

**MANATEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY
JOINT MEETING
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER
1112 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, Florida
February 27, 2018**

Present were Manatee County Commissioners
Priscilla Whisenant Trace, Chairman
Robin DiSabatino, First Vice-Chairman
Carol Whitmore, Second Vice-Chairman
Charles B. Smith, Third Vice-Chairman
(entered during the meeting)
Betsy Benac
Vanessa Baugh (entered during the meeting)
Stephen R. Jonsson

Present were Longboat Key Commissioners:
Terry Gans, Mayor
Ed Zunz, Vice-Mayor
Jim Brown

Randy Clair
Jack Daly
Irwin Pastor
George Spoll

Also present were:

Ed Hunzeker, Manatee County Administrator
Mitchell O. Palmer, Manatee County Attorney
Tom Harmer, Town of Longboat Key Manager
Robin Toth, Deputy Clerk, Manatee Clerk of the Circuit Court

AGENDA

BC20180227DOC001

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

 Manatee County Commission Chairman Priscilla Trace called the Joint Meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Ed Hunzeker, Manatee County Administrator, outlined the order of the agenda.

CITIZEN COMMENTS (Future agenda items with Longboat Key)

 Robert Bunting, Longboat Key (LBK) resident, expressed concern of erosion at the north end of LBK, and impacts to the south end from hardening the north end of the barrier island. He spoke in favor of Manatee County allocating Longboat Key tax revenues for beach renourishment on the north end of LBK.

Maureen Merrigan, LBK resident, thanked both government entities for coming together to talk. Residents on the north end of LBK want to see their tax dollars used for improvements on the north end of LBK.

There being no further citizen comments, Commission Chairman Trace closed Citizen Comments.

(Enter Manatee Commissioners Baugh and Smith)

7. TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY – CHALLENGES OF BEING IN TWO COUNTIES

 Longboat Key (LBK) residents in Manatee County pay about \$2.6 million higher taxes than if the property was in Sarasota County. There are no additional services provided by Manatee County to LBK residents to justify the \$2.6 million disparity. This inequity in property taxes has caused the Town to begin looking seriously at the issue and discuss how to achieve equity in taxes for LBK residents.

County boundary lines can be modified by passage and adoption of a general law modifying the geographical description of each county's jurisdictional limits. The legislation must be passed by the Florida Legislature and subsequently approved by the Florida Governor.

 LBK Town Manager Tom Harmer utilized the slide presentation in the agenda packet to share some of the challenges for LBK which span both counties. There are practical and public safety-related challenges, as well as financial differences, that significantly impact LBK.

The boundary was identified as County Line Road that became University Parkway. In 1921, development was primarily occurring on the north end of LBK. It wasn't until the 1950s that the Town incorporated and services grew and developed. The Town has been a full-service provider in both counties, and neither County provides significant services to the Town.

During the same time the counties evolved, they had different philosophies on how to fund their operations. Sarasota County funds many services through non-ad valorem special assessments within assessments districts, whereas Manatee County funds many services through ad valorem taxes. Manatee County pays the full ad valorem millage rate. Some of the challenges are practical.

 Discussion ensued regarding the obvious inconveniences of one town being split between counties, that Manatee County provides a different bus service to LBK than Sarasota County; Florida Statute 252 outlines disaster planning provisions, counties have authority and responsibility to oversee events in their county, the challenge is how each county deals with evacuations, sheltering and re-entry, there are differences in approach and philosophy as it pertains to curfew, there are a handful of counties around the state that experience this same challenge, and there is also a financial challenge and equity issue.

Mr. Harmer utilized a slide presentation showing a One County Analysis FY 2018 Ad Valorem Taxes of a sample LBK address in Sarasota County and a sample LBK address in Manatee County. Taxes for the Manatee County address are an additional \$764.24. There is an equity issue as to how each County bills their property owners and the revenue that is collected. No action is required by either Commission, but only to discuss the impacts to LBK residents.

