin Foundation in Clewiston. Mr. John's stated he would do a follow-up.

Mr. Tate briefly mentioned an opportunity presented to the City of Belle Glade involving job creation. A meeting is being held today with Mr. Tate, the business group, and the City Commissioners. Mr. Tate will be going to Tallahassee next week to discuss expanding the Business Park. The group discussed the land involved in this expansion. Pam Nolan stated that he should contact Gary Hines, Vice President, Business Development Board (marketing person), at (561) 835-1008.

Mr. Johns stated that he and Lillie Latimore met with some people in Atlanta about creating a state farmers market. Mr. Johns had another meeting to attend and asked that Ms. Latimore briefly talk about this idea.

Mr. Harrington mentioned that there is land owned by PRIDE, off State Road 98. He also mentioned that IRCC (Indian River Community College) is in partnership with the University of Florida offering farming classes. The group discussed other schools that offer farming classes.

Ms. Latimore stated that the Glades has an extremely weak labor market; with no vocational training; and long-term unemployment. It is important that we look at these needs and the long-term impact with unemployment.

In reference to Mr. Tate's aquaculture business opportunity, which would bring in jobs to the Glades, Ms. Nolan recommended that he contact Arthur Kirstein and Gary Hines.

Participant Updates and Comments (Cont'd)

Pam Nolan, Economic Development, reported on the following:

- Vocational Training – Ms. Nolan attended a meeting, in the past, with Vicki Silver at the Palm Beach Community College. She will try to bring that information to GTAC.

Mr. Gainer talked about the procedures and requirements regarding the job-training program that he managed in the Glades. The group shared their concerns regarding job-training programs, such as: time of scheduled classes, student's criminal background, and education requirements.

The group agrees that the School District, Gary Hines, Arthur Kirstein, and other resources need to be involved in this discussion; along with the Glades municipalities.

- Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail – She briefly explained the design plan and new types of businesses included in the plans.
- Pahokee Marina – is on its way to being developed.
- Development Regions Grant – The maximum grant request is \$50,000. A minimum of one full-time equivalent must be job created/retained per \$10,000 request. The deadline for submitting applications is March 11th. Ms. Nolan distributed applications.

Mr. Duane Gainer, OCR, reported on the following:

- OCR was allocated \$2.9 million for FY '05. He is in the process of reviewing all the funding allocations for projects since the beginning of the program. He anticipates there will be money left over from projects that were completed.
- He talked about inviting hikers to a GTAC meeting to give their input or concerns with the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail.

Ms. Bell-Spence inquired about the Home Beautification Program. Mr. Wynn comments were that OCR is not accepting applications at this time because the Neighborhood Home Beautification Program have not been approved by the Board of County Commissioners. The program will be presented to the BCC on March 1st for approval. The requirements of the program are: the funding limit is \$3,000 per property, the property has to be in an identified CCRT area, and the program is for exterior beautification. The program is being partnered with the Solid Waste Authority. Joanna Aiken is the contact person. The Solid Waste Authority will be distributing the applications and OCR will be processing the applications.

Participant Updates and Comments (Cont'd)

Denny Abbott, Employer Services Executive, P.B.C. Workforce Alliance:

- Business Opportunity Day – event will be held on March 22nd. This is an opportunity for procurement people from both public & private sector in South Florida to spend a day in the Glades. A tour of the Glades is scheduled. After the tour will be a luncheon. Congressman Hastings will be the guest speaker. Also, the Mayors of the Glades area will be speaking, speaker from OCR, and Commissioner Masilotti will be doing the welcome. After the luncheon, there will be business matchmaking with the buyers.

Mr. Tate would like to meet with Mr. Abbott after the meeting to discuss the city working along with the port to establish businesses that are import/export related.

Mr. Harrington asked for an update regarding the canal point sewer project. Ms. Nolan commented that the Engineering Consultants process should be done by the end of July. Then the bidding process will take approximately three (3) months. She informed the group that the funds are in place for this project.

Ms. Nolan stated that Economic Development put together a steering committee for the Economic Summit Program. The steering committee will consist of seven (7) panels. If anyone is interested, she will send the information to you. The first meeting will be held on February 17th, 3:30pm – 5:00pm, at the Cooperative Extension/Clayton Hutchinson Agricultural Center, located at 559 Military Trail. It is very important that the Glades have some input at the meetings.

Mr. Gainer stated that The 4th Annual Smart Growth Conference would be held this weekend. He will be speaking on Growth Management during the session called Preserving the Environment in Dense & Sprawling Regions.

Adjournment:

Mr. Gainer stated that if there were no other questions or comments, the meeting is adjourned. The next meeting will be on February 24th, held at the City of Pahokee.

Minutes prepared by:

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