

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS / PUNTA GORDA CITY COUNCIL JOINT MEETING

OCTOBER 13, 2006

A joint meeting of the Board of County Commissioner was held at the Murdock Administration Complex in Room 119, Port Charlotte, Florida. The following members were present: Chairman Moore, Commissioner D'Aprile, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner DeBoer, Commissioner Duffy, Mayor Fabian, Vice Mayor Friedman, Council Member Poole, and Council Member Smith-Mooney. Also in attendance were Assistant County Administrator Baltz, City Manager Kunik, City Attorney Levin, and Deputy Clerk Mitchell. The following members were absent: Council Member Phelen. The meeting was called to order at **9:00 AM**, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

I. [Annexation Plans \(City\)](#)

Howard Kunik gave a brief update on the status of the City's annexation plans using slides detailing the following: U.S. 41 Commercial Enclave; U.S. 17 Corridor West and Scott Street Addition; and Annexation Study Areas 2006.

Mike Konefal gave an explanation of the County's TDU (Transfer of Density Units) ordinance, noted it applies to both the City and the County and to future annexations, and commented on the fact that a majority of the City is in the coastal high hazard area.

Commissioner Cummings commented on the need for a good outreach program in any of the City's annexation efforts.

[Citizen Input](#)

Harvey Goldberg referred to the property at Cooper Street and Airport Road, and commented on the need for the County and City to work that project into the annexation process of this area because it represents a critical area for much needed affordable housing.

II. Event Center (County)

Andrew Baker reviewed the packet materials distributed yesterday.

Robert Humpel and Ward Friszolowski with the design/build team of Mathews/Taylor Construction and Harvard-Jolly Architects, respectively, gave a presentation and comprehensive update that paralleled the detailed packet materials. (**Questions and discussion addressed V-zone options and efforts to keep the process moving.**)

Mr. Humpel and Mr. Friszolowski continued the presentation with an update on the Team Punta Gorda rendering and related cost studies as detailed in the packet materials.

Commissioner Cummings said he was frustrated with the whole process due to the lack of communication, and he would feel better if there was an open exchange of information between the two sides because they need to make an educated decision based on solid information.

Council Member Friedman suggested that concurrent with the V-zone issue Team Punta Gorda sit down with the people from Matthews/Taylor to try to reconcile the cost differential of \$1.25 to \$1.5 million versus the Team Punta Gorda architect figure of about \$50,000.

Mr. Humpel clarified they believe the assumptions and figures they presented to be accurate and not a guess.

Council Member Smith-Mooney opined at this point they really need to pledge to one another to work openly to find the best possible solution to enable the building to stay in Punta Gorda, and if there's a financial concern that needs to be addressed for that to happen, then the City Council needs to say to the County Commission they will step to the plate and do that. **Council Member Smith-Mooney** said the one thing she didn't want to see any more of is the constant flip-flop on whether the building is going to stay in the City is causing tremendous trepidation on the part of investors in City projects and she has received calls from so many of the property developers of

City projects saying their clients will pull out if the Event Center is moved out of the City.

Council Member Smith-Mooney added she was sure the City Council would say collectively that if the County Commission feels there are budget issues to please ask the City to pick up the portion that's beyond the County's budget because she was certain they would probably come to an agreement to do that.

Chairman Moore said felt he'd been clear in the past that he wants the Event Center built at the current site, opined the Board has been upfront and candid during this process, and said the record's pretty clear that it's been a fairly split Commission on this site and what it can handle.

Council Member Poole opined issues over the design have overridden functionality so it seems the wounds have been self-inflicted and not the fault of the County.

Council Member Friedman said they all need to forget the past and agree to have both architects meet, get solid cost figures, and then they can decide who pays for what.

Commissioner Duffy said she felt that morally and ethically they should make a decision about the location and then try to work together in the spirit of cooperation to get this project moving.

Commissioner D'Aprile opined before any decision can be made about location they have to allow the architects to meet and establish the costs, said he has a fiduciary responsibility to the people of this community to spend the money as wisely as possible, he won't interfere with where this project is located but he personally feels the current location isn't big enough to supply what the County needs as a whole, and he can't support the increased cost.

Council Member Smith-Mooney opined two types of facilities were needed, a civic center for the City and a convention center for the County, and she's not expecting the County pay for any of the extras.

Chairman Moore said he and **Commissioner Cummings** support having a meeting as soon as possible.

