

MINUTES OF THE COLLIER COUNTY  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Naples, Florida, April 6, 2022

LET IT BE REMEMBERED, the Collier County Development Services Advisory Committee, in and for the County of Collier, having conducted business herein, met on this date at 3 P.M. in REGULAR SESSION at the Collier County Growth Management Department Building, Conference Room #609/610, 2800 Horseshoe Drive North, Naples, Florida, with the following members present:

Chairman: William J. Varian  
Vice Chairman: Blair Foley  
David Dunnavant  
James E. Boughton (excused)  
Clay Brooker  
Chris Mitchell  
Robert Mulhere  
Mario Valle  
Norman Gentry  
Marco Espinar (excused)  
Laura Spurgeon-DeJohn  
Jeremy Sterk  
Jeff Curl  
John English  
Mark McLean

ALSO PRESENT: Jamie French, Deputy Department Head, GMD  
Lorraine Lantz, Principal Planner, Transportation Planning  
Ken Kovensky, Director, Operations & Regulatory Management  
Matt McLean, Director, Public Utilities Division  
Jaime Cook, Director, Development Review  
Rick LoCastro, County Commissioner, District 1  
Patricia Mill, Operations Analyst/Staff Liaison

*Any persons in need of the verbatim record of the meeting may request a copy of the audio recording from the Collier County Growth Management Department.*

**1. Call to Order - Chairman**

**Chairman Varian** called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. A quorum consisting of 11 members was convened. (Two members arrived later.)

**2. Approval of Agenda**

*Mr. Curl moved to approve the agenda. Second by Mr. Valle. Carried unanimously, 11-0.*

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**Chairman Varian** noted that Eric Johnson was not present at the meeting and should be removed from the first page, and that on p. 16, Eric Johnson was listed under “h,” but no one provided a report for the Zoning Division, which the minutes noted.

**a. DSAC Meeting – March 2, 2022**

*Mr. Foley moved to approve the March 2, 2022, meeting minutes, with the above noted changes. Second by Mr. Mulhere. Carried unanimously, 11-0.*

**b. DSAC-LDR Oct. 19, 2021**

*Mr. Curl moved to approve the Jan. 19, 2022, DSAC-LDR Subcommittee meeting minutes. Second by Mr. Mulhere. Carried unanimously, 3-0 (subcommittee members in attendance who attended the DSAC-LDR meeting).*

**4. Public Speakers**

None

**5. Staff Announcements/Updates**

**a. Development Review Division – [Jaime Cook, Director]**

**Ms. Cook** provided an update on staffing and building issues:

- Since she was last here in February, a senior planner started under Cormac Giblin’s planning group. He has landscape experience, so while he goes through the training process, he’ll be helping Mark Templeton with landscape reviews, as well as site development plans and plats.
- We are moving forward with offering a planner position to a current staff member, so that employee should be starting shortly and will be helping with building permits and insubstantial changes to SDPs and plats.
- We had two inspectors and have now offered the senior inspector position to a candidate who works elsewhere in the County. He should be starting shortly. The other job is posted, and we are hoping to get that position filled as quickly as possible.
- Permits: We have significantly decreased our delayed permitting. Planning reviews for commercial permits are now up to March 25.
- Zoning Single-Family: We’re working on March 30, with about 124 that are past due. About 1½ months ago, we were at 800, so we’ve made significant progress.
- A citizen has complained a lot about silt fencing on single-family building permits and small projects, so the 814 Erosion/Silt Inspection that used to be called in at the end, when you’re trying to get a CO and engineering inspectors to come out and do that, will

now be done at the beginning, when you're calling in your 200 Plumbing/Underground Inspection. We have had conversations with some contractors and builders, so many are aware that this is now being implemented at the beginning of building, but I just want to make sure that you guys were all aware of it, as well.

**Mr. Foley** asked if the new senior planner, landscape reviewer was Mark Morton,

**Ms. Cook** said it was.

**b. Code Enforcement Division – [Cristina Perez, Central District Supervisor]**

**Ms. Perez** presented the "Code Enforcement Division Report, Feb. 22-March 21, 2022."

- 628 cases were opened.
- 358 cases were closed due to voluntary compliance.
- There were 2,516 property inspections.
- There continues to be a high number of lien searches, 1,607.

**Ms. Perez** said the Central District runs from I-75 to Wilson Boulevard, which goes north to Collier/Lee County line and south to Davis. There are seven investigative territories. We are currently working with the Civic Association on some items of concern that they've brought to our attention. This week, we did some reorganization within our department to shift some of the investigators around, so we can strengthen all the territories equally and have equal staffing throughout the territories. As Ms. Cook stated, there have been several complaints made to Code Enforcement about silt fencing, so we're working with the Engineering Department to address those cases.

- This weekend, there's a Community Neighborhood Cleanup and flyers are available if anyone is interested.
- Code Enforcement works quarterly with associations in each district to provide a clean-up for the community, where they can bring debris, hazardous materials and yard waste, free of charge. We work with the Sheriff's Office, which provides us with its weekend program people who assist residents with putting their debris into containers, so, ultimately, it's like a drive-through service.
- The Vacation Short-Term Rental Registration is in process. About 1,000 have already registered.
- Each district holds task-force meetings and the Central District Task Force meeting is tomorrow, the first Thursday of every month. Those dates and locations are on our website, if anyone is interested in attending a district task-force meeting.

