

**Glades Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC)**  
**Meeting of November 19, 2009**  
**9:30 – 11:00 a.m.**  
**Pahokee Parks & Recreation Department Wellness Center**  
**Behind the Historic High School Building**  
**360 E. Main Street, Pahokee**

**Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Denny Abbott, PBC Workforce Alliance (WFA)  
David Allen, Florida Rural Area Construction Co-Op (FRACC)  
Barbara Bell-Spence, City of Pahokee  
LaClaire Bowdry, Pioneer Park Beacon Center  
Tish Burgher, QCA, Inc. (Consultant for Florida Department of Transportation FDOT)  
Linda Camardella, PBC School District  
Karen Corbin, Belle Glade Chamber of Commerce  
Raquel Diaz, City of South Bay  
Capt. Larry Easton, PBC Sheriff's Office (PBSO)  
Jesus Fuentes, American Engineering Group  
(Consultant for Florida Department of Transportation FDOT)  
Duane Gainer, PBC Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)  
Michelle Gonzales, Resident of Pahokee  
Roswell Harrington, Keene Mobile Home Park  
Lt. Chris Keane, PBC Sheriff's Office  
LJ Margolis, PBC Parks & Recreation / Glades Emergency Operating Area (EOA)  
Chrystal Matthews, PBC Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)  
Juanita Maybin, Essence Unique Ladies' Club  
Klawza McCall, Belle Glade Weed & Seed  
Lois Monroe, Farmworker Coordinating Council  
Ivory Paschal, City of Pahokee  
Scott Ryder, C3TS Architects  
(Consultant for Florida Department of Transportation FDOT)  
Capt. Ken Sehres, PBC Fire-Rescue  
Major Debbie Simpson, PBC School District Police  
Stephen Stokes, Target Engineering Group  
(Consultant for Florida Department of Transportation FDOT)  
Jeff Tarr, Pahokee Resident  
Houston Tate, PBC Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)  
Ashley Tripp, Lake Okeechobee Regional Economic Alliance (LORE) / Tripp Electric Motors  
Rashonda Warren, City of Pahokee  
William Wynn, PBC Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Duane Gainer called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m., introduced himself, and welcomed attendees on behalf of the Palm Beach County Board of County Commission, Palm Beach County Administration, and Palm Beach County Office of Community Revitalization. He thanked the City of Pahokee for hosting the meeting and providing refreshments, and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

### **2. Review of Minutes**

The minutes of the October 22, 2009 meeting were reviewed.

### **3. Discussion / Updates**

#### **Habitat for Humanity, PBSO Lt. Chris Keane**

Habitat for Humanity was started in 1976 in Americus, Georgia. Former President Jimmy Carter and his wife are supporters of Habitat. It is a charitable organization, not a government agency. The Palm Beach County chapter has recently made a commitment to build Habitat homes in the Glades, which has never been done before.

The City of Pahokee donated two sites – one on East Third Street and one on Barfield. The structures on the sites have been raised and the properties are ready for building. Out of about 100 applicants, two families have been selected. One is a single mother who works in the insurance industry and her three children. The other is a married couple with three children. The husband works in the sugar industry. The Habitat families must meet certain requirements, including 500 hours of sweat equity working on their site, on another site or at the Habitat thrift store in West Palm Beach.

Money is needed to build the homes. Habitat likes to fund 50% of the construction cost – about \$50,000 per house - before breaking ground. Large donations receive sponsorship placement, but all amounts large or small are welcome. If the community demonstrates that there is monetary and volunteer support in the Glades, Habitat is committed to building larger housing units and large scale villages of 30 to 50 units. The success of the Pahokee project will demonstrate that support. Sites exist that could accommodate a large-scale project. Large organizations and individual philanthropists are needed to make substantial donations. When the 50% of construction cost is raised, volunteers will be needed. The goal is to start building in January on Tuesdays through Saturdays. Volunteers don't have to be skilled laborers. There are jobs for everyone. When a house or project is completed, there will be a celebration at the house and the community will see what has been accomplished.

