

**OFFICE OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION**

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Glades Technical Advisory Committee Minutes

Speaker: Mr. Todd Bonlarron, PBC Asst. County Admin. &
Mr. Van Johnson, CEO., PBC Housing Authority

Facilitator: Houston Tate, Director

Scribe (recorder): Derrek Moore, Senior Planner

Date/Time: July 28, 2016, 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Location: Belle Glade Civic Center

Meeting Attendance:

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| 1. Mayor Keith Babb | Mayor of the City of Pahokee |
| 2. Whitney Baldwin | FL. Rural Legal Services, Inc. - Attorney |
| 3. Marilu Baltazar | Pahokee Housing Authority |
| 4. Allie Biggs | Former Commissioner – City of Pahokee |
| 5. Todd Bonlarron | PBC Asst. County Admin. |
| 6. Ralph Butts | City of Belle Glade |
| 7. Leondre Camel | City Manager – City of South Bay |
| 8. Elizabeth Cayson | Healthcare District of PBC |
| 9. Barbara Davis | Rep. Kevin Rader's Glades Representative |
| 10. Sgt. Jeff Garten | PBSO – S. Bay |
| 11. Joe Glucksman | McCurdy Senior Housing Center – Belle Glade |
| 12. Anna Harper | Molina Healthcare |
| 13. Cynthia Harris | Bridges of Belle Glade |
| 14. Van Johnson | PBC Housing Authority - CEO |
| 15. Mayor Joe Kyles | Mayor - City of South Bay |
| 16. Dan Liftman | Congressman Hastings Office |
| 17. Pat Lucey | Red Cross |
| 18. Capt. Ed Luty | PBSO – Glades Area |
| 19. Cartheda Mann | Delta Sigma Theta & Boys Scouts of America |
| 20. Cylenthia Mann | Director of Bridges at Pahokee |
| 21. Eugene Mann | Boy Scouts of America |
| 22. Monica McCoy | PBSO |
| 23. Justin McIntosh | IBEW |
| 24. Derrek Moore | OCR Senior Planner |
| 25. Clara Murvin | Commissioner – City of Pahokee |
| 26. Evan Reif | Gulf Stream Council Boy Scouts of America |
| 27. Eddie Lee Rhodes | Belle Glade – Resident – Tri-Cities Educ. Comm. |
| 28. Rick Roche | CAO – Lakeside Medical Center – Healthcare Dist. |
| 29. Trenesia Rozier | Bridges of Belle Glade |
| 30. Shilondra Sheppard | Director of Bridges of Belle Glade |
| 31. Houston Tate | Director, PBC OCR |

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| 32. Vernell Taylor | PBC Housing Authority – Staff Project Coord. |
| 33. Caroline Villanueva | Florida Crystals |
| 34. Dr. Dorothy Walker | We Help Bridge Solutions |
| 35. Javin Walker | 2SBW - Owner |
| 36. Ralph Walker | 2SBW |
| 37. Chandler Williamson | City Manager – City of Pahokee |

Some Attendees Did Not Sign-In

Meeting Minutes

1. Prayer & Pledge:

Mr. Tate called the meeting to order at 9:44 a.m. and introduced **Mayor Keith Babb** (City of Pahokee) to lead us in prayer. Mayor Babb also led us in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Tate welcomed the attendees and continued the meeting by asking everyone to introduce themselves and briefly share why they are attending today's meeting. After the audience shared with the group why they were attending the meeting, Mr. Tate introduced Mr. Todd Bonlarron, PBC Asst. County Administrator, and briefly mentioned his background.

Mr. Todd Bonlarron thanked everyone for coming out and for OCR inviting him to speak. He explained his role as Asst. County Administrator and mentioned that he has been a long time supporter of the Glades. He shared a little about his background with the County and his recent appointment as Assistant County Administrator. He also discussed the departments that he oversees in his new role.

