

MINUTES OF THE COLLIER COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Naples, Florida, December 1, 2021

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 3:00 P.M. in REGULAR SESSION at the Collier County Growth Management Department Building, Conference Room #609/610, 2800 N. Horseshoe Drive, Naples, Florida, with the following members present:

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

ALSO PRESENT: Jamie French, Deputy Department Head, GMD
Michael Ossorio, Director, Code Enforcement
Lorraine Lantz, Planner, Transportation Engineering
Eric Fey, Senior Project Manager, Public Utilities
Ken Kovensky, Director, Operations & Regulatory Management
Mike Bosi, Director, Planning & Zoning
Jaime Cook, Director, Development Review
Patricia Mill, Operations Analyst/Staff Liaison
Shar Beddow, Captain of Fire Prevention, Greater Naples Fire District

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 p.m. A quorum consisting of 11 members was convened.

2. Approval of Agenda

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

3. Approval of Minutes

a. DSAC Meeting – Nov. 3, 2021

Mr. Curl moved to approve the minutes of the Nov. 3, 2021, meeting, with one exception involving No. 8: Mr. Mitchell thanked Mr. French, Ms. Cook and the PPO, not Mr. Curl. Second by Mr. Mitchell. Carried unanimously, 11-0.

b. DSAC LDR Subcommittee Meeting – June 15, 2021

Mr. Foley moved to approve the minutes. Second by Mr. Curl. Carried unanimously, 11-0.

4. Public Speakers

None

5. Staff Announcements/Updates

a. Development Review Division – [Jaime Cook, director]

Ms. Cook provided updates:

- The division is incredibly busy.
- We promoted one of our senior planners to a principal planner in the planning section.
- The senior planner position is posted, and we've filled a planner position; that employee will start in 2½ weeks.
- Senior Environmental Specialist Tabatha Cole moved to Virginia, so her position was posted and has closed. Interviews are in progress to fill the position.

b. Code Enforcement Division – [Mike Ossorio, director]

Mr. Ossorio provided a report, "Code Enforcement Division Monthly Report: Oct. 22–Nov. 21, 2021, Highlights," for informational purposes. He reported that:

- There were no community cleanups for the month.
- Outreach activities were conducted at several community associations – Golden Gate City, North Naples, Riviera Golf Estates, Cooper Cove, Brookside, Goodland – and two CRA meetings.
- About 652 cases were opened, about the same as last year, but he'd like that to go higher, as it was last year, in the 800s, but retention is an issue and we're working with Jamie's office on that.
- Lien searches are still above 1,000.
- Housing Authority: Two houses were demolished in East Naples and Immokalee.
- Four executive summaries were done this month.
- \$928,000 in fines were waived and about \$174,000 in fines were collected, about 18%.
- Our QAQC this month was: fair and objective, 88%; professional, 94%; courteous, 96%; knowledgeable, 90%; overall, 86%, percentages that are not bad for Code Enforcement.

c. Public Utilities Department – [Eric Fey or designee]

Mr. Fey provided a monthly report on response times, "Letters of Availability, Utility Deviations and FDEP Permits," for informational purposes. He stated:

- All time charts show a decline in volume over the last couple of months, accompanied by a decline in response time, which is good news.
- He intends to get caught up on availability letters each month.
- We had to repost the project manager position because there was only one decent candidate; an interview will be scheduled, and he can use Key Staff personnel to assist.
- FDEP revised its Wastewater Construction Permit form (DEP 62-604.300(3)(a) Notification/Application for Constructing a Domestic Wastewater Collection/Transmission System). We prepared templates to aid in getting those applications approved. As of Oct. 4, the new form is required and DEP's policy is if an old form was signed and sealed by an engineer prior to Oct. 4, it's considered in-transit and it will be accepted; if it's received after that, it won't be accepted. A new form will be required. We're updating our templates for the new form.
- There have been some design criteria changes. The old standard was the 1997 10-state standards (The Recommended Standards for Wastewater Facilities, RSWF, as referenced in the Florida Administrative Code). We were working on standards that were more than 20 years old. They've now been updated to 2014 standards and we're still in the process of determining what changed.
- One change is that in the past, pump stations with a flowrate of 1,200 GPM or more had to have flow measurement. That number was lowered to 350 GPM, so some larger pump stations may now require flow meters, per DEP. The standard flow-meter magnetic part is already on our approved product list. As other changes come to light, they will be presented to DSAC.
- Industry forum meetings have not resumed due to staffing shortages and COVID, but he hopes to resume them early next year and get a consultant to pick up where Davidson Engineering left off.
- Two independent efforts are going on. Any time you do a grinder-pump station or a private pump station you must come to us for a utility deviation, which is an inefficient way to proceed. There needs to be uniformity and control so we're not maintaining ourselves.
- In an effort to modernize, we've been asked to put together standards for fiber-based pump stations, rather than radio-SKADA, which is what we've used for the past two decades. Fiber is better for real-time communication with pump stations, response time, reporting and diagnostics. It eliminates the need for an antenna at pump stations so it's better aesthetically. Antennas are susceptible to wind, tree and hurricane damage. After Hurricane Irma, there were no issues at fiber-based stations because fiber networks have slack. Fiber-based also offers better resiliency and sight security (they can operate cameras) and facilitates additional IT services, such as Wi-Fi and access control. It will cost more per pump station. Preliminary estimates are \$10,000-\$15,000 per pump station, \$3-\$5 per linear foot of fiber-optic cable. The numbers are on our IT contract for maintaining the county's fiber network.
- There's some question whether we should include the work in the subdivision for the developer to perform and convey to us, which may impact our conveyance process, or if we should provide the option to have IT's contract installer do it.
- The changes are just starting, and the county doesn't have fiber everywhere, but is gradually getting rid of radio-based and transitioning to fiber. If fiber is available, it should be disclosed in availability letters to show which standards should be used. We're asking for your feedback.