*[Mr. Dunnivant joined the meeting at 3:09 p.m.]*

**c. Public Utilities Department [Matt McLean, Director of Engineering Project Management]**

**Mr. McLean** submitted the *Response Time Report: Utility Deviations, FDEP Permits, Letters of Availability* and provided some product and other updates:

- Over the first quarter of 2022, we're not where we want to be with our Level of Service on Utility Deviations, DEP Permitting and Letters of Availability. We've had some staffing changes within the team. We have three open FTE positions that we are actively trying to backfill, so the numbers are not where we want them. We believe we

started to rectify that greatly over the last 30 days and hope to meet and exceed expectations.

- One of the mechanisms that allowed us to do that was that we've had to outsource as a temporary stopgap. We brought on three people to help out with these respective processes, as well as planning reviews affiliated with zoning applications.
- Please route any questions and information that you need through our Utility Planning email, [utilityplanning@colliercountyfl.gov](mailto:utilityplanning@colliercountyfl.gov), which is our mechanism to convey that information. We monitor that 24/7.
- The agenda packet includes an update to approved products for a manual specification. The Florida Administrative Code changed in late 2021. Manholes used to have an open hole of a little over 20 inches and it's now approved as a 24-inch opening to be able to get into a manhole.
- That led to an update on County specifications to get that approved manhole, which has now been done at the staffing level. Those utility details are available in CAD and in PDF. If you need them, request them through our utility planning email. We'll also update that on our website.

**d. Growth Management Dept. Transportation or Engineering Division – [Lorraine Lantz, Transportation Planning Director]**

**Ms. Lantz** provided several updates:

- Our Transportation Planning Manager, Nelson Galeano, is here. He started on Monday two weeks ago and is from Manatee County. He has engineering and planning experience, so we are now fully staffed, a staff of four.
- We have a public meeting tonight for the Collier Boulevard Phase Three/Project Three. This is for the remaining segment of Collier Boulevard that's not six lanes yet. We're at 60% plans for that. It's from Green Boulevard down to City Gate North. We're at 60% plans for that, as well.
- We are coming out with a bridge-location study as to where the bridge will cross the canal to go to 39<sup>th</sup> Street. There's a bridge or culvert at 25<sup>th</sup> Street right now that will become obsolete, so we're trying to determine where to cross. The meeting will be from 5-7 p.m. tonight at the Golden Gate Community Center.

**Chairman Varian** asked if there was a favorite spot to put the bridge. It wouldn't be straight across Golden Gate Parkway, would it?

**Ms. Lantz** agreed. Golden Gate Pkwy is one of the considerations, 25<sup>th</sup> is not, but 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> streets are all considerations we're evaluating. The public meeting tonight will talk about public involvement as to where people want to see it and the pros and cons. But a determination on the location has not been made yet.

**Chairman Varian** said he assumes they have to move the canal for that.

**Ms. Lantz** said that depends on where the bridge goes. That will determine how much of the canal will have to be relocated.

*[Ms. Spurgeon-DeJohn joined the meeting at 3:13 p.m.]*

e. **Collier County Fire Review – [Shar Beddow, Deputy Fire Marshal]**

**Ms. Beddow** detailed the monthly fire review statistics and provided several updates:

- There were 613 building reviews this month.
- There were 62 site reviews, with a one- and two-day turnaround.
- Current staff has 938 entries in our mobilized system.
- We've transitioned multiple personnel over to existing, so the new construction inspectors are routinely having to work overtime. We're hoping for a couple of additional staff positions.
- For the last three weekends, they held an MDA boot drive for three hours. We did incredibly well and brought in \$10,000 for MDA. A lot of donors didn't know what MDA was.
- On May 10, the Lee and Collier County Fire Marshals will offer a fire-stopping class. It's unlimited occupancy and there are currently about 35 are people attending. We did one about five or six years ago. We build the walls, install the fire-stopping, inspect it, then take a torch to it and destroy it. It's one of the most interactive classes that you can engage in. Fire-stopping is one of the highest re-inspections that we have. There's a flyer, if anyone is interested in signing up.
- On July 12, we will be asking our own Phil Snyderburn to do a class for Lee and Collier County Fire Marshals on flammable and combustible liquid-storage compliance. He's by far one of the most intelligent, articulate, flammable and combustible liquid people she knows, so we ask him to teach every couple of years. That class will be held at Bass Pro Shops.
- We also will be asking Kelly, a direct employee of UL, to do a class on alternate-energy storage solutions, such as lithium-ion batteries, a fire hazard. They can't put those fires out. The best they can do with sprinkler systems that they're running tests on is just control them because of the way those cells are wrapped in all the batteries. It's like they're shrink-wrapped, so it's already heating the cells below it or alongside it, so you can't put the fire out. The best you can do is keep it checking. Firefighters have been hurt in these fires, so they're trying to do a lot of studies on how to mitigate them. As an offshoot, three years ago, we had the big Hertz fire and 700 pounds of vehicles now are with plastics, and we've got all the hazards with the batteries, so moving ships have been sunk because they've had a fire in one of them and it burned it out. We're also losing parking structures, so they're trying to do more studies on how to mitigate these issues.
- The County Fire Marshal's meeting is tomorrow at 9 a.m. two buildings over from this.

**Chairman Varian** noted that inspections seem to be falling a little bit behind.

**Ms. Beddow** said they've authorized overtime and employees were just hired. Most people are routinely working overtime. She did 65 hours last week. We also have some other duties, we've had more fires and she doesn't expect those to decline. There are brush fires. So sometimes, we'll be on schedule, but then we'll get pulled off. That's why they're trying to get additional staffing. If you run into a problem, your best bet is to plan ahead, if possible. She believed they're three days out now.

**Chairman Varian** confirmed it was three days. He had an inspection bumped from Monday to Wednesday.

**Ms. Beddow** said she will ask the chief to change it to three days on the website. She said they lost several employees over the past two weeks to COVID or something similar, so that affected staffing.