Mr. Bonlarron mentioned some his recent efforts securing funding for various projects from the State for Glades' area projects. Some of which included: 1) \$1.5 mil. for infrastructure (underground work); 2) \$9 mil. for Roads & Streets projects dedicated for the Glades; 3) The Inland Port half million dollar transportation dollars; & 4) \$1 mil. for the waive attenuation project for Pahokee's Marina and is presently seeking matching FEMA dollars. This does not include the funds procured for the Glades Water & Sewer system, West Tech, Palm Beach State College and other funds procured for the Glades.

Mr. Bonlarron went on to discuss the one cent sales tax and Palm Beach County's plans for the proceeds from the tax. He stated that the tax is supposed to be for ten years or until a certain amount of revenue is raised. Once the targeted amount is raised, the tax will discontinue. The primary purpose and use of the funds will be for Infrastructure including: Repair, replacement & resurfacing of roads & streets, improvements to our parks, repair and/or replacement of bridges, school improvements, replacement & repair of air conditioning systems, mildew & mole remediation, improvement of law enforcement vehicles and equipment, repairs to the courthouse and many other infrastructure related matters/issues Countywide. A portion will be allocated to the cities throughout Palm Beach County to address their infrastructure needs as well.

There was brief discussion about repair of the Glades parks. Mr. Bonlarron stated that efforts will be made to apply for FRDAP grants funds to assist with improving the parks in the Glades. South Bay has approached the County about their concern and interest in improving its parks.

Mr. Bonlarron opened the discussion up for questions.

Mr. Eddie Lee Rhodes asked Mr. Bonlarron to comment on the Herbert Hoover Dike and the recent issues expressed in the media surrounding the flow of water from the dike. **Mr. Bonlarron** responded by stating that the dike is an expensive project. The original plan for the dike was to focus on the strength and integrity of the dike, but recently the focus has also turned to the flow of water and increase in algae from the dike. The Army Corp of Engineers can only throw or allocate so much money towards the dike annually and they are maxed out on what they are capable of doing. One of the County's focuses is on the home owner's insurance rates for Glades area residents related to the Army Corp's opinion on the integrity of the dike. Depending on that opinion, rates could go sky high and/or reach levels that will make it difficult, if not impossible, for many residents in the Glades to obtain home owner's insurance to cover their property.

Mayor Keith Babb followed up with a question about the \$9 mil. State allocation of funds for roads & streets. Mayor Babb asked for clarification on the area of coverage for the funds. **Mr. Bonlarron** responded and stated that the funds are available for statewide allocation and there are approximately a dozen other cities that are eligible to apply and receive the funds. He went on to say that approximately \$5 mil. of the \$9 mil. was recently allocated to the Glades for road & street repairs and reconstruction. He also stated that since this set-aside was made by the State, the Glades' area has gotten the majority of the allocation each year.

Mrs. Caroline Villanueva asked for Mr. Bonlarron to discuss the future plans for procuring funds and support for West Tech. **Mr. Bonlarron** stated that their efforts in Tallahassee for West Tech has been very successful and that it could not have been done without the support and hard work of Glades' residents and representatives. He added that the County is committed to improving West Tech and making it a viable option for local residents to secure training to prepare for future jobs and opportunities.

Mr. Bonlarron briefly discussed what he felt some of the emerging trends were and encouraged the GTAC attendees to continue to be active and vocal about their needs and concerns. He wants to hear from the community to ensure that the County and his focus is on track and consistent with the Glades' community's focus and needs. He thanked everyone for coming out and he stated that he looks forward to continuing his work on behalf of the Glades.

Mr. Tate thanked Mr. Bonlarron for coming out to speak to the GTAC attendees and everyone gave Mr. Bonlarron a round of applause.

We took a five minute break to allow Mr. Van Johnson to set up for his presentation and to allow everyone to speak to Mr. Bonlarron, during the break.

Mr. Tate introduced Mr. Van Johnson and briefly shared a bit about Mr. Johnson's background. Mr. Johnson presented on the projects that Palm Beach County's Housing Authority is doing in the Glades.