Council Member Friedman requested agreement for the two sides to meet and come up with a cost estimate.

Council Member Poole noted the City has not discussed contributing funding to this project and opined considerable discussion was needed among the City Council as well as with its residents.

Commissioner DeBoer said the County has already paid their experts who have told them there was rationale behind everything they've done, and he doesn't have a problem sharing that information but it appears if Team Punta Gorda wants to dispute this information and he didn't feel it should require great expenditure by the County to do that. **Commissioner DeBoer** recalled the Board said it would build what it could based on what was in the original sales tax dollars along with the monies from FEMA, noted they'd already spent millions more than that and that was when he and **Commissioner D'Aprile** made a departure from supporting this.

Citizen Input

Judy Brentano, Team Punta Gorda CEO, commented on the importance of the Event Center, design concepts, appropriate cost offsets, the need to obtain correct cost figures, the impact of FEMA rescinding the V-zone waiver, and the future of downtown Punta Gorda.

Grace Amodeo opined the County citizens are very frustrated, and asked where the \$1.25 to \$1.5 million will come from especially considering all the projects facing the County.

Bill Hughes said based on what he's heard today everyone should have started talking to each other right from the beginning, and voiced support for keeping the Event Center in Punta Gorda.

Caroline Watt said this is a very important decision, the city needs to keep to their revitalization plans, it was vitally important that the Event Center stay in Punta Gorda, the building should be moved more to the south and raised with

a parking garage underneath, the City absolutely needs to commit financially to the building, and reinvestigate obtaining private donations and grants.

Nancy Prafke said she supported keeping the facility near the Peace River as it has a big financial impact to the City and will promote economic growth, and she supported the Team Punta Gorda design.

Jim Townsend commented on the need to keep the Event Center in Punta Gorda, voiced support for using the Team Punta Gorda design, and their projected continued economic growth.

Rick Kilmer commented on funding options, agreed they should move the building to the south end of the lot, raise it and put parking underneath.

Gary Cardillo said as a realtor he's observed that County is seen by outsiders as possessing something very unique, and keeping the facility on the waterfront was key to being successful and providing economic growth.

Ray Rose said he felt aesthetics do count, and they need to do the right thing and create something everyone can be proud of.

John Shaddock opined the Punta Gorda citizens will support the cost to do this project right.

Maryann Hughes asked the City and the Board to remember it's the citizens' money and they have the right to ask for something beautiful.

Dot Minzer opined there was one root decision that must be made before anything else can be decided and that is where is this building going to be.

Eugene Pentuck said they need to decide what they want and what they need, and noted it was amazing how many of the rich people in Punta Gorda Isles had to borrow the deductible amounts in order to pay their contracts to repair their homes after Hurricane Charley.

RECESS: 11:05 AM - 11:13 AM

III. Emergency Water Interconnect (County)

Chairman Moore advised this topic will be discussed at the Board's meeting on October 24, 2006 and the City has approved the language in the draft interlocal agreement.

Council Member Friedman asked if the Board was still committed to proceed given the forced change in wording to make it on an emergency basis only.

Chairman Moore recalled the Board approved having the WA be the County's sole water provider.

Council Member Poole noted the interconnect will be in the vicinity of Highway 17 and asked if it wouldn't be more practical for the County to put in a plant-to-plant connection making it much easier to direct the water where it's needed.

Jeff Pearson explained at the request of Punta Gorda Utilities they looked a plant-to-plant connection from the Peace River to Punta Gorda's Shell Creek plant but a pumping station would be needed at East Port, and commented on the feasibility criteria used.

Commissioner Cummings said due to the language the water management district has insisted on, he felt it was very questionable if the interconnect is worth the expense involved.

Commissioner DeBoer commented on his conversation with Davie Moore yesterday about this, said the only thing they were concerned about was they don't want the County to use this as a way to buy water from Punta Gorda instead of buying the water from the Peace River Regional Water Supply Authority, and he didn't think there will be any problem other than just taking out the word emergency.

Citizen Input - None.

IV. Library Location (City)

Commissioner DeBoer explained the County was presented an option of putting this on the Edison College campus, the Board did not

accept it because the County doesn't have a funding source because the project is so far out in the future, and the Board decided to wait and see what other options come up before they make that commitment.

Mayor Fabian said he didn't know if this was requested by the City but he didn't feel any more discussion was needed.

Council Member Friedman asked what a realistic timeframe might be.

