

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**July 30, 2009**

A Town Hall Meeting was held at the Cultural Center, Port Charlotte, Florida and hosted by the Charlotte County Curmudgeon Club. The following members were present: Chairman Duffy, Commissioner Loftus, Commissioner Starr, and Commissioner Cummings. Also in attendance were County Administrator Baltz, County Attorney Knowlton, and Deputy Clerk Lansing. The following members were absent: Commissioner Skidmore. The meeting was called to order at **6:30 PM**.

Dale Watson, President of the Curmudgeon Club opened the meeting by introducing the attendees seated at the head table and requested citizens stand, state their names, and speak clearly. **Chairman Duffy** thanked the Curmudgeon Club for working hard to keep the citizens informed, and also thanked the Charlotte Sun.

**Chairman Duffy** announced the new RX cards are available to all Charlotte County residents, mentioned the approval of the Solar Energy Bonds application, noted the Board did not raise the millage rate, commented on being "open for business" and improving communications with our citizens, noted the reservoir has been filling up over the last month, announced the opening of the Events Center, commented that the Tampa Bay Rays training at the Sports Complex was a success, discussed the One Cent Sales Tax projects, mentioned Comprehensive Plan updates and Smart Charlotte 2050, and pointed out the ability for citizens to express opinions on the website.

Lee Swift responded to questions related to budget cuts made by the School Board.

Suzie Hackett commended Paul Stamoulis, Roger Baltz, and Frank Desguin, congratulated Ray Sandrock on his promotion, suggested Sheriff Cameron not to give in to the budget demands of the Board, mentioned Adam Cummings resignation, and asked Bob Starr to stop trying to run the entire Board.

Ron Segar discussed paving in Deep Creek. Mike Brown, Deep Creek MSBU President responded.

R. Issacs questioned the septic tank inspection process and was directed to call the Health Department.

Dr. Crain pointed out a flyer related to required flu shots and was referred to the County Website.

Ed Mega questioned vaccine safety and was referred to Charlotte County Health Department for the latest information.

An unidentified citizen suggested Commissioners work for \$1.00 since they do not need money, complained he was unable to get on the Affordable Housing Committee, and spoke negatively about Sheriff Deputies. Sheriff Cameron responded.

Kelly Burn asked for an update on Murdock Village. Mr. Sandrock provided detail.

Howard Shaw commented on Bayshore Park area problems and questioned School Administrative salaries. Staff and Mr. Swift replied.

Mike Brown questioned drainage issues related to MSBUs. Bob Halfhill addressed drainage and associated issues.

An unidentified citizen asked when his property will be worth what it was. Mr. Desguin responded.

**RECESS: 7:30 PM - 7:45 PM**

John Hitzel commented on high water rates. **Commissioner Loftus** provided related history and explained the topic in detail.

An unidentified citizen asked about the Market Place property in Punta Gorda. Vice Mayor Goldberg responded and gave a timeline of events related to the vacant property.

An unidentified citizen asked if they pay taxes on the property. Vice Mayor Goldberg answered affirmatively.

Joanne Hopkins expressed the importance of education and suggested without education, the Sheriff will have more to handle and advised she has not had a raise in pay for three years. **Commissioner Starr** and **Chairman Duffy** addressed pay cuts and County Budget reductions in detail.

An unidentified citizen said she has a hard time walking and was accused of being drunk by Sheriff Deputies three (3) years ago. Sheriff Cameron responded.

Scott Heinis commended Fire/EMS employees, remarked on Commissioner salaries, and indicated Fire/EMS were afraid of losing their jobs to privatization. **Commissioner Starr** responded.

An unidentified citizen suggested the Board consider casino gaming as a revenue source. **Commissioner Loftus** mentioned his research related to a casino at Murdock Village and explained why it is not allowed.

An unidentified citizen opined the County is moving in the right direction and asked about growth and penny sales tax projects. Don Root talked about upcoming deals, financing, potential jobs, economic development, and noted our investment in Solar Energy.

Barbara Rendall, Chairman of the School Board provided handouts.

An unidentified citizen asked about unfunded mandates and suggested the public could help if they are informed. **Chairman Duffy** advised Charlotte County had \$8 Million in State unfunded mandates and explained further.

Cynthia Ireland spoke on behalf of the Commissioners and announced they deserve the salaries they receive and agreed with the importance of education.

Jerry Massie said the Sheriff's budget should be the last to be cut.

Mr. Watson thanked everyone for attending and opined this is the best way to keep informed.

Mr. Baltz remarked that many difficult decisions must to be made, mentioned the economic climate, said people are passionate and have their own opinions, explained the Commissioners do not have the authority to hire or terminate any employees other than the County Attorney or Administrator.  
Thank all.

ADJOURNED: 8:51 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

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