 LBK Mayor Terry Gans stated he must examine every situation for the benefit of the Town, organizational responsibilities of the Clerk, and the Legislative Delegation. There is much work to be done between both Manatee and Sarasota Counties, and partnerships are needed if decisions are to be considered. Financial issues can be discussed and negotiated.

 Discussion continued regarding various taxes and fees in LBK, revenue streams between both Counties, and that the various activities in LBK should matter to Manatee County.

 LBK Commissioner Ed Zunz commented on the problems on Greer Island (aka Beer Can Island), which is owned by Manatee County. In the past, the Town relayed requests to Manatee County but did not receive a response. The Town gets more response from Sarasota County.

 Manatee Commissioner Robin DiSabatino stated the various taxes and fees between Manatee County and the Town should be examined.

 LBK Mayor Gans suggested the County's Finance Director and LBK's Finance Director review FY 2018 Ad Valorem tax figures. LBK has not taken an official position on consolidating the Town of Longboat Key into either Sarasota or Manatee County.

 Further discussion occurred regarding Greer Island currently being used as an active recreational site and law enforcement services are required, the Island has damage and needs repair, the purpose of this meeting, mutual respect should be shown, articles in the LBK Observer about Manatee County, both counties should discuss moving forward with changes that need to be made, Manatee County does not maintain Greer Island, and it does not sound fiscally wise to invest money into Greer Island.

 LBK Mayor Gans confirmed that Representative Jim Boyd and Senator Bill Galvano are LBK Legislators.

 Manatee Commissioner Vanessa Baugh encouraged Town Commissioners to meet with Charlie Hunsicker, Manatee County Parks and Natural Resources Director, about Greer Island.

 LBK Commissioner Irwin Pastor stated the Sarasota/Manatee County area is one of the largest growth areas in the United States. Part of the planning process is for both counties to examine the geography, demographics and service areas for the benefit of both counties.

 Manatee Commission Chairman Trace stated Manatee County must be examined as a whole and suggested LBK and Manatee County representatives hold productive dialogue.

LBK Commissioner Jim Brown encouraged both government entities to work together.

 Manatee Commissioner Betsy Benac stated Manatee County is aware of the tax challenges; however, Sarasota County has a significant tax deficit which should be examined in greater detail. Everyone must work together to resolve concerns and face challenges to achieve a common goal.

 LBK Commissioner Brown stated LBK does not rely on Sarasota or Manatee County, but instead, taxes their citizens.

 LBK Commissioner Zunz stated that several years ago, LBK wanted an additional terminal groin. An expert consultant advised due to the lack of the terminal groin, three additional groins north of the two previously constructed, are needed. Greer Island is owned by Manatee County and the County should take care of its property.

 Manatee Commissioner Baugh recalled talking with the Town about problems with the sewer lines, but Town Commissioners have not talked to Charlie Hunsicker about Greer Island. Though the Town does not have many hotels to receive bed tax revenues, the bed tax revenues collected by Manatee County are returned to the Town, which perhaps could be used for beach renourishment.

 LBK Mayor Gans stated Town representatives previously met with Mr. Hunsicker, but nothing transpired. LBK has requested this joint meeting for several years. Greer Island is listed as a Manatee County park, and the County should be proactive in upkeep/maintenance.

Manatee Commissioner Carol Whitmore stated progress can be achieved by working together.



LBK Mayor Gans stated the Town is trying to get on the approved study list with the Army Corps of Engineers.

As District representative for the north end of LBK, Manatee Commissioner Stephen Jonsson stated there is an obvious lack of communication with the Town. He apologized for not reaching out and offered to meet with Town representatives at any time.

Manatee Commissioner Charles Smith suggested annual meetings with the municipalities.

LBK resident Robert Bunting stated the homes on the north end of LBK are in jeopardy and residents expect to be protected. He requested the discussions on Greer Island be taken seriously.



Katherine Edwards commented that any changes in the status of the north end of LBK may potentially set a precedent for Lakewood Ranch.

There being no further public comment, Commission Chairman Trace closed public comment.