David Milligan clarified they have it projected beyond 2011, and currently they have impact fees available to purchase of land for the West Regional Library but at this time it looks like they will use County owned land freeing up some of those funds.

V. **Aqui Esta Project (City)**

Mayor Fabian explained they were just looking for an update and they know the funding was cut.

Thomas O'Kane explained the monies the state reinstated to the project are in FY08, and they were still defining the five elements to this project.

Mayor Fabian reported at the MPO meeting last Monday FDOT assured them they were looking at this so they don't have to go through a whole new PD&E, they're going to try to work this into the existing PD&E, so it would shorten the timeframe.

Mr. O'Kane said one important thing he didn't mention was they had met with SWFWMD, and it appears they're going to give them an exemption from having pond sites and having to go out and buy additional land for storm water management.

Council Member Friedman asked if everyone recalled these same items: 1 - they were going to price out each piece; 2 - they were going to ensure that the aggregate cost was within the amount they were getting from FDOT; 3 - they were going to corroborate they could use that money for the actual construction; and 4 - they were going to come up with a schedule from the permitted date when the funds to the ultimate completion; and said if everyone agreed, please tell us how many

of these have been done and were they on schedule to complete the project.

Mr. O'Kane explained they're still discussing with the state how the funds will be allocated; the state has assured us there's no problem taking design money and converting that to actual construction dollars; this is a very cumbersome process they have to follow; the plan now is to take the two intersections and have them done with the City and County local funds that are available; and then the federal portion of the project would be the middle part that handles drainage, sidewalks, and maybe the bridge. Mr. O'Kane said to make things more complicated, the state decided to divide the project into two pieces - Magdalena to Bal Harbor and then Magdalena to U.S. 41, and once you decide which pot the money is going to be in, the money is stuck in that pot.

Mr. O'Kane said they do have cost figures to each of the components, it appears they have enough money to do everything provided they don't federalize the whole project because then he knows they don't have enough money, and summarized he wanted to get the local projects going so everyone can see activity in the corridor.

Citizen Input

Bill Albers spoke on behalf of the Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association on the need for the repairs to Aqui Esta to keep egress possible during storms, and commented on his letter to the Board and several state officials.

Brian Duffy commented on the need to work on the road from Magdalena to U.S. 41 because that's where it floods and the need for the road to be raised four feet (4') and that needs to be done before the intersection improvements.

VI. Lights on U.S. 41 Bridge (County)

Mr. O'Kane gave a brief update on the project status.

VII. Justice Center Windows (County)

Andrew Baker gave a brief update on this issue.

VIII. CDBG Disaster Recovery Funds - Commercial Rehab Citywide (City)

Howard Kunik said the \$9 million hurricane recovery funds have been allocated to the approved projects in their CRA, the question arose as to whether these funds could be used outside the CRA area for future hurricane recovery commercial rehabilitation, and according to County staff this can be done.

Robert Hebert concurred those dollars can be used outside their CRA area.

Council Member Poole said he wanted to caution the County Commission that \$450,000 of the \$800,000 is currently slated for the new construction at the Sun-Loft Center specifically for rehabilitation of the damages sustained during the hurricane.

Mr. Hebert clarified these weren't FEMA dollars, this is HUD money that comes through DCA, and all levels have approved this project.

Mayor Fabian asked if FEMA was involved.

Mr. Hebert reiterated FEMA is not involved in this, and stated these were CDBG funds which were HUD dollars.

IX. Council Member/Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Duffy thanked the community for their input, and said she hoped whatever they do regarding the Event Center that they do it right.

Council Member Smith-Mooney reiterated the City wasn't expecting the County to foot the bill for anything extra and they need to keep the Event Center in downtown Punta Gorda.

Council Member Friedman extended his welcome to **Commissioner Duffy** and thanked **Commissioner DeBoer** for his efforts over the years.

Council Member Poole thanked **Commissioner DeBoer** for all his efforts over the years and wished him well in the future, and

said he hoped when **Council Member Smith-Mooney** comes with an open check book that it's from private donors and not expecting the citizens to cover these extra costs.

Mayor Fabian wished **Commissioner DeBoer** well in the future.

Commissioner D'Aprile said he appreciated all the comments made today but if you want something you have to pay for it, the County is willing to do their share, and he hopes the City will be willing to do their share so that things can get done.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 11:48 AM

Signature on file in Commission Minutes
Chairman Moore

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**

/ksm