

**FORT MYERS BEACH  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
MARCH 10, 2003  
REGULAR MEETING  
Town Hall - Council Chambers  
2523 Estero Boulevard  
FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The Regular Meeting of March 10, 2003 was opened by Mayor Daniel Hughes on Monday, March 10, 2003, at 9:00 a.m..

**Council members present at the meeting:** Mayor Daniel Hughes, Vice Mayor Terry Cain, Howard Rynearson - Council member, Bill Van Duzer - Council member and Bill Thomas - Council member.

**Excused absence from meeting:** None.

**Staff present at meeting:** Town Manager Marsha Segal-George, Deputy Town Manager John Gucciardo, Damon Grant, Attorney Dick Roosa, Dan Folke and Bill Spikowski.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

All assembled and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA**

**Professional Service Consultant Interview for Pedestrian Crossing Project**

**9:00 Barraco and Associates**

**10:00 Coastal Engineering Consultants, Inc.**

**11:00 Utelco, Inc.**

Damon Grant began by indicating three firms will be interviewed for the Professional Service Consultant for the pedestrian refuge project. The Council will determine if a firm is qualified to perform the required services. The Council should determine such factors as the ability of professional personnel, whether a firm is certified a minority business enterprise, past performance, willingness to meet time and budget requirements, as well as projected work loads of the firm. All three will be interviewed and a rating process will take place among the Council members. Competitive negotiations will then take place with the number one rated firm based on qualifications.

Carl Barraco, President of Barraco and Associates, came forward. He thanked the Council for allowing his firm to present their qualifications and ideas. He grew up on the island and has seen the beach develop. He does believe he knows the beach area. He has over 20 years of experience in this area in both surveying and engineering.

Dan, whose title is Planner, came forward. He has a masters in city planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a certificate of urban design. His professional focus has been on community visioning and creating redevelopment and growth management plans. Over the past year, he was the author of Plan for Palm Beach Boulevard recreating State Road 80 into a more pedestrian friendly area. He is a Professor of Planning at Florida Gulf Coast University. He has authored a number of articles on visioning, redevelopment and growth management.

Christian Andrea, Principle with Architectural Land Design, came forward. His firm is a landscape architectural firm which has been in business for 8 years. He has been practicing for 18 years and has been licensed for 16 years. His firm is a 7-person firm who practices on a variety of projects ranging from large master planned communities, commercial, high end residential and also Streetscape.

Carl Barraco showed the organizational chart to the Town Council. The team is hand picked by past experience. This experience will allow them to pull together to be successful on this project. There are three aspects critical to the project. The first is the planning stage, the next are the engineering stage with

the construction being the final stage. This must all be pulled together with team relationships.

Dan came forward. His role as the Planner is to take a look at the work already done and redesign to make it more pedestrian oriented. This can be translated into design ideas that can be constructed at the back end. The function of a road is to serve as a corridor for pedestrian, public transit, bicycles, as well as for cars. His role is to understand this plan and be sure the engineer who makes the design fits in with the new urbanism plan. He described the roadway and indicated he did not feel the purpose is to eliminate congestion. Congestion is positive to some degree, especially to Times Square. The purpose is to improve the traffic flow and make it more pedestrian oriented. His personal choice are the raised crosswalks. This idea implements the Town's vision. A raised crosswalk will help to change the realm of the roadway. This is a perception change in the roadway. No ideas should be ruled out, such as pedestrian overpass and separate bike lane. All ideas should be reviewed and new ideas should be created. Some ideas have already been implemented. The best solution should be found. A comprehensive traffic study is in the works to look at ways to alleviate congestion on Fort Myers Beach. They do not want to duplicate efforts. All bases should be covered with all public input. Additional workshops and meetings have been planned.