Mr. Johnson introduced one of his staff assistants, Ms. Vernel Taylor, Project Coordinator. Mr. Johnson stated that he and his board welcomes the opportunity to work in the Glades. He sees his organization as a stakeholder in the Glades and not simply a profit seeking organization. They have properties in South Bay; Marshall Heights (South Bay Apts.). They also purchased South Bay Villas and plans to join those contiguous properties for redevelopment purposes. They also own the port center. The plan is to create a new community in South Bay. They have also contributed to the development of a property in the City of Belle Glade called Quiet Waters. They provide 100% of rental assistance to renters through project based vouchers. Mr. Johnson mentioned that Mr. Glucksman is in the audience and he operates & manages that center. He stated that Mr. Glucksman works closely with PBC Housing Authority (PBCHA) to continue that project. Hopefully, this speaks to the commitment to the Glades and our seriousness about our work in the Glades.

(Around 17:30-recording point) Mr. Johnson stated that Covenant Villas is another project that PBCHA is working on with the County that is located in the City of Belle Glade. We have one final hurdle to overcome on that project and you will begin to see great progress on the project. We expect the closing to take place in the month of August, 2016. Shortly thereafter construction will begin. For those that do not know what or where Covenant Villas is located, it is a 144 unit existing property, located on N.W. 8th Street. It is a total rehab. project. We will be placing project based vouchers on the site. Rental assistance is necessary to attract any investors to obtain tax credits and any other kinds of financing. The Housing Trust Group is the co-developer on this property/project. The tax credits secured by the Group and the vouchers provided by the PBCHA have made it possible for us to provide a product that anyone will be proud of and to live in. We are producing a product that is comparable to or better than the private sector. This project has been in the works for a couple of years now. Its design and plans are complete and we're ready to begin work. We will begin to conduct a closed relocation for the residents soon, which means no one will be relocated off site. This project should be completed by the end of 2017. No later than the Spring of 2018. We have the site plan for viewing. There will be a Child Care Center and everyone will participate in what we call "Support Services". It is mandatory that everyone signs up for the support services to facilitate everyone working towards self-sufficiency, which simply means that they are employed, going back to school or obtaining additional training towards employment, etc... Newly rehabbed 116 project based units and the remaining 28 units will be public housing units. The public housing units will be indistinguishable from and/or between the other units. I have a rendering with me of what the units will look like for anyone that is interested in taking a look at them. Any questions?

The next project is in the City of South Bay; Marshall Heights. It should have been demolished a long time ago. It was purchased with the understanding that it had problems, but we purchased it with the intent of preserving some housing in the City of South Bay. After our inspection and review of the property, it was determined that the structures (all 62 units) will be demolished. We also own the neighboring property, which will be demolished and re-constructed. The plans are complete for this project. Our Co-developer on this project is McCurdy Senior Housing (Mr. Joseph Glucksman). We expect to close this deal no later than September or October of this year. We expect this project to be completed by 2018. Tax credits, bonds & vouchers are being utilized to leverage and finance the two projects mentioned above. 130 project based vouchers are being placed on this property to make this deal work. It is about a \$37 mil. deal. We have some illustrations and renderings for your viewing with us today. Mr. Javin Walker, from 2SBW, did the contracting work on the first phase of the project. He is a local contractor and he has been committed to hiring local people. This is in line with our efforts to hire local contractors for these projects. Royal Building Group handles our project management. HUD has been working with us to get these projects done. Mr. Johnson also thanked City Manager Leondre Camel and Mayor Joe Kyles for their assistance and cooperation in their efforts with these projects in South Bay. He added that jobs will be generated from these projects.

