

Captiva Community Panel
MINUTES
May 13, 2025

Attending: Linda Laird, Jon Rosen, David Mintz, John Wade, John Jensen, Sandy Stilwell Youngquist, Ken Suarez, Bruce McDonald, Michael Bennett, Margarethe Thye-Miville

Absent: Tony Lapi

Audience: 22 at peak

Meeting convened 9 a.m. The April 8, 2025 meeting minutes were unanimously approved (Jensen/McDonald).

LCISO Deputy Chris Lusk provided updates on security measures, highlighting the installation of cameras at Blind Pass, which recorded around 4,500 vehicles on their first day. Residents were reminded to secure their properties as seasonal moves begin, and clarifications were made regarding the registration and insurance requirements for low-speed vehicles compared to golf carts.

CFD Chief Jeff Pawul addressed the upcoming hurricane season, urging residents to prepare their homes and relocate electric vehicles from flood-prone areas. He outlined the communication strategy for storm updates, which will be disseminated through the community panel and the CFD website. Concerns regarding the Captiva Drive project were also discussed, with Pawul encouraging patience as the Sheriff's Department works on safety measures post-storm. Additionally, he provided insights into the safety and performance of traditional versus lithium batteries for golf carts, emphasizing the importance of proper maintenance and adherence to safety recommendations. The meeting also covered ongoing negotiations regarding the fire department's acquisition of a new ladder truck, which has been stalled due to opposition from the county attorney.

Chairman John Wade reported on the Captiva Erosion Prevention District's beach renourishment and dune renovation projects, on track for completion by late September. He mentioned the opening of a new office and the approval of a \$13 million advance on grant funding to support construction costs, with efforts underway to secure additional funding to prevent assessments on residents. He noted that surveyors will be working on the beach in anticipation of the renourishment, and that a new general manager has been hired for the district.

Further discussions included planned developments at South Seas, which involve new condominiums and hotels, with some structures proposed to be significantly taller than existing ones. Legal challenges regarding development limits were noted, as well as the legacy of Allen Ten Broek in South Seas' development. A public records request submitted to the panel was discussed, raising questions about the panel's status as a government entity.

The timeline for the Captiva Drive fortification project was outlined, and community involvement was emphasized. Additionally, the formation of a nominating committee for panel positions was proposed, and discussions about potential annexation with Sanibel ensued, highlighting the need for community engagement on this topic.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m. Meeting video link: <https://youtu.be/uCKTZokUwZQ>.

Chapters & topics:

Vehicle Regulations and Safety Updates

Deputy Chris Lusk highlighted the successful installation of a flock system that tracks vehicle movement, which can aid in addressing security issues. He urged residents to ensure their homes are locked and monitored during seasonal absences and provided guidance on the distinction between golf carts and low-speed vehicles, emphasizing the need for proper registration and insurance for the latter.

Hurricane Preparedness and Community Safety Updates

Chief Jeff Pawul addressed the upcoming hurricane season, urging residents to prepare their homes and evacuate when required. He highlighted the importance of moving electric vehicles and batteries out of flood-prone areas and ensuring that power sources are de-energized before storms. Powell also mentioned that communication updates will be provided through the website and community panels, and he encouraged patience from residents as the Sheriff's Department works to ensure safety post-storm.

Battery Options for Golf Carts

Chief Pawul discussed the ongoing debate about whether to choose traditional or lithium batteries for golf carts, especially after recent storms. He mentioned that while lithium batteries are more efficient and longer-lasting, they can pose safety risks due to overheating and other factors. Jeff emphasized that both battery types have their own concerns and that the decision ultimately depends on individual preferences and maintenance practices.

Fire Department Agreement and Captiva Erosion Prevention District Update

The fire department's potential agreement with Timbers Resorts for a new ladder truck has not been finalized, as the county attorney has expressed opposition to the condition. Pawul indicated that discussions are still taking place between the attorneys involved. Meanwhile, CEPD Chairman John Wade provided updates on the Captiva Erosion Prevention District, including the status of beach renourishment and dune renovation projects.

South Seas Development Update

Mintz detailed the most recent developments at South Seas, including plans for taller buildings, new hotels, and a water park. The hearing examiner is considering the rezoning proposal, and a decision is anticipated by the end of July. Additionally, the Captiva Fire Department lacks the necessary equipment to address the new building heights, which poses a significant concern.

Discussion on Allen Ten Broek's Legacy and Zoning Issues

The passing of Allen Ten Broek has led to reflections on his role in the development of South Seas Plantation, with a recent article highlighting his influence on zoning decisions. Mintz emphasized that the 1973 zoning approval and a 2002 administrative interpretation clearly included hotels in the 912-unit density limitation. This clarification addresses ongoing confusion, particularly from the South Seas ownership group, regarding the inclusion of hotel units in the density ruling.

Public Records Request Discussion

Mintz outlined a public records request received by the Captiva Community Panel, which includes demands for various official records related to South Seas, Timbers Resorts and other

entities. He stressed the importance of obtaining a legal opinion to clarify whether the panel qualifies as a government body under public records law, as the county does not recognize it as such. A motion to authorize Mintz to secure an attorney to assist in this request was unanimously approved (McDonald/Laird).

Captiva Drive Fortification Project Update

Bennett detailed the timeline for the Captiva Drive fortification project, noting that the county is in the environmental review phase, which will take about two months. Afterward, a procurement process for selecting a design and construction team will take an additional four to five months, followed by a design phase of six months and a bidding process of four to five months. The project is expected to begin construction in about 24 months.

Update on BOCC and Development Committee

Mintz discussed the difficult personal situation of Lee County Commissioner Kevin Ruane, who is dealing with the serious illness of one brother and the recent death of another. Thye-Miville, the new chair of the Development Committee, indicated she is still learning her role and plans to update the committee's website and organize fundraising in the fall. Mintz also mentioned the need to form a nominating committee for upcoming panel appointments, and suggested Tony Lapi as chair with Mike Boris and Jim Berg as members.

Discussion on Annexation and Community Engagement

Mintz introduced an email from Mr. Bacon, who is strongly advocating for Captiva to annex with Sanibel, and proposed sharing it with the panel for future discussion. Laird agreed that the topic should be addressed at the next panel meeting, highlighting the importance of community input on the matter. Mintz emphasized the need for careful consideration of the timing and appropriateness of discussing annexation.

Action Items:

- Chris Lusk will provide advice on home security camera options to residents.
- David Mintz will send the public records request letter to an attorney for review.
- Michael Bennett will coordinate with the county and property owners regarding the Captiva Drive fortification project.
- Margarethe Thye-Miville will work with Ken Gooderham on recommendations for fund-raising events and website updates.
- Tony Lapi will be asked to reach out to Mike Boris and Jim Berg to confirm their participation on the nominating committee for panel appointments.
- The panel will review the email from Mr. Bacon regarding the annexation discussion and decide if it should be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Key Questions:

- What are the specific safety measures that residents should take to prepare for hurricane season?
- Are there any updates on the public records request from the new owners of South Seas?
- What is the timeline for the completion of the Captiva Drive fortification project?
- How will the Captiva Drive fortification project impact property owners' access to the beach?
- What are the next steps for the nominating committee for panel appointments?