

***Glades Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC)**
Meeting of December 17, 2009
9:30 – 11:00 a.m.
City of South Bay Commission Chambers
335 SW 2nd Avenue

Minutes

Attendees:

Jacques Beaubrun, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Barbara Bell-Spence, City of Pahokee
Commissioner Esther Berry, City of South Bay
Brenda Bunting, Belle Glade Chamber of Commerce
Mike Butler, PBC Information Technologies Services
Inger Cheves, Pioneer Park Beacon Center
Karen Corbin, Belle Glade Chamber of Commerce
Raquel Diaz, City of South Bay
Karis Engle, Glades Initiative
Berkley Finley, Palm Beach Community College
Jesus Fuentes, American Engineering Group
(Consultant for Florida Department of Transportation FDOT)
Duane Gainer, PBC Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)
Roswell Harrington, Resident of Pahokee / Keene Mobile Home Park
Mirlene Hatcher, Pahokee Beacon Center
Mary Jackson, Resident of Pahokee
Angela Johnson, Dept. of Commerce Census Bureau
Lt. Chris Keane, PBC Sheriff's Office
Ed Kerr, City of South Bay
Arthur Kirstein, PBC Cooperative Extension
LJ Margolis, PBC Parks & Rec / Glades Emergency Operating Area (EOA 1)
Juanita Maybin, Essence Unique Ladies' Club
Kwanza McCall, Belle Glade Weed & Feed
Roy "Mike" McGinnis, PBC Department of Health
Julia Morgerson, Resident of Pahokee
Betty Porter, Resident of Pahokee
Dist. Chief Curtis Rice, PBC Fire-Rescue (PBFR)
Ted Roberts, City of Pahokee
Shanique Scott, Street Beat, Inc.
Jeff Tarr, Resident of Pahokee
Houston Tate, PBC Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)
Rashonda Warren, City of Pahokee
Channell Wilkins, PBC Office of Community Service

1. Welcome and Introductions:

Duane Gainer called the meeting to order at 9:42 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 South Bay for hosting the meeting and providing refreshments, and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

2. Review of Minutes:

The minutes of the November 19, 2009 meeting were reviewed. There were no corrections.

3. Discussion / Updates:

Palm Beach County Office of Community Services

Channell Wilkins, Director

Mr. Tate introduced Channell Wilkins, the new director of the Palm Beach County Office of Community Services (OCS). Mr. Wilkins gave an overview of the department and said that his office requests feedback from citizens about the services they need and how his office is fulfilling those needs. Community Services programs include Community Action, Head Start & Children's Services, Human Services, Migrant Programs, Senior Services, and Veterans Services. The Community Action (CA) program is being revamped. Representatives will participate in Glades Initiatives, GTAC and other programs to learn how CA can help meet community needs. CA has provided almost \$800,000 in energy assistance through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). CA will do more job placements, primarily through Goodwill Industries, but also through other agencies. The program is upgrading employment skills for workers in packing houses and other areas. Mr. Wilkins discussed CyberHealth Care, which is a new way for people with a basic education to receive a strategic certificate in telemedicine whereby they would electronically provide home medical services and get health care to people who cannot get to healthcare themselves. He reported that Head Start is being expanded. Senior Services has a frail and elderly caretaker respite program through the Area Agency on Aging, training people 50 years and older to provide respite services for caretakers. Veterans Services has a new program to provide assistance to veterans returning from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. A philanthropist has given money to help with special needs, foreclosures and other issues. The Office of Community Services can be reached at 561-355-4700. Visit <http://pbcgov.com/communityservices> for detailed information.

