

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**January 29, 2009**

A Town Hall Meeting was held at the Tringali Recreation Center, Englewood, Florida. The following members were present: Chairman Duffy, Commissioner Loftus, Commissioner Starr, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Skidmore. Also in attendance were County Administrator Baltz, County Attorney Knowlton, and Deputy Clerk Lansing. The following members were absent: None. The meeting was called to order at **6:00 PM**.

**Chairman Duffy** opened the meeting by stating this was the first of a series of Town Hall Meetings to be held throughout the County, introduced the Commissioners, County Administrator, County Attorney, indicated all department directors were present, said she would begin with a brief "State of the County" visual presentation, and noted citizens would then have the opportunity to ask questions.

**STATE OF THE COUNTY PRESENTATION: ATTACHED**

**CITIZEN INPUT:**

Ed Zubal asked who was directly responsible for Murdock Village, wondered which attorney negotiated the issue, questioned how they could put the County in such a position, asked why the responsible parties are not incarcerated, and questioned what the end result will be. Mr. Zubal also commended the Board for the Charlotte Sports Park. **Commissioner Cummings** explained his involvement and the original intent for Murdock Village; said the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is insufficient; noted thousands of undeveloped lots; clarified the decision not to sell in this market and still own a portion of the debt; commented if he could do it all over, he would have selected a smaller, non-residential project; and opined the day will come when the Community will be glad we have Murdock Village. **Commissioner Starr** explained the ultimate responsibility for any decision rested with the County Commissioners at that time; talked about the legalities; indicated the original debt and interest; mentioned property taxes and losses; opined the importance of correcting past mistakes and moving forward. **Commissioner**

**Skidmore** announced a public workshop scheduled to discuss options for Murdock Village on February 10, 2009.

Bruce Pomeroy thanked the Board for scheduling this meeting in West County, opined the need for better communication between those who live over the Myakka River and in the Murdock area, and requested the Board consider a ½ cent sales tax to support our citizens with health and child care. **Commissioner Skidmore** advised he is available at his satellite office in West County, explained he is opposed to any additional taxes, said they will make cuts, enact countywide efficiencies, and suggested the citizens can help by contacting our legislators.

Bob Aspery talked about Municipal Services Benefit Units (MSBUs), mentioned the number of vacant lots, noted increased taxes, and indicated he would be attending meetings in the future. **Commissioner Cummings** explained ad valorem taxes, property values, homesteaded properties, millage rates, related county service impacts, and opined it is less expensive to be proactive. **Commissioner Starr** explained MSBUs, administrative costs, noted his quest to find a more efficient and affordable way to provide the services, mentioned sewers and septic tank issues, and asked for resident input. **Commissioner Loftus** said there may be a legal issue related to sewers and reserved comment.

Carol Locken discussed several issues related to potable water, sewers, wells, and septic tanks, said this is our County and our tax dollars, and reminded the Commissioners they were elected to be stewards of the Community. **Commissioner Skidmore** confirmed they had no intention of forcing a sewer project on County residents. **Chairman Duffy** agreed.

Mike Hadsell indicated he was happy to hear the legal issues are going to be addressed and asked what the procedure is to get the septic tank program in his area. **Commissioner Loftus** advised they are addressing the issue with the Health Department in the near future.

Stan Sussman thanked the Commissioners for coming to West County, complained about uncontrollable growth on vacant lots in the South Gulf Cove area, and expressed concern for future fires. **Commissioner Loftus** explained the County is financially unable to maintain the vast amount of vacant lots throughout the County. Attorney Knowlton confirmed the County cannot afford to

maintain overgrown lots and explained code enforcement. **Chairman Duffy** explained code enforcement further. Mr. Sussman opined the bottom line was nothing would be done about it. **Chairman Duffy** said they would look further into the issue, mentioned priorities and the budget, advised citizens are welcome to discuss their concerns at the end of every meeting, and said the Commissioners will review the issues and get back to the speaker as soon as they can. **Commissioner Starr** explained most wild vegetation will grow back within a year unless they are bulldozed, mentioned seeds fall and are dropped by birds, noted the County cannot legally bulldoze private property without an ordinance, and suggested Mr. Sussman ask his neighbors to maintain their property. Attorney Knowlton pointed out another consequence of lot clearing is the invitation of Scrub Jays. **Chairman Duffy** offered to contact property owners on behalf of Mr. Sussman.