Christian indicated the most important portion of a design project is to determine an effective analysis to get an understanding of the site. He has spent approximately 5 hours at two different times walking and driving the property. This allows a first hand experience to see the issues to be discussed. He had the opportunity to speak with a shop owner and the Sheriff's Department. The shop owner discussed traffic and parking as a major concern. The Sheriff's Department felt wider pedestrian refuges were needed, bicycle traffic is conflicting with pedestrian traffic, cars backing into the right of way, striping of the crosswalks should be better defined, communication issues are arising, lighting is poor at nighttime and a properly designed intersection to handle the buses should be considered. Can an intelligent transportation system be created to show the flow of traffic? This should also be considered. Left turn lanes are a major problem and must be factored in. The bicycle lanes should be separated to show the difference between bicycle and pedestrian lanes. Bus loading is an issue and it seems there is land in front of McDonald's that can serve as bus stop. Any redundant access points to Estero should be eliminated. All these issues are being focused on.

Carl Barraco reviewed that Dan went over the existing ideas he has investigated. He is familiar with the plans and work done to date. Christian reviewed some of the ideas, which have been developed over the last few weeks. There are probably some good ideas that have not been considered yet and this would be determined in the visioning process. Until all three components are together and evaluated they are unsure what the best product is for this project. The planning stage is very critical to determine what will be developed in the end. Once this has been determined the design, permitting and engineering will take place. He feels the engineering will be fairly straightforward, once the vision is developed. The most difficult part of the engineering is the permitting, specifically with the drainage and the roadway. Over the past 20 years he has completed many major projects with Lee County and the Florida Department of Transportation. He is familiar with their staffing and feels this would be very beneficial to bringing this project to construction.

Carl indicated that his firm has the most experienced personnel on large public projects in this area. He is proud of this. There are six employees from his firm that worked on the Midpoint Bridge corridor. This team and relationships are in place. Business access signs worked well for the Midpoint Project and he envisions something such as this for Fort Myers Beach. Also, in addition he sees parking to be found during construction to help with the process with very little inconvenience. Relationships with the business owners will be critical during construction. Innovative ideas were used in the Midpoint project by the utilization of a dedicated hotline. This will allow people to have a direct line to call with questions. This elevates the need to call around and cuts back on frustration. This was very successful. Off season construction is helpful during a low traffic count. This should minimize the inconvenience to the public and businesses. Boat rides each month will allow the community leaders to be kept up to date on the project. Attention to detail during the project is the most critical aspect. Public information with a message board will be helpful. A notice would be delivered to all businesses and stakeholders. This will keep everyone up to date. Also, the management of the radio, T.V. and newspaper announcements. Lee County DOT has a program where they provide the T.V., radio and newspaper information. They feel they can piggyback on this advertisement to make the public aware of what is happening.

Dan came forward and expressed this is the most important corridor to the beach. In constructing a team there needs to be the ability to understand the vision the Town of Fort Myers Beach. Also, as important is experience as a project team on construction and construction management for major

infrastructure projects. There is no room for delays. This team has been together for two decades and works together constantly. Problems can be ironed out and resolved without delays. He thanked the Council for allowing them to present today.

Carl Barraco hopes their presentation has initiated questions from the Town Council. His firm presented a hard copy of the presentation to Council.

Council member Van Duzer referred to the graphic. He felt the intent is a pedestrian refuge for people to cross comfortably. He is not seeing this in the graphic. He wants to know if the traffic light is to be removed? Carl replied that many discussions have taken place with regard to the light. The removal of the light would be a great benefit. Many options have been discussed, such as a round about.

Carl discussed that in preparation for this meeting his team went out and walked the site. One of the first problems he noticed was traffic flow. He is not sure of the approach. Additional research will be needed.

Mayor Hughes asked for the definition of new urbanism? Dan replied that new urbanism is looking at how cities used to develop prior to becoming automobile centered. This is a movement in planning, which tries to create places that are more pedestrian oriented and more town and village like.

Vice Mayor Cain asked for a definition of a raised crosswalk? Dan replied a speed hump is an example. He would like to distinguish this area by more than just pavers or textured paving. Although, this will highlight the crosswalk, it will not change the character of the road.

Mayor Hughes asked at what point the County would become involved? Attorney Dick Roosa replied the County will need to give their blessing before any work is complete. Carl added that his firm has done a lot of roadway improvements in County right of way. The County will be brought in from the first day to have them become involved in the process. He does not see this as being a problem. Their main concern will be safety and efficiency.

Mayor Hughes asked for the best way to keep pedestrians from crossing in all areas? Carl replied that education will be the best situation. Dan added that they considered this as a group to try to develop how pedestrians can be funneled in certain areas. This is an item for further consideration.

