

Glades Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC)
Meeting of February 26, 2009
9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Belle Glade City Hall

Minutes

Attendees:

Comm. Keith Babb, City of Pahokee, PBC Department of Senior Services (DOSS)
Maria Bello, PBC Planning Zoning & Building (PBCPZB)
Tish Burgher, GCA Inc. / Consultant for FL Dept. of Transportation (FDOT)
Dessie Caraccio, PBC Division of Human Services (PBCDHS)
Larry Caraccio, PBC Code Enforcement
Inger Brown Cheves, Housing Partnership / Pioneer Park Beacon Center
Kathleen Cole, PBC Division of Human Services (PBCDHS)
Richard Colon, PBC Code Enforcement
Deputy Malora Duplantis, PBC Sheriff's Office (PBSO)
Captain Larry Easton, PBC Sheriff's Office (PBSO)
Karis Engle, Glades Initiative
Theresa Fordham, Office of State Rep. Priscilla Taylor
Duane Gainer, PBC Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)
Joe Glucksman, Quiet Waters Assisted Living Facility (ALF)
Pamela Guerrier, PBC Office of Equal Opportunity (PBCOEO)
Michael Jackson, PBC Board of County Commissioners (PBCBCC)
Deputy Stan Jackson, PBC Sheriff's Office (PBSO)
Steven Jackson, Quiet Waters Assisted Living Facility (ALF)
Mike Roy McGinnis, PBC Department of Health (PBCDOH)
LJ Margolis, PBC Parks & Rec PBCP&R / Glades Emergency Operating Area (EOA 1)
Annette Parchment, City of Belle Glade
Sylvia Sharps, PBC Water Utilities Department (PBCWUD)
Steven Stokes, Target Engineering Group / Consultant for FL Dept. of Transportation (FDOT)
Scott Ryder, C3TS Architects / Consultant for FL Dept. of Transportation (FDOT)
Houston Tate, PBC Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)
Comm. Diane Walker, City of Pahokee / PBC Sheriff's Office (PBSO)
Mary Jo Walker, City of Belle Glade
William Wynn, PBC Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Duane Gainer introduced himself and asked the group to introduce themselves. Houston Tate thanked all partners for their attendance.

2. Review of Minutes - January

There was one correction per Diane Walker on page 3, 1st paragraph, last 2 sentences immediately before the Action Item.

3. Discussion/Updates

Highway 98 / US 441

LJ Margolis reported that Captain Craig Prusansky has been going door to door to notify residents of their correct address, and to ensure that the addresses are correctly reflected in databases for emergency responders, electric and phone companies, and others.

Pelican Lake

Larry Caraccio reported that he contacted the Pelican Lake owners, who said they had leased the entire property to The Miracle Group / Matthew 25 Ministries, which helps people transition from prison. The owner is continuing to manage the property and rent out units. The owner stated that there would be no congregate living use at the facility. Because some of the new residents may be sex offenders, the owners wanted to ensure that there would be no conflicts with nearby bus stops, children living in the complex, etc.

a. PBC OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY (PBCOEO)- In relation to the Pelican Lake concern, Pamela Guerrier reported on the OEO, which enforces equal opportunity, including fair housing. Fair Housing laws ensure that people are not treated differently when looking for housing based on several reasons, including age, race, gender, disability, religious beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation, familial status, and others. There are two different categories of Housing for Older Persons: 62 and older or 55 or older. The 62 or older category requires that every one in the household must be 62 or older. The 55 or older category requires that at least one person in the housing must be 55 or older, in 80% of the units. The remaining 20% acts as a buffer in the event the over-55 spouse dies, so that the younger spouse can stay in the housing.

Under Fair Housing laws, if Pelican Lake transitions into Housing for Older Persons (“Adult Community” is not proper terminology) then those already living there would be grandfathered in, allowed to stay. The owners sent out a letter stating they were transitioning into an “Adult Community” and that everyone with children under 18 had to leave. The Office of Equal Opportunity does not have any issue with the sexual predator aspect. However, there is a concern with a protected class –under 18– being targeted. A lawsuit has been generated against the Pelican Lakes, Miracle Group and Matthew 25 Ministries.

b. PBC DIVISION OF HUMAN SERVICES (PBCDHS)- Dessie Caraccio reported that funds are available to help people with relocation expenses such as rent and utilities, and to assist people who are behind in their rent and utilities payments, through sources such as FPL’s Care to Share funds. PBCDHS also provides a summer camp scholarship program and summer food program. Application for these programs can be made through Kathleen Cole’s DHS office in Belle Glade. Other programs include Indigent Burial, Homeless Assistance for homeless single individuals, and an Assisted Living Facility. DHS programs information can be obtained through the 2-1-1 telephone system.

