

**FORT MYERS BEACH
TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP
OCTOBER 17, 1996**
Nations Bank, Council Chambers
2523 Estero Boulevard
FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA

I CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was opened on Thursday, October 17, 1996, at 6:30 P.M. by Anita T. Cereceda, Mayor.

Present at the meeting were: Anita T. Cereceda, Mayor and Council Member; Ted FitzSimons, Vice Mayor and Council Member; Council Members Rusty Isler, Ray Murphy, and Garr Reynolds; Marsha Segal-George, Town Manager; and Attorney Richard Roosa.

II PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

III PROCLAMATION ON RED RIBBON WEEK

Mayor Cereceda read a proclamation naming October 20-26 as Red Ribbon Week. Mr. David Graham, Executive Director of the Coalition for a Drug-Free Lee County, accepted the proclamation, and presented the mayor with lapel pins for the council members, a certificate and a plaque recognizing the Town for its participation, and a red flag to be flown outside of Town Hall.

IV OPEN DISCUSSION ON THE STATE OF THE TOWN

Mayor Cereceda mentioned that after the meeting, she will put together a letter to Commissioner Doug St. Cerny stating the Council's and Town's concerns, and a joint Council/Commission meeting will be scheduled.

Dan Parker read a letter from the Civic Association congratulating the Council, the staff, and the LPA on their first nine months of Town government, and thanking them for their many hours of work.

The Council discussed the list of Town/County issues which need to be addressed:

1. Gas Tax - Marsha Segal-George reported that the County has notified the Town that they miscalculated the Town's share and it will now get 2.8% which will give the Town an extra \$102,000. She feels that it still doesn't resolve the issue. The Council agreed that they still want to pursue 5%.
2. Cable franchise fee - as far as the staff knows, this has not moved anywhere and Marsha Segal-George feels that the only hope for getting this resolved is through the Commissioners.
3. Dual taxation on EMS service - this may need to be a three-way resolution with the Fire Department, the Town and the County.
4. Core level service - the Council agreed they still need to discuss this with the commissioners. They need more quantification of what the County will provide.
5. Transportation issues - the Town has been unable to get answers on sidewalks, the status of Estero Boulevard to the north, and parking meters. They also need to have a dialogue on mutual traffic problems with Bonita, and direction on hurricane evacuation.

Judy FitzSimons mentioned that the County is removing grass on the medians, supposedly to improve drainage, but it causes erosion and is unsightly. The County has told the staff that they have to do it because the sand has built up and if we don't like it, the Town can take maintenance of Estero Boulevard. Mr. Isler said that he felt the work was necessary and will only be unsightly for a short time.

Johanna Campbell mentioned that she is very upset about the trolley. She thinks the Town needs to strongly remind the County that the trolley is not just for the Beach residents, because it is also servicing Lee County's tourists. She asked the Council to do anything they can to encourage the County to put on more trolleys. Mr. FitzSimons wondered if TDC would help with more trolleys. John Gucciardo said the Chamber's Traffic Committee has been discussing whether the solution should be through LeeTran or privatized, and whether it should be free or fee-paid, etc. They are trying to look at a wider scope than just adding new trolleys. Some people think the trolleys actually impede the traffic problem, and unless the trolley stops are redesigned, it won't help. Mayor Cereceda said we can't wait that long because the season

is here now. Two or three years ago there were enough trolleys (at least 4 at peak times) and they were packed. Now they have cut it back so far it is not reliable, and they charge a dollar per person from Summerlin. She wants to know why LeeTran decided to change a system that was working so well. Tom Kitty said if we are thinking of subsidizing the County to get more trolleys, we should take the money and privatize it so we will have control and not have to rely on the adversarial relationship with the County. Ms. Campbell thought perhaps we could look into battery-operated trams that would be less expensive. Mr. Reynolds said he felt that studies have shown that privatizing will not be economically feasible. He thinks it costs \$100,000 for each extra trolley.

Mr. FitzSimons wondered if the Town took over maintenance of Estero if the gas money would be enough to take care of it. Mr. Gucciardo said the Town feels that we are entitled to 5% even without the responsibility of Estero. If we take care of Estero, they should give even more money.

