

Captiva Community Panel

MINUTES

Feb. 9, 2021

Attending: Jay Brown, Antje Baumgarten, John Jensen, Tony Lapi, Michael Lanigan, Ann Brady, Linda Laird, Bob Walter, Rene Miville, Mike Mullins, Mike Kelly

Audience: 42

Convened: 9 a.m. Following introductions, the Jan. 12 minutes were unanimously approved (Mullins/Jensen).

Covid: *David Mintz:* 209 or 217 cases on Sanibel this month, trend from holiday season. Captiva cases still at eight, residents only so low. 6.82 % positivity rate statewide, deaths stay low. 144 ICU beds in county, 21 available now, availability rate is holding consistent. Vaccinations, Florida has given ~2 million first doses. 9.2% of population, better than most states. Lee County, process has changed, call 866-200-3468 to preregister. No first-dose appointments, you register for callback. Problem is supply, not distribution. Publix now giving shots, next chance is Wed. Feb. 10, to register via Publix website. Not an easy process, difficult if you're not computer savvy. Winn Dixie will begin vaccinations Feb. 11, no information on how that will be handled. *Brown:* Still having same problem of not being able to get through? *Mintz:* Difficult to get through if you're not computer-savvy, but people are getting appointments. It's a supply problem, county has ability to distribute vaccine if vaccine was available. More people are calling than available supply. Discussion. *Mullins:* Publix frustrating to access, finally registered and went to county instead. Trying to help those who struggle with computers. Discussion.

LCISO: *Lt. Mike Sawicki:* Not much to report. Seeing progress, but don't get lax in Covid precautions, vaccine is not the finish line. Focus is on what's coming, not what needs to be done now.

CEPD: *Jennifer Nelson:* Board meeting yesterday, engineer Tom Pierro spoke on upcoming project. Next steps and potential timeline. Ready to start advertising for dredgers in the next 30 days. Attended the FSBPA Technical Conference last week. Learned we want dredger who will give us a point person on the beach who can do walk-aheads to meet with residents and engineer to anticipate problems and answer questions. Had SCCF on call to talk about turtle nests and communication plans. Once dredger is selected, we would schedule a virtual town hall (or combination of in-person and virtual) *Brown:* Timing? *Nelson:* March anticipated, but may need to push back to April to give me time to plan it. *Brown:* Have plan to the community by the end of this season? *Nelson:* That's the plan. Send us any questions you might have. *Mullins:* To save money, providing maximum flexibility to dredgers, option to start work between May 2021 and May 2022 for construction – 12-month time window for bids, will work continuously once they start. Six months start to finish, just not sure when they will start. *Nelson:* Statewide, heard that average project time is 90 days, but can't guarantee that until we get bids back.

MSTU: *Gooderham:* Pointed out stats in handout. Packet online is not working for some reason. 1148 properties, need 575 petitions to form unit have 212 received plus 112 sent or solicited. 780 still be re-mailed, went out over the last week with pre-populated petitions to everyone who has not returned a petition to us yet. *Brown:* Everything filled out? *Gooderham:* Sign it, date it and tell me where they were when they did that. Everything else is already there. *Jensen:* When are petitions due back? *Gooderham:* In county hands by April 1, so we need them back before then. If you know people who have not signed reach out to them. We have some panel members who have not signed yet, will be following up with

them and multiple owners. If we don't pick up the pace of returns, the unit will not form. Was asked if we could change the properties in the unit. Once the unit is defined, especially the finances, the county will not allow any change since their calculations are based on that many properties. We would have to start over from scratch. *Miville*: How many short? *Gooderham*: 400 total, about 100 out on request. *Miville*: Need to use this as an opportunity for communications to get thumbs up or down, priority for communications committee? I don't think we're selling it, I am one of those who has not responded since I don't really care. Need to get a little more professional at it. *Brown*: Been trying to think through what we would do differently than what we are doing now. Emails, personal requests... what could committee do beyond what we are doing now? *Mintz*: Relying on mail and emails. Any serious drive need to organize, someone on staff to give people opportunity to sign. Figure out who can do that. Disproportionate number of people not signing who are in South Seas and are not here. Different kind of challenge if we do a sewer MSTBU. *Brown*: Much bigger effort than this, bigger budget. *Gooderham*: Also have not been able to do in-person events. Looking at the list we just mailed, the number of petitions that go to a Captiva PO box is extremely small, sending materials around the globe. Mail is moving slowly, especially over the holidays. May try to contact rental agents to encourage their clients to sign, saying it will be easier to rent homes that don't have an iguana hanging off of them. Limited number of touches we can make given that we only have the property owner list and our email list to work from. *Laird*: Can we ask South Seas for Help: *Walter*: Asked Island Management to send out the letter, they told me they had already sent it out (Suz Abare sent it to them.) Discussion.