(Around 28:58 on the recording) Mr. Johnson has one final project to discuss. This is probably the most challenging, aggressive, difficult and creative of the projects in the Glades. He stated that it has taken all of his four years with PBCHA to bring this project to the forefront for development. **Grand Lake Apts.'s site (f/k/a Glades Glenn Apts.).** Many had said that the only way for the voucher cap to be increased is it will take an "Act of Congress" for this project to work. We did not have enough vouchers to do the project. **HR-3700 - "Housing Opportunities Through the Modernization Act" – HOTMA.** Mr. Johnson briefly explained how Section 8 works. HOTMA gave some relief to property owners to fix minor non-compliance issues to satisfy Section 8 requirements within 30 days. It finally passed the Senate July 17th. The biggest thing that it did was it passed and increased our voucher cap from 20% to 30%. We will now be able to use more of our vouchers to turn around trouble properties, like Grand Lake Apts. We will be taking the lead on this project. Next month, we will begin working towards 360 or more new housing units in the City of Belle Glade. We are going to completely transform that site. We will demolish the structures on the property, down to the foundation. We will be using concrete block and stucco, instead of the existing wood frame structure. It will not only be

housing. We are using a very aggressive concept to develop this property (i.e., "**Campus of Learners**"). We treat it as if it is a campus. Tenants will have to apply for admission. They will need to sign addendums to their leases stating that they, and everyone in their household, will participate in structured learning, which leads to either a degree or at least to getting a skill towards employment in 4 to 5 years. Support will be on site to assist with their efforts to achieve their goals and objectives. Coaches, mentors, placed based support of services on site to assist them with their plans. It is what we call a "Live, Work, & Learn" environment. I will plan to come back to do a follow up to provide more specifics and progress on that project to allow you to see where we are and how we are progressing on this project. We recently submitted to HUD an application for a Choice Neighborhood Initiative grant. It is in partnership with Palm Beach County. This grant can be for a maximum of \$30 mil. and a minimum of \$10 mil. We believe that we have a very good chance of getting the grant. However, even if we do not get the grant, we will still have the capacity to move forward with the project and intend to proceed accordingly. We are also going to submit this project to HUD for a research grant. We call our project the "**MUCK Town Experiment**". I will be coming back to share more about the project at a later date. A Harvard professor stated that low income individuals and people that live in poverty will not see any improvement in their quality of life, unless they move to a better zip code. They are going to be stymied, their children will not perform or achieve academically and they will not be upwardly mobile. This is the argument made by the Harvard professor. I have convinced my board and I do not agree with that premise or position. Mr. Johnson explained how he grew up and how many of his counterparts overcame their condition to go on to achieve success, and in some cases achieved great success. It is not your zip code that determines your success; it takes a village. When the village and neighbors rally around its citizens, it can produce many successes.

Other financial vehicles will also be used. **EB5** was created by the United States back in the 1990s. It set up a legal structure that facilitates foreign investors investing in projects such as ours. It is a part of the citizenships process and has been around for a number of years. It is specifically designed to assist those areas that are difficult to develop and raise funds.

This project will be developed in phases:

Phase 1A – Glades Regional Housing Center – also addresses emergency and homelessness needs. Elderly living, veterans, etc... - resource center. The Belle Glade Housing Authority is funded by USDA and is not a HUD funded housing authority. They have declined to participate in this project or application, to date. However, we're not giving up on getting them involved in this project. Someone from the audience said good luck with that! We are developing an "APT Center" (Administration Potential & Technology). This center will serve as a student center, library, education center, etc... to support the tenants in their quest to expand and improve their skills and abilities.

SPECTRA – a non-profit development organization and board for the PBCHA. Mr. Johnson mentioned that his background is in architecture and that he practiced in other cities. He stated that PBCHA will be the developers and planners for each of the projects. They will also select and oversee the property managers. There will be no more neglect of properties. We're here for the long haul. There are some exciting phases.

Phase II – 1B – The development of another 140 units. The regional housing center will have approximately 500 units.

Mr. Johnson also stated that they also want to collaborate with the City of Pahokee on some of their housing initiatives. We have additional capacity to do so. We drove the entire city with Mr. Moore when he was the City Manager for Pahokee and met with Mrs. Julia Hale, PHA. I will come back and provide more detail about the Muck Town Experiment at a later date.

