

SIESTA KEY ASSOCIATION MEETING

May, 2015

WELCOME

Michael Shay called the meeting to order. A quorum was present : Helen Clifford, Joyce Kouba, Catherine Luckner, Michael Shay, Robert Stein, and Joe Volpe.

MINUTES

The April Minutes were approved.

COMMUNITY REPORTS

Sheriff's Office

Deputy Chris McGregor said there were no big crime trends. Some “cases of opportunity” have occurred in South County— a couple of residential burglaries where people were gone for less than one hour. He advised to lock your door, lock your car, and set your alarms.

Code Enforcement

John Lally is retiring. John has 5 illegal rentals going to Special Magistrate. He introduced Susan Stahley, the new Code Enforcement Officer with Planning and Development Services. She gave her e-mail: sstahley@scgovt.net should you wish to reach her.

The deteriorating property at 722 Siesta Key Circle was discussed. There is very little that code enforcement can do about this property. John Lally said his department only has the power to enforce the laws. He said that the Commissioners need to change the laws to encompass such deteriorating properties.

Junior Lifeguard Program

Richard Hinkson, director of the Junior Lifeguard Program, said they had their first graduate going to the Kona Ironman Event. The Junior Lifeguard Program is voluntarily operated by the County Life Guards, in conjunction with Parks and Recreation. Michael Shay presented the Junior Lifeguard Program with a \$500 check from SKA for purchase of more equipment for the program.

GUEST SPEAKER

Sarasota County Update: Big Pass Independent Peer Review Scope

Matt Osterhoudt

Manager of Sarasota County Environmental Protection Services

Laird Wreford, Project Leader

Laird provided an update on the scope of the upcoming independent peer review. He said that this third-party review is designed to bring good scientific data to the table. Although this is a City of Sarasota and Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) project, the County also has a stake. The County is an advocate for the natural resources and the coastal system. The most appropriate thing the County can do is have an impartial reviewer (an expert) critically review the proposal. The goal is that this reviewer would talk to community leaders, ask the right questions, and come to the right conclusions.

Prior to applying for a permit, the ACOE revised their plans which were presented at public meetings. A peer review cannot be launched until these revisions have been completed. The County has 3 major concerns:

- 1.) What effect will this project have on navigation in Big Pass?
- 2.) What effect will it have on shorelines and beaches of Siesta Key?
- 3.) What effect will it have on the County Park on South Lido?

Atkins North America is currently at the top of the list of companies being considered to do this review. They have an office in Sarasota. They have provided an initial proposal, which the County is reviewing. In the near future, the County should know the cost, the time line, and exactly what is going to be looked at and

measured. The County would like to have answers as soon as possible so that they can provide comments to the permitting agency of the State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

A question came from the floor: "One of the key clients on the ATKINS website is the ACOE. Isn't that a conflict of interest?"

Laird Wreford replied that ATKINS Sarasota office has no current contractual ties with the ACOE. Catherine Luckner added that Audubon and Mote Marine also often do work with the ACOE. You probably cannot find a company with expertise in coastal engineering that does not do business with ACOE. Another question: Were non-commercial academia scientists or European firms considered? Laird responded that such a course would be extremely time-consuming and might not allow us to get comments to the DEP before they make their decision. Another question from the floor: "What was the total Atkins bid?" Laird responded that it was still under negotiation, but it was in the \$15,000 to \$50,000 range. Nora Patterson chimed in: "We are spending 20 million just to put a frame around that beach. We need a really thorough review. Don't skimp on this one. Let's make this a really important thing."

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Big Pass Dredge Project

Catherine Luckner reported that the DEP was very responsive on sending her information. On April 15, the DEP informed the ACOE "you have exactly 14 days to print a public notice." However, the link provided on ACOE's web site went nowhere. She advised people in the audience to send certified letters of concern, and provided a sample letter. SKA's official stance is to do no harm. The volume and scope of the project is not yet clear. President Michael Shay added that we all understand Lido needs sand. This has never been a sand war. We are simply concerned about where the sand will come from, and the effect that has on Siesta Key.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Roundabout:** Bob Stein reported that no decision has been made. Another mailing will soon be made by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to nearby residents. SKA sent a letter to FDOT recommending that a roundabout not be built but that improvements should be made to crosswalks and bicycle lanes. The Sarasota NPO opposed the project to FDOT, however, FDOT stated that they were going to build the roundabout. FDOT has since delayed this decision due to objections received.
- **The Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan** will be voted on by the County Commissioners in the month of May. This plan outlines the rules for redevelopment after a disaster, including what to do, how to be ready, and whether or not you will be able to rebuild.
- **Village Parking Lot:** SKA worked with the Village Association and the County to ban commercial vehicles parking in the lot.

NEW BUSINESS

Pedi Cabs: Michael Shay reported that SKA is looking into possible regulations, talking to the tax collector, etc.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Kouba

Secretary, Siesta Key Association

SKA minutes reflect the column written by Diana Colson and published in the Siesta Sand newspaper with additions by the association secretary.

Next SKA monthly meeting is Thursday, 6/4, at 4:30 pm.

There will be no SKA meeting on Thursday, 7/2.