COMMISSIONER RUANE: *Brown*: Introduction, thanks for joining us today, we're a small part of your constituency and appreciate your level of attention. Moved from being mayor of Sanibel to being the chair of the county commission, a huge change. Share what you're seeing in challenges and your priorities, and what can we do to help you? *Ruane*: Job is much bigger than I expected, surprised to be elected chair. Priorities are to understand county resources and revenue streams, the best utilization of funds. County has \$2.1 billion budget, 97 different revenue streams, over \$600 million in different reserves, the better I know that the better I can work for constituents and county. Big organization that moves more slowly than Sanibel. At city level, you look at every detail – need to do that for the county as well. Second issue: water quality, spent a lot of time on developing relationships over last two administrations. Working for constituents... a bigger population and a lot more people asking for things. Government needs to provide services, but not be the answer to all things. Vaccines: We were told county would not have a role in November (would go through medical systems and pharmacies); then county was told to help facilitate deliveries right after Christmas. County was asked to assist state DOH in logistics for vaccines. Explanation of process – not allocation or administration, logistics is just planning to handle crowds and traffic. Started at first-come process that became barbaric, went to call-in center instead. State first said we would use Tidal Basin to handle calls, and dial-in as opposed to an online system because our community is a little bit older and many people either don't have computers or aren't comfortable using them. County Dept. of Emergency Management would take point on logistics and coordinates with Dept. of Health. County offers support, not advice. Work through those logistics each week. Also limited by really erratic supplies, gave examples. A lot of frustration. Have to use state system to receive vaccines and get reimbursed by FEMA. Lee is third place among counties statewide, first in administration. Taking a lot of our office's time. Lee Health has their own challenges, working with them. Then state added Publix to distribution, 200 vaccines per store a week (3,400) and our supply dropped by 3,300 – so not receiving more vaccines overall. Now Winn Dixie will be added, 8100 doses statewide. Done well with second doses, way ahead of the curve on that. Call us if you have not gotten your callback on second dose. Overall, 12% of county vaccinated, close to 80,000 people. 270,000 doses a week to state, county a small part of that. *Brown*: If you're over 65, what's the single best thing to get scheduled? *Ruane*:

Register with the state, look at Publix, look at your physician group. Do all three. *Brady*: What about essential workers? *Ruane*: 1,000 of 2,800 doses weekly are allocated to essential workers. Mostly first responders and medical people, just not enough vaccines to get to all. Governor's focus is on seniors, so we follow that protocol. Discussion.

Captiva issues update: *Brown*: Background on meetings in the past, Mintz will update the panel where we are. *Mintz*: Finished code proposals, submitted to staff, awaiting Chairman Ruane's arrival to provide policy direction requested by staff. Has directed appropriate staff to proceed on proposals. LDC changes and ordinance amendments or approval. First meeting already scheduled, will update panel after that. We're on the path to completion. *Ruane*: We've learned that LDC changes are moving forward, ordinances I have to bring to commissioners for consent to move them forward. Ran through list of ordinances, only challenge might be straw ban, could require some conversations. History of ban in county, Sanibel's efforts and state veto. No appetite at that time. As chair, I can lead on issues, but I can't make my own motions to get issues on the floor. Straw ban, legislators did not like it but the governor did. *Mintz*: This is a legislative and political process, we don't have our own government and have to work through issues with commissioners and staff. Compromise and discussion required, but we don't give up and we're on the right path. *Brown*: What about community planning, does county prefer a one-size-fits-all for planning, will we still get the support we want? *Mintz*: We will, not a lot of communities that have the participation our community has – workshops, forums, surveys. County recognizes we're doing our job. Will have our issues that are unique to a barrier island incorporated into the county rules. May not get 100% but expect 90%. *Ruane*: I represent a lot of communities in unincorporated Lee County, some are very engaged like Captiva and some are not. My job to express to commissioners why a request fits your area and why it's necessary. Some people like ordinances that are applicable to many areas, but my responsible is to do what my constituents want, articulate what they want to the commissioners and staff. Work to get three people to say yes.