Barbara Bell-Spence said that a problem developing is the Glades Utility Authority changing its due date on water bills. She said that seniors are having difficulties in paying their bills on time because most are on fixed incomes with payments arriving at set times each month. As a result, they are assessed late fees. She asked if these people could be referred to OCS. Mr. Wilkins replied that OCS can help advocate and can meet with GUA to talk about those concerns and try to get those late fees deleted or otherwise resolve the problem. He stated that OCS provides a significant amount of money to FPL with light bill assistance and can have some influence.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Tate stated that OCR representative Sylvia Sharps is assigned to GUA, so OCR will be able to address all the issues with them. He requested that Ms. Bell-Spence gets information from the residents so that it can be brought before the January meeting.

Palm Beach County Information System Services, Network Services

Mike Butler, Director

Mr. Tate introduced Network Services Director Mike Butler to discuss the proposed Palm Beach Broadband project. Mr. Butler stated that initially Palm Beach Community College, Florida Atlantic University, the Palm Beach County School District and other entities looked into the possibility of bringing in widespread wireless internet access, but cost estimates were prohibitive. However, Palm Beach County has an extensive wireless network with all of its facilities including Fire-Rescue, courthouses and others. The 240 schools countywide have an extensive network. We are the only county in the state to be directly fiber connected to the Florida Land to Rail (FLR) statewide fiber optic private network. We have been asked to facilitate hooking up the schools, cities and non-profit organizations to FLR. Through FLR, we also have connectivity to the third primary disaster recovery data center for the State of Florida, the Northwest Regional Data Center at Florida State University. The Palm Beach County School District, Clerk of Courts and South Florida Water Management District have placed equipment there. Currently 17 schools are connected to the County network and 32 more are in the process of connecting. When the schools are connected, their Internet connectivity goes from the equivalent of a drinking straw to a fire hose. Students and teachers are able to access resources they could not access before and the schools' costs are lowered. Jupiter and Palm Beach Gardens have been connected to the County's network, and other cities are in the process of being connected. The Kravis Center and several non-profit organizations are being connected. This lowers their tax burden as well as ours. South Florida Water Management District has connected and we are in the process of partnering with them to use SFWMD towers to get Internet to areas that have never before had access. Connecting Lakeside Medical Center will enable telemedicine, getting medical services to people who cannot get themselves to medical services. The Turnpike Authority is also connecting to the County network. FLR goes right past South Bay RV Campground. The County is working with FLR to recondition the facility's connectivity, to give it redundancy. This will also provide resources to service the Inland Port if it comes to South Bay.

Mr. Butler stated that broadband is the new essential infrastructure. People must have Internet access to online, to access basic and essential things like food stamps and online school textbooks. Palm Beach Broadband would provide digital inclusion for those communities that cannot afford broadband on their own.

The Federal Stimulus program has a component called the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). A coalition of partners, including Palm Beach County, has submitted an application to BTOP for Palm Beach Broadband. Mr. Butler distributed copies of grant application. Palm Beach Broadband will connect anchor institutions such as government, education, healthcare and non-profits. If we receive the grant funding, we will work with each municipality to finalize engineering details in those areas. The grant looks at areas that are un-served or underserved. Because AT&T makes broadband available, we do not have un-served areas. However, underserved populations are those that cannot afford broadband. Our grant

application targets the underserved. Census information and (the School District's online communication system) EDLINE's subscription rate were used to help determine the underserved areas. Multi-use wireless will be put in seven areas targeted toward students. Radios will be mounted on FPL lines and an antenna in the home will seek and pick up the signals. It took about one year to negotiate this with FPL. This will also provide free WiFi hotspots in those areas. A pilot program was implemented in the Pleasant City area of West Palm Beach. Of 225 students at Pleasant City Elementary School, only three had computers in the home. The School District refurbished computers as part of the curriculum, placed them in students' homes, installed wireless Internet access, and saw students' grades improve as a result of being able to go online. We did not announce the WiFi in Pleasant City, but people picked up the signal and are using it along with the students. The Pleasant City project has been the result of several entities working together: County Network Services, the School District, the City of West Palm Beach, funding from the WPB Community Redevelopment Agency, training through the Urban League and other collaborators.