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6. **GREER ISLAND**



Longboat Key (LBK) Town Manager Tom Harmer stated Greer Island is owned by Manatee County and provides a physical barrier to LBK residents to the south. The Island serves as a popular recreational site for residents and visitors. Greer Island's land mass has fluctuated over time and is currently in a severe state of erosion. In a recent Town meeting, Olsen Associates Inc., presented recommendations and options for consideration by the Town Commission regarding structural stabilization of the north end and Greer Island.

Currently, the preferred option is to stabilize the majority of Greer Island with three rock structure groins northward along the Greer Island shoreline concurrent with sand placement of beach fill material. The planning level cost estimate for this work is approximately \$9 million, with the beach fill material driving the majority of the cost.

The Town requests consideration from the County Commission for financial assistance and possible fill material support to share in the expense of the stabilization effort.



LBK Public Works Director Isaac Brownman utilized the slide presentation in the agenda packet showing the north end stabilization of Greer Island study area of 1,600 feet north of the permeable groin, sand transport modeling, Greer Island Options, Greer Island Preferred Option, Option to Permit - FDEP, LBK is moving forward in preparing preliminary designs and the economic package to submit January 2019, and the earliest time to begin the project is late 2020-mid 2021.



Discussion ensued that Manatee County and LBK have the permits, sand source near the natural gas line, and sharing arrangement and rock groins.



Mr. Brownman stated the terminal groin was determined to not significantly protect the erosion roll off occurring north of the permeable groin, and it was never built. In determining that an additional groin field was needed, it was decided to do smaller rock groins. The terminal groin is not needed, and the stabilization solution replaces the terminal groin. It was suggested Charlie Hunsicker, Manatee County Parks and Natural Resources Director,

make a presentation to the Town Commission on the beach groins.

 Ed Hunzeker, Manatee County Administrator, suggested that he and Mr. Harmer meet with consultants about a process to protect property owners on the north end of LBK. A solution could be presented in early fall to reconcile differences.

 Maureen Merrigan, LBK resident, stated Greer Island has become a high litter area and there is underage drinking. She asked the County Commission to assist with litter clean up and have law enforcement monitor the Island.

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5. **REGIONAL COORDINATION OF BEACH RENOURISHMENT PROJECTS**

 Longboat Key (LBK) Town Manager Tom Harmer utilized a slide presentation with the agenda packet addressing regional coordination of beach renourishment projects. There may be some benefit to attempting a more regional approach, including economies of scale, improved permitting and grant scoring, and more effective sand source utilization. A regional approach would require policy and practical considerations as well as long-term cooperation. There are deficiencies in the current process, it is extremely costly, and resources are limited.

 LBK Public Works Director Isaac Brownman continued with slides addressing regional beach management collaboration, who should organize the regional forum to explore multi-jurisdictional projects, reasons to consider collaboration of beach management, advantages of increased regional collaboration, why hasn't this been done before, the West Coast Inland Navigation District (WCIND) has regional structure, regional representation, and good management track record, familiarity with coast issues, WCIND does not currently have beach management in its direct responsibility, WCIND is not interested at this time, and what should happen next if we want to pursue better coastal collaboration.

 Charlie Hunsicker, Manatee Parks and Natural Resources Director, stated Manatee County supports the conclusions of the experts. While Greer Island is identified as a beach on the County's inventory, the County does not budget nor maintain Greer Island. Under regional coordination and cooperation, it makes more sense to work together; however, there are two components (1) the availability of sand and (2) who constructs the beach. Manatee County understands it is the authority of the Federal Government to make the determination.

 Discussion continued on the need for partnerships, working under the limitations of the Federal Government, assess the needs of interested jurisdictions, what we should be lobbying for, the availability of sand drives the cost of construction, both the north end of LBK and south end of Coquina Beach need to be maintained because of the abundance of sand that flows through the channel and sand sharing.

 LBK Mayor Terry Gans stated LBK's last beach renourishment project cost \$16 million.

 Mr. Brownman stated discussions need to be regional and not just at a local level.