Sewer: *Brown*: Summary of steps to date, survey results and basic plan to work with Sanibel on processing. Roughly \$16 million project estimated. Need a more detailed plan for system in order to win community support for funding via an MSTBU – costs, where elements will be placed, how their properties will be affected and be assessed. Proposal from Kimley Horn to do such a study, been working with county to fund it. Have gotten a variety of different responses. You've agreed with us in principle that the county should fund this. *Ruane*: Started before I got here, recap of county steps. Make position known to Desjarlais that water quality was at the top of my list. Moreover, county has not done a great job on any conversions of septic to sewer. Funding from federal and state governments, \$25 million to \$50 million budgeted from state for septic conversions, not being utilized, need to lead by example. Tell them Captiva is ready, in design or planning via this study, show we're moving forward. He responded in an email that he would go to the commissioners and talk about various abilities to fund this. He thought the plan was to fund it via an MSTU, now I was asking for a different direction. I told him I never wanted to go to MSTU for study, just was not in a position then to advocate for it as I am today. Islands would benefit in numerous ways from conversion, county should pay for study. Looking at revenue stream options and breakdown by MSTU, not one entity. Roger Desjarlais wants to discuss with commissioners not using MSTU but county funding for study. Don't anticipate pushback, expect this to be resolved in next 30 days. *Brown*: Appreciate your strong support, tell us what we need to do to help. *Ruane*: Working with Sanibel as well, need someone on city council to own the issue, not just support it. Elections coming up, candidates understand importance of issue but need leadership to keep city on the right path as well. We can pay for study, but need continued support from city to move forward. *Miville*: Possibility to fund study but still have to do MSTU for construction? *Ruane*: Brady response pointed to MSTU to fund study. *Brown*: Still would need to form a taxing unit to pay for capital project. *Ruane*: County to pay for

study, thereafter we would need to look at options. Sanibel would need to work with county to look at funding options and support to augment and reduce overall cost, ultimately would have to pay for some part of the project, sewer connection. *Mullins*: Have the county manager take a hard look at the existing unincorporated MSTU, Captiva contributing \$1.25 million annual already, I would be hard pressed to find \$250,000 being spent on the island annually. We can get you the CEPD study showing all tax contributions Captiva has made to the county, goes to other areas, time for county to give back those monies. Don't need a separate MSTU for this. *Ruane*: Not that simple, that's why I need to look at revenue streams and develop options. Lots of possibilities at state level for funding, were very successful with that with Sanibel. *Brown*: There's a fear among some that sewer service to Captiva will trigger a density increase despite zoning protections already in place? *Ruane*: Incorrect perception, a minority view. Sanibel leadership, three new councilors, study will give you information you need, then look at how to proceed on interlocal agreement on how to do this. If someone owns it, they will help dispel that incorrect stereotype. It's an old-time Sanibel misperception. People need to be aware of what you all have been able to do. It's still a concern you'll have to address. *Mintz*: Ways islands have historically limited development with undertakings such as this, memorialize limitations already in place in plan.

Rental properties: *Mintz*: Background of homes in RSC-2 single-family zoning but operating as mini-hotels and corporate retreats. Nip this in the bud so owners don't think they can build these mini-hotels and rent them out, would change the character of the RSC2-2 zone and the community. Also have brought up our recommendation for closing the bay side of the Blind Pass bridge for fishing to make it safe for pedestrians. Brought to county staff with little response until Chairman Ruane took office. Asked us to bring these issues to Community Development dept. to pursue, we've provided them with our background materials. On agenda with department as part of code work. If they can respond to these issues, great. If not, then bring it back to chairman's office to pursue. *Ruane*: Sanibel addressed short-term rentals with software to identify violations, now an issue with Legislature again. If staff cannot find a resolution, it comes back to my office to bring to the dais in hopes of finding two county commissioners who agree with me. Don't expect much pushback, will learn this process as we go along. Assured by staff that what I'm asking for is reasonable. Biggest difference is that this office has not represented district in a long time, now we're bringing staff a lot of things to do that I want done yesterday. Not just Captiva, but a lot of areas of the county I represent, a lot of people anxious to get things moving. *Brown*: Appreciate your efforts on behalf of Captiva, you have a lot of supporters out here. *Ruane*: Getting my money's worth out of staff right now. A lot of people asking for a lot of things for the county to do. A lot of differences between a small city and the county in terms of getting things done. Sanibel and Captiva doing more things together, it's always better when islands do things together.

