

SGI Civic Club
Monthly Meeting Notes
April 19, 2007

1. President Susan Bassett called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Seventy seven people attended.
2. Drawings:
 - * Glynda Ratleff won the 50/50 drawing. She will donate the money to the Humane Society.
 - * Faye Phillips won a brass "turtle" door knocker donated by Mason and Marilyn Bean.
 - * Joe Phillips won a handwoven bread basket donated by Dee Grinenko.
3. Thank you:
Jimmy Lewis thanked club members for their support as he recovers from a stroke.
4. Treasurers Report:
Paul Riegelmayr reported:
 - * General fund: \$9,587.11 (4/18/07)
 - * Dune Restoration fund: \$3,410.14 (4/19/07)
5. Chili Cookoff:
Jayne Bamberg reported that the Chili Cookoff receipts should total nearly \$120,000. The SGI Volunteer Fire Department will receive about \$77,000. Final amounts are still being determined. Jane said she and her committee appreciated the support from the Civic Club. She also reported she has some Cookoff clothing items still available. She can be reached at 927-2971.
6. First Responders/EMS teams:
Susan Ficklen reported that this is the 20th anniversary for the SGI First Responders. She said there is a need for volunteers for the work to support the current team of eight responders. There will be a party in June to honor Jay Abbott, the founder of the First Responders and current Volunteer Fire Chief. More information on the party will be forthcoming.

Susan also reported that Franklin County will have an ambulance station on the Island for the summer season. The crews will bunk at the Firehouse.
7. Flood Insurance:
Paul Riegelmayr cautioned that a proposed zoning variance which was preliminarily approved by the County Commission could result in changes that could increase flood insurance rates. Russell Crofton, County Commissioner for

the District 1, said that if the Federal Emergency Management Agency didn't approve the variance, it will not be granted. Crofton also said the issue will be discussed again at the Board of Commissioners before final action is taken.

8. STAR Beach Surveys:
Bruce Hall asked for to survey the beach at night looking for lights that would disturb nesting turtles. People interested should contact Bruce at bruceh@gtcom.net.
9. New Turtle Sign:
The Civic Club membership approved a resolution to provide financial help to create a new sign for the Island regarding: "Lights Out. Turtle Nesting Season." President Bassett will determine the amount of the support. The total cost of the sign is not expected to exceed \$400.
10. County Commission Report:
Russell Crofton reported that the Commission gave a first level approval to the Porthaven Project in Eastpoint. Part of the approval was to reduce the density in the development from 15 units per acre to 10. The project must be reviewed by the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The project will be the subject of many more discussions, hearings and meetings before it is approved or disapproved, Crofton said.

Commissioner Crofton also reported that a project to redevelop the entire block where Anchor Reality and the St. George Inn currently stand was approved preliminarily. The project now must go to the Florida DCA for review and approval or disapproval. "We will have more opportunities to look at it," Crofton said.

The Civic Club passed a resolution proposed by Commissioner Crofton to support the extension of the bike path from E. 11th Street to the State Park. Mary Ann Durrer moved the resolution and Judi Little seconded.

Responding to questions from the audience Commissioner Crofton said:

- * He supported efforts to roll back the county budget to 2001 levels even though Franklin County, as a "financially constrained county" was exempt from a state-mandated rollback. He noted that the state has not taken final action on the issue.
- * He supported efforts to change the current policy under which one commissioner can say a budget item is "tentatively approved," which puts the item into the budget.
- * He supported a proposal to have a citizen budget committee work with the Board of Commissioners and the county department heads with the budget.

11. Dune Restoration Project:
Elaine Rosenthal reported that all elements of the project – sand fences, beach walkovers and beach plantings – have been completed. Remaining money will be used to build another walkover next fall, probably on the East End.

Signage will be created for the sand fences to alert beach goers of the project and urge them to stay out of the fenced areas.

John Selby reported that he has designed a “Beach Bulliten Board” for posting signs at the entrance to all beach walkovers.

President Bassett thanked Elaine for the articles in the local papers she has written regarding the project.

The membership approved a resolution to provide support of up to \$1,000 for a party to thank people who have worked on the project. Mason Bean will organize the party. Details to come.

Bruce Hall said it will be up to the Civic Club to patrol the beach and look for damage to fences and walkovers. The county will not provide that service.

12. Bingo:
Steve and Cecilia Harris have volunteered to organize Bingo Night. Sessions will be held at 7 p.m. every Tuesday starting the first Tuesday in June and continuing through the last Tuesday in August. An experienced team will head the sessions, supported by other volunteers. Team leaders are:
- * Cecilia and Steve: First Tuesdays
 - * Carol Talley and Fred Stanley: Second Tuesdays
 - * Marilyn and Mason Bean: Third Tuesdays
 - * Need volunteers here Fourth Tuesdays

Volunteers can contact Steve at 927 2135.

13. May Meeting:
The County will publicly thank the Civic Club for its dune restoration work at a gathering in the Pavilion at the Pubic beach prior to the regular Club monthly meeting on May 17. The event will probably be at 6 p.m. 6:15 p.m. that evening.

14. Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and Affordable Housing.
Phil Calandra, a member of the CAC, said soaring housing prices and relatively flat median incomes in the county have caused a lack of affordable housing for the people needed to fill jobs here.
The median house price in Franklin County increased from \$130,000 in 2000 to \$321,000 in 2006.

Affordable housing is one of three issues the CAC is studying. Calandra said the group first identified 15 or 16 issues to work on, but quickly cut the number to: 1) The seafood industry and a working waterfront; 2) Balanced growth and enforcement (which includes affordable housing); and 3) Ongoing public participation and planning. As part of the process, the group maintains close contact with county officials, who first urged the group to reduce the number of issues in order to give them “something they can sign on for and do something about.”

Calandra centered most of his comments on affordable housing, his primary focus. He said the group has set three goals: 1) Determine who is accountable for affordable housing; 2) Determine who pays for the housing; and 3) Create a process to get the work done.

To address the first goal, the group recommended the creation of a Franklin County Housing Board. It is yet to be determined if the group will be advisory or be accountable for getting work done.

Regarding who pays, Calandra said the group is discussing with developers ideas like “inclusionary zoning,” which would require that a certain number of units in a development be affordable to “moderate income people.” Moderate income people earn 80% of the family median income. Another idea would require developers to put money into a trust fund that would be used to provide loans to families in need of affordable housing. Calandra said the CAC is working to create options for developers as the process moves forward.

Calandra said the group is working on an ordinance that would create a process for getting the work done.

“It’s a basic fact that most people in Franklin County can no longer afford housing here,” he said. “The challenge is to find ways to make affordable housing available.”

15. St. George Lighthouse Fundraiser
There will be a fundraiser for the St. George Lighthouse restoration at 4 p.m. May 5 at Sometimes It’s Hotter Seasonings Co.
16. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.