Mrs. Caraccio reported that DHS has helped two of the Pelican Lake families in relocation, and also referred them to Legal Aid.

Mr. Tate stated that OCR will help inform residents of DHS programs through the newly-developing neighborhood associations in the Glades.

c. PBC DEPARTMENT OF SENIOR SERVICES (DOSS)- Keith Babb reported that DOSS provides services for seniors aged 60 and older. They provide, or refer clients to, services such as transportation, meals, homemaker and personal care. DOSS' primary function is case management. Someone may call for assistance in one area, but when DOSS steps in, they assess the overall situation to see what other areas of need there may be. DOSS refers seniors to funding sources for needs such as installing a wheelchair ramp at their homes. The DOSS Senior Center in Belle Glade provides congregate meals, assists with transportation to the Center, provides tax return preparation, funding to help seniors pay bills and other services. DOSS' goal is to become the primary resource for senior citizens. DOSS has three clients living in Pelican Lake, but since they are seniors, they are not affected by the "under 18" issue. DOSS can be accessed through the 2-1-1 telephone system, which refers callers to the Elder Helpline, which conducts the initial needs assessment.

d. PBC Department of Planning Zoning and Building (PBCPZB)- Maria Bello reported that PZB is processing an amendment by the County Commissioners regarding the proposed Inland Port in the Glades. The Port of Palm Beach and FDOT have identified two sites in the Glades that could serve as the site of an Inland Port. Property owners interested having their land considered for the Port site can have an industrial designation added to their existing agricultural designation. After a site is selected, the industrial designation would be removed from the other properties that were not selected. Mrs. Bello distributed an information sheet on the Proposed Overlay to the Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan: Inland Logistics Center Overlay. She requested that participants review the document and give her office any feedback.

Mr. Tate noted that the Glades residents should begin building their skill sets now to equip them to take advantage of the employment opportunities if the Inland Port does come to the Glades.

4. PARTICIPANT UPDATES & COMMENTS

PBC Office of Community Revitalization- Duane Gainer noted that the Glades REAP classes come to their end tonight, February 26 at 6 p.m. at Belle Glade City Hall.

PBC Office of Equal Opportunity- Pamela Guerrier distributed information about a Fair Housing contest for 3rd, 7th and 11th graders in Palm Beach County. Prizes are \$250 for 1st place, \$100 for 2nd place, \$50 for 3rd place. She is making presentations to schools to encourage participation.

Glades Initiative- Karis Engle discussed the organization's mission to address the system of care for health and human services in the Glades area. Glades Initiative assembles a resource guide, updated yearly. It is available in print and digitally. They send a weekly email which lists meetings in the Glades or elsewhere that are pertinent to Glades residents and agencies. They

offer training for health and human services providers. They will also host a board training workshop. A large part of their function is collaboration, connecting people and agencies. They also try to help prevent duplication of efforts. There is a community calendar which is focused on the Glades area. They have just added a new position to help reach out to the community, to educate residents about the different services that are available and help them connect with the services they need. Ms. Engle can be reached at Kengle@gladesinitiative.org or updates@gladesinitiative.org or 561-996-3310. The website is www.gladesinitiative.org.

Lighthouse Café- Ms. Engle reported that Lighthouse Café, which provides meals for homeless, will hold a fundraiser at Community United Methodist Church from 4 – 7 p.m. on Friday evening, February 27.

Lakeside Medical Center- Ms. Engle reported that a fundraiser will be held at the Belle Glade Marina on Saturday, February 28.

Quiet Waters Affordable Assisted Living Community- Joe Glucksman and Steven Jackson will be the operators of the new facility, currently under construction at the site of the old Lake Shore Middle School. A Grand Opening is scheduled for June. Mr. Glucksman will make a presentation at the March meeting on the project, its services, partners and intended residents.

PBC Sheriff's Office / Helping Hands Improve Pahokee (HHIP)- Deputy Malora Duplantis discussed HHIP, which received a Countywide Community Revitalization Team (CCRT) grant to make improvements to areas in Pahokee, such as painting buildings. HHIP is starting with the Quick Stop plaza on Bacom Point Road. They are receiving volunteer help from students who need community service hours, football team, and AP and Honors students. The town of Wellington also has been assisting with the project.