6. and 7. Marsha Segal-George suggested that these be deleted because they deal with All Hazards and the Sewer plant and have been basically resolved.
8. Bay Oaks, Lynn Hall, Bowditch and beach accesses - it seems clear that the County is going to stop supporting Bay Oaks in the next fiscal year and the Town will have to pick it up. Perhaps the Town could work out some joint venture like they are doing with the other cities. There is a question of whether the beach accesses are ours or theirs or some of each. The Town hears that they want to give us Bowditch, but they don't want to give us Lynn Hall. Mayor Cereceda suggested that perhaps the Town should be preemptive rather than waiting for the County to dump things on us. It appears that the County wants to shift the responsibility on us for the things that are losing money. Mr. Roosa suggested perhaps the Town should insist on a package of the things we want to maintain and how much support we expect from the County to do that maintenance. Judy FitzSimons said if we have to take over beach accesses and Bowditch, perhaps the town can put in parking meters to help support the facilities. Bob Gaydos said he believes that the county can't just dump things on us, that it has to be by mutual agreement. He also talked about the trolley, and he believes that at least 75% of the riders are tourists and the Town should not have to support a trolley for tourists.
9. TDC and Economic Development - Economic Development needs to work with the Town's small businesses, and also TDC needs to talk about tourist development dollars.
10. through 13. - Marsha Segal-George said that these items (CDBG, interlocals, discussions on environmental issues, and financing help) are philosophical ideas that probably don't need to go into the letter to the County.
14. County Attorney's office - Mr. Roosa said this issue has been resolved because the County Attorney's office has agreed to give oral, but not written, opinions on land use.
15. Pool - this issue is being worked on through an interlocal which will be discussed at the Oct. 21 meeting.

Rusty Isler read a report of what he thinks the Town has done well (the Town is up and running with a competent staff, computer and phone systems functional, Town Hall facilities leased and furnished, etc.); what has not been done yet (adequate accounting system, lax policies and procedures particularly in accounting and purchasing functions); things he would like to see the Town accomplish (complete a master plan that does not support increased density, improve working relationships with the County, prevent the further deterioration of the marine environment, make sure family aspects are considered in the comp plan); and his personal goals (set up the Town web site that will include Town documents, build an information system, work on the marine environment, and continue to have planning sessions and set priorities.)

Ted FitzSimons noted that we are making progress with the financial system and auditing. Regarding land use, the Council has not passed anything that will increase density, but has inherited a number of density problems from Lee County. He sees the only solution to stop them is to buy them. He also mentioned that he has spent a good amount of time in the Town offices lately and has learned that bare bones works, but any time the phone rings, it ties up one third of the staff, and many of the calls are public relations-related or complaints. He also mentioned the goals, objectives and tasks list which was generated by Bill Mills at the beginning of the Town and he feels it is amazing how much has been accomplished or is in the process of being accomplished.

Mr. Isler mentioned that he has been contacted by Philip Babcock who has offered the services of a team of local amateur radio operators, and he recommended adding them to the emergency team and giving them I.D.s and keys to the building since they have two -way radios and ham radio equipment. The

team would make sure evaluation of damage reaches the proper authorities, and would provide health and welfare reports to relatives of residents.

Motion: Mr. Isler moved and Mr. Reynolds seconded that the Council authorize the formation of an emergency communication team headed by Mr. Babcock, and issue proper credentials to the volunteers.

Discussion: Mr. Reynolds thought they should come in to speak to Council first and Mayor Cereceda agreed. Mr. Gucciardo mentioned that the Council had already agreed they wanted to coordinate efforts with others that already have a plan in place. After this first season, the Town would start developing its own plan. He thinks these radio operators could be part of the plan, but he would rather they be part of a greater plan rather than adding things piecemeal. Mr. Isler said he is more interested in planning for the recovery from disaster rather than preparing for the disaster itself. The Town needs property records on the laptop, etc. so we can act quickly and decisively if a disaster hits. Mr. Isler and Mr. Reynolds agreed to withdraw the motion until further consideration at a future meeting.

Mr. Roosa mentioned a memo he received from Bruce Conroy, City Attorney of Cape Coral, talking about how the proposed County charter could negatively affect the Town. He is afraid the Town may lose control if the County amends the charter later. Cape Coral and Sanibel are planning to present resolutions to their Councils opposing the County charter. He asked whether the Council wanted to do anything to inform the residents of the Town of the danger in voting for the charter. For instance, the County could make their ordinances override the Town's, and they could have a tax referendum where everyone in the County would vote, even though it might only affect people in the municipalities. He offered to prepare a resolution if the Council wished. Since there was support for the resolution, he will prepare it for consideration at the October 21 meeting. Don Deane mentioned that the Civic Association is having a meeting between Don Stillwell and an opponent of the charter. He encouraged everyone to attend.

Mr. Gucciardo also mentioned that if the Council wants a resolution in support of Conservation 2020 they need to have Mr. Roosa prepare it for October 21 also. The Council agreed.

Mr. Gucciardo reported that Jim Lavender of Lee County Parks and Recreation called because they need to do maintenance on the pier and need to close the pier for a month. Bids will be back by the end of October and he wanted to know if it could be closed in December. The Council indicated they want the County to wait until the spring.

He also reported on the \$247,000 that has been held by DOT for the Town. The Town has received a letter from them that they have spent \$8349 on approved projects, and that they will be sending us a check for the balance of \$238,884 before November 1.

Mayor Cereceda thanked Larry Ihnen and Brittany Wallman from the press for their support of the Town through the media.

V ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 8:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Salfen
Recording Secretary