Mr. Tate commented that he is excited and impressed with the projects proposed for the Glades.

Mrs. Cartheda Mann commented about the act of congress comment made earlier remarking that she was glad Mr. Johnson did not say it took an Act of God. **Mr. Johnson** mentioned that he is an ordained minister and his work could not be possible and successful without God's involvement and guidance. **Mrs. Mann** went on to ask if there will be guidance counseling in the facility. **Mr. Johnson** responded that there will be counselors in each building providing counseling and support to the tenants in each building. They will rent a unit and serve as if they are resident assistants in a dorm. This will be place based support of services.

Mayor Keith Babb (Pahokee) commented that he was pleased to hear that Pahokee was finally mentioned in his presentation. **Mayor Babb** wanted to make sure that Pahokee has a similar project for the City of Pahokee. He wanted to make sure that Mrs. Hale, PHA, is included in the plans.

Mr. Eddie Lee Rhodes asked about the EB5 program? Mr. Johnson briefly explained the program again and stated that they are already in a relationship with another organization that qualifies to participate in the program. **Mr. Rhodes** asked if he could get access to that information; about the EB5 program. **Mr. Johnson** said yes. He asked Mr. Rhodes to give his contact info to his assistant and he will make sure he gets the information.

Ms. Whitney Baldwin commented on how well, PBCHA and the organization that she works, they work together. She thanked him for being so cooperative and easy to work with. **Mr. Johnson** responded by stating that the attorney that represents the Housing Authority is there to assist with resolving issues in a manner that helps the Housing Authority and the tenants, whenever possible. They try to work with the tenant and/or prospective tenant to support the distribution of housing process.

Mr. Rhodes commented and thanked Mr. Johnson for hiring local contractors and encouraged him to continue to do so.

Mr. Tate commented that Mr. Johnson and Mr. Walker have both supported the Back-to-School bash and they have helped to make the bash possible in South Bay. **Mr. Gene Mann** took a few minutes to thank Mr. Javin Walker & Mr. Johnson. **Mayor Joe Kyles** also took the opportunity to thank Mr. Johnson for using local contractors and for committing to doing the projects and work that they are doing in South Bay and the Glades. He also stated that Mr. Walker has done what he said that he would do by hiring local workers for the jobs. **Mr. Johnson** thanked everyone for their kind words and re-affirmed his commitment to hire local contractors and workers for the project that PBCHA does in the Glades.

Commissioner Allie Biggs commended Mr. Johnson for his work and commitment to doing projects in the Glades. **Mr. Johnson** commented that he will certainly come back, if asked to come back. He also stated that the Muck Town Project is one of many projects that he hopes to complete in the Glades.

Mr. Tate acknowledged and thanked Mr. Ralph Butts, Ms. Annette Parchment, & Mr. Lomax Harrell for opening up the Civic Center & providing the refreshments for the meeting. He also acknowledged and thanked Mr. Dan Liftman, from Congressman Alcee Hastings's office, for attending the meeting and announced that Congressman Hastings will be our speaker for next month.

Special Presentations:

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Participant Updates/Comments

Mr. Tate thanked everyone for coming out today.

Upcoming Important Dates:

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| Aug. 6 | - Back-to-School Bash (West Tech, Tanner Park, & Pahokee High School) 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. – Each location may vary in time slightly |
| Aug. 9 | - GCRR Mtg. – 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. – West Tech |
| Aug. 9 | - LORE Stakeholder's Meeting – 3 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. – CareerSource (Belle Glade) |
| Aug. 15 | - PBC County School District Begins School |
| Aug. 22 | - PBSC Convocation – 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. – Dolly Hand |
| Aug. 25 | - GTAC Mtg. – 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. – Pahokee Marina |

3. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

The next meeting will be held August 25, 2016, at the City of Pahokee's Marina. Congressman Alcee Hastings, United States Congress, will be the guest presenters/speakers.

DAM 

Date: August 2, 2016

Approved by: Houston L. Tate, Director 

8/4/2016
Date