**Chairman Varian** commended her inspectors, noting that he worked with one last week who did photos of a shower-pan project.

**Ms. Beddow** said if anyone gets behind, they should reach out to her.

**f. North Collier Fire Review – [Daniel Zunzunegui, Deputy Director]**

**Mr. Zunzunegui** outlined the monthly Fire Review Statistics and provided several updates:

- We did about 700 plans last month and had a four-day turnaround for building review and three days for planning.
- We did 671 building permits and 29 planning permits. The majority of plans were architectural additions, alterations, renovations. Following that was miscellaneous-trade permits.
- Roughly 30 of the plans were coming in for a third review, which is a small fraction of that 700, so we're doing a better job identifying where the deficiency is within the code and collaborating with our design professionals to make sure that second submittal is going to pass.
- Regarding that queue, we are extremely busy, so we still have overtime open on the weekends to get ahead. Staff is tired. If you look at this many plans during the week, it's hard to want to do that on the weekends, so that's not mandated. But staff is welcome to put in the extra time.
- Update on legislative changes for fire alarm systems: They passed the House and Senate and are on the governor's desk for approval. We're waiting to see when that's finalized and what the implementation date will be. He believes it will be in July. This involves any kind of fire-alarm monitoring or an existing system with 20 devices or less. They can do a label permit. There will be no plan submitted and we're required to give them one inspection with that label permit out in the field. There can be some difficulties with that because it's an as-built system, so if we find a flaw and it's got to be corrected, much of that is going to take place out in the field and without a plan review, so it makes it more of a challenge. Then we have to try to catch if there's an engineering issue with that whole 5,000, which leads into the next item.
- There was a change to the Administrative Code that ties in to the fire-alarm monitoring systems. It basically changed the minimum design detail that accompanies engineering, where it's more of a statement. It used to state that for systems below the threshold requirements for mandatory use of professional engineering services, the engineer of record would specify a minimum design detail and a lot of times that would just say that we have a complete addressable fire alarm system with a job value of less than \$5,000. Now, it's been revised to read that all such plans shall include a disclaimer stating that the fire-protection system is exempt from professional engineering service and shall provide a clear understanding of the minimum system requirements expected to be installed by the contractor and permitted by the authority having jurisdiction. So, if they submit any kind of additional information, that can be reviewed for accuracy, but it's not required. It's a different kind of statement, and we already have our plans

for how we're going to address it. The interesting thing that came with this change for the Administrative Code on 61G Engineering for Alarms is there is new language that contains a sunset clause, so the Board of Engineers has to revisit these statements and if they don't, it appears that this language goes away on December 30, 2026. It's going to be interesting to see what happens in the future.

- Master Plan Study: He mentioned last month that you might be receiving the external stakeholder surveys, but that's going to be delayed until the strategic plan component. It's coming, but a little later than expected.

**g. Operations & Regulatory Management Division – [Ken Kovensky, Director]**

**Mr. Kovensky** outlined the monthly activity report and provided updates:

- The division was extremely busy last month, with over 5,500 permits applied for, which is over 20% more than the prior month – over 1,000 more permits.
- There are over 400 permits in the queue.
- Staff is currently working on March 31 permits, so we're a little behind. We're still meeting the deadlines that are imposed upon us, but we're still using overtime and temporary staff.
- The phone calls that have come in are at a record pace. We handled over 7,500 phone calls last month and had an abandoned rate of about 10%. Our Call Center staff has been beefed up a little over the prior few months. We're pretty short-staffed and are still trying to hire temporary-services staff to beef that area up.
- We probably have close to 25 vacancies throughout the entire building. We just got nine positions approved, so we're trying to staff those. One of those already was selected and is in the process, and the others are posted.
- The Operations Division has just three vacancies out of 75 full-time staff, so we're doing well.
- We had a retirement in our Customer and Contractor Licensing Section that just came up, a customer-service specialist position, so we'll be posting for that.
- A position he's been working on getting reclassified for a while is another operation supervisor in the records room. That was approved by HR, is currently posted and is sorely needed for the records room. The operation supervisor who had double duty trying to manage that staff can concentrate on his core duties and will have somebody dedicated to handle the records room, which involves all the public records requests, processing customer inquiries and requests for records, as well as handling complaints that come in through the County or County Commissioners.
- Temporary Services Staff: Keystaff is still a mixed proposition. We are constantly interviewing and constantly bringing people in at the same rate people up and leave, so we're trying to find a balance there. We met with KeyStaff management recently to talk about where we are, the relationship and how important it is that they're on board as key partners. That led into a separate meeting with their main recruiter, who shadowed several staff members a couple of days ago. They spent a half-day with us sitting down with each of the people and the positions that they try and recruit for to get a better understanding of what to look for to try to enhance their work-recruiting ability.
- When Rose Burke left the Business Center manager position, we hired Kirsten Wilke as an interim manager, so she's here. (He asked her to stand up.) She's done a phenomenal job filling in. She's pretty much picked up, not skipping a beat, so we're fortunate that she's accepted this role, at least for now on an interim basis.

- We're right in the middle of our budget season. We've already met with all the directors to identify needs going into the next year. We have a drop-dead date of May 5, where we get locked out of the system, so we have to have all our numbers in by then. I have a young, new finance staff, so we're learning as we go and guiding them on how to build the budget. We always get it done, so we should really be hitting our stride in the next couple of weeks and will finish up.

**Chairman Varian** asked about contractor licensing and the renewals that will come up this fall. A couple of years ago, we had a big crunch at that time. Do you have some thoughts as to making sure that group is ready for that this year?

**Mr. Kovensky** said we have double renewals this year, so we'll be sending out notices to both local and state contractors.