A discussion ensued:

Mr. Valle asked about the study in Golden Gate City and moving that to encompass the rest of the properties there. Where are you in the process for that Golden Gate plat?

Mr. Fey said that would kick off early next year with a water-transmission main project in Golden Gate City, which is the first step in expanding water main service there. There will be many phases and old infrastructure will be replaced, which may be a higher priority than the new infrastructure. There's so much work there that we're in a master planning effort that's more focused on the waste-water side of the plan. There's a "master-Master Plan" that was discussed for Golden Gate City, but with staff changes, it's uncertain where that stands. There was a recent grant application to fund that effort. We're trying to coordinate with other divisions to prevent the same street from being disturbed three different times for water/sewage/drainage, sidewalks and lighting. There are many utility and

infrastructure needs in Golden Gate City. The only thing we're working on presently is expanding the wastewater plant from 1½ MGD to 5 MGD within the next two years. It's a design build that will make IQ water available, so we're converting it from a wastewater-treatment plant to a water-reclamation facility and the effluent will be a high quality for beneficial use. The only other thing scheduled is the water-main transmission project.

d. Growth Management Dept. Transportation Engineering Division – [Lorraine Lantz]

Ms. Lantz provided several updates:

- We were not awarded the \$25 million RAISE Transportation grant for the Complete Streets Project on Golden Gate Parkway for streets, bike lanes, sidewalks, landscaping, utility and stormwater work, but we will determine what we can do better and probably apply again.
- The widening project on Wilson Boulevard, two lanes to four lanes from Immokalee Road to Golden Gate Boulevard, is being studied. A public meeting was held several weeks ago. We expect to bring it before the BCC by the second meeting in January and it will then move to the design phase. Construction is funded in 2024.
- We're doing a scope and kickoff for the Immokalee Transportation Area Network to look at the gaps in sidewalks, bike lanes and general transit and what needs can be filled through grants and other funding to make it a better network.

e. Collier County Fire Review – [Shar Beddow or Shawn Hanson, Assistant Chief, Fire Marshal]

Capt. Beddow provided a report, Fire Review Statistics, and reported:

- The current volume for building plan reviews is 409, with a two-day turnaround.
- There were 689 inspections in the last month with a lean crew due to holidays.
- The Collier County Fire Marshal's meeting is 9 a.m. tomorrow at the main office next door.
- Last night and earlier in the day, she was on-call for two fires; one was completely extinguished with one sprinkler head, causing no loss in a condo; the other didn't fare well.
- She thanked Code Enforcement, which is helpful and good to work with, very professional.
- If you're moving into an area where there is no water for utilities, we've had an increase probably due to land costs due to people moving into the area. We developed checklists and guidelines to assist in the water supply, so if you encounter that, reach out to me or Tom Mastroberto, senior site plan reviewer, Fire Review.
- She's making her first foray into fire alarm code writing on the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) committee.

f. North Collier Fire Review – [Chief Sean Lintz or Deputy Director Daniel Zunzunegui]

None (excused)

g. Operations & Regulatory Mgmt. Division – [Ken Kovensky]

Mr. Kovensky presented a report, "November 2021 Statistics," which outlined building plan and development review activities. He noted the following:

- The department had 4,248 applied permits, a small decrease from last month due to holidays, but that was still 300-plus permits over last November, a decrease over last month and higher than last year.
- The pattern for permits is similar.
- Our queue is still in good shape, finishing up on the 29th and starting on the 30th, so we're only a day behind, but we have staff still working on overtime.
- The Call Center is still steady and handled about 5,000 calls last month
- The planning technician positions were filled, with one Key Staff temp employee and one outside candidate. Both are awaiting start dates.
- The two openings for budget analyst were filled; one starts Monday, and one is awaiting HR processing for a start date.
- The department is losing a front-desk planner, who is moving to Development and Review, so that position will be posted on Friday.