PBC Sheriff's Office / Golfing Program / Great American Cleanup / Youth Ranch / Putting Kids First- Deputy Stan Jackson stated that PBSO's golfing program is progressing very well, with practice on Mondays and Thursdays from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at the Belle Glade Golf Course. Every day after school, they work with the students at Okeechobee Center. He noted that the Great American Cleanup event in South Bay will be held on April 18. He stated that the Sheriff's Office Youth Ranch will be held in June in Belle Glade and Pahokee. He announced that Putting Kids First will receive funding from the OCR.

PBC Board of County Commissioners- Michael Jackson, representing Commissioner Jess Santamaria in the Glades communities, reported that many projects are being undertaken in Commission District 6, which includes the Glades. He said that a significant amount of money is funding projects in the Glades. The official Ribbon Cutting for the regional water plant is upcoming. There has been discussion of establishing a Water Utility Authority, a partnership between the three cities and Palm Beach County. One function of the Authority would be absorbing the utilities debt of the three cities, which has been accumulating over the past couple of decades. The Authority would operate the Water Utility and it is expected to be developed within the next three months or so. Mr. Jackson stressed the importance of people understanding the concept and knowing what is going on. He said that it is also important that

the Glades communities receive their share of the stimulus money that President Obama is making available to the State.

PBSO Youth Intervention Program / Truancy Mr. Jackson observed that there is a tremendous amount of open and blatant truancy in our communities. He asked the assistance of the Sheriff's Office in developing a plan that could be enforced. Pahokee Commissioner Diane Walker, also with the Youth Intervention Program of the PBC Sheriff's Office in Belle Glade, works on the truancy problem. She stated that she is not getting much support from the schools with the referrals she needs or cooperation from parents to ensure that their children attended school regularly. **ACTION ITEM: TRUANCY COMMITTEE** Mr. Tate recommended that a Truancy Committee be developed with oversight from Michael Jackson, and that the committee be comprised of Commissioner Diane Walker, Commissioner Keith Babb and Deputy Malora Duplantis. The committee will develop and recommend strategies to partner with the PBC School Board, PBSO, Criminal Justice Commission, students and parents to address the truancy issue.

Florida Department of Transportation Steven Stokes of Target Engineering Group reported that the SR 80 road improvement project in South Bay is progressing. He requested feedback from the community regarding things we like as well as things that need improvement in the roadways. Jacques Beaubrun was unable to attend today's meeting, but sent word that the US Highway 27 road improvement project from South Bay to the Hendry County Line is on schedule.

PBC Water Utilities Sylvia Sharps invited everyone to the Grand Opening of the new water treatment plant on March 6, 2009 at 10 a.m. The facility is a \$58 million dollar project providing the Glades communities with quality drinking water.

Belle Glade Annette Parchment expressed appreciation for the PBSO Explorers, who received an OCR grant to make some improvements at Mace Park, replacing grills and benches, and installing signage. She also expressed appreciation to OCR for funding for fencing, tiki huts and equipment for Hands Park. She said the City has requested authorization from the BCC to use the remaining balance of funds from the Inter-local Agreement to fund the purchase and installation of a Hands Park sign.

PBC Code Enforcement Larry Caraccio referred to a complaint in a previous GTAC meeting about the large, abandoned water tank in Pahokee. He reported that the property owner voluntarily removed the tank. Commissioner Keith Babb mentioned a particular property on the outskirts of Pahokee as an area of concern. Mr. Caraccio encouraged attendees to call the code compliance complaint line at 561-233-5500 with issues that Code Enforcement needs to respond to. He said that Code Enforcement primarily responds to citizen's complaints, rather than initiating action from their side. Commissioner Babb suggested that at some point Code Enforcement staff take a ride through the unincorporated areas and see what needs attention. Mr. Caraccio stated that he will bring that to the Director's attention. He said that complaints can be made anonymously on the code compliance complaint line. Mr. Caraccio's direct phone number is 561-233-5576.

5. Adjournment

The next GTAC meeting will be held at the Pahokee Community Center, in the historic school location, on Thursday, March 26, 2009, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Minutes prepared by LJ Margolis and Duane Gainer

Approved By Houston Tate, Director