Christian commented that when he steps off a curb and puts a foot on the ground the cars still go passing by. Education through signage or other means needs to be implemented. When a pedestrian enters the crosswalk, the traffic should stop. **(Tape Paused - End of interview- Remainder of Tape 1 blank) (Tape 1 Backup began here after first interview from Barraco)**

Dean Martin from Environmental Consulting and Technology came forward. ECT has been in business for 15 years with a corporate office in Gainesville. Nine Florida offices exist with one being in Fort Myers. There are 8 people in the Fort Myers office with 145 total employees throughout Florida. Environmental is large part of their focus and experience with utility design, permitting, roadway design and coastal engineering. Some of the services ECT feels will be needed will include water management and design, utility design and roadway design. Some of the most recent clients include the Town of Fort Myers Beach, Lee County, Florida DOT and other subdivisions and commercial projects as well. The company believes strongly in safety and likes to be hands on with the projects. He spoke of UTELCO and expressed they have 27 full time employees, which consists of a drug free workplace with a headquarters in East Fort Myers. Five of their most recent jobs include Old San Carlos, Hyde Park - Mid Island Drive, US 1, US 41 and Florida DOT. The US 41 project is going on and is under budget and will meet their time frame. Safety is also a large factor with this company for employees and public. Metron is the surveyor they have chosen to team up with. Metron is based in Fort Myers and is the largest surveying only firm in the tri-county area. Same day or next day service is available for the project and time line. Some of their most recent projects completed are subdivisions, Lee County co-op location work and construction layouts. Metron has the latest technology.

The objectives as ECT sees them for this project are improvement of the flow of traffic off the bridge, accommodation of pedestrians, lump sum design build project to help the Town lock in the budget and schedule, pleasing to the eye to enhance the experience of pedestrians and the completion of construction during the off season depending on the outcome of the project. Their understanding of the project includes relocation of the streets and curbs, installation of sidewalks and bike paths, landscaping, relocation of utilities and the creation of refuges for pedestrians in the center of Estero Blvd..

Dean went on to further discuss the project concerns. Numerous concerns exist with the utility location and conditions, drainage, traffic, provide access to all the businesses during construction and provide adequate features during any down times. A design build will provide a budget and schedule that can be followed. The company feels it is important to do a great deal of up front research for utilities and

drainage. Only one lane will be closed at a time during construction. They will work at night when possible and provide detour routes to try to alleviate congestion.

Some reasons why the Town Council should choose the ECT team are due to all members of the team being local. This provides cost effectiveness and responsiveness. UTELCO has an on island representative available 24-hours, 7 days of week which is important during construction. Much local experience, as well as state wide experience has been obtained. Their personnel is qualified with additional staff corporate wide for assistance.

Mayor Hughes commented on the work done to date by UTELCO. Some difficulties have taken place and does this have any relevance to awarding the contract? Damon Grant replied that the problems with UTELCO have not stemmed from their firm directly, but was due to working without the proper design and pre-design elements. He discussed a meeting with Wilson Miller, UTELCO and Bob Rockwell. Wilson Miller has seen additional money owed to UTELCO. Once this information is reported back from Wilson Miller some additional money may need to be paid out and the Town and UTELCO may be on the same side. This misunderstanding would be due to lack of a proper estimate and numbers from the beginning.

Mayor Hughes commented that the problems with UTELCO are based on financial payments and does not relate to the quality of their work? Damon replied that there are issues with the quality of some subcontractors.

Attorney Dick Roosa reviewed the qualifications the Town Council should be considering today for these interviews. These qualifications were reviewed by Damon at the start of the interviews.

Council member Rynearson asked for the recommendation of Damon Grant? Damon replied that UTELCO has the experience. He feels Barraco and Associates approached this project the same as Bill Spikowski would handle the project. Coastal Engineering came in with 7 out 10 companies refunding the agency or client. He does favor Barraco.