Blind Pass bridge: *Baumgarten*: Panel worried about bridge situation for a long time, since Covid started seeing more families using bridge but nothing has changed for disabled people and kids, while it is still crowded by fishing people and gear. Urgent need but moving slowly, will something have to happen to get action? *Ruane*: Agree it's urgent, need to develop something we can enforce. Not a matter of it not being important, it's about directing staff. Government doesn't move as fast as we'd like, issue has been going on for years. This office hadn't been representing Captiva for a long time. I understand the importance of it and your frustration. *Mintz*: Two other issues: Roosevelt Channel all-year manatee zone, county is aware we have data to support return of no-wake zone. County staff wants to do it once countywide, which is slowing down process. Sanibel has already restored zones there, we've asked chairman to encourage staff to proceed on Roosevelt Channel designation since we're ready to go. Other issue: Captiva Drive sidewalk, the county paid for survey, the community paid for engineering. Commitment from your predecessor that construction would be funded by county, which never got consummated. County Lands now pursuing easements and construction easements. About \$370,000, not

small change. When done, we'll have a shovel-ready project that just requires funding. A heavy lift with county's limited resources. *Brown:* Do you anticipate problems with easements? *Mintz:* Six properties, one already returned, one ready to go, covers from South Seas to Laika Lane. Spoken with all of the owners. Suspect only one problem, property just changed hands. Always chance of last-minute balks from owners, throws project into hiatus. We won't pursue funding until we have all rights of way in hand. *Ruane:* County may make rule change that right of way has to be in hand prior to funding due to issues with the Three Oaks Parkway project, problems due to rights-of-way disputes, despite money spent on design and construction. Don't make the ask until you have rights of way signed. *Brown:* Thanks, can you stay for SLR discussion?

Sea Level Rise: *Laird:* Presentation on progress in adaptation planning and proposal on alternatives from Integral Consulting. Background and recap on work of committee to date. Presented findings to panel in March and to community in November. Starting initial adaptation planning, have identified five focus areas on bayside. Develop and assess alternative for five areas, about \$35,000 for study, looking at hard and soft solutions. Committee will be reviewing the proposal this month and then will work on getting it funded and can discuss it at length at the next panel meeting. Also working on on-site tidal gauges: Presented last month, decided not to move forward, vendor came back with alternative we wanted to look at again. Predicting flooding along east and Gulf coast loop current, online and real-time predictions. All funded by five-year grant. Captiva can join by installing some tidal level sensors for \$500 per sensor. Two donors that will reimburse costs to the panel and two sites committed, very little work on our part, Sanibel considering as well. Better understanding of flooding, better predictions of potential flooding on a more local basis. NOAA gauges up river and in Marco, this would give island its own data. *Brown:* Just wanted to make Commissioner Ruane aware of what Captiva was doing on this important issue. Any comments on what county is doing on this? *Ruane:* Savarese will address funding concerns county had 3-5 years out, look at grants are available. Initial proposal was on the high side, have not gotten revised proposal from him yet. Working every day, be patient, the county has a lot on its plate these days. Work to prioritize issue. Most important is sewer, hope to see sewer issue put to bed very quickly. *Laird:* Any thoughts on flood prediction proposal? *Brown:* Since we have two donors will to host monitors and willing to reimburse panel for gauge costs, maybe we'll learn something. *Walter:* \$500 a year? *Laird:* Part of grant, \$500 one-time cost for next five years. *Walter:* We should put one on T-dock and marina. *Brown:* A lot of interesting information potentially. *Brady:* Put it at SSIR rather than our dock? *Laird:* Down by Redfish Pass, more things happening there? Might be a good idea to have one there, monitor local events tied to pass. Lanigan comment: Pricing changed from last month after we turned it down, vendor came back with revised proposal, no mobile interface just cloud-based. *Jensen:* Recommendations how far apart they should be apart from each other? *Laird:* It's a research project, no real guidelines, where water levels could be significantly different. *Laird:* One at one pass, one at the other, one at a site protected by uck Key and one other on the bayside. Discussion. *Jensen:* Talk to vendor about where and how many sensors they recommend, to discuss at next meeting? *Brown:* Authorize Laird to commit to four sensors? *Laird:* Up to four, depends on what the vendor recommends. Motion requested to proceed on up to four sensors. *Lanigan message:* I'd rather not commit to four, put off to next panel meeting. *Brown:* Concur, put off to next meeting after you talk to the vendor.

