



Captiva Community Panel
MINUTES
Aug. 12, 2025

Attending: David Mintz, Jon Rosen, Linda Laird, Tony Lapi. John Jensen, Sandy Stilwell Youngquist, John Wade

Absent: Bruce McDonald, Michael Bennett, Margarethe Thye-Miville

Audience: 23

The meeting convened at 9 a.m., with unanimous approval of the July 8, 2025, meeting minutes (Jensen/Laird). Updates from committee chairs included a report from Tony Lapi on the nominating committee's progress. LCSO Sgt. Rich Zeltman addressed safety concerns on Captiva, highlighting a series of car break-ins and a recent accident related to roadside parking, emphasizing the importance of vehicle security and adherence to parking ordinances.

Brighton Heard, the new CEPD general manager, shared his background and expressed eagerness to engage with the community. Updates on the beach renourishment project were provided, detailing the timeline for pipe laying and sand pumping, with financial discussions ongoing due to pending sand survey results. Concerns regarding the impact of eagle nesting season on the project were also raised, but assurances were given that measures are in place to address these challenges.

Legal developments surrounding the South Seas redevelopment project were discussed, including the Board of County Commissioners' approval of the rezoning request (which includes increased density and building heights) despite community opposition. An appeal is being considered, and the community has raised significant funds for legal efforts. The absence of public notice signs on the South Seas property was questioned, with concerns about the treatment of property owners in the zoning application process and the financial implications of public records requests highlighted.

The meeting concluded with updates on various projects, including the wastewater project initiated in 2017 due to concerns about septic systems and their environmental impact. Discussions focused on the financial implications of a central sewer system, with costs projected to be significantly higher than initially estimated. The need for further investigation into environmental performance and stormwater management was acknowledged. Additionally, updates on D&O insurance renewal and fund-raising efforts were provided, with plans to discuss these in detail upon the return of a committee chair from abroad.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m. Video link for the meeting is:
<https://youtu.be/3Oi03LQpLTU>.

Chapters & Topics:

Safety Concerns and Updates on Captiva

Sgt. Rich Zeltman discussed recent incidents on Captiva, including car break-ins by a teenage visitor and a roadside parking accident that resulted in a vehicle flipping over. He highlighted the effectiveness of security cameras in identifying suspects and urged residents to keep their car doors locked. Speaker 4 also reiterated the importance of adhering to the no roadside parking ordinance for safety reasons.

Introduction of Brighton Heard and CEPD Report

CEPD Chairman John Wade introduced Brighton Heard, the new general manager of the CEPD, to the panel. Brighton, who started in May, has an environmental background and previously worked in California. He clarified that although he came from California, he is originally from Louisiana and has lived in Baton Rouge for most of his life.

Beach Renourishment Project Update

John Wade shared details about the beach renourishment project, indicating that work will commence soon and is expected to last about 60 days, barring weather delays. Wade elaborated on the financial situation, mentioning that the district is finalizing the tax roll and will have a better understanding of costs in about three weeks, while also highlighting ongoing efforts to secure state funding.

Turtle Lighting Code Enforcement Discussion

Jay Brown shared that there has been a dramatic rise in turtle light code violations, including his own citation despite using turtle glass and following recommendations. He noted that the current enforcement seems to focus on visibility from the beach rather than actual illumination of turtle nests, leading to confusion among homeowners. David Mintz proposed reaching out to the county for clearer guidelines to help residents understand compliance requirements.

County South Seas Redevelopment Rezoning Legal Update

David Mintz discussed the recent Board of County Commissioners' decision to approve the South Seas redevelopment application, which includes increased density and building heights. Despite strong community opposition and concerns about public safety and environmental impacts, the vote was 3-1 in favor of approval. The community is considering filing an appeal against this decision, and there are ongoing legal challenges regarding code amendments that allowed for the increased development.

Public Notice Requirements and Legal Proceedings Regarding South Seas

An audience member inquired about public notice signs related to the South Seas property, noting a lack of clarity in the Lee County Land Development Code. Ken Suarez acknowledged that signs were posted and notifications sent, but he emphasized that South Seas property owners were not treated as full participants in the zoning application process, raising due process concerns. This issue is expected to be a significant point of contention in the upcoming appeal.

Infrastructure and Stormwater Committee Updates

David Mintz discussed the infrastructure committee's updates, focusing on the resilience project at Jensen's Curve, which is expected to take a year for design and procurement. The project is funded by federal block grants, and public meetings will be held to address local residents' concerns about height and beach access. Additionally, the Santiva Roadway will also be included in the project, with funding from the county.

Wastewater Committee Report Overview

Jay Brown detailed the progression of the wastewater project, starting in 2017 with concerns about septic systems contributing to poor coastal water quality. Key studies, including those by TKW Engineering and David Tomasko, indicated that a central sewer system would be the best solution, but recent findings revealed that costs could escalate to approximately \$65 million, significantly higher than initial estimates. The Sanibel City Council is supportive of forming a working group to address these challenges. Brown, Mintz and Bennett will represent Captiva on that effort.

Discussion on Central Sewer System Costs and Performance Standards

Costs of the central sewer system were discussed, with estimates suggesting \$90,000 per home for advanced treatment systems. This highlighted the need for further study on the environmental impact of these systems, particularly regarding pollutants. Additionally, they discussed the challenges posed by sea level rise on septic systems and the necessity of elevating them to maintain functionality.

D&O Insurance Update and Fundraising Plans

Ken Gooderham reported that the D&O insurance coverage is at risk of lapsing, as the renewal process has been delayed. He is actively seeking alternative quotes while ensuring that the current carrier is pushed for timely renewal. Additionally, Margarethe Thye-Miville is preparing a funding development plan for 2026, which will be presented to the panel at the September meeting.

Action Items:

- Tony Lapi will reach out to Captiva Cruises regarding their interest in joining the panel.
- Sgt. Zeltman will follow up on the status of the permit and inquire about how to obtain a copy of it and its requirements.
- Sergeant Rich Zeltman will follow up on the immobilization and tow-away permit for Southeast.
- David Mintz will reach out to the Department of Community Development and Code Enforcement to request clear guidelines on turtle lighting compliance.
- Jay Brown will pursue a working group with members from Sanibel and Captiva to advance the central sewer project.
- Ken Gooderham will follow up with the current insurance carrier to ensure the D&O insurance is renewed by the required date.