

Captiva Community Panel
MINUTES
April 8, 2025

Attending: David Mintz, Jon Rosen, Margarethe Thye-Miville, Tony Lapi, John Jensen, John Wade, Linda Laird, Sandy Stilwell Youngquist, Mike Bennett

Absent: Bruce McDonald, Ken Suarez

Audience: 13

Summary: The Captiva Community Panel convened at 9 a.m., confirming a quorum and approving the minutes from the previous meeting (Jensen/Lapi, unanimous). The session included a presentation by Sergeant Rich Zeltman, who raised concerns about unsafe practices involving golf carts and low-speed vehicles, particularly the dangerous trend of allowing children to sit on laps while driving. He emphasized the need for strict enforcement of traffic laws and addressed illegal parking issues in the Village, suggesting that residents should seek appropriate parking solutions. Discussions also included a review of parking fines in Captiva, with suggestions to align them with those in Sanibel, and potential increases in parking violation fees were noted.

CFD Chief Jeff Pawul highlighted parking challenges that impede fire department access during emergencies, particularly during storm evacuations, and thanked the community for their engagement at a recent open house. He clarified that the fire department does not control storm evacuation decisions and urged residents to prioritize their safety.

CEPD Chair John Wade then discussed property owner assessments for the upcoming beach restoration project, with clarifications on the apportionment model and concerns about the financial burden on residents compared to rental property owners. It was noted that homesteaded properties receive significant discounts on assessments, and a public forum will be held to discuss future funding strategies for beach management.

The South Seas redevelopment hearing was reported on, revealing significant community opposition regarding traffic, emergency evacuations, and adherence to historical density limits. The Lee County Hearing Examiner is seeking detailed information from the applicant about the proposed development's impacts, with a decision expected in 60 to 90 days. David Mintz reiterated that a maximum of 912 units is mandated by the comprehensive plan and a circuit court ruling, which limits the county's ability to issue more building permits. An appeal has been filed, anticipated to take 18 months or longer, and public input on the proposed rezoning will be taken during the Board of County Commissioners' public hearing later in the year.

The results from the recent storm readiness and recovery survey were detailed. Concerns were raised about the management of sand accumulation on properties and streets post-storm, with suggestions for establishing protocols to guide residents. Sandy Stilwell Youngquist discussed significant permitting issues affecting subcontractors and proposed sharing survey results with the Horizon Council to advocate for a more cohesive permitting system. Mike Bennett updated on the Road Infrastructure Committee's project at Jensen's Curve, aimed at preventing erosion, while discussions on effective communication to mitigate rumors and enhance community initiatives were emphasized. The Wastewater and Stormwater Committees are actively

reviewing projects, and Marguerite Thye-Miville has volunteered to chair the Development Committee, with plans to recruit additional members.

Chapters & Topics:

Traffic Safety and Parking Enforcement Updates: Sgt. Zeltman raised issues about the unsafe use of golf carts and low-speed vehicles, particularly the dangerous practice of holding children in laps while driving. He also noted an increase in illegal parking in the village, urging the public to seek proper parking options. Speaker 3 supported these concerns, recalling past enforcement efforts and suggesting a review of parking fines to ensure they are effective.

Updates on Community Safety: Chief Pawul highlighted difficulties in accessing certain roads due to contractor parking and reiterated the need for timely evacuation information during storms, which is managed by Lee County. He expressed gratitude for community turnout at the fire department's open house and noted the receipt of around 60 storm survey responses, some of which called for better communication regarding storm updates.

Discussion on Apportionment and Assessments: CEPD Chair Wade discussed the status of the upcoming beach restoration project, including the potential for a later start than the planned early-July kickoff due to contractor issues. Jon Rosen raised concerns about repeated assessments affecting residents versus rental property owners, questioning if there are tax benefits for homesteaded properties. Wade responded that homesteaded properties receive a 42.1% discount on recreational benefit apportionments. He also mentioned plans for a public forum to discuss future apportionment formulas after the current project.

South Seas Redevelopment Hearing Update: David Mintz detailed the recent hearing on the South Seas redevelopment application, which involved 52 witnesses and lasted seven days. The community expressed concerns about increased density and traffic, emphasizing the historical 912-unit density limit. The county hearing examiner is now seeking clarity on various impacts, including traffic generation and parking needs, before making a recommendation.

Mintz outlined the legal interpretation of the comprehensive plan, which restricts development at South Seas to 912 units based on a CCA settlement agreement from 2003. The hearing examiner's role is to assess whether the current application aligns with the comprehensive plan and code, but the existing legal limit remains in effect until the appeal is resolved. The appeal process is expected to take over a year, during which the county is bound by the court's decision.

Post-Storm Assessment Survey Presentation: Gooderham shared insights from a post-storm assessment survey, highlighting that 63 responses were collected from around 830 emails sent out. The survey revealed significant concerns about storm damage, the importance of timely communication, and frustrations with permitting and insurance processes. Coastal protection, communications and community resilience were also emphasized as critical issues.

Mintz expressed concern over the low survey response rate, suggesting that the panel summarize the results for the email list. Gooderham noted the short timeframe for responses and competing community concerns, particularly regarding Protect Captiva, likely contributed to the low engagement. He emphasized that people may prioritize other issues over the survey.

Mintz highlighted the challenges posed by sand accumulation on streets following recent storms and the need for a clear protocol for residents on how to manage it. Gooderham noted that

while the presence of overwash sand indicates effective storm protection, there is still a need for better communication regarding the post-storm handling of sand. They agreed that the CEPD should take the lead in developing guidelines, with support from other stakeholders.

Youngquist addressed the challenges related to permitting delays, noting that subcontractors experience varying systems in different locations, which complicates the process. She emphasized the need for a unified software solution to improve efficiency and mentioned that the Horizon Council is actively seeking solutions. Additionally, she pointed out staffing shortages as a contributing factor to the delays.

Road Infrastructure Committee Updates: Mike Bennett reported on the Road Infrastructure Committee's efforts regarding a project at Jensen's Curve on Captiva, which aims to protect the roadway from erosion. The project involves a metal piling barrier and is currently unfunded, with public discussions anticipated once funding is secured. Homeowners' beach access concerns will be addressed in future conversations. Mintz highlighted the need for clarity in communication to avoid misunderstandings that could derail community projects, citing previous incidents.

Updates were shared regarding the Wastewater Committee's financial study and the Stormwater Committee's contractor negotiations. Marguerite Thye-Miville was appointed to chair the Development Committee, and Mintz encouraged her to recruit additional members.

Action Items:

- Mintz will follow up on the inquiry regarding the increase in parking fines in Captiva.
- Wade will explore options for emergency sand placement if the beach renourishment project is delayed.
- Gooderham will summarize the storm survey results and distribute them to the email list.
- Gooderham will work with the CEPD to develop a protocol for residents on how to handle sand on their properties after storms.
- Bennett will keep the CEPD informed of any progress or major decisions regarding the Jensen's Curve project. He will ensure there is no controversy regarding the county's use of resources for the project.
- Thye-Miville will chair the Development Committee and find additional members to assist her.
- Lapi will have the Tween Waters cleanup crew out by the end of the week to address the sand encroachment on the western side of the road.

Key Questions:

- What is the timeline for the hearing examiner to issue a decision on the South Seas application?
- How will the community be informed about the outcomes of the South Seas hearing?
- What are the specific reasons for the delays in the permitting process?
- What steps will be taken to prevent rumors from affecting community projects?
- How will community input be incorporated into the stormwater management plan?

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m. Video link for the recording is https://youtu.be/9K2DR4N_EzY.