**Chairman Varian** asked if that would be enough time to keep up with August 30, or the last day when everyone likes to send it in.

**Mr. Kovensky** said we made great strides and just went electronic last year and that's one area that we've had a lot of success with KeyStaff staffing. We have two KeyStaff people in our front office who are pretty experienced. They've been there for many, many months, so hopefully we'll keep them around and we'll be able to process as we go through it. We're also making changes behind the scenes in CityView to streamline the process.

**Chairman Varian** said we did this two years ago. There was a questionnaire that went out with a lot of questions that weren't relevant for those of us that were renewing. Is that still going to happen again or has that questionnaire been changed?

**Mr. Kovensky** said it's been updated.

**h. Zoning Division – [Jamie French, Deputy Department Head, GMD]**

**Mr. French** noted that Commissioner LoCastro had made a commitment to attending the DSAC meetings and is here again today. Clearly, you've sparked his interest and he has been a great advocate for us and certainly a good steward for the community, so we appreciate his involvement with our agency. He said he's neither for development or anti-development, but he's for responsible development. It's those words of wisdom that he encourages us to live by, and that he holds us to.

We heard Shar (Beddow) talk about the implementation of overtime to be able to catch up with with inspections and what they've got to contend with. We've expended over 176,000 hours of overtime this fiscal year. Those are big numbers. If you look at the inspections, last month was probably the most inspection activity that we've seen, if not in the last 10 years, perhaps in the history of Collier County. We were 160 shy of hitting three with 30,000 inspections, with 27,000 of those just in building. That's not all new development. It could be a shed, a fence, an air conditioner, a pair of shutters, or a new single-family home. It could be new residents or folks that are either living here or moving here. They're real jobs. We recognize that they're real jobs.

He was at the Ritz Carlton today. He hasn't been there in 2½-3 years. We issued a bunch of permits and the new GM invited him there to show appreciation to our staff, especially to Jon



Walsh and to Jaime Cook, and everybody who pitched in and rolled up their sleeves to keep them open and able to continue to add back to our economy by hosting tourists and being a great employer for our community. It's great to hear that feedback, but it comes with a great deal of pressure that we receive from clients in the community, some always not so good.

Silt Fences: Mr. **Lauer** was opposed to a development being built near his home. Staff is neither for nor against it, but it went to the Planning Commission and the BCC. Unfortunately, Mr. Lauer has called us about a few things because he's an active engineer and he's out inspecting many sites throughout the community and silt fences is one of the areas we were failing. We've talked about the number of inspections. Clearly, we're not infallible and we have to be better, but Mr. Lauer pointed out that we weren't providing that silt-fence for protection to the environment, but the built-environments with regards to neighbors. So, we moved the silt-fence inspection up. Mr. French noted that Mr. Lauer may be visiting some of the DSAC members' sites and he was at Gulf Coast Homes. Contractors have called about him.

We've gotten very good direction and have some authority to apply some alternative methods within the LDC that empower us. We have some residents who have relocated here in the last 10 years who may have been in your professions in other states. They sometimes don't grasp the idea that we are not always the authority with jurisdiction. When you get Water Management Permits, the state is the one with jurisdiction, and when you're talking about DEP or ERP permits. The LDC says that all permits must be in place before you go into construction on some of these sites. Some community members don't like that, and it has created a great deal of additional work for us because we are doing research. We are the County authority with jurisdiction, so we do our best. Even though they're not you (they don't represent a client that you do that actually pays for this Enterprise Fund), we do have an obligation, by statute, to provide them with those answers, so we work hard at that.

We are starting to get some community complaints. He brought this up because he wants everyone to please be mindful of your sites, your neighbors and the environment because many of these lots are now infill properties. On many of them, the PUDs or the ordinances may have been in place many, many years ago, and the landowner or the developer has now decided to move through.

He noted that in Foxboro in East Naples, the PUD is very old. Collier has wrapped around it, but those residents who border that Foxboro site have concerns about the Hampton Inn and the Lamborghini dealer going in there. They want to know when the County relaxed the standards to allow work Monday through Saturday from 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. That has been an ordinance since 1990. He understands they've moved in here in the last five to 10 years. It's not that we don't want to accommodate it, but just because the ordinance says you can do it doesn't mean that you should not be mindful to the neighboring community. That's what we ask. Unfortunately, if you don't, it will serve as a distraction for you because it takes you away from doing your work when we have to send out Code Enforcement or Licensing. Or, he has to ask Jon Walsh to go take a look, which is one hour he's not able to put toward a review. It's a collaborative effort between the industry and staff as the regulatory body to be able to best manage the expectations of a community.

Affordable Housing: Commissioner LoCastro arranged for Mr. French, Mike Bosi and James Sabo to speak with the affordable housing community. He told them it requires development involvement. Wherever the relationship may or may not have gone right or wrong, they can't build it without your industry. The need is there, your employees need it, our employees need it, the

community businesses and community need affordable housing to exist throughout the County. Where it's placed is not up for us to decide. The regulatory body will help guide you through that petition.

The one message we drove home is that without you at the table, it's probably not going to happen. So, we're encouraged by the feedback we received that the Affordable Housing chairman, as well as Steve Ruby and a number of members that many of you have worked with in the past, will be reaching out to you. We invited them to DSAC meetings because where best to engage with the industry but here? Even if it forces the conversation, at least the conversation is occurring.

We looked at Anita Jenkins' old position to determine whether we really need planning and zoning broken out. We've got a production element and planning and zoning for the entitlement piece for the petition piece. But as far as those long-range planning elements, to include resiliency, affordable housing and economic development, that's a planning module.

