

FINDING AND LISTENING TO THE AUDIO FILE OF YOUR MEETING MINUTES.

Beginning in 2008, Charlotte County elected to improve its minute taking process by moving to one of the most popular of the digital minute-taking programs, **For the Record** (FTR). Among the many advantages of digital minute-taking over the old cassette tape method is that Board members and other citizens using the Internet can now access the complete recorded meeting minutes via audio files stored online.

This short "how to" document describes the process of finding the audio file online, downloading that file to your computer and then listening to the audio file at home or at work. For this lesson, we will use the South Gulf Cove Advisory Committee (SGCAC) meeting minutes for our example.

Finding The Audio File Of Your Minutes Online

The audio portion of the meeting minutes is saved as an mp3 file which is a universal file format playable on both Microsoft Windows computers and Apple Mac computers.

The mp3 file will be stored on the Charlotte County servers and a link to that file will be available from the Committee's meeting minutes page where links to the transcribed minutes are also stored. In the case of the SGCAC, this page can be found online at: <http://www.charlottecountyfl.com/BoardsCommittees/SGC/MinutesArchive.asp>

Here is a picture of how that page might look:

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address <http://www.charlottecountyfl.com/BoardsCommittees/SGC/MinutesArchive.asp>. The page header features the Charlotte County logo on the left and the text "Charlotte County Government" on the right. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Resident, Business, Government, Visitor, eServices, Departments, and Jobs. The main content area is titled "South Gulf Cove Advisory Committee Minutes Archive in PDF format". It displays a list of meeting dates for 2007 and 2006, with links to the PDF files. A sidebar on the left contains a "Text size" control and a "Select a Department" dropdown menu, followed by a list of departments including Agencies/Departments, Boards & Committees, BCC Meeting Agenda, City of Punta Gorda, Comprehensive Plan, County Commission, Employment, Feedback Survey, GIS County Maps, Library Pages, Licenses, Meetings, On-Line Permitting, and Parks & Recreation. Below the PDF list, there is a section for "Audio Archive(MP3 format)" with a link for January 9, 2008. A red line and text note that audio files are listed here by meeting date.

Address <http://www.charlottecountyfl.com/BoardsCommittees/SGC/MinutesArchive.asp> Go

Charlotte County Government

Resident Business Government Visitor eServices Departments Jobs

South Gulf Cove Advisory Committee

Minutes Archive in PDF format

2007	2006
October 24, 2007	November 8, 2006
September 26, 2007	September 27, 2006
July 25, 2007	August 23, 2006
June 13, 2007	July 26, 2006
May 9, 2007	May 24, 2006
February 14, 2007	April 26, 2006
January 10, 2007	March 11, 2006
	February 23, 2006
	January 25, 2006

Audio Archive(MP3 format)

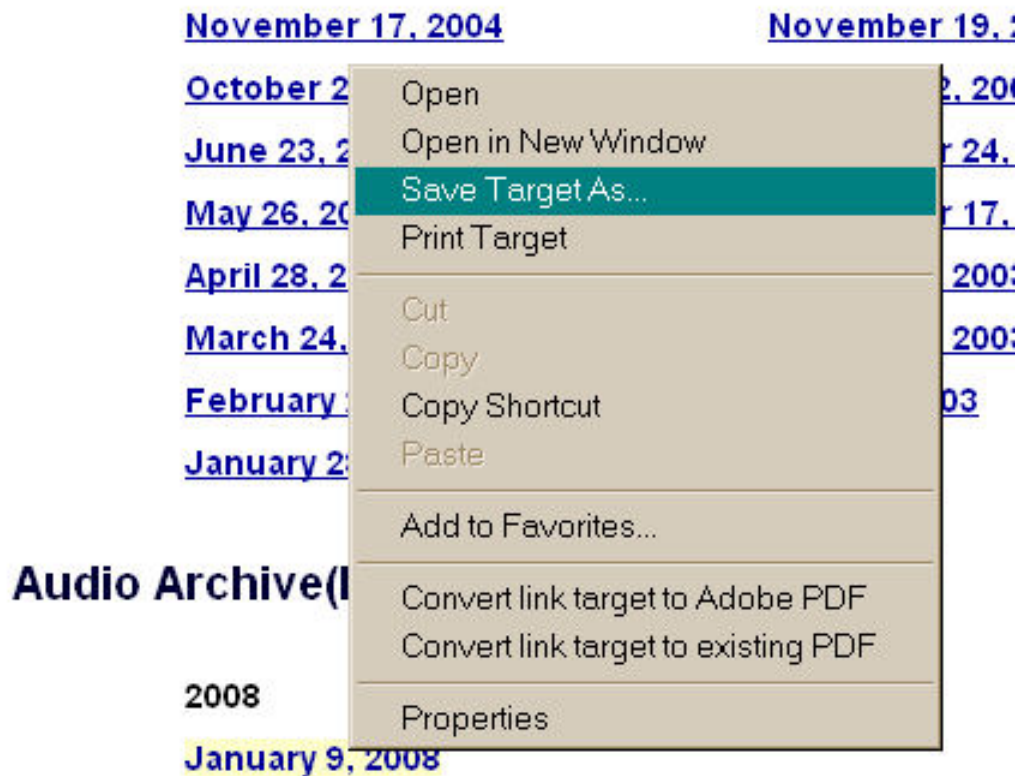
2008	
January 9, 2008	

The audio files are listed here, by meeting date.