 Discussion ensued that the State monitors specific project outcomes, concerns of trash and the need for law enforcement at Greer Island, LBK and Manatee County should jointly maintain the Island and work with the Town Manager on an agreement.

 Katherine Edwards stated the WCIND letter in the agenda packet (2/6/18) regarding contributions to beach renourishment is confusing.

 Manatee County Commissioner Carol Whitmore suggested briefings continue with both the Manatee Commission and LBK. BC20180227DOC004

4. **LONGBOAT KEY GULF OF MEXICO DRIVE CORRIDOR STUDY**

 Longboat Key (LBK) Town Manager Tom Harmer stated LBK engaged Urban Land Institute to conduct an Advisory Services Panel Study. The Study indentified recommendations for Gulf of Mexico Drive.

 Allen Parsons, LBK Planning, Zoning and Building Director, utilized a slide presentation and simulations demonstrating potential enhancements along the Gulf of Mexico Drive corridor. The simulations provide examples of the types of features that could be explored: keeping the current speed limit of 45 mph, town entryways with roundabouts, gateway signage, landscaped medians, crosswalks with a special pavement treatment and landscaped mid-road respite areas, ten-foot multi-use paths on both sides of Gulf of Mexico Drive, wider bike lanes with enhanced visual separation from the traffic lane, enhanced landscaping along the East and West sides of Gulf of Mexico Drive, low pathway lighting along the multi-use paths, enhanced bus shelters, benches along the multi-use paths, and the next steps.

 Manatee County Commissioner Betsy Benac spoke about making 15th Street a complete through street, coordinate utilities, and prioritize with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

 Discussion ensued on where the Town is with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) on this corridor plan, this is not a funded project with FDOT at this time, roundabouts are good solutions to traffic issues, and this report needs to be presented at an MPO meeting.

There being no public comment, Commission Chairman Trace closed public comment.

BC20180227DOC005

3. **HURRICANE IRMA - LESSONS LEARNED**

 Longboat Key (LBK) Town Manager Tom Harmer encouraged dialogue between the Town and the County Commission regarding lessons learned from Hurricane Irma (8/30/17-9/16/17).

 LBK Fire Chief Paul Dezzi stated Manatee and Sarasota County Emergency Operations Centers collaborate during storm events, and the coordination that occurred between both entities during Hurricane Irma was excellent. He shared slides outlining a timeline and protective measures, Florida Statute 252-Emergency Management, outlining Responsibilities and Coordination, sheltering, evacuations and persons with special needs, storm debris removal, strengths and opportunities, utility shut-off timing, and the After-Action Peer Review Team.

 Steve Litschauer, Manatee County Emergency Management Officer, stated Manatee County's Emergency Operations Center is in continuous contact with the State. He spoke on the success of the infrastructure workshop held last week and advised that an emergency team session drill is planned at the Manatee Emergency Operations Center on April 24th.

 Inasmuch as LBK spans two counties, Mr. Harmer stated Sarasota County has engaged former Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Craig Fugate to review and return with recommendations on not evacuating by A/B zones but instead, evacuating by geographical identifiers for the public, opening/closing qualified hurricane shelters as needed, and opportunities to improve consistency between both Counties.

 Discussion ensued regarding the Hurricane Irma After-Action Report (AAR) prepared following Hurricane Irma, the AAR Report evaluates and assesses Manatee County's strengths and areas for improvement and records observations and recommendations, provide the Report to all Commissioners, an estimated 6-7,000 people did not evacuate during Hurricane Irma, people did not leave because of pets and because they weathered out previous storms, shelter capacity and shelter staffing is a huge issue, other counties pay staff to man shelters, share information and learn from it, now is the time to modify procedures for the upcoming storm season, and examine pet shelters.

 Katherine Edwards commented.

There being no further public comment, Commission Chairman Trace closed public comment. BC20180227DOC006

2. **BARRIER ISLAND TRAFFIC MITIGATION TRAFFIC STUDY UPDATE**

 Longboat Key (LBK) Commissioner Jack Daly, representative to the Barrier Island Traffic Study (BITS) being performed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), stated the BITS is being conducted in three phases, with peak season traffic being treated as a special event and how special events are managed with multiple integrated solutions.