Most of you recognize that the County's previous administrations chose to go in a different direction. We're encouraging the County Manager's Office to rethink that with us, and we do have a job description. He and Mike Bosi worked on it 30 days after the new County Manager came in and it was given to Sean Callahan, so it's been going on that long. Deputy County Manager Amy Patterson and County Manager Mark Isackson already have given us the green light to engage with the HR department about a week to 1½ weeks ago to work on that job description, so we can get the right person there. That will encourage that relationship between the development community and the affordable housing mission because our community certainly needs everybody involved with this.

The budget piece we are going to be requesting is at least three new code enforcement officers, predominantly because what you're not hearing is the interaction that we have through Mike Ossorio's group that I'm also charged with overseeing. There are a number of partnerships that exist, not just between those other authorities having jurisdiction, but the Sheriff's Office, the police departments, Pollution Control, even internal.

Vacation Rental by owner: The state has basically said you can't do anything about it. They preempted local government from regulating the process, but they haven't preempted us from requiring registration to identify a designated point of contact. So, in the event that we've got a property maintenance issue, a noise issue, a bad-tenant issue, we can address it with the property owner. We've established that point-of-contact. We've also made that information available to the Sheriff's Office, as well as the local police agencies.

Danny Condomina, the former code enforcement officer and former trainer within our group, now works in our process-improvement element and works with you on a regular basis. We sent him to the Sheriff's Office free-of-charge to train them on how to navigate through that software on the public portal because we've made it available to the public. Based on the address you punch in, you can tell who the designated point of contact is and whether it's a vacation rental.

He also reached out to Col. Bloom's office, (Commander) Jamie Cunningham and deputies because we want our partners in the field to be as well equipped with knowledge as they can be and understand what the code is.

The three positions that we're looking for are predominantly based on vacation rentals, noise complaints, night-time entertainment noise, especially with these pre-built environments where they've introduced something new and we need to be able to respond accordingly. Code Enforcement staff is usually off the road by 6-7 p.m., unless it's a special mission, and they aren't working at 10 p.m. During the day and weekends, we've got some part-timers or job-bank staff. The idea is that we would split the County up to be able to cover all nights and weekends to answer those community concerns, as well as work on some of the illegal parking we're seeing and getting complaints on in East Naples and Golden Gate City. We know that they've filled in the culvert or they filled in the drainage, which floods out the neighborhood, so they can park their construction trucks or their window-washing trucks. We see this, but it only occurs at night. Salt Alley used to be the No. 1 area in Golden Gate City where we saw a lot of complaints. It's crept into the neighborhoods, so we're focused on community engagement and responding to those community needs.

**Mr. Mulhere** said he's assuming that the short-term vacation rental registration he's talking about is unincorporated Collier County, not the city of Naples or the City of Marco Island?

**Mr. French** said that was correct.

**Mr. Mulhere** said he wanted to make sure because he knows Marco has 1,104 and they have to renew those every couple of years.

**Mr. French** said it's the actual registration and there are ticklers. Mr. Lauer has asked for all active construction sites. We purposely don't maintain a report that shows all active construction sites because we get ticklers in CityView when things are due. Just looking at the activity, there are probably 30,000-40,000 active construction sites in this County at any given time, based on permit volume.

**Mr. Curl** said that as a professional, he's willing to share some of the burden, but not all of it. And a great example is, and you hit the nail on the head, we have so many new people moving here that they think have the same rules that they've had in Connecticut. What drives him up the wall is that there are other aspects that they're completely unaware of, such as preserves. The other day, he heard someone say they didn't have to maintain their preserves. They're already approved, so no problem. When complaints come in, is there some sort of method of outreach? The new County website is a disaster and he understands why it was changed, an ADA lawsuit. It's the most bizarre-looking thing to just hit the landing page. Where do I go? You've got literally three buttons and then the links don't work. That's a totally different issue, but have you ever thought about some quick way of responding to people with the correct information? You know, if there's a landing page, for instance, and it says, "7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (whatever the work hours are), they're allowed to be there" or "silt fence: call here if you don't see it." He doesn't know what the solution is. But his point is, bad information is contagious and there's a lot of bad information out there.

**Mr. French** said he appreciates the question. Absolutely. Our Code Enforcement staff, under Mike Ossorio's direction, is all about the educational component, as all our staff and directors are, to drive the ultimate result, which is compliance. It's a lot more work to take someone in front of the Special Magistrate or the Code Enforcement Board just to put liens on and put those hardships against people who may need a simple correction. But as for clarifying the record and providing that information, absolutely. There are training videos out there. And

even on the application process, it clearly illustrates and references those ordinances on what your allowable work hours are and what your responsibility is.

**Mr. Curl** said you hit the other end. He's talking more about frivolous complaints that come in that you can just nip in the bud and not waste staff's time.

**Mr. French** said they've taken numerous approaches, unfortunately, and it's not an excuse when you're looking at the voluminous nature of the work that we're involved in now and not just the voluminous nature, but the complexity of the work. Construction is difficult because it's supposed to be. Otherwise, everybody would be in it or those that were in it that weren't supposed to be would be unlicensed, and then we would have another challenge, and we still have those challenges. We could always do better, and that's homework for him, but he doesn't know how to correct the way people think about things.

**Mr. Curl** said he's seeing more of it. The problem is that Facebook posts are allowing things to go viral in the wrong direction.

**Mr. French** said he didn't want to give this gentleman any credence, but our colleagues across the street were visited by someone who did not necessarily look approachable, with a camera in everyone's face and wanted to gain access to the building. And it's not that the denial of access should have ever been presented to this person, but the distraction that he intended to cause and the engagement, he took staff away from work that they should have been dedicated to doing. So, whether it's a phone call or accusation, he learned a long time ago that the truth never gets in the way of a good story.