Karen Price thanked the Board for meeting in West County, advised South Gulf Cove Homeowners Association is addressing the vegetation problem, and noted she would provide Mr. Sussman with her business card.

Walter Taylor thanked the Board for passing the restrictions related to six wheel trucks in the Rotonda area and asked about the landfill. Attorney Knowlton provided detail related the landfill ruling.

Maryanne Balaski asked why retention ponds are being fenced in. **Chairman Duffy** explained it is a safety issue. Dan Quick agreed it is a safety issue, advised the State requires fencing based on pond size, and explained additional regulations related to fencing.

Carol Locken spoke on behalf of elderly residents who are physically unable to haul the new garbage cans. Jim Thompson addressed the issue, advised residents are welcome to contact Environmental Extension Services Department under Solid Waste and put in a special needs request, and noted requests are handled individually. There was further discussion related to the availability of smaller trash cans and concerns that trash associated information was published prior to snowbirds returning to the area. Mr. Thompson responded to the issues in detail.

Ed Zubal asked about taxes related to Scrub Jay properties. **Chairman Duffy** explained the Scrub Jay issue in detail, noted steps she has taken on behalf of the County; mentioned Grant Funding; said if the property is designated Scrub Jay occupied, the owner should receive a 50% deduction in their taxes; and recommended property owners contact the Property Appraisers office if they have not received that benefit.

County Attorney Baltz opined **Chairman Duffy** has truly described the challenges related to Scrub Jays, noted the extent of work done on behalf of our citizens, explained the County is unable to overrule U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) decisions, mentioned stiff FWS penalties, and advised conservation strategies are not working since the Scrub Jay population is continuing to decrease. Mr. Zubal asked who has the authority to override. **Commissioner Cummings** stated the only people with authority are members of Congress, indicated this is the direct result of the Endangered Species Act, and advised Charlotte County decided to work on a local conservation plan on behalf of their citizens so residents did not have to go against it alone. Mr. Zubal commented on the mitigation process and opined it does not make sense. **Commissioner Cummings** explained the Federal Government's position further.

**Chairman Duffy** noticed some attendees were leaving and said West County Residents can call the County Office by dialing 941-697-4000.

An unidentified citizen asked if the County was developing a new Comprehensive Plan, inquired if this plan went back to the 1970's, and spoke negatively of past plans. **Chairman Duffy** clarified they were planning to update and modify the plan. **Commissioner Cummings** agreed the 1988 plan was terrible, confirmed this plan was 1997 through 2010, indicated this plan is considered one of the best Comprehensive Plans in the State, and noted the County received an award for the Community doing the most to protect the quality of life for its citizens.

Janet Potts asked if there was a wish list on the County website showing what the Board is considering as far as the economic stimulus plan. **Chairman Duffy** answered affirmatively, mentioned this is appropriations time and explained the purpose for their trip is to lobby federal legislators, and indicated they have been very successful in the past. **Commissioner Cummings** and

**Chairman Duffy** explained the Legislative Agenda included both Federal and State.

An unidentified citizen mentioned illegal workers in her neighborhood and wondered if she should report it to the Commission. **Chairman Duffy** said she should if she was sure they were illegal.

**Chairman Duffy** closed the meeting by thanking staff and the citizens.

**ADJOURNED: 8:00 PM**

Signature on file in Commission Minutes  
Chairman

ATTEST:

BARBARA T. SCOTT, CLERK  
OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND  
EX-OFFICIO TO THE BOARD  
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

By: Signature on file in Commission Minutes  
Deputy Clerk

jl

*State of the County  
January 2009  
Charlotte County, Florida*

- Population: 152,814
- Area: 694 sq. miles or 444,160 acres
- 142,981 acres of preserved land
- 2,947 acres of park lands
- 12.5 miles of beaches
- 165 miles of canals
  
- ✓ Highlights of 2008
- ✓ Major Issues of 2008
- ✓ Prospects for 2009

*Highlights of 2008*

- Construction Projects
- Local Preference
- Open for Business

*Goals for 2008*

- Develop near and long term strategic financial plan
- Re-write the Comprehensive plan
- Continue and strengthen comprehensive water supply and conservation
- Analyze the County MSBU system
- Resolve the phosphate situation
- Improve internal and external communication
- Aggressively continue the promotion of Economic Development
- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government