Downloading the Audio File to Your Personal Computer

The next step is to download the mp3 file and save it on your computer's hard drive. This will help you avoid the many problems that can result when trying to play a large audio file across the Internet.

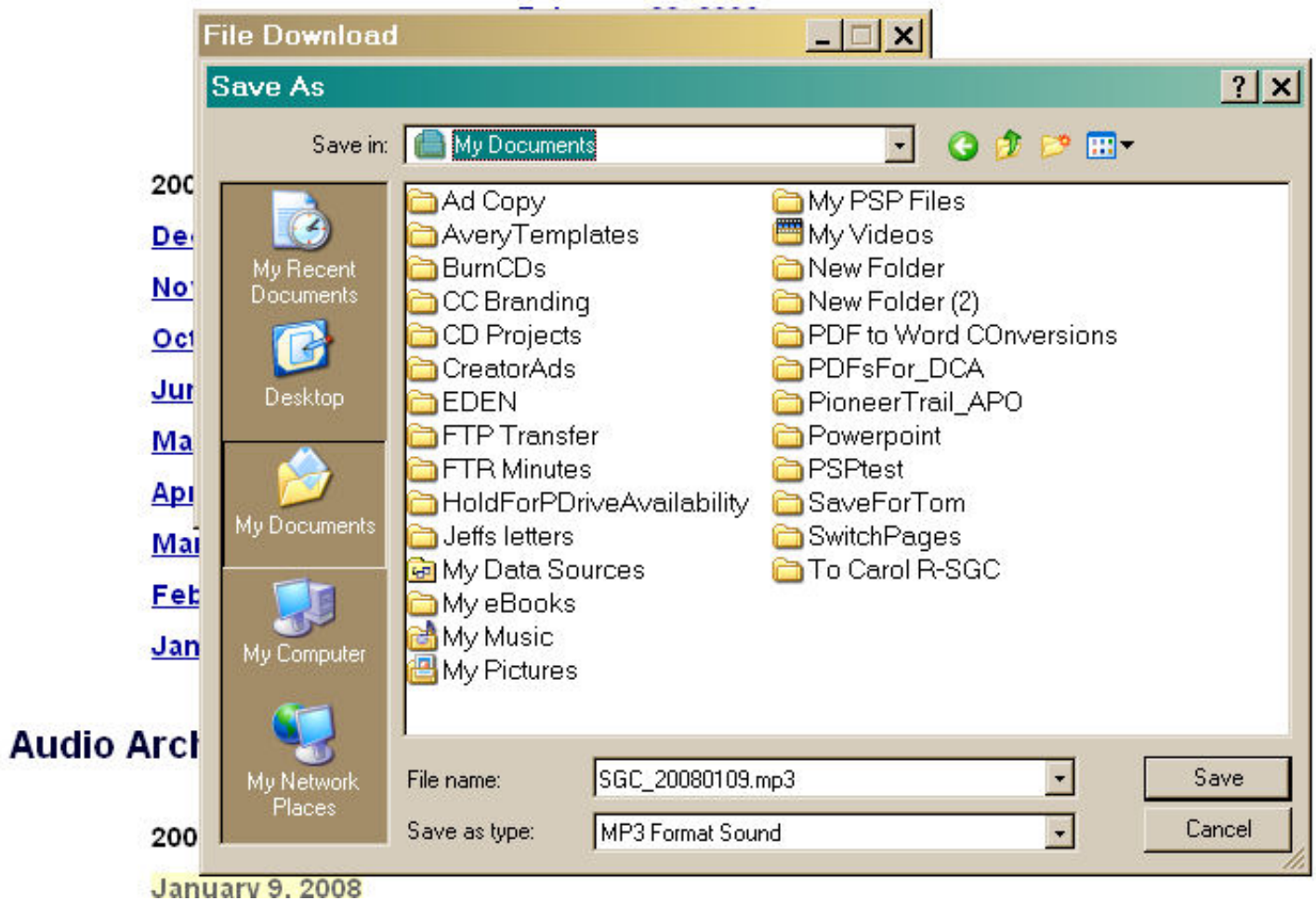
Position your cursor over the link to the file you want, and the cursor will turn into a little hand icon; then right-click. A small menu will appear as shown in the picture below. Select the menu choice "Save Target As".