Mayor Hughes reviewed it is interesting the way the teams are made up. UTELCO has a General Contractor head of the team. The engineer plays a key role. Coastal Engineering and Barraco have a contract with an engineering firm with all work being subcontracted out. Barraco emphasis the planning and vision aspect more than the others. UTELCO emphasis the physical construction aspect and brought forward problems which may occur. He was impressed with Coastal Engineering. Coastal Engineering has a broad scope of personnel available to them. Both Coastal Engineering and UTELCO would utilize the same landscape architect who is David Jones.

Council member Rynearson questioned with the extra knowledge of UTELCO in this area would this not weigh heavily on the decision? Damon replied that this would be a factor. The underground work is where the majority of problems could occur.

Vice Mayor Cain was impressed with Coastal Engineering due to their job site cleanliness. She feels they have the personnel and experience to complete the job. She enjoyed seeing the savings to the last 7 projects. She felt this showed the Town Council their cost effectiveness and time efficiency. She would give her consideration to this firm.

Mayor Hughes questioned if the Town could direct the primary contractor to hire a certain subcontractor? The response was that this is not possible.

**MOTION:** Made by Council member Howard Rynearson and seconded by Council member Bill Van Duzer to select UTELCO as the Professional Service Consultant for the Pedestrian Crossing Project.

**Discussion:** Council member Van Duzer hopes all firms have the ability to design and does not feel that UTELCO has the advantage. He feels an engineering firm must do the design on the project and not a contractor.

Mayor Hughes feels you must look at the team. All interviewed has an engineer, contractor or contract manager and landscape architect. The right team is what should be considered.

Damon added that ECT was the engineer who completed several drainage projects.

Mayor Hughes added that a half million-dollar project should not be built over a

possible water main issue. A water main break could potentially destroy all work that would be completed.

Council member Thomas felt all three presentations were great, but all emphasized different points. He liked Barraco's experience with the Midpoint project and their familiarity of the area. Coastal Engineering would be very cost efficient and their technology is one step ahead of everyone. UTELCO emphasized possible problems, which is also important to recognize. This will be a difficult decision.

Council member Van Duzer commented that UTELCO was his second choice. He does feel an experience factor is present, which could be important. He will support UTELCO. He did feel Barraco made the best presentation. He wants to see UTELCO come forward with designs first and utilities to be secondary.

Vice Mayor Cain cannot support this motion. Dean stated that the estimate by Bill Spikowski is conservative. She is concerned with his future bid. This award is being made on assumptions that difficulties may exist. Problems may not even be a factor.

Mayor Hughes added that the design will determine the effect on underground infrastructures.

Damon Grant added that on the Seafarer's side of the road easements will be obtained to give additional space. The road will be extended to make room for the refuge to go into the center of the road.

Council member Ryneanson commented on the engineer hired for Old San Carlos, which did cost additional money. He does not want to see them go this route again.

Council member Van Duzer feels the contractor selected should be told to contact Southwest Florida Water Management District first to obtain approval.

Mayor Hughes commented on the good design provided by Bill Spikowski.

Vice Mayor Cain would have agreed until seeing the presentation by Barraco.

Damon Grant commented that Clayton Miller from Coastal did work for Southwest Florida Water Management. He felt that Clayton did touch base with Rick Thompson who indicated the Water District did not have any issues.

**VOTE: Motion passes 4 to 1. Vice Mayor Terry Cain dissenting.**

**MOTION:** Made by Council member Bill Van Duzer and seconded by Council member Bill Thomas to choose Barraco and Associates as selection #2.

**VOTE: Motion passes unanimously.**

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT**  
None.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

\*\*Prior to the adjournment of the meeting Council member Van Duzer commented on his meeting with Wagner. He has found that the money is not available and the Town of Bonita Springs is not totally in favor as a Council. It may be appropriate for the Town Council of Fort Myers Beach to ask the Bonita Council to reconfirm the commitment to the project. He would like to move forward. John feels they should go back to the Council for a commitment. A decision would then need to be made.

Mayor Hughes is working with some people in Tallahassee regarding the corporate status and the potentiality of having this disconnected from the City of Bonita Springs. Politically this must be discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m..

Respectfully Submitted,

Shannon Miller  
Transcribing Secretary

**If a person decides to appeal a decision made by the Council in any matter considered at this meeting/hearing, such people may need to ensure that verbatim record of the proceeding is made, to include the testimony and evidence upon which any such appeal is to be based.**