Lt. Keane reminded attendees that the need for affordable housing has been discussed at the GTAC meetings several times in the past. He said that Habitat for Humanity is part of the solution for truly needy and deserving families. The families do not receive a hand-out. They receive a no-interest loan which they are required to repay. He asked that people call him at his office at 561-996-1678 with ideas for funding sources.

Checks may be made payable to Habitat for Humanity of Palm Beach County.

A question was raised about insurance or worker's comp or other some other method of covering accidents. **ACTION ITEM: Lt Keane will find out and report back.**

**Lake Okeechobee Regional Economic (LORE) Alliance, LORE President Ashley Tripp**

LORE is a non-profit organization that has been active in the Glades for several years. Its mission is to assist the Palm Beach County portion of the Lake Okeechobee region through economic development programs and projects. Mrs. Tripp stated that LORE believes that to help our communities advance, local stakeholders must join and work together to advance the local economy. LORE specifically wanted to accentuate the great resource of Lake Okeechobee, which is the second largest freshwater lake wholly contained within the continental United States. In addition to the resource of the Lake, the Glades has a strong agriculture resource. LORE strives to advocate for the region, build community, build communications within our community and beyond, and express our community's unique nature. LORE is comprised of a 19-member Board of Directors from the three cities including citizens, city managers, chambers of commerce, Palm Beach County staff, the Cooperative Extension, the three mills, Workforce Alliance, professional engineers, the Business Development Board, and others. LORE hopes to form a greater alliance with GTAC to catapult this area's development.

LORE sees the Lake Region as strategically located with ample land for economic development and growth, with the Coast being fully developed. LORE wants to help ensure that our communities receive quality design and development, and believes that investors, businesses and residents can be attracted to the area. We have the benefit of good roads and rail transportation systems already in place. LORE is very much behind the Inland Port being in South Bay.

Palm Beach County has played an integral role in the development and establishment of LORE. An Enterprise Florida grant in the amount of \$35K was used to develop the brochure and web site, to do marketing and host some meetings in the region. A couple of years ago LORE was given a \$200,000 grant to administer a façade improvement project, which several businesses have participated in.

The Lake Okeechobee Waterway (Rim Canal) was dug to build the dike around the Lake. Over time it has accumulated a significant amount of sediment, which the recent hurricanes added to. When the lake level is low, large boats cannot navigate the waterway, which connects the east coast to the west coast. There is no economic value to the communities for boats to take the route across the Lake. If they take the Rim Canal around the perimeter instead, they can stop in our communities, which will boost economic development. LORE is advocating dredging the Rim Canal to encourage boats to navigate it again.

Ms. Tripp stated that Pahokee has a plan to dredge in the Rim Canal and to put the material on the shelf and build an eco-island. Pahokee had permits and was ready to present it to the State, but the State Cabinet said they didn't want any more islands built in the State until they saw the results of some eco-islands that were built elsewhere. Mrs. Tripp has met with Senators to ask that they go back to the Cabinet and have them reconsider an exception for Pahokee.

Denney Abbott stated that the dredging is a political solution, and that contact has been made with political entities including Alcee Hastings' office to build a core of strength with which to go to the Army Corps of Engineers and others to be able to do the dredging.

Roswell Harrington suggested getting with Dale Erickson to discuss the Canal Point boat ramp area. He stated that fishermen and Army Corps of Engineers use the Canal Point boat ramp, but are unable to use it when the wind picks up.

LORE hopes to hire a full time, dedicated Executive Director, who would advocate for the region and which would allow the currently all-volunteer organization to accomplish much more for the economic development of the region. LORE is actively working to build partnerships with the primary goal of marketing the region and its offerings. LORE is in the process of developing databases and inventory of the assets of the region, such as land, organizations and incentives to attract visitors, businesses and new residents.

David Allen mentioned that LORE was instrumental in the \$85.3 million grant for revitalization, and that the façade improvement program has been successful and very good for the community.