Saving the Audio File on Your Computer Hard Drive

When you right-click on the link as described above, a dialog box will open, allowing you to choose where you want to save this file on your computer. You may choose to save it in My Documents, as shown in the example pictured below, or you may choose to save it on your Desktop. The important thing is to keep track of the save location, so you can find the file later.

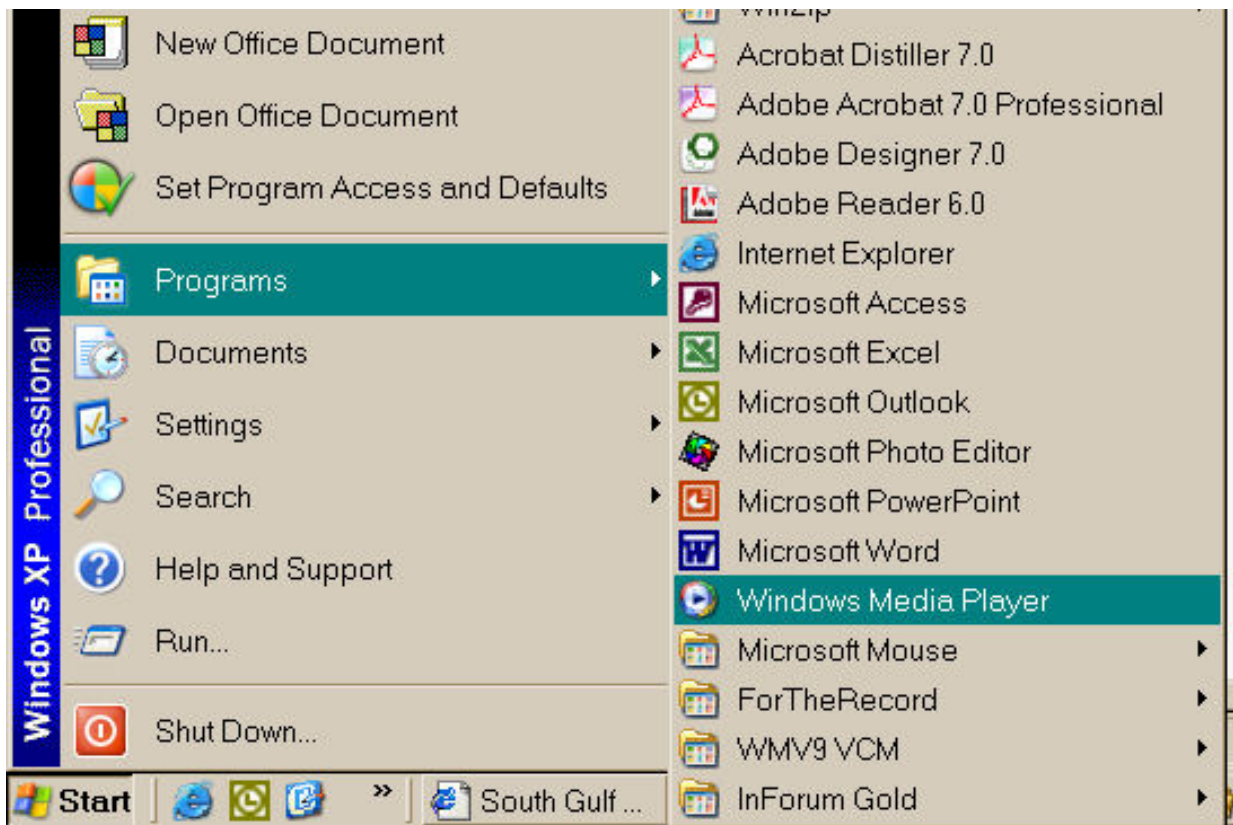
Notice that in the dialog box, you can see the file name and that it is an mp3 file.



Playing the Audio File

Once you have saved the file, use My Computer to find it on the desktop or wherever you stored it. The next step is to play the file.

All modern computers have some program installed that will play an audio file. On a Windows computer, the most common program is the **Windows Media Player**, which can play a number of audio file types, including mp3 and wma. To confirm that you have Windows Media Player on your computer, go to your START button, then Programs, and then look for the program which may appear in a list like this:



You may use any other program (e.g., WinAmp on Windows or iTunes on Mac) to play the mp3 file.

All that you need to do to play an audio file is to double-click on it (using the left mouse button) – the computer will automatically open up whatever program it has available to play that file.

If no program opens to play the file, then it is likely you will need technical assistance to determine why the audio-player program will not run.

