

GTAC 07/24/08 Minutes

Attendees: Duane Gainer, OCR; Denny Abbott, Workforce Alliance; Carol Carlson, Workforce Alliance; Angela Morlock, MPO; Surina Brown, City of South Bay; Houston Tate, OCR; Mike McGinnis, Health Department; Kim Erickson, Canal Point; Diane Walker, PBSO/City of Pahokee Commissioner; Wayne Whittaker, Mayor; City of Pahokee; LaShonda Warren, City of Pahokee; Daisy ? City of Pahokee; Roswell Harrington, Canal Point; Ted Roberts, City of Pahokee

Welcome and Introductions

Follow-up Issues

Duane passed along Trombley's comments about the grant process being long and cumbersome.

REAP Grant recipients

- Canal Point Community Development – “Something to Talk About” program, bi-monthly publication - \$1,700
- Iglesia Bautista Independiente Emmanuel – Overjoyed Landscaping – develop a community garden and paint community center - \$2,200
- Noah Development – Purchase recreational material and have activities for Senior Community Center - \$2,500
- Pioneer Park Beacon Center – Community Comp – printer equipment and supplies to provide free computer classes and other training- \$2,200
- Urban League of Palm Beach County – Landscaping beautification for Youth program, to get youth involved in horticulture - \$2,500

Total project costs \$22,200: \$11,100 provided by OCR.

By attendance in the REAP training, neighborhoods or organizations or small groups of citizens can receive a grant to assist with improvements throughout the community.

Mr. Tate discussed a project in conjunction with the Health Department. A grant of up to \$50K per project in housing funds available beginning August 5 for developers committed to providing “green” affordable housing.

Discussion/Updates

Discussion turned to plans for the future, the purpose of GTAC, core responsibilities, roles of team members, GTAC priorities. Mr. Tate led the discussion with the question, “What do we want out of GTAC? What are the critical success factors? Who are the players that should be involved”? He spoke about reconstructing the committee to make it serve as a strong voice for the Glades. Currently, attendees are primarily County staff. At today's meeting, Glades elected officials and City staff were in attendance. Mr. Tate challenged those officials to help spread the information about GTAC being an available and important resource. GTAC needs to be able to collect data, learn of the concerns and

pass along the issues to Commissioner Santamaria. There are critical issues such as US Sugar's pullout and the potential of the inland port that we should be looking at and what will their ramifications be?

Who needs to be here? What are the priorities for the Glades? What is the merit of what we are doing?

How can we design GTAC? What methods will GTAC use? How can we improve how things get done? How can we improve the operation of GTAC? What is the overall strategy?

We need to structure each of the meetings so they are focused on the priorities of the Glades.

The Community Development staff of the Cities must be involved in GTAC. In this way, we can find out the needs of the communities and address those needs. Those communities will be able to position themselves to submit grants. Then the communities become part of the solution for the municipalities. They need to be trained and directed as to the opportunities and how to reach for them. Mr. Tate asked each of the Cities to begin working on getting the communities involved. Each part of the City has different issues.

How does an area like the Glades position itself so that it shows that it will be on the upswing? A hospital is being built, a hotel is coming in, and the inland port is a possibility. People will need to live close to where they work. When people drive through looking at the area, they need to be able to say, "There's a good feeling here. Improvement is being made."

What happens when the program is actually working?

What are the strengths and weaknesses?

Ted Roberts stated that Pahokee's concern is Code Enforcement. He stated that they would like to see the County Code Enforcement come out and give some guidance. Next, roads and streets are a concern. If the City looks good, it will be more attractive to people who come here. Pahokee needs guidance in how to set up a program to improve Code Enforcement and Roads. They also need guidance on how to help improve the image of entryways and what they can and cannot do as code enforcers. Mr. Tate asked Ted to evaluate the situation, define the exact needs, and to send specifics to him. Mr. Gainer said that he will speak to Larry Caraccio and others in code enforcement to provide assistance after OCR receive the info from Mr. Roberts.

Roswell Harrington spoke about the streets and roads issue. He thinks we need someone from DOT or County Roads to attend to address various road issues throughout the Glades.

Angie Morlock suggested that a document be developed that prioritizes the regional needs and the cities' needs, with costs. Example: sections might include infrastructure, housing. We need a very clear direction in black and white – these are our needs and these are the costs. She gave the example of the City of Cleveland wanting to bring in the Olympics. They drew up a plan, how many people they wanted to get in, how to get them around town, housing, restaurants, etc. If we are competing with another area for an inland port, we need to show similar planning.