We are proposing to run new fiber from West Palm Beach out SR 80 to the Glades with several anchor locations. The target areas cover a total of 55,000 families. In the Glades there is a population of 33,000 with 10,000 households.

Ours was the first BTOP grant application in Florida to move to Step 2 of the application process, and was of only 10 to progress there. The first 18 awards will be announced today (December 17, 2009.) Hopefully we'll be in that group.

The website palmbeachbroadband.org is under development.

Roswell Harrington stated that about 15 years ago a fiber optic line was installed along Hwy 15 up to Canal Point. Mr. Butler said it might have been either AT&T, Level Three, or Broad Wing. Mr. Harrington said that Comcast provides limited service but they want to charge you for putting in cable if you don't already have cable. AT&T has DSL but it does not go into Canal Point. Anything north of the canal has to pay Comcast's high rates. He asked if Lake Harbor and Canal Point and areas north would be included in Palm Beach Broadband. Mr. Butler replied that, assuming receipt of the grant award, Palm Beach Broadband would go into the municipalities and be sure to cover the needs. Mr. Gainer added that Canal Point, Lake Harbor and Sand Cut are not municipalities. He said that after the municipalities are covered, it could then expand into unincorporated areas.

Barbara Bell Spence asked what the timeframe for implementation would be after the grant is awarded. Mr. Butler replied that there is a commitment to complete within two years. SR 80 is already planned out and engineered. If the grant is awarded today, digging will begin next week. About five projects will run simultaneously. The ring around Lake Okeechobee will take most of the two years.

Mr. Tate asked how schools and organizations would request computers. Mr. Butler replied that his job is to build the thing. Project Manager Chuck Spaulding is responsible for getting the computers into the hands of the users.

Mr. Butler said that future grants are planned for public computing centers and that the School District is looking into consolidating facilities and re-purposing some facilities for public computing centers.

Ted Roberts asked if there would be security measures to mitigate potential hacking. Mr. Butler replied that public WiFi is just that; it is open. Firewalls and other personal security measures are recommended. The Palm Beach County government network intercepts numerous hack attempts daily, some of which are malicious.

Mr. Harrington asked what the range of each radio is. Mr. Butler replied that the range is conservatively 500 feet. He said that concrete, steel, plants and water can block the signal or absorb the wave. Radios are placed close enough to communicate with each other and self correct if one fails. The County has the capability to install our own poles. Mr. Harrington stated that he and a committee are looking at a 30' high structure for shortwave radio. He asked if the County would be interested in talking with them about the facility. Mr. Butler replied that the County is interested in talking to everybody about everything, and will use a variety of launching points.

Mr. Gainer asked if there will be an opportunity for Glades residents to participate in some of the related jobs. Mr. Butler replied that the County will leverage the contractor to do as much local job creation as possible.

Jeff Tarr asked where else in the continental United States this technology is actively working today, not in a test mode. Mr. Butler replied that Mountain View, CA about 700 radios which have been operated for about 3 years by Google, which is based there. A small city outside of Oklahoma City has citywide coverage. Houston TX operates their public safety on this type of system. Rescue units have these radios mounted and on the way to the hospital, hospital personnel can see exactly what is going in the unit and can guide the paramedics. Our coverage target is about 60 square miles.

Mr. Tate stated that this project came about from a resident coming forward with the suggestion. When he asks the cities to each bring five people to the meeting, that is to generate more suggestions of future projects.