Mr. Gainer pointed out that all of the communities can directly benefit from a successful LORE. He said that the \$200,000 for the Façade Improvement Program came from the OCR via Ed Lowrey and Pam Nolan. He suggested that the cities help fund the Executive Director and an Administrative Assistant, to help ensure the mutual success of LORE and the communities.

Mrs. Tripp asked that attendees let LORE know if there are efforts within the community LORE can assist with.

LORE's website is <http://www.lorealliance.org>. There is a blog at <http://lakeopalmbeach.blogspot.com>.

### **Take Stock in Children, LaTrell Banks, Student Advocate / Mentor Coordinator**

In Ms. Banks' absence, Houston Tate discussed Take Stock in Children. This is a free program that will fund a child's educational future. The student meets weekly with a mentor and meets certain scholastic and extracurricular commitments. Take Stock in Children is seeking volunteers to mentor students.

#### Students must adhere to the following:

- 1) Must stay in school
- 2) Maintain good grades
- 3) Exhibit good behavior
- 4) Remain drug free
- 5) Meet with mentors once per week

#### Take Stock in Children will provide the following:

- 1) Mentors are recruited and trained by Take Stock in Children.
- 2) Each child is assigned a student advocate/case manager that confirms with the school personnel that each child is achieving continued success.
- 3) Each child that fulfills all requirements of Take Stock in Children receives a fully paid college tuition scholarship. Those students who prefer post-secondary vocational training may seek a vocational education for a two-year technical degree at a community college.

Mr. Tate stated that Take Stock in Children and the promise of an educational future it offers students can be a good tie-in with the Truancy Subcommittee's efforts. Many students drop out of school because they feel hopelessness about their future, thinking that they could never go to college. While they are young, mentors can help encourage them to look at an educational future, find scholarship options, and discuss what kinds of courses to take and what extracurricular activities will help in their future.

#### **4. Subcommittee Updates**

##### **Transitional Housing**

Mr. Harrington stated that Transitional Housing addresses the lack of adequate housing for upper blue collar and lower white collar workers. There is a need for more private housing and more middle income housing. Mobile homes make good transitional housing because there are spaces available to place the homes. But the homes themselves are becoming logistically and financially out of the reach due to regulations and set up costs. Mr. Tate stated that this is a natural tie-in with Habitat for Humanity's interest in the Glades. Crystal Matthews stated that the Community Development Block Grant is available for municipalities, non-profit organizations, County departments, redevelopment agencies and public housing agencies. She stated that both Habitat for Humanity and LORE would be eligible for the grant. Grant applications are due January 22, 2010. Agencies are encouraged to sit with OCR to find out how they might be eligible. Mrs. Matthews stated that Housing & Community Development has about \$6.5 million they must disburse from Tropical Storm Faye. The deadline for a Letter of Intent is Friday, November 20, 2009. Lois Monroe of the Farmworker Coordinating Council is interested in serving on the Transitional Housing Subcommittee. She said that the Council is developing a survey for farmworkers who need hurricane-related damage repair.

##### **Truancy**

There were no updates. Refer to the notes under Take Stock in Children above.

##### **Correcting Addresses in the Glades**

In PBFR Capt. Craig Prusansky's absence, PBFR Capt. Ken Sehres reported that, due to unforeseen circumstances, data entry is progressing more slowly than anticipated. About 75% of Canal Point addresses are in the database. It is anticipated that the remaining addresses will be in the database in the next couple of weeks. The information will then be sent to County Planning, Zoning & Building for review. Capt Prusansky will be working with PBC Code Enforcement Officer Larry Caraccio to ensure that Lake Harbor addresses are correctly displayed at the residences.

#### **5. Participant Comments / Updates**

##### **Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)**

Mr. Tate encouraged cities to work on their community organizations and neighborhood associations. He welcomed new attendees, particularly the Pahokee residents in attendance. He again encouraged cities to bring five residents to the next GTAC meeting. He stated that when residents and community representatives attend the meetings to present their concerns, we all can work together to determine how to best address those concerns. He stated that the Community Foundation wants to help bring food to the Glades for needy families.