*2002 Sales Tax Projects*

- Genesis Safe House
- Bayshore Live Oak Park
- Mobile Command Unit

*Charlotte Sports Park*

- Cost: \$27,300,00
- Funded by a state grant, tourist taxes, and the Tampa Bay Rays

*Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center*

- Cost: \$19,650,000
- Funded by sales tax, ad valorem tax, and a \$1.95 million contribution from Punta Gorda

*Historic Courthouse Renovation*

*Fire/EMS Facilities*

- Fire Station 11 in Harbor Heights – Final Hurricane Recovery Project
- Cost: \$2,024,000
- Funding included insurance and FEMA reimbursements.
- Englewood Area Fire Control Station 75  
Cost: \$1,800,000

*County Parks*

- Bayshore Live Oak Park
- Conservation Charlotte
- Prairie Creek Preserve
- Shell Creek Preserve

*West Charlotte Mini-Transfer Recycling Facility*

*Local Preference*

- Desire for local companies to receive preference in government contracts
- Updated the scoring process to recognize local bidders
- Incentives for maintaining local offices; hiring local subcontractors and hiring Charlotte County residents

*Major Issues of 2008*

- Budget & Spending
- Economic Development

- Growth Management

*How much and what did we cut? CUT: \$32.5 Million*

• Millage re-direction (part of .6 mill)	\$3,600,000
• Savings from this years budget	\$4,000,000
• Capital project re-direction	\$11,000,000
• Growth Management Fees	\$1,000,000
• Department Reductions	\$10,500,000
• Property Appraiser	\$7,000
• Clerk of the Court	\$427,000
• Sheriff	\$424,000
• Supervisor of Elections	\$1,768,000

*Unfunded State Mandates*

Unfunded State Mandates \$8,499,322 in FY 2008

• Div of Juvenile Justice	\$412,625
• Justice Center Facility & Security	\$2,113,328
• Criminal Justice Info System	\$73,795
• Drug Court, Pre-Trial, Law Library	\$410,335
• Public Defender	\$1,177,488
• Healthcare Responsibility Act	\$6,406
• Medicaid – Hosp & Nursing Care	\$974,710
• Medical Services	\$15,000
• Pauper Burials	\$6,080
• Additional Programs:	
• Mental Health	\$1,278,752
• Substance Abuse	\$627,334
• Health Department	\$1,403,469

Distribution of Ad Valorem Taxes for FY2008/09

*Ad Valorem Used by Constitutional Officers*

- Supervisor of Elections, 2,062,640, 1%
- Clerk of the Courts, 3,344,577, 2%
- Sheriff, 59,777,827, 41%
- BCC, 69,459,440, 48%
- Property Appraiser, 4,964,461, 3%
- Tax Collector, 6,496,994, 5%

*Ad Valorem used by BCC Departments*

- Mosquito Control & Acquatic, 113,037, 0.16%
- Facilities Management, 441,765, 0.64%
- Grants Organizations, 166,560, 0.24%
- Sheriff Related, 377,206, 0.54%
- Capital Projects Fund, 23,921,056, 34.44%
- Health Department, 1,714,587, 2.47%
- MSTU's, 5,454,720, 7.85%
- Community Development, 3,712,658, 5.35%
- Conservation Charlotte, 3,780,790, 5.44%
- Community Redevelopment Agencies, 2,010,413, 2.89%
- Fiscal Stabilization Reserve, 25,063,148, 36.08%
- Parks, Rec. & Cultural Resources, 1,089,064, 1.57%
- Animal Control, 55,393, 0.08%
- Human Services, 275,567, 0.40%
- Information Tech & GIS, 426,987, 0.61%
- EMS, 721,651, 1.04%
- Court Related, 134,838, 0.19%

*A Typical Tax Bill*

- Average tax bill is \$1,611
- Assuming a \$1,600 bill
- 35.6% goes to Charlotte Co Ad valorem or \$571
- 50% of that goes to Constitutional officers
- What's left is \$285.50 to the county budget
- Rest goes to School Board, SWFWMD, Peace River Basin, etc.

