**FORT MYERS BEACH**
**TOWN COUNCIL**
**SPECIAL MEETING**
**NOVEMBER 15, 1999**
**NationsBank, Council Chambers**
**2523 Estero Boulevard**
**FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA**

The firm of Wilson Miller introduced Dan Burden who would explain the workings of a Charette and what we hoped to accomplish with a brainstorming of ideas for making our Town a more resident friendly place.

Mr. Burden advised that the most important reason for getting together before the Charette officially begins is so that we will get a clear idea of what the opportunities are, what the process will be, the reasons for as many citizens to come as possible. He said that this will be one of the most important weeks in the history of the Town for many years to come.

Towns in America have lost a lot of their focus. By looking at our most prominent piece, our main street, we can begin to assemble some of the most important opportunities for places where events can occur to celebrate ourselves.

He would not like for us to think of a Charette as anything less than helping give birth to the future, and it is appropriate that we do this as we start the next millennium. We take the historic presence of the Town as it has evolved over time. He would like to get across to us how important the process is, as the process is the product. When his team leaves on Sunday, they will turn over to Wilson Miller a lot of work products.

He showed us a Charette as it unraveled in Raleigh, North Carolina, so that we could see the actual process of a Charette.

The presenter noted that they always start with children, who are our leading asset. They have a pure vision of the world. They want to make sure that people clean up the streets, that it feels safe, that there are things for them to do.

A Charette was explained as a work in progress. The first act in making our Town work is to make sure that we're very proud of our streets. We must pay attention to traffic.

On Wednesday focus groups will be started. The purpose of a focus group is to make sure that people who have common interests, such as retailers, can sit around a table and talk about for example the retail trade. This is also important for emergency groups. They need to talk to us almost one on one in a small room. The same is important for utilities, sanitation, etc. We need to hear that before we start with the public.

Thursday will be the most exciting day of all. This is when the citizens come out to do the design. That is a most important part of the process. It always turns out that they are better designers than anyone we can bring in for the process. They are going to make sure that they don't put anything on the map that won't be useful to them. People get totally involved in this. After they do their work, they give their presentations. Young children and teenagers want to give their perspectives of a lot of things adults don't want to think about. They can remind us of our important elements. And different

people have different styles of presenting.

The citizens are given a little training and the maps that are worked on are just chock full of information that professional designers can interpret.

The building blocks or elements of streets are defined. The placement of spaces where people can congregate is important.

A roundabout may be a very valuable tool for us. It is very pedestrian friendly and slows everyone down to about 18-20 miles per hour. It can also move more people. You can actually manage 30% more traffic at intersections than you can ordinarily. Nobody ever has to stop on a roundabout unless it's absolutely saturated. Also, they will typically eliminate from 50%-90% of crashes. They allow you a true gateway into your community, a sense that you've arrived. They also improve access to buildings. Two roundabouts at an intersection with a median between them keeps cars from turning left into driveways and blocking traffic. It actually simplifies getting access to people's properties.

The roundabout also allows us to take what is a gray, ugly asphalt intersection and turn it into an area of beauty, a vista of trees, flowers, shrubs and even monuments.

Mr. Burden advised we will also talk about proper lighting -- street lighting and the lighting that comes out of store windows, which is another reason why stores should be built with a relationship to the street. There are different ways for creating themes for different neighborhoods. People will come and promenade where there is proper lighting. They will feel a sense of ownership.

His whole purpose in doing the Charette, he explained, is to get the engines running, to get everybody to start thinking with a common passion to build the Town. People will take over during the Charette, they well get involved. From this moment forward his team is thinking of where they can find money for us, how they can get some early products on the ground. They also want us to set what we feel is our benchmark for success. Where we see children out in the public realm, relaxed and enjoying themselves, that is a safe place. People with disabilities should be able to get across the street without feeling like second class citizens.

In every community there is always someone who turns out to be the sparkplug, and that person can, should, will, must step forward.

Mr. Burden went around the room and asked each person what he expects to get out of the Charette process. A reply from Anita Cereceda was the following:

"I hope that you will be able to get a commitment from the Town Council that indeed they're going to go forward with this, and I hope that you will be able to decipher what the community really wants the vision to be. The plan is something that I wouldn't deal with but the vision is something that I want to deal with."

Dan Hughes said he'd like to see some finality to some of these issues.

Others also expressed their feelings, but were inaudible.

Mr. Burden advised that they will bring up how residential streets and homes relate to Estero Boulevard. You can't talk up streets unless you talk about how people live and how the schools, churches and everything else relate to the streets.

Town Manager Marsha Segal-George expressed regret for today's small turnout. We will try to get as many people to come to the Charette as possible by getting the word out.