

SIESTA KEY ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES
October 6, 2011
St Boniface Church, Room F

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Catherine Luckner called the meeting to order. A quorum was present: Beverly Arias, Helen Clifford, Deet Jonker, Joyce Kouba, Michael Shay, Peter van Roekens, Joe Volpe, Bob Waechter, Gayle Zentz. Excused: Ann Kaplan, Bob Tripp.

2. MINUTES – Joyce Kouba

Bob Waechter moved, with Peter van Roekens seconding, to approve the September minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

3. COMMUNITY REPORTS

Sheriff's Office

- No crime trends.
- Car burglaries have stopped since the recent arrests.

Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce (SKCC) – Kevin Cooper

The Crystal Classic Master Sand Sculpture Contest will be November 11th to 14th.

Code Enforcement – John Lally

- Illegal rentals in residential zones remain an ongoing issue with five new violations. The SKA web site provides a link to regulations for residential rentals.
- The sailboat anchored off north Siesta Key does not appear to violate any regulations. The Marine Patrol will verify that there is no illegal discharge.

4. GUESTS

Sarasota Power and Sail Squadron (SPSS) – Cmdr. Leon Warshaw and Lt/C Susan Lomanstro

SKA was delighted to have the Squadron provide information about its activities to promote boat safety, including boating classes, safety checks, and marine patrol. SPSS was invited as part of the ongoing effort for manatee protection, canal safety, and improved boater skills. Florida leads the nation in boating accidents.

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) – Engineering Staff, District 1
L.K. Nandam, district traffic operations engineer, explained that six years ago, the Sarasota BOCC (on behalf of condominium owners with property on both sides of Midnight Pass) requested that the FDOT review pedestrian safety on Midnight Pass Road. After reviewing pedestrian activity during peak season and crash history, FDOT recommended establishing ten pedestrian islands at various locations in the center lane. Emergency responders reviewed the plans

to ensure that there would be no negative impact on response. In the meantime, FDOT reduced the speed limit and added pedestrian crossing signs. The BOCC acquired funding for the project and FDOT is ready to proceed. Reasons for recommending pedestrian islands rather than crosswalks include:

- Islands allow the pedestrian to cross a single lane of traffic at a time, while crosswalks require a gap in all lanes before crossing.
- The amount of pedestrian traffic on Midnight Pass Road does not appear to qualify for a marked crosswalk under State regulations.
- Pedestrian traffic is sporadic and not congregated in a few locations.

The Siesta Key Condominium Council requested that this project not be implemented and provided their rationale for the request. Some attendees agreed that the project was not likely to improve the safety record of only one vehicular/pedestrian crash in five years. One guest suggested that unless a person has access to the Gulf, there is not much reason to cross between the fire station and Stickney Point Road and questioned whether crosswalks would be used, since they are frequently ignored in the Village. Walt Olsen stated that five condominiums have property on both sides of Stickney Point. There was a general consensus that the project should be revisited as to number and location of pedestrian islands, alternatives such as crosswalks and reduced speed, and whether the project is needed at all.

A public meeting to present options and receive community feedback is scheduled for December 6th at St Michael's Church from 5 to 7 p.m.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

INLET MANAGEMENT – Peter van Roekens

Big Pass mark BP1 is missing. Mike Solum has been notified. As soon as the winds calm, another run will be done to check depths.

ADOPT-A-ROAD – Peter van Roekens

The next Adopt-A-Road pickup for the north end of the Key is planned for November 19th. Breakfast at 8 a.m. compliments of the Village Café; pickup begins at 9 a.m.

PUBLICITY – Joe Volpe

Joe introduced SKA's new T-shirts.

6. COMMUNITY COMMENTS/DISCUSSION (28 guests) - None

7. OLD BUSINESS

- Michael Shay reported that 14 SKA volunteers participated in the Coastal Cleanup, collecting 16 bags of trash.

- In reference to manatee protection and canal boating activity, marine patrol boats from both the County Sheriff's Office and the City of Sarasota Police have been observed patrolling the Grand Canal.
- Recommendations from Siesta Key organizations regarding replacement of the fence at Treasure Boat and Ocean Blvd. will be provided to the BOCC. Joyce Kouba requested that safety considerations be included in the recommendation, including: trimming/removing palm trees at the corner, and if possible, running the walkway behind the corner electric pole.
- Detlef Zimmerman asked for an update on the complaint letter sent to the bank that owns the property at Treasure Boat Way and Ocean Blvd. Catherine Luckner reported that the bank VP responded positively, stating they initiated property mowing and trash pickup and that sale of the property is imminent.

NEW BUSINESS

Palmer Point Project – Paul Semenac, Project Engineer

Palmer Point is the first Sarasota County project to remove Intercoastal Waterway (ICW) dredging spoil and restore tidal wetlands to pre-dredging conditions. Invasive plant species have been cleared. To restore the wetlands, the current land must be lower than low tidal elevation for new planting of mangrove and sea grasses. To do this the materials deposited by the Army Corps more than 60 years ago must be excavated. This material is sea bottom consisting of rock, shell and sand.

Casey Key residents declined use of their private road for truck access, so spoil must be barged off site. FDOT has recommended that the spoil be barged to their right-of-way on the mainland near the north Siesta Key bridge. The material will be loaded onto a barge, taken to the transfer site where it is lifted directly off the barge onto a truck, and driven to a Palmetto borrow pit. The material is not deposited on land for 'drying' or left in or near any waterway. The estimate is from 2-6 truck transfers a day for up to 90 days. Time could be reduced if a double barge can be used. Time is of the essence as funding is available only through January 1, 2012.

After discussion, a straw vote of the attending residents and a Board vote resulted in no objections to this transfer of Palmer Point materials. Peter van Roekens moved, with Deet Jonker seconding, to support use of the FDOT site to offload spoil to be trucked to Palmetto. The motion passed unanimously.

The following points plus the benefit of the project supported SKA's decision:

1. No trucks cross onto Siesta Key or use the bridge.
2. None of these materials will be 'de-watered' or stored at the site but immediately transferred onto trucks and transported.

3. The material is not toxic matter or 'muck' such as such as found in a canal; this is original water bottom that has been topside without significant human use for more than 60 years
4. The contractor and County will oversee management of traffic when trucks are leaving the offload area.
5. The contractor will attempt to reduce the length of time for this process by using multiple barges.
6. SKA hopes this restoration of tidal wetlands will improve the water quality, estuary habitat, and mangrove development, which will help barrier protection. This project could also serve as a model for restoration of other spoil islands in the ICW.

Commissioner Nora Patterson recommended that Semenac meet with Bay Island residents to get their input.

8. ADJOURN – President Luckner adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Kouba
Secretary, Siesta Key Association