2010 CENSUS

ANGELA JOHNSON – Census Bureau Partnership Specialist

Mr. Tate introduced Angela Johnson to discuss the 2010 Census. Ms. Johnson stated that the task is to count everyone in the US. The count will determine how much funding your area will receive. In 2000, Belle Glades response rate was 38%. Pahokee had a 42% response rate. South Bay's response rate was 36% response rate. This means those areas did not receive all the money or resources they could have received with a more accurate count. The next census is April 1, 2010. People need to understand what the census is and feel safe to respond. If someone doesn't respond, a paid census worker will visit their home. If they are not in, the worker will return. Ms. Johnson said that some people intentionally plan not to respond to the census. The Glades has both documented and undocumented people. Each person needs to consider how much money or resources the community will not receive if that person is not

counted. The money helps fund roads, schools and other critical items. Knowing how many children there are in an area and their ages indicates the need for additional schools. There are so many portable classrooms now because it was unknown that there were as many children in the area as there are. On March 1, everyone in the US will begin to receive questionnaires. There are only 10 questions. It's safe, it's easy and it's important. The census is not connected with immigration and will not report undocumented workers. Communities are encouraged to reach out to their residents through Be Counted committees made up of representatives of the community's demographics. The census bureau has begun testing for the field employee positions. Ms. Johnson is encouraging Glades residents to apply for the jobs. The practice test is available online or can be obtained by calling the recruiting department at 866-861-2010.

4. Subcommittee Updates:

There were no subcommittee updates.

5. Participant Updates:

East Beach Family Emergency Depot

Mr. Harrington reported that the Pahokee Food Pantry has been recreated and renamed East Beach Family Emergency Depot (EBFED). The abandoned vegetable packing house on about three acres north of Pahokee has a building with coolers in place. The building has withstood three hurricanes and one tropical storm. It is a multi-task facility which can serve as a community garden, food pantry and post-disaster emergency operation facility. It would be a local program with regional and countywide impact. The building is a commercial facility for shelf-sustainable and value-added food storage. It is a 30-foot high building of concrete construction at the intersection of two state roads, next to the FEC railroad track, along the dike. It can be accessed by air, land, rail, road or boat. Mr. Tate stated that the Community Foundation wants to bring food out to the Glades.

Glades Initiative – Karis Engle reported that she participated in the REAP program and received a grant to print health and human services resource guides. The guides are now in and she invited all to visit the office any time to pick them up. She especially suggested visiting on Tuesday, December 22 at 5 p.m. during the Glades Initiative Christmas party.

Office of Community Revitalization (OCR)

Mr. Tate stated that the only sustainable programs will be those that the community buys into. He said that if the residents or communities tell OCR what unmet needs there are and who will be responsible for meeting them, then OCR will give technical assistance in putting together grants or establishing projects.

Department of Transportation (DOT)

Jesus Fuentes stated that there will be no road work from December 24, 2009 through January 3, 2010. The project is going smoothly and is still on schedule for early February. Mr. Harrington said that drainage problems still exist in Canal Point and that Scott Snyder was handling the issue. He asked if it needed to be escalated.

ACTION ITEM: Jacques Beaubrun replied that DOT has nothing to do with the issue, but can schedule a meeting with the people responsible.

Mr. Beaubrun reported that work is going well. The roadway is still closed except to local traffic. The portion from Muck City Road to Hatton Highway is open. There is still repair to be done at State Road 15 and that there is a project coming up at SW 3rd Street. Mr. Harrington asked that the four-laning of SR 15 / US 441 from the intersection of SR 80 north to Muck City Road be put back on the 10-year plan.

Miscellaneous:

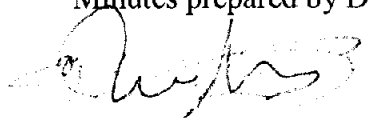
Mr. Harrington stated that he ran into a problem getting in touch with anyone who would answer questions or take responsibility at the **GUA**. He also stated that there is no money available for emergency placement for families in the Glades. He said he called the **Red Cross**, who referred him to **211**, who referred him to **The Lord's Place** and another agency. He said that no agencies answered their phones after 4 p.m.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Tate will raise the issue with the appropriate agencies.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

The next GTAC meeting will be held at Canal Point Community Center on January 28, 2009 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Duane Gainer and LJ Margolis.


2009 10 28 11:35 - Be 1200 for Houston Tate
Approved By Houston L. Tate, Director