

SIESTA KEY ASSOCIATION MEETING

Thursday, January 12, 2017

CALL TO ORDER

Harold Ashby called the meeting to order. A quorum was present: Harold Ashby, Joyce Kouba, Catherine Luckner, Dan Lundy, Bob Miller and Joe Volpe.

MINUTES

Joyce Kouba

December Minutes were unanimously approved.

COMMUNITY REPORTS

Sheriff's Office

Sgt. Mruczek

Sgt. Mruczek reported that there were some break-ins to unoccupied vacation rentals at Polynesian Gardens. The December pub crawl had no major problems.

BOARD REPORTS

Annual Breakfast Meeting

Joe Volpe

The annual breakfast meeting will be March 4th 8:30 am at St. Boniface. Members receive two free tickets to the breakfast. Please make reservations to ensure seating.

Electric Car Charging

Joe Volpe

A government project, Charge Up rebate program, will pay 50% of the cost of charging units for electric cars. See sustainablesarasota@scgov.net for details.

SKUA Update

Bob Luckner

Current work on dismantling Siesta Key's waste treatment plant is removal of the fresh water treatment plant. Also, the hole is being drilled for the pipeline that will go under the Intracoastal Waterway and the pipe being pushed through. There will be periodic shutdowns on Shadowlawn for the pipeline construction.

The project appears to be on schedule and should be complete by the end of the year.

Membership

Bob Miller

Membership is on pace with last year. One problem is that, many automatic renewals have been declined. If you believe that you renewed membership via credit card payment, please verify that your credit card has been charged. If not, sign up as a new member and SKA will ensure that you have not paid twice. SKA needs your support when advocating for Siesta Key. Please renew your membership for 2017.

Bicycle Safety Initiative

Harold Ashby

SKA created and distributed a cycling map of Siesta Key. New bicycle racks were installed. SKA is working with the County to put markings on roadways which indicate shared bikes and autos. A bicycle education class will be scheduled at the Out-of-Door Academy. Attendees asked about vehicles parked in bike lanes and street lights on Higel. SKA will pursue these issues with the County.

Siesta Promenade Project

Harold Ashby

There was no news from a recent workshop on this project. Russ James requested help in persuading the County to purchase the Promenade site for a park to deter the negative impact this project will have on Siesta Key. There will be a meeting January 25 at 1:30 at the County Commission Building to discuss the scope of work for the Critical Area Plan.

Environmental Report – Big Pass Dredging

Dan Lundy, Catherine Luckner

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) gave notice of intent to give the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) a permit to dredge the pass between Lido and Siesta Keys. The Environmental Protection Act of 1971 gives anyone standing to protest any activity by government agency which will damage the environment. SKA has engaged a law firm to issue an administrative appeal with the FDEP. If the appeal is turned down, the next step is to appeal to court for relief. Bob Luckner explained several issues with the permit application. Of

the three dredge areas, one is not within the Sarasota City limits, requiring permission from the County for dredging. Several acres of sea grass are located within the dredge area and would be destroyed. The Comprehensive Plan prohibits dredge and fill activities in the Gulf, except to maintain existing channels, unless approved by the Board of County Commissioners. The Sarasota City Comprehensive Plan states that hardening (e.g. groins) are prohibited except for an emergency. Joe Volpe suggested that this project appears to be a boat channel into Marina Jacks.

Harold announced establishment of the Siesta Key Environmental Defense Fund (SKEDF) to accept tax-free donations to protect Siesta Key's environment, the first project of which will be protesting the Lido Key Big Pass dredging project.

Catherine announced property owners who have joined SKA's complaint: Dave Patton, William Bortz, and Michael Holderness.

Living Seawall

Phil Chiochio

Phil would like to make a future presentation to SKA regarding living seawall and living shoreline projects.

Lessons Learned from Past Dredging Projects

Bob Waechter provided a historical perspective on the Midnight Pass closing, warning "This is what happens when you don't stop them before they do it." Residents were assured that everything would be okay. But there were unintended consequences including: the scouring of Turtle Beach, the die off of the benthic community, the scouring of the Venice Channel, and the scouring of the north end of Siesta Key. "Fight your hardest fight now, don't let them do this, because, you will never get them to reverse it. "

New Business

Jean Cannon announced a Solar Energy Co-op meeting on January 18.

Ed Kroninger asked what SKA is doing about the potential Comprehensive Plan amendment to allow building of hotels on commercial general property on Siesta

Key. SKA has requested the initiators of the amendment to make a presentation, with no response to date.

ADJOURNMENT

Harold Ashby adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Kouba

Secretary, Siesta Key Association

Next SKA monthly meeting is February 2, 2017 at 4:30 pm.