BREAK

Wastewater: *Brown:* Nothing to add beyond what Ruane said already.

Code: *Mintz:* First meeting with staff tentatively scheduled this coming week.

Golf cart: *Baumgarten:* Lee DOT meeting on island, very supportive, waiting for them to come back with suggestions. Hope to improve signage at the end of the cart zone and at South Seas before people enter the Village so people know we have different rules than inside the resort. Discussion. *Baumgarten:* Want them to commit to their actions in emails, not just promises from a meeting.

Development: *Brady:* Have raised \$53,000 from membership mailing, plus commitment for \$25,000 from a local family foundation. Budget discussion, funds from last year go into cash on hand, ahead by \$16,000 from last year due to when memberships were received. *Brown:* Fantastic results. *Brady:* People don't give if they aren't asked, we have a great product that people want to support.

Website: *Brady:* Working with TJ Walker developing redesign of website. Committee working on structure, hope to have something to look at for March meeting. We welcome your suggestions on website. Thanks to Gooderham for follow-through, helpful to have a paid person when you're doing this kind of work even when volunteers are as proactive as this group is. *Brown:* What about the remainder of year for development? Probably not a good idea to engage in a socially oriented fund-raiser for some time due to Covid concerns. Everyone still on board with that? *Baumgarten:* Some events are still taking place, especially golf events – Sanctuary and Sanibel School. Events taking place, not as normal but distanced and safe. Consider MATM in May perhaps, people may stay around longer this season? *Brown:* If you hold an event and people in community think that's inappropriate, do you create ill will toward the panel? *Lapi:* Time will tell, be cautious and see how vaccinations and sentiments change the situation. *Baumgarten:* Social gatherings vs. golf tournament, latter is more spread out. *Brown:* Experience with MATM not so great given the effort it takes to put it on. *Brady:* Don't want to compete with organizations in more precarious financial positions who need to raise funds now. Some groups need it more than we do right now. We should wait until the fall when people are coming back and we'll know what's going on with Covid. *Brown:* In good financial shape right now, relative to our needs. Hold our current posture and review at the next meeting.

Communications: *Baumgarten:* Improve our email list, planning to build a property owners list with email for each, develop contacts, need to get owners' list and ask them nicely. *Brown:* Add to agenda for next month. *Baumgarten:* If I have a list I can ask panel members to pursue information with neighbors. *Brady:* New website updated, will promote more once new site is up, ask for contact information at that time, explain what we will and won't do with emails.

Taxation: No report.

Video: *Baumgarten:* Following up with Marcel on golf cart rules video to find out status, to get it started. DOT pleased we are trying to educate people on cart rules.

Future issues: *Brown:* Hurricane protocol, Lanigan agreed to try and rejuvenate effort. Stormwater management will become part of Sea Level Rise Committee, work with Linda to develop program on stormwater issues.

Financials: *Brown:* \$121,000 cash on hand, plus a \$25,000 commitment yet to come. Projected expenses well below that.

New business: *Lapi:* If y'all are raising money, the United Way campaign is still going on, If you haven't contributed yet we hope you'll support it. Island workers depend on it, as you know. Virtual wine tasting coming up later this month. *Brady:* Will offer update on our construction and renovation plans for 2021 at March 9 meeting, always available to answer any questions and put any rumors to rest. *Gooderham:* Also have a request from IWA general management to speak to panel in March. Question in Q&A from Jimi

on getting business emails, that's the next step of the membership drive and expect you'll be hearing from Ann on that soon.

Note: Include Island Water Association and Ann Brady/Residency plans on March agenda. Subsequent to this, the IWA request was moved to later in the year.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

-- *Ken Gooderham*

DRAFT