

SIESTA KEY ASSOCIATION MEETING

August 2015

WELCOME

Michael Shay called the meeting to order. A quorum was present: Beverly Arias, Helen Clifford, Deet Jonker, Michael Shay, and Joe Volpe.

MINUTES

The June minutes were approved.

COMMUNITY REPORT:

- Sheriff's Office

Sgt. Chris Laster oversees the Siesta Key Substation. He reported that— through luck and informants— the office had been able to find a robbery suspect, a man connected to several burglaries both here and in Manatee County. Sgt. Laster went on to say that 58 parking tickets had been given out in July, and there were 18 Misdemeanor arrests. The office received 90 calls during the month of July.

The issue of illegal fireworks was addressed. Sgt, Laster said these were hard to trace. People keep the fireworks under wraps until ready to leave, then shoot them all off and depart. “We address it when we see it, but we’d have to have an officer every 5 feet to control the issue.” Michael Shay added that any firework you cannot hold in your hand when firing is illegal.

A member of the audience asked what could be done about Lance, our resident homeless person, who appears sometimes to be sleeping on the beach. “We can only enforce whatever laws we have on the books,” said Sgt. Laster. County Commissioner Christine Robinson added: “You have to have a place for people to go. It’s a challenge! You can’t enforce a law when people have no place to go.” Michael Shay said that in the past Lance has been offered a place to sleep. At the end of the day it was his choice not to accept that situation.

- Code Enforcement

Michael Shay covered the subject for Susan Stahley, who was unable to attend. Stahley is actively pursuing illegal rentals, but the process is cumbersome. Code Enforcement plans on staggering the hours and days of people on their staff to better address issues of Code Enforcement.

Joe Volpe is concerned that Real Estate Brokers are flaunting the law of illegal rentals. He was also concerned that some owners might not know their properties are being illegally being rented out (i.e. more than once every 30 days), and brokers might be pocketing the money. However, it is the homeowner who is fined, not the broker. The SKA association will look into the situation.

Michael Shay made the following “Public Service Announcement”: If a person sees something that is not an issue for the Sheriff, but rather a Crime Issue, call the County Call Center – 941-861-5000. The Call Center has been extremely helpful.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Big Pass Dredge Project: Catherine Luckner was not present, but sent word that we should be seeing some preliminary reports coming through on the Project by the end of August.
- Liberty Clean-up 7/5: Michael Shay reported that the beach clean-up on July 5th was a real mess. The picnic area was left in particularly deplorable condition.
- Beach Clean-up: A plan is afoot to get people engaged in keeping our beautiful beaches clean. A proposal has been made that beach walkers take a bag with them, pick up trash, then take a picture of the objects they picked up and post it on Face Book. The goal here is to stimulate interest in keeping our beach clean.

- International Coastal Clean-Up 2015: SKA sent out an e-mail to past volunteers. September 19th is the big day. Volunteers will be provided with T-shirts, bags, and gloves. Access #1 to Point of Rocks will be covered as well as the park down at Bay Island.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Stickney Point Bridge Update: During repairs, avoid the bridge if at all possible between 9 pm and 6 am. Only one lane will be open.

FLOOR OPEN FOR QUESTIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- One audience member expressed concern that a neighbor's green lights were on all night in front of her home on the canal. The call center said nothing could be done. They did however tell her that lights should be under docks, and not in the middle of the canal. The SKA board urged the woman to discuss the situation directly with her neighbor.
- We do not yet know the decision of the FDOT about the proposed roundabout at Midnight Pass & Beach Rd.
- The US Coast Guard has agreed to review Bridge Opening Times on all bridges from Manatee County to Sarasota. Joe Volpe posed the question: "Where is the holding area for sailboats? That is one of the things the Coast Guard is looking at."
- Dee Jonker reported that it appears the retention pond has helped alleviate some of the flooding on Beach Road. He added that we had many visitors from many countries this summer. Perhaps some multi-language signage might help encourage visitors to pick up their trash.
- Jeanne Ezcurra serves on the board of Save Our Siesta Sand (SOSS). She encouraged everyone to participate in the 24 hour Giving

Challenge, which is being held on September 1-2 from 12 noon to 12 noon. Go to www.GivingPartnerChallenge.org to participate.

NEXT MEETING OF THE SKA ASSOCIATION TAKES PLACE ON SEPTEMBER 3RD