- Phase 1 involved summarizing previous study recommendations. That effort is complete.
- Phase 2 involves data collection and observation with preliminary recommendations. That effort is nearly complete; and
- Phase 3 will involve developing a Transportation Management Plan and Recommendations.

 Isaac Brownman, LBK Public Works Director, stated the Metropolitan Planning Organization requested the BITS Study be led by FDOT. A sub-committee will review FDOT's recommendations and report back. The Study includes Longboat Key, Coquina Beach, Bradenton Beach, Holmes Beach, Anna Maria, and St. Armands and Lido areas. The Study is expected to be completed in the fall of 2018.

Mr. Brownman utilized a slide presentation outlining the approach to integrated solutions, additional input/emphasis, opportunities to take cars off the road through a park and ride plan, and a pedestrian plan in the beach communities. LBK is looking at opportunities to have on-site amenities at the beaches, technology to advise of available parking, a LBK arts and cultural center. LBK seeks input from FDOT on improving area congestion. Not included in the study is for FDOT to examine the Bridge Street roundabout, replacing Cortez Bridge potentially with a fixed-span bridge, a third multi-modal lane with flexibility to be used as a contra-flow lane, and roundabouts and crosswalks for better pedestrian mobility.

Discussed occurred regarding the City of Sarasota is focused on mobility and LBK is focused on traffic, part of the recommendations are focusing on FDOT's study of the entire region, including elevated pedestrian walkways, the Central Manatee Network Analysis (CMNAA), the Cortez Bridge third multi-modal lane, better communication is needed, LBK Commissioners should individually meet with Manatee County Parks and Natural Resources Director Charlie

Hunsicker regarding Beer Can Island, the Manatee Commission and LBK has not had much communication, both Boards should meet twice a year, communicate by email, and work together to devise a plan to address traffic congestion.

 Manatee Commissioner Stephen Jonsson commented on the north/south traffic flow on Gulf of Mexico Drive.

 LBK Commissioner Jim Brown stated traffic congestion used to be seasonal, but is now year round.

 Katherine Edwards stated that regardless of action taken, traffic will continue to increase.

There being no public comment, Commission Chairman Trace closed public comment.

BC20180227DOC007



1. **LONGBOAT KEY UTILITY UNDERGROUNDING AND FIBER UPDATE**

Isaac Brownman, LBK Public Works Director, stated the Town’s Utility Undergrounding and Fiber Project is a significant project to underground utilities (electric, telephone, cable and fiber optic), and add both a Town fiber-optic backbone and enhance street lighting along Gulf of Mexico Drive.

He utilized a slide presentation on the project location, scope, goal of enhanced safety, reliability and aesthetics, funding mechanism of special assessments, approved LBK Referendum, the damaging impacts from Hurricane Irma, hardening of the infrastructure impact, before and after photographs of undergrounding, and how to shorten the construction program from five to three years using a Design-Build delivery approach.

 Discussion ensued regarding sewer lines from LBK to Bradenton, the plans of LBK, what would it look like to permit and construct a redundant power line in an emergency, LBK has a utility engineer on board to study the redundant line design process, a sea grass survey required due to environmental impacts, request that Mr. Brownman keep both Counties updated, and the status of Manatee County’s utility line replacement.

 Ed Hunzeker, Manatee County Administrator, stated LBK has its own utility system with a master meter. There are no County utility lines on LBK.

 Manatee Commissioner Robin DiSabatino commented on the struggles experienced regarding water shutoff during Hurricane Irma without compromising the rest of the water system.

There being no public comment, Commission Chairman Trace closed public comment.

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COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS

Commission Chairman Trace expressed willingness to continue working with the Town of Longboat Key.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Commission Chairman Trace adjourned the Joint meeting at 4:40 p.m.

Minutes Approved: _____