- Two others are open in our division, one a senior programmer analyst, which was vacated a few weeks ago by Jason Badge, who moved into the manager position. His position is always a difficult position to fill, so we rewrote the language and will be reposting it on Friday. The other position, Principal Projects Manager, was vacated several months ago by Jeff Dunham, who moved to internal controls and now he's the interim IT director. We've received no applications.
- We're rotating our three client supervisors in the business center, Mike Perez, Sonie Clark-Boyle and Connie Thomas, to provide them with cross-training in all areas. Two support the building side, one through our electronic application, and one inhouse and satellite offices. The other permitting supervisor handles client services at the Call Center. They will have different roles but should still be able to handle your questions.
- Permits/Self-Issuing Permit projects is finishing up, which will speed up processing, make the portal experience more efficient and will be a game-changer. We have a go-live date. Danny Condomina will be presenting updates today.

h. Zoning Division – [Mike Bosi]

Mr. Bosi reported that:

- In November, the BCC adopted the AUIRs (Annual Update and Inventory Reports), so infrastructure capacity should be available for development orders and building permits to be issued without any issues.
- Eight petitions will go before the BCC on Dec. 14.
- One is a property rights element required by the state that will be adopted into the Growth Management Plan. It spells out property owner rights the county provides during the rezoning process.
- Another is a CCME amendment in which the state is requiring all jurisdictions to address sea-level rise and try to develop a resiliency plan for some of the low-lying coastal areas by 2023.
- The Planning Commission on Dec. 2 will review that amendment and a model developed by UF and FGCU professors for sea-level rise and anticipating issues in southwest Florida.
- In October, there were 30 land-use petitions, slightly higher than normal, and we're maintaining a hectic pace.
- Positions opened for Land Development Code Manager, Amendment Code Manager and Principal Planner in our conference planning section.
- The first of the golf course conversion petitions, the Golden Gate Golf Course, will be heard by the Planning Commission on Jan. 20 and the BCC on Feb. 22. Following that will be the Riviera Estate Golf Course conversion, which is going through the Intent to Convert process. Then it must go through the PUD process.
- We've maintained a steady load of petitions for Planning Commission and the BCC, so I don't see entitlements slowing down. The plats and SIPs will continue to go forward.

6. New Business

None

7. Old Business

a. GMD Public Portal changes and self-issuing permits [Operations & Regulatory Management]

GMD Senior Operations Analyst Danny Condomina provided a PowerPoint presentation, "Upcoming Portal Changes," and reported:

- The launch will be Jan. 24, 2022, and testing is going well.
- A weekend before the launch, the system will not be available to test before it goes live.
- This PowerPoint presentation is available on the permitting webpage.
- The groups in the home page have increased and there are more application types, so that allows us to ask more specific questions for those applications.
- Requirements for items that are uploaded to the portal were reduced.
- Two new applications were added: RV and Garage Sale Permits, Code Enforcement permits.

- Three more groups were added the Building Department options on the homepage: Building, Remodel & Accessory Permits; Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, Gas & Fire Permits; and Right-of-Way, Sign and Well Permits.
- The old portal Planning Group becomes: Pre-Application and Planning Application; Special Events, Zoning Certificates; Temporary Use, RV and Garage Sale; and Environmental Permits.
- Anything related to environmental now has its own group.
- We created new application types because we had issues receiving applications, especially because the building application was very general. All accessory applications were under Building, so it was removed and moved to the first drop menu.
- There will be new permit prefixes and PRBD will no longer be a permit type in the drop-down menu. All PRBDs will be under Building/Remodel/Accessory Permits.
- The new application types allow us to be more specific with permits.
- Items causing confusion and phone calls were removed, such as questions about occupancy code and construction type.
- We're trying to make it simpler with just six categories, hotels and motels.
- We met with Planning Review to make changes. For example, with single-family homes, it had 23 submittal/checklist items and was reduced to nine. But based on your answers to questions, it will show other submittal items.
- Questions posed to site visitors will load other questions, instead of showing everything at once.
- We made it a little smarter to make it easier for customers, so they won't be overwhelmed.
- Some questions will be handled later in the process because upfