

Glades Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC)

Meeting of March 23, 2006

9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

South Bay City Hall

Minutes

Present at the meeting:

Denny Abbott, Employer Services Executive, P.B.C. Workforce Alliance
Lt. Alonso, P.B.C. Sheriff's Office
Duane Gainer, P.B.C. Office of Community Revitalization
Sgt. Linda Hamilton, P.B.C. Sheriff's Office
Roswell Harrington, Canal Point
Linda Jeter, P.B.C. Housing & Community Development
Eric Lewis, City of South Bay
Lt. Ed Luty, P.B.C. Sheriff's Office
Arthur Kirstein, P.B.C. Cooperative Extension
Pam Nolan, P.B.C. Economic Development
Corporal Thomas Padgett, P.B.C. Sheriff's Office
Carlos Serrano, P.B.C. Housing & Community Development
Barbara Bell-Spence, City of Belle Glade
Donna Stokes, P.B.C. Workforce Alliance
William Wynn, P.B.C. Office of Community Revitalization
Palm Beach Post (name unknown)

1. Welcome and Introduction

Mr. Gainer introduced himself and asked everyone to introduce her or himself. He introduced Eric Lewis, the new Community Development Director. He thanked Mr. Lewis for providing the refreshments.

2. Review of Minutes (February Meeting)

Mr. Gainer asked if there were corrections to the February 23, 2006 minutes. There were no corrections to the minutes.

Mr. Gainer commented regarding the Neighborhood Partnership Grant (NPG) Program. He stated that Chrystal Mathews gave a report at last month's meeting. A workshop was held in the Glades for anyone that had questions regarding the NPG Application.

3. **Follow-up Issues** – February Meeting

William Wynn reviewed the follow-up issues with the group:

- a) Canal Point residents inquired about the status of the community center opening at the Canal Point Park.

Follow-up: Mr. Wynn contacted Parks & Recreation Department. The park site is open except for the community center. Currently the community center is being tested for asbestos. A date is not known as to when the building will be opening.

Roswell Harrington expressed a concern regarding the building needing to be available and open to the public, especially with the hurricane season coming up. He further questioned why the building was not tested during the renovation of the building.

Mr. Gainer informed the group that Chuck Tear, the new Director of Emergency & Operations, would be giving a presentation at the April 5th CCRT Meeting. Mr. Gainer stated that he would be inviting Mr. Tear to give a presentation at a GTAC meeting.

- b) Traffic signal at intersection of East Main & Everglades.

Follow-up: Mr. Wynn stated that he contacted P.B.C. Engineering and was told that East Main & Everglades run parallel of each other.

Mr. Harrington commented that the streets do intersect and he proceeded to give the directions of the streets. He stated that Everglades (S.R. 15) runs north; and East Main (S.R. 700) runs east & west. He further stated that he contacted the County, and FP&L. FP&L came out and repaired the streetlight about one (1) week ago.

4. **Presentation by P.B.C. Housing & Community Development/Commission on Affordable Housing:** Linda Jeter

Ms. Jeter began by stating that the County received \$4.4 million dollars to provide assistance with hurricane related repairs. HCD provides a variety of resources available to the community. HCD is working in the cities within the County. This program is an income-based program. Based on how you qualify, it determines the maximum amount of money you can receive; along with the terms and conditions. She further stated that if the repairs or services are \$5,000 or less, there is no payment due; and if the repairs or services are over \$5,000, there will be terms and conditions that is due upon sale/transfer or conveyance of the property.

Ms. Jeter talked about the Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program. This program gives the homeowner an opportunity to make almost any type of repair that is needed to bring the house in compliance with local codes. Ms. Jeter further explained the application process. She also explained the process for disbursements of funds to the contractor and final inspection.

Ms. Jeter talked about the Rental Housing Rehabilitation Program. This program provides assistance for non-profit, or for-profit. The maximum amount for this program is \$25,000, and all rental units are to be rented to low or very low-income eligible occupants.