So, clearly the best we can do is try to educate, respond accordingly, always be professional and in the event there are any questions, invite the party here. He's made that mistake a number of times where he's reached out to a community member only to get bombarded with many more questions, and it was a no-win situation. But he had an epiphany that perhaps he'd be able to answer their question and they would trust him. And that doesn't necessarily always happen. He doesn't know how to placate certain groups or individuals, especially when the best thing we can show is professionalism and continue to represent the agency we are committed to, not just your industry, but to the community that that we're statutorily bound to serve. So, we try to do it with a smile.

**Ms. Spurgeon-DeJohn** said it's not a quick fix, but you could involve public information officer for the partner you're referencing down the street, the transportation group. It does feel like what goes on in this building touches the public very intimately and a public information officer could mitigate a lot of things that you're describing.

**Mr. French** agreed, but said they're all basically public information officers within this organization. The public information officer they had did an amazing job, but it still wasn't good enough because the individual was focused on causing disruption.

**Ms. Spurgeon-DeJohn** said she didn't believe they tasked the public information officer with appeasing and making everyone in the world happy, but it alleviates what's being described. It becomes a single point of contact who has all the answers to the top 10 or 20 beefs that are being circulated in the community. It's something to think about.

**Mr. French** said she was right and it's something that they've focused on with the whole Business Center idea. Unfortunately, what's happening is one of the discussions, as Ken brought up, he had conversations with the CEO of KeyStaff. There were some commitments that were made to him and our team. He hasn't seen them yet, but part of the issue is that when you lose that retention, you lose a lot of knowledge and it takes away from the organization. He has to continually train. Then what happens is we lose the trainer because they get recruited by Pulte or somebody else because of the intrinsic knowledge they have about this organization and the regulatory process. Then we find ourselves in a stalemate. We are not the same organization we were when we all started 12-15 years ago. We have evolved, and in some areas more so than others, but, clearly, Laura, you're absolutely right. It's something that we should be revisiting, and it's something that I know Ken holds near and dear to his heart as our Operations Director.

Ken also is 100% in CityView, your public records, your regulatory element with regards to routing, scheduling pre-ops, answering questions, being available to the public and supporting every one of these groups. We designed that on purpose, to centralize that, so we all had skin in the game.

**Mr. Mulhere** said he had a friend who was having some issues similar to what you're describing with a neighbor. The neighbor wanted to research permits. After about a half a day, when I finally found that link that used to be there, called "Track My Application," and then it said if it's before this date or after this date, this was before that date, I found a way to get there. But it took awhile because there were 86 permits, and it wasn't easy to find. He provided that link to his friend, who said he couldn't believe how easy it is to find all this historical information. He told his friend it's a lot different than it used to be when we had to search for paper files. He asked for a couple of files from the records room and they said it might be five to seven days, that they're busy, and after six days, he was concerned and believed they'd lost the request, but on the seventh day, he got it. He wanted him to know that, to give him a compliment.

**Mr. French** said he appreciated that. He noted that if not for DSAC's engagement and information they shared with Commissioner LoCastro, which he took to the County Manager's Office, the records room position wouldn't have been approved. Nineteen years ago, when he was hired, he was the records room employee with Maria Estrada. The County has evolved since then. What he's focused on is eliminating the need for that position by making it all digital. We've done a good job and unfortunately, over the years, we've had a number of staff taken from there and put throughout the County Manager's agency.

It may be a little too soon, but our intent is transferring records dating back to 1959 to current, which would be about a \$4 million project. By statute, we're only required to cover 14 years for single-family homes, and life of structure for commercial. He believes everyone finds value in having those records available so you can go back and look at the architectural and the as-builts.

**Mr. Mulhere** said a lot of people don't know where to go for that information.

**Mr. French** said thanked them for being good clients and mentors.

**Chairman Varian** said he wanted to recognize Jonathan Walsh and Rich Long. What they do is fantastic. He can reach out to either one of them. He sends an email and they answer. He wanted everyone to know they're cherished and are fantastic to work with.

**Mr. French** said Jonathan Walsh told him today he's being recruited by four firms.

**Chairman Varian** said that would be a horrible loss.

**Mr. Mulhere** noted that Jonathan is common-sense and customer-service oriented. You can't ask for anything more.

**Mr. French** said he agreed. When he hired Jon Walsh, he gave him a vision of what he wanted him to do. Many of you know Jon is registered and he's appeared before the BCC on the tower issue in front of Commissioner LoCastro, when they gave him some bad information. Here you have someone with a level of education. Jon graduated from Manhattan (College) School of Engineering, he's a registered PE in multiple states, a fire-suppression engineer and a floodplain manager. He's worked in land-use planning and has multiple licenses, not just in construction, but as a building code official. It's a rarity to have someone with that level of experience, education and licensing within a local government. We understand that he's probably a very attractive option or would be a good candidate, as would Rich. But Rich has put us on notice that he's good for a few more years before he retires, so we need to be mindful of that because that will impact your business.

**Mr. Varian** said that on affordable housing, it's us, the builders who are going to create it, but a lot of it is policy. Maybe **Christian** wants to talk about that shortly. Are there builders and developers on the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee?

**Mr. Valle** said there were. He was on it for five years when he first got to Collier County.

**Mr. Mulhere** said yes. Gary Hains is on it, and he works for David Torres.

**Mr. French** said he spoke with Gary Hains, who agreed that the developer needs to come to the table.

**Mr. Mulhere** said if a client asks if he can build something residential, he tells them they're going to have to make a commitment to add affordable housing, minimally about 20%. So, we've got the message and we're delivering that message. He's pretty sure that things are moving in that direction right now, politically.

**Chairman Varian** said he read an article about a local community that raised \$250,000 for one affordable home. He was thinking affordable was \$180,000, \$190,000.

**Mr. Valle** noted that the average price of a preconstructed home on the MLS in Golden Gate City is \$400,000.

**Mr. Mulhere** said there's no easy solution. You're talking about entry-level homes going for \$380,000-\$400,000. You don't want to have to pay PMI, so you have to come up with 20%. Well, what's 20% of \$400,000? That's \$80,000. Good luck.

**Mr. Valle** noted that it's not the dollar amount, it's the monthly payment and how that correlates back to their median income and as a percentage of their median income. If you do the math, it's either that the mortgage rates go from 30 years to 35 or 40 to make a more affordable monthly payment, and then where does the down payment sweet spot come in? We all remember what no down payment looks like from 2005, 2006 and 2007. So, it's about the balancing act of affordability because of the cost of construction materials that we all know are moving under our feet daily, and including labor. So, those are items we can't manage. We can manage what the rates are and what the time frame is. That comes from the regulatory agencies.

**Mr. Mulhere** said that economically speaking, it's more feasible to accommodate a significant percentage, 20, 25 whatever, in a rental product of some number, 300, 340, 360, than it is to try to accommodate that for fee-simple ownership. But that's a different challenge and it requires a different set of solutions.

**Mr. French** noted that they have an item going to the BCC on the RFMUD with regards to if you build 100% affordable housing, it allows you to go from three units per acre to 12.2 units per acre. That's a big deal. That's one of the things he pointed out to the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee. He understands that the need is now, we all understand that. You need to think about a long-term solution, long-term partnerships and to stay ahead and understand. He noted that department heads talk about planning for the future and then they get to Year 5. He reminded them they heard about the Vanderbilt Beach Road Extension for five years. That's why he talks about the need for a long-range planning position. Yes, we need short-term solutions. There's no doubt this committee and this community have spoken and the Board has spoken. But from a staff perspective and as planning, engineering and building professionals, we look back and we say that's the short-term, and we recognize that if the housing market softens, there are opinions out there that say the affordable-housing need goes away. He doesn't think that's the case all the time. But knowing what we know about this market, we really should have a long-range plan in place.

A lot of folks come in for GMPAs and they're looking for additional density. That's when they really need to have an affordable-housing component or a discussion and not a buyout, but a discussion on what do we want to do, so if we can make that 12.2 units per acre a reality, it doesn't require any TDR credits. You build 100%, and you're automatically granted that and your sweet spot. So your sweet spot is anything north of 16 units per acre. You can usually make the number work.

**Mr. Curl** said it's almost folding in on itself. In other words, you're encouraging more development. Now you just overloaded the transportation network again.

**Mr. French** said that's where you get into towns and villages. But maybe it's not that. Maybe it's in your already-built activity centers. So, when you look at some of these, if you look at the Bed Bath & Beyond Plaza, how old is that? It was built when he was in high school. We're dealing with some of the restaurants in there that are trying to get site-development

plans and the owner is absent and doesn't really engage. It's owned by a single gentleman who is up there in age and he does not care. But why not begin that negotiation early on to find out what the interest is because it's already a built environment? You've got plenty of parking, so much impervious space.

**Mr. Curl** said it's around the corner, it's at the old Sweetbay.

**Mr. French** said our code speaks to concentrating on those activity centers.

**Mr. Mulhere** said any land within 1½ miles of the urban area that you could incentivize and do some good things there. They have urban services, they are close to an hour or have direct access to an arterial roadway. You'll have transit, so he's got a new goal.

**Mr. French** said that's absolutely right. So, it's not an encouragement of what's going on in the eastern lands. But throw no consideration out the window is all that staff is saying.

**Mr. Dunnivant** said it's far from affordable, but they had a land cost that was over the top and it maybe apartments, what used to be a commercial complex, but it's not anybody's affordable housing. He appreciates other alternatives to it because he knows at the CBIA, they spoke to the BCC at the time and put together a sector of 30 different business groups in the community and the only tangible one they came up with was Phase One new construction to create affordable housing, so now we're going to make a fund that goes to affordable housing, not how it goes out ...

**Mr. French** (finished his sentence) .. and drives up the cost of construction. I got it.

**Mr. Dunnivant** said your only solution is to drive up the cost of construction, too?

**Mr. French** said there is a residual risk that you run with a banker that backs it, the underwriters that are carrying the note because that construction and your time and material don't come for free.

**Mr. French** asked if Commissioner LoCastro had anything to say.

**Commissioner LoCastro** said the last meeting he attended, his first one, was very valuable. The homework assignment he took home was to meet with HR. He met with HR, the County Manager and two deputy County Managers about giving a lot more support to HR. Jamie confirmed that has started. That's the kind of thing he wants to leave here with, things that maybe you are working on, but simultaneously, he can work on. He plans on asking HR if they followed up on what he spoke to them about.

He chairs the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee. They always say if you want to effect change, get a seat at the table. The previous commissioner who chaired AHAC didn't have a really great attendance record. We've done a lot of different things now, having Jamie attend with Mike Bosi at the last meeting and maybe making that a recurring thing. It was very valuable for separating rumor from fact. We turned over some of the people that had gone past their term limits. Our current chair chairman is Joe Trachtenberg, who was the chairman of the board of St. Matthew's House, and he brings a long business executive resume. He



personally recruited him to be on the committee after the committee chair decided to resign. Joe Trachtenberg decided to run and won unanimously. We've been working closely together.

