



Captiva Community Panel
MINUTES
Dec. 9, 2025

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

Audience: 34

Summary: The meeting convened 9 a.m. The Nov. 11, 2025, minutes were unanimously approved (McDonald/Jensen).

LCSO Sergeant Rich Zeltman highlighted safety concerns during the holiday season, particularly regarding school bus regulations.

Fire Chief Jeff Pawul announced a bond referendum on the bid to purchase part of the Rauschenberg property scheduled for Feb. 10 at the CCA, marking a change from prior locations. CEPD chair John Wade provided an update on beach renourishment efforts, confirming progress and the establishment of pathways for beach access. Concerns were raised about property tax bills related to beach renourishment assessments, prompting members to share their experiences and seek clarification.

An update on the upcoming legislative session was provided, focusing on ecological concerns regarding the estuary's minimum flow level violation and a proposed oil drilling plan in the Gulf. SCCF's Matt DePaolis emphasized the need for community advocacy to protect local ecosystems and highlighted federal efforts to roll back environmental protections.

David Mintz reported on county code enforcement, mentioning a draft letter about Captiva code and clarifying that there are no plans to lower the speed limit on Captiva Drive. He also discussed a potential temporary stop sign at Rabbit Read and provided updates on legal matters concerning South Seas redevelopment.

The panel discussed the Protect Captiva tax-deductible Legal Fund, encouraging contributions before the end of the year for tax benefits. Mintz detailed challenges in responding to a public records request from South Seas, which incurred significant legal fees. Mintz provided an update on the Rauschenberg property bidding process, noting two viable bids, one from a community investor and another from a developer. He expressed concern over the foundation's delay in decision-making and emphasized the importance of community involvement.

Updates on stormwater initiatives were lacking due to the unavailability of the Lee County liaison. Jay Brown reported on the wastewater committee's progress, detailing the history of the project and a significant increase in estimated costs for the wastewater collection system. The committee is exploring funding opportunities to address these costs.

Discussions also included the sewer project and alternative septic systems proposed by Marguerite. The panel voted unanimously to approve Jay Brown and Bob Rando as new panel-appointment members starting in January 2026. It received an update on the recent “Welcome Back” cruise from Margarethe Thye-Miville, who also noted a future fund-raiser on Feb. 13, which will feature Kat Epple and will be held at the Community Center. The panel discussed the feasibility of holding in-person meetings during the coming winter months, while emphasizing the importance of hybrid meetings for better community engagement.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m. Video link for the meeting is:
https://youtu.be/n977mYj4_Z8.

Chapters & Topics:

Updates and Reports from Community Panel Members

LCISO Sergeant Zeltman discussed local safety concerns, emphasizing responsible driving during the holidays and the operation of school bus cameras. Fire Chief Jeff Pawul announced that a bond referendum on the bid to purchase part of the Rauschenberg property would be held on Feb. 10 at the CCA center on Captiva.

Legislative Updates and Environmental Concerns

SCCF’s Matt DePaolis discussed the impending legislative session and the critical status of the estuary, which is facing a minimum flow level violation that could take five years to recover from. He urged the South Florida Water Management District to prioritize saving the estuary and mentioned the proposed oil drilling plan in the Gulf, which poses risks to local beaches and the economy. He also called for opposition to federal rollbacks of environmental protections, including the Endangered Species Act. The panel asked DePaolis to provide a draft of letters for the panel to submit on these issues.

County Code Enforcement and Legal Updates

David Mintz discussed the county’s efforts in code enforcement, including a draft letter about Captiva code and recent vegetation cleanup along Captiva Drive. He dispelled rumors regarding a speed limit reduction on Sanibel, confirming that no such changes are planned. Additionally, he mentioned a potential temporary stop sign at Rabbit Read for safety assessments.

Discussion on Charitable Donations and Tax Deductions

David Mintz confirmed that donations to the Protect Captiva through the CCA Foundation are tax-deductible, addressing a question from Tony Lapi regarding the status of these contributions. Jon Rosen added that individuals with high adjustable gross incomes should consider making donations this year due to upcoming changes in tax laws that may affect charitable deductions in 2026.

Public Records Update and Legal Fees Discussion

The public records request from South Seas has been burdensome, requiring extensive review and production of documents dating back to January 2021. David Mintz reported that the total legal fees incurred for this process will reach around \$20,000, with the possibility of further litigation from South Seas. Gooderham emphasized that the panel is not a public agency, which raises questions about the necessity of complying with such requests.

Update on Rauschenberg Property Bids

David Mintz discussed the status of the Rauschenberg property bids, indicating that there are currently two main options for the foundation to consider. He highlighted that the community

investor's bid is straightforward and has garnered significant community support, while the other bid is from a developer who prefers the community investor's proposal. Mintz expressed hope that the foundation would accept the community investor's bid.

Nominating Committee Recommendations and Voting Process

The nominating committee proposed Jay Brown and Bob Rando as the preferred candidates to fill the vacancies left by John Jensen and Tony Lapi. Panel members were asked to vote for two nominees from a list of four, which also included Bob Adler and Christopher Kempf. The voting process required members to send their choices to the Captiva Community Panel email.

Acknowledgments and Community Updates

Mintz thanked John Jensen and Tony Lapi for their long-term service to the panel, suggesting that John could remain involved with the Community Panel. John Jensen expressed his willingness to help despite stepping down from the panel. The discussion also included updates on iguana eradication efforts, with a grant to CEPD of up to a half-million dollars approved for this purpose.

Stormwater and Wastewater Committee Updates

Phil Gilliby from Lee County did not provide an update on stormwater efforts, leaving the status unchanged from the previous month. Jay Brown shared that the wastewater committee has formed a working group and completed three studies, which indicated that the initial cost estimate for the wastewater collection system has risen significantly from \$20 million to \$75 million due to additional infrastructure requirements.

Brown highlighted the importance of securing grant money to lower the sewer project costs for property owners to around \$20 million. He mentioned that Kimley Horn is working on a plan to enhance the resilience of the FGUA plant at South Seas, which could shift wastewater processing from Donax to South Seas. David Mintz noted that making the FGUA plant more resilient would be costly, estimated at \$25 million, but could ultimately reduce expenses for property owners.

Infrastructure Updates and Development Committee Announcements

Mike Bennett indicated via email there were no new updates from the infrastructure committee. Jon Rosen confirmed that the proposed 21% rate increase from Island Water Association has been withdrawn, with plans to resubmit in early 2026, influenced by potential grants. Additionally, the panel unanimously voted in support of Jay Brown and Bob Randall as new members starting in January 2026.

Action Items:

- Ken Gooderham will work with Matt to prepare a draft letter regarding environmental issues for the panel to review.
- David Mintz will circulate a draft of the letter regarding environmental issues to the panel for approval before the next meeting if the submission deadlines allow.
- David Mintz will send out a reminder to the community about the Captiva code and the upcoming review of the draft letter.
- David Mintz will recommend to the legal team to send out a communication regarding the legal reserves and encourage contributions before the fiscal year ends.
- Gooderham will send out the letter asking for support to the panel at least once more before the end of the year.

- Margarethe will look into scheduling the Welcome Back Cruise for the second week of January next year, and will finalize details of the Feb. 13 event at the CCA.
- Gooderham will confirm the ownership of the domain names and discuss the website renewal.
- Gooderham will talk to the CCA about the improvements made to their audio and visual systems for potential hybrid meetings.