Ms. Jeter talked about the Land Acquisition Program. This program is for non-profit, or for-profit; with intent that people who are income eligible will occupy the units. This program allows you to purchase a vacant lot. The maximum amount for this program is up to \$50,000 per lot.

Ms. Jeter also stated that HCD has a program for mobile home repairs. This program provides assistance for mobile homes built since 1994. The program provides limited repairs to extremely low, very low, and low income persons. The maximum amount is up to \$40,000. If the home has 40% or more damage, the \$40,000 could be used to purchase a new home.

Ms. Jeter further mentioned other programs; which HCD is no longer providing assistance for: eviction notices from landlord, relocate renters, and relocate homeowners that have 50% or more damage to the residence.

Ms. Jeter stated that there is a lack of contractors in Palm Beach County available to do the work. HCD still has a number of outstanding cases for repairs to be done. HCD's concern is to try and get as many people stable by the hurricane season. Ms. Jeter asked the group for questions.

Mr. Harrington asked if she had any literature on the programs presented today. Ms. Jeter asked Mr. Harrington for his contact information so that she could send the information to him. She also stated that she brought applications for distribution.

Pam Nolan inquired about the status of the applications in the Glades. Ms. Jeter commented that as far as taking applications, she has not received that many. The Manager of the Commission on Affordable Housing is in the process of contacting all of the Community Development Directors to schedule a meeting to discuss HCD's programs available.

Ms. Nolan further commented that there are still some people who are displaced (living in churches, trailers, & etc). Her concern is with people not being able to afford the \$5,000 to connect to the utilities in order to live in the trailers. FEMA is supplying some of the trailers.

Barbara Bell-Spence commented regarding a meeting held last year with HCD and the City of Belle Glade to go over the programs HCD had available. She stated that they were told HCD was finishing up with the '04 applications. She was not aware that more funds were going to be allocated for '05, and that the programs were available. Ms. Jeter apologized and stated another meeting will be held to go over the same process. HCD has been very busy working with damages from both hurricanes. The group began to comment about keeping the Glades informed.

Mr. Harrington commented about eligibility for housing, and he explained a situation that happened with him needing a place to live. He stated that he is a single man, and County Engineering had condemned the building that he was living in. He did not qualify for a two- or three-bedroom occupancy. He mentioned the lack of one-bedroom occupancies. He further commented that he contacted NOVA and he was qualified for a trailer; which he now lives in. His concern is with single people being refused for housing because the only housing available is two or three-bedrooms. Ms. Jeter stated that although HCD is not housing, HCD has helped many people coming from shelters to get permanent housing. She further stated that it is incumbent for the individual to find suitable housing. HCD does not have the staff to handle this but HCD will help with first, last & security; provided the individual have the capacity to pay the rent. Mr. Harrington commented that his neighbor, who is single, needs a place to live. His roof still has not been repaired. He is single and does not qualify for a two- or three-bedroom occupancy.

Ms. Bell-Spence commented that in the Glades there has always been an issue with a lack of housing. She inquired about what programs does HCD have to help these people. Ms. Jeter responded that they should apply to HCD. She stated that if the residence is not in livable condition, HCD could provide assistance for up to six (6) months while the residence is being repaired. The family has to get an estimate from the contractor and hopefully within the six (6) month timeframe, the house will be completed and ready for occupancy. Ms. Bell-Spence asked Ms. Jeter to email her an application.

Deputy Alonso commented that his mother owns a mobile home park in the Glades and the people that live there own their mobile homes. Some of the mobile homes were totally destroyed. He commented regarding a family that is still living with a family member in the same mobile home park. The family is still waiting on FEMA for assistance. Deputy Alonso inquired if the family would be eligible for HCD's program. Ms. Jeter responded yes, they would need to apply and it is based upon income eligibility.

Donna Stokes commented in relation to a comment made by Ms. Jeter regarding working with Workforce Alliance on getting information out to the Glades. She stated that she has been employed by Workforce Alliance for three (3) months and she would be sure to pass the information on or she would be the contact person herself. Ms. Stokes asked Ms. Jeter for her contact information.

Mr. Harrington suggested that in preparation for the next hurricane season, HCD coordinate with Dean Wells' office and County Engineering staff regarding condemning buildings. People may still be living in the buildings, and may need to find somewhere else to live.

Ms. Nolan inquired if there were other types of modular units that could be transported to the Glades. Ms. Jeter responded that HCD does not have information on trailer availability. Ms. Jeter further commented that \$4.4 million dollars will not resolve all of the outstanding issues and cannot begin to address all of the needs; but once an individual complete an application, HCD will do everything it can to assist them.

Mr. Harrington commented that South Bay RV Park still has about thirty (30) people that were evicted from the various communities around the lake. Also there are people still living in FEMA temporary housing. Eric Lewis commented that the City of South Bay has seventy-one (71) people living in FEMA trailers. Ms. Jeter suggested that they contact HCD, find suitable housing, and be able to show that they can afford to pay the rent after the County provides them with first, last and security. She suggested that this is done as soon as possible because the County is in the process of phasing out the rental program.

Eric Lewis also commented that the County does not do a good job at keeping the Glades in the loop of things as far as what goes on with the coast. He feels there is a vast need on the western side of the County.

Mr. Gainer inquired if whether trailers built prior to 1994 were eligible for HCD's program. Ms. Jeter stated that the bottom line is there are not enough available contractors to do the work. Additionally, there is a shortage of material.

Ms. Bell-Spence inquired about the applications that were completed by people that needed housing assistance after the hurricane. She stated that the applications were passed on to Sandy, with FEMA. Ms. Jeter responded that HCD did not received any applications from Sandy. She further stated that HCD worked with Sandy on some other issues. Ms. Bell-Spence stated that she kept copies of the information. Ms. Jeter asked Ms. Bell-Spence to send her a copy the documentation.

Sgt. Hamilton commented that after the hurricane, the Sheriff's Office brought in Jacksonville and Gainesville Sheriff's Office, and organizations or agencies that only came to the Glades to help out. She stated that it seem as though the entire County should have focused, as a priority, on the western communities. After the hurricane, they identified 100 families that had no means of communication. She mentioned that a generous donor, from Royal Palm, had heard about the devastation in the Glades. He helped the families with their immediate needs.

Mr. Gainer commented that immediately after the hurricane, OCR did neighborhood assessments. Also, OCR assisted with distribution of tarps. He stated that in his opinion the coast had a lot of damage also. He agrees that the various departments, community support, and efforts from outside were not coordinated properly. It seems every one was in a survival mode. He mentioned that some people had left their homes and went other places during the hurricane. Mr. Gainer further commented that OCR is working on an emergency operation procedure for OCR staff.

Ms. Nolan commented that Butch Truesdale, with EOC, is having a workshop on what you do after the hurricane. The workshop is called Post Disaster Economic Redevelopment Planning Workshop. The workshop is being held on April 19th (Wednesday), 7:00a.m. – 4:30p.m. Some of the topics for discussion: Balancing pressures to rebuild quickly versus rebuilt starter; sustaining governmental services and face of economic crisis; recovery/retaining our core business community & workforce retention redevelopment; post disaster housing issues and repopulation strategies; and post disaster quality of life issues.

Ms. Nolan further commented that the small communities are close knit. It is important for people to notify a neighbor or someone if they are leaving their home.

Mr. Gainer commented that it took OCR staff two (2) weeks to assess the needs of the 104 CCRT areas. He talked about the importance of identifying the needs of the community by age, health, and special needs.

Ms. Jeter made a correction regarding rehabilitation of mobile homes. She stated that there is limited assistance for mobile homes built prior to 1994 done on a case-by case basis.