Mayor Whittaker stated that with the US Sugar sale we need to look to the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), which is the purchaser, to assist the Glades with the transition. Regarding the inland port, we need to lobby the County and the Commissioners to help us get in a position to be ready to have an inland port, zoning, land use, etc. Mayor Whittaker pointed out that Florida Crystals owns the land in both Palm Beach County and Martin County that is being considered for the inland port. Florida Crystals also owns the land that will need to be swapped with SFWMD.

Surina Brown stated that the South Bay City Manager has a meeting with the County Commission, SFWMD and Florida Crystals to discuss the issues of the inland port, and that he and South Bay Mayor Shirley Turner-Walker will be in communication with the other Cities.

Roswell Harrington stated that infrastructure is a key issue in inland port consideration. The Cities need to take a hard look at their infrastructure; do they have the sewer capacity to handle the growth?

Commissioner Diane Walker mentioned that the Fanjul's had sent a letter to the County Commissioners requesting that the inland port be put in the Glades. She suggested that each one of the Cities write a letter of support for that request. Mayor Whittaker suggested that residents also need to inundate the County Commissioners with requests that they position the Glades to receive the inland port. A concern is that SFWMD might not want to give up the land, because it might be in their proposed flow way.

Denny Abbott mentioned that he is meeting with the new Director of FHREDI to discuss the inland port. He also stated that there is a task force for the inland port from the Glades – Denny and Ken Lutz. The port is designed to be a public-private partnership, built with private money, run and maintained with private money. The committee is leaning very heavily toward the Glades as the location. LORE is going to set up an inland port summit to bring everybody together to develop one strategy for the region to make it happen. Everybody involved, US Sugar, Florida Crystals, Commissioners, City Officials, etc., all the parties affected, will be included in the summit. If the inland port comes, it will create the biggest economic impact the Glades has ever seen. But there is a long way to go. Nobody knows if the inland port will happen anywhere. There is no guarantee of the private funding ever becoming available.

UPDATES

Mr. Abbott reported that LORE also has a grant for business façade improvement. They have several applications for improvements and are looking for more businesses to apply for the façade improvement grants.

Mayor Whittaker stated that Derrick Moore of the City of Pahokee was elected by the Tri-Cities to be on the board of the Regional Water Treatment Plant.

Angie Morlock stated that the Palm Tran route from Belle Glade to Clewiston is to be eliminated. MPO was able to find five years of funding to help pay for the route with FDOT. Calendar year 2009 will end the five years of funding. Hendry County and Palm Beach County (each partnering in funding with FDOT) are leaning strongly toward eliminating their funding at that time. She noted that for many people, that route had been their only form of transportation. MPO has a vanpool service and is able to work with companies that have several employees who live near each other and have to travel long distances, providing \$400 a month toward the vanpool.

Denny Abbott stated that the hospital construction project is sending all job seekers to Workforce Alliance with a commitment to hire local contractors where possible. Other construction projects in the Glades are agreeing to hire and purchase locally where possible.

Roswell Harrington stated that he attended the recent MPO meeting to discuss various issues. He passed out a document that indicates various projects that have been approved to receive funding from MPO. He also mentioned that SR 700 would no longer be designated as a federal highway. He also discussed the problem with the addressing system still being inaccurate, resulting in emergency responders going to the wrong address to respond to a major accident.

Surina Brown, City of South Bay, reported that South Bay is working on a project at Southwest 7th Avenue, reconstructing the street, sidewalk replacement, and drainage improvements. Also underway, a project at Southwest 9th Avenue, costing about \$320,000, street, sidewalk replacement, drainage, and leveling of driveways. The Master lift station project includes new master lift station and on-site standby generator. She also mentioned some employee training grants available, specifically for utilities, electrical, etc.

Mr. Tate mentioned that OCR is working with several partners for a major grant for removing lead-based paint. This will accomplish two things, take care of the health issue and work on the image with fresh paint. Houston will provide further information as it becomes available.

WHO NEEDS TO MAKE UP THE COMMITTEE?

Mayors

City Managers

Community Development Staff

Angie Morlock – to help develop the municipal and city documents mentioned above

WHO NEEDS TO BE HERE FOR THE NEXT MEETING?

Bevin Beaudet re: sewer infrastructure

Code Enforcement -

DOT

PBC Planning & Zoning

FHREDI

PBCo Water Utilities – distribution system, pipe condition