Mr. Gainer reported that the OCR will not have money for capital projects in the upcoming year. OCR will continue programs such as NPG, NSL, REAP and GTAC.

### **Department of Transportation**

Scott Ryder reported that the SR 700 project is progressing smoothly. Since the last meeting, a couple of issues have arisen. One issue is a control structure that is outside the project limits. Mr. Harrington has expressed concerns about drainage.

**ACTION ITEM: Mr. Ryder is researching this issue and will report back.**

Another issue is that some truck drivers are not taking the detour. Some of the trucks are large and cannot turn around in the bail-out area if they inadvertently go through the detour sign.

**ACTION ITEM: Mr. Ryder will look at the detour plan and will consider a signage revision.**

Steven Stokes reported that the last of the asphalt was placed this week at Main Street and SR 15 in Belle Glade. A water main broke under the project and was repaired by Glades Utility Authority (GUA). The road will be repaired. Project completion is expected shortly after the new year.

Jesus Fuentes reported on the project on US 27 in South Bay. Installation of 15 new decorative green street lights will take place. Paving started in late October and completion is anticipated in early February. DOT will maintain the landscaping for a one year warranty period, after which the City will take over landscape maintenance.

Tish Burgher stated that work will be suspended for Thanksgiving weekend, Thursday through Sunday. Detours and road closures will remain in place.

### **City of Pahokee**

Barbara Bell-Spence reported that on Monday, December 7, Pahokee will hold its Annual Christmas Parade. She invited the other municipalities to join in and participate with cars, floats, people on foot, or in any other way they would like. The parade begins at 6 with line up at 5 p.m. After the parade there will be a tree lighting ceremony. She also reported that the City is putting together a proposal for a community food pantry project. CROS ministries, Palm Beach County, United Methodist Church, FRACC and other agencies are partners. It will also serve as a regional facility for use during disasters as well as being used on a daily basis for food pickup and delivery, storage and training. The location under consideration is the old packing house at 2701 East Main Street.

**ACTION ITEM: Mr. Take suggested that Ms. Spence and Mr. Harrington meet with the Community Foundation.**

### **Share Florida Food Network**

Mr. Harrington distributed the SHARE updates.

### **CERT**

Mr. Harrington reported that there will be a CERT meeting at 5:30 tonight, November 19, 2009, at the Pahokee Recreation Department.

## **GUA**

Jeff Tarr asked if GUA might make a presentation at an upcoming meeting. Ms. Bell-Spence said that Pahokee City Hall has fliers in their office with GUA contact information. Information about where to pay the water bill is printed on the bill. Mr. Gainer stated that Sylvia Sharps has been assigned to GUA, and will attend future GTAC meetings.

## **Traffic**

Mr. Tarr suggested that the PBC Traffic Division participate in GTAC. He is concerned about safety issues in and around school zones and railroad crossings.

**ACTION ITEM: Mr. Tate asked that Mr. Tarr provide a list of these areas so the information can be passed along and issues resolved.**

## **Pioneer Park Beacon Center**

LeClair Bowdrey reported that on Saturday, December 12 from 10 a.m. to noon, there will be a WinterFest at Pioneer Park Beacon Center, with activities for children and booths for adults with information on holiday survival, tree safety, avoiding holiday depression and more.

## **PBSO**

Capt. Larry Easton distributed flyers about the Sheriff's Office's new Crime Reports public access. People can look up incidents that have occurred in their neighborhoods. He thanked Capt. Andy Bilardello for his efforts in getting this website linked to PBSO's website. Visit [www.pbso.org](http://www.pbso.org) and follow the Crime Reports link.

**The next GTAC meeting will be held at South Bay City Hall on December 17, 2009 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The meeting was moved up one week due to the Christmas holiday.**

Minutes prepared by Duane Gainer and LJ Margolis.

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**Approved By Houston L. Tate, Director**