5. Participant Updates and Comments

Mr. Harrington commented regarding the Heritage Trail Meeting. He stated that during the meeting the group updated the following: map, relocated the Belle Glade Marina to its appropriate location in Canal Point, and made some additions to the marina. He mentioned that the maps were being distributed.

Ms. Bell-Spence commented that the City of Belle Glade is having a meeting on March 29th, 6:00p.m., at the City Hall of West Palm Beach. This meeting is being held to enhance the number of certified contractors. They are inviting the local contractors to attend the meeting. She stated that Alvin Jackson, from Accelerated Eight, would be speaking with the contractors about some of the other projects going on in the area.

Mr. Harrington commented regarding the Canal Point Elementary School property. He mentioned that Dale Erickson held a meeting to discuss the property.

Pam Nolan, Economic Development, reported on the following:

- Request For Proposal (RFP) for Public Market Consultant to create a wholesale/retail market over 50,000 sq. ft. - She is on the selection committee.
- Canal Point Sewer – The project has not gone out for bid yet. The engineers gave the preliminary drawings to USDA.
- Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail – The state allocated \$1 million dollars for the project. She is requesting another \$1 million dollars. The focus of the project is trailheads, entryways, and pathways leading to the trail. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board approved a request for \$925,000 for the project. A meeting is going to be scheduled at Dolly Hand for community participation for entryway contents. The entryways are to be approved by the Cities.

Angela Morlok commented that the Railroad Heritage Association letters for support should be finalized, and will be sent to all the different entities.

Mr. Gainer stated that he received correspondence regarding the Big Water Heritage Trail meeting that is to be held in Clewiston. Because he is no longer assigned to attend these meetings, he wanted to know who is going to represent the County at the meeting. Pam Nolan commented that Vicki Silver would be going to the meetings and she will give her the update. The project will be going before the Review Committee on April 12th.

Pam Nolan, Economic Development, reported on the following:
(Cont'd)

- Regional Economic Entity – She stated that Workforce Alliance helped out a lot with creating this entity. She announced that a meeting is being held today at 11:30a.m..

Art Kirstein commented that he is working on three (3) grants for three (3) major growers in the area. He is waiting on the Board to release the funding.

Sgt. Linda Hamilton commented that Harmony in the Streets event is coming up in June. The locations will be in South Bay (youth ranch), Okeechobee Center, and Pahokee. Next, the Sheriff's Office will be getting involved in Putting Kids First to be held on the coast. She would like representation from South Bay, Belle Glade, and Pahokee.

Sgt. Hamilton announced that a community meeting is being held on March 29th, 7:00p.m., in South Bay, at Town Park to hear the citizens concerns.

Mr. Gainer mentioned that Putting Kids First was originated from Kenwood Estates.

Mr. Gainer also briefly mentioned the five grants that were awarded during each REAP Session; which a six (6) week session was held in the Glades, and one was held on the coast.

William Wynn commented regarding the Home Beautification Program. He stated that OCR is requesting an increase regarding the \$3,000 cap per house. The project in Juno Ridge has been completed.

Mr. Gainer mentioned that OCR would be going to the Board in October with the funding recommendations.

Mr. Gainer further mentioned that OCR has been reviewing projects to reclaim any left over funds. These projects were either completed and had funds left over or projects that were not completed and had funds left over. The funds will be used for projects to benefit the community. If you have a project that will benefit a neighborhood or community, please send your requests to Edward Lowery, OCR Manager.

Mr. Gainer mentioned that Bret Baronak, who was responsible for the Visioning Workshops, is no longer with OCR. The Canal Point Visioning Workshop is on hold until someone is assigned to handle the project. The position is in the process of being advertised.

6. Adjournment of Meeting:

The next meeting will be held on April 27, 2006 at the Canal Point United Methodist Church.

Minutes prepared by:

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

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