At our next AHAC meeting, we're going to get a report on affordable housing. After the BCC approved affordable housing, a year later you can go back to that unit and find that 63 of those units were rented by teachers and dishwashers and nurses. The County was sort of checking on developments that were built three or four years ago, with the 20% or 30% affordable piece. There are places that we cut the ribbon on a while ago and everybody took credit for having 63 affordable units in there. We actually don't. Some of those communities were maybe affordable for six months and then they threw those back into the inventory, or they put a nurse in there, but doubled the rent a year later. That wasn't part of the agreement, and so it's not a matter of just saying, "Look what we did." Did you really do it?

So, the County was calling. We have a spreadsheet on the website where you can look at everything. All the rental communities that are in bold are the ones that are supposed to have affordable units. Then you can do a deeper dive to figure out how many. The County was checking periodically, but at the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee meeting, the folks connected to our housing team admitted that when they called to check, they probably don't do it frequently enough. And when they do, the rental community knows it's the County calling. They have caller ID and know that we're not a secret shopper and just checking

So, what we've been doing over the last several weeks is the County is not checking on those units anymore. Julissa Rodriguez, a single mom who works hard and is having a hard time finding affordable housing, got together a group of mostly single aggressive, moms who want to get things done. He met with them and gave them the spreadsheet. Jacob Burrow, who was part of our housing team, was part of that meeting, so we asked them to be secret shoppers and to call and say, "Hi, I'm Debbie Johnson and I heard you have 63 affordable units. Do you still have some available?" They say they don't, they're all full. So, the secret shopper asks if they weren't full, what would the rent be? They are being inquisitive. The feedback he got is not good.

A Naples Daily News reporter who attended one of his town hall meetings picked up on this story and downloaded the Excel spreadsheet. She sent him a text last night and said she's called a few places and asked for the manager and the manager said, "Oh, we don't do that anymore. We did that about three years ago, but everything is the exact same price right now." He warned her not to rely on 20-somethings who pick up the phone and to confirm the information she initially receives with management. So, he believes the County will have some recourse against those complexes.

The sin is that people who are paying full price now aren't first-responders and blue-collar workers. What are you going to do, throw them out on the street? What's going to end up happening is those complexes are probably going to get hit with a huge violation. In some cases, however, the violation probably will be less than the money they've collected all this time. So, he'll work with the County Attorney on that. The signal he wants to send to the developments the County recently approved, is: Be careful, we're actually watching now. If you've agreed in perpetuity or for 20 or 30 years to keep those 63 units affordable, he's going to make sure they do it and ensure that those units aren't facing the garbage cans, while the

full-price units face a lake, or that the carpeting for the affordable units didn't come from Big Lots, while the other units have Clive Daniel carpeting.

*[Mr. Mulhere left the meeting at 4:18 p.m.]*

You're promising to keep the same level of quality on your apartment complexes, but you're taking a little bit of a hit on the rent to help the affordable-housing crisis. He's been trying to educate citizens. Some of the developments aren't in locations where they would be very popular, or a developer says, "Yeah, I'll put in 30% of the units to be affordable." Then they get other positives, such as increased density and other things that now are on the table.

The average resident often doesn't know that. He knows because he's had 140 town hall meetings since he was elected. You should be hearing soon about the results of the affordable-housing calls. Julissa Rodriguez is going to give us her feedback and we're not going to take that as fact, but as feedback. Then County staff will follow up on that feedback to get definitive answers, even if we have to go down there and sit down with the senior leadership. There might be some hell to pay for some of these communities.

He met with Paul Hiltz, NCH's CEO. He's trying to do a lot of extra things for NCH workers to either subsidize their housing, or a host of things. They're starting to lose a lot of workers to Lee Health, which is aggressively advertising "Come work for us. We have a community that is a little bit more affordable to live in." They don't necessarily throw them a higher salary, but they're advertising a lot of other perks. Lee Health is stealing a lot of people at almost the exact same salary.

So, those are some things we're talking about in the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee meetings. You may have heard that several meetings ago, the Commissioners voted on about seven different programs that you can apply for in the County to get some rent-relief help with utilities and other costs. The average citizen really isn't educated on that. The pushback he's giving in his town hall meetings is, God helps those who help themselves. If you're sleeping in your car, you've got to dig into the programs. No one is going to knock on your door and hand you a bag of money.

As Commissioners, we voted unanimously on the programs that we control. There are a few that we work on in tandem with the State, so we don't have as much flexibility, but we open the aperture of who can be eligible. You can make a little bit more now and still be eligible for some of the programs that we have, and that's because we got feedback from some people who said they missed the threshold by \$1,000, or a year or they missed out on this much help. We've been able to adjust it a bit more, be a little bit more flexible and much more aggressive on advertising these programs to make sure people are really aware.

Anything that you talk about in here, he's listening as the eyes and ears of all five Commissioners, whether they're here or not. He will take it back as a homework assignment. Please let him know. He heard about Jonathan and Rich. DSAC is where the sausage is made, the boots-on-the-ground folks. A lot of what you're seeing sometimes doesn't trickle up into the Commissioner's building, but he will share what's important with Commissioners. He doesn't care what district it's in. He's going to continue to get HR support for Growth Management and a few other things on his list from this meeting.

- 6. **New Business**  
None
- 7. **Old Business**  
None
- 8. **Committee Member Comments**  
(None)
- 9. **Adjourn**  
**Future Meeting Dates:**  
May 4, 2022, 3 p.m.  
June 1, 2022, 3 p.m.  
July 6, 2022, 3 p.m.

*Mr. Valle made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded. It carried unanimously, 12-0.*

There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned by the order of the chairman at 4:23 p.m.

**COLLIER COUNTY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman, William Varian

These minutes were approved by the Committee/Chairman on 5/4/22, as presented  
(choose one)  , or as amended \_\_\_\_\_.