*Property Assessments Dropped in 2008*

- 2000-01            7,662,906,568
- 2001-02            8,471,308,164
- 2002-03            9,483,025,806
- 2003-04            11,025,783,488
- 2004-05            12,993,261,715
- 2005-06            16,124,765,813
- 2006-07            24,280,088,571
- 2007-08            23,370,729,141
- 2008-09            18,850,841,938

*Economic Development*

*Major Changes in 2008*

- BCC transferred authority to manage business incentive programs to the Industrial Development Authority (IDA)
- Prospectus and monthly scorecard created
- “Ready Real Estate”
- Provided Infrastructure Grant for the development at the Airport Commerce Center Park
- Economic and Fiscal Impact Module
- Charlotte County Competitive Analysis
- SW Florida Regional Technology Partnership, Incubator study and angel funding programs

*New companies brought over 400 jobs:*

- ADT
- A Plus Laundry
- Arcadia Aerospace
- Green Scapes
- Sherwin Williams
- South Eastern Freight

*Growth Management*

- Preparing and implementing the County’s comprehensive plan
- Smart Charlotte 2050, a community-based planning process to get everyone involved in the Comprehensive Plan revisions
- Land development regulations
- U.S. 17 Corridor study

*Planned for 2009*

- Increased Communication
- Budget and Organizational Realignment
- Open for Business
- Economic Development
- Growth Management
- Sales Tax Projects

*Public Interaction*

- Increasing Internal and External Communication
- Reaching out to the Community
- More Town Hall Meetings
- Evening BCC Meeting
-

*Budgeting 2009*

- Performance-Based Budgeting
- Focuses on results
- Sets objectives and performance targets
- Has a long term perspective – a continuous process
- Driven by Strategic Goals set by BCC
- 

*2009 Sales Tax Projects*

- Burnt Store Road
  - a valuable hurricane evacuation route
- Edgewater Drive
  - a critical corridor to relieve traffic congestion on US 41
- Midway Boulevard
  - needed to accommodate current traffic volume and improve safety
- County Road 775/Placida Road
  - to accommodate traffic growth, and a hurricane evacuation route
- Sidewalks
  - connecting schools to recreation areas and neighborhoods

*Capital Improvement Projects*

- Burnt Store Reverse Osmosis Plant
- Reclaimed Water Expansion
- Rehabilitating water mains and lift stations that are 30 years old
- County Facility Energy Efficiency Upgrades
- Coral Creek Bridge Replacement

*More CIP 2009 Projects*

- Aqui Esta road-widening project
- Toledo Blade road-widening project
- Piper Road Widening (South)
- Winchester Boulevard South (2002 Sales Tax Project)
- Drainage work in preparation of Midway Boulevard Widening

*Economic Development*

*Enterprise Charlotte Economic Council*

- Formed this year from the Enterprise Charlotte Foundation.
- Funds economic development work and studies through investments made by our business community partners.
- Focus:
  - ✓ expand economic development
  - ✓ bring in site selectors
  - ✓ work with local, regional and state counterparts to advance measures that will encourage business growth

*Enterprise Airport Commerce Park (ECAP)*

- Charlotte County's Industrial Hub
- Special mixed-use designation
- 4,300 acres
- Arcadia Aerospace Industries, Direct Air, and Blue Bell Creameries opened in 2008

*Open For Business Initial Improvements*

- Developed a DRC User guide aimed at instructing the new user of the DRC process
- Staff completed a revision to the DRC code that:
  - ✓ Creates a faster administrative approval process. Projects can now be approved once all departments recommend approval.
  - ✓ Extends the maximum timeline for DRC approval to 5 years from 3
  - ✓ Creates certainty in the preliminary approval process by requiring all applicable comments be made at the preliminary review and prohibiting new comments at final if the proposed development has not changed.

*Stay Connected With Us!*

- Online all the time – [www.CharlotteCountyFL.com](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com)
  - ✓ Meetings & Agendas, Videos, Forms, Events, and lots more!
- Charlotte Alert Notification System:
  - ✓ Sign up on our website to receive messages about topics you choose, including our E-News monthly newsletter
- Watch CCTV-20
  - ✓ Comcast channel 20 or streams live on our website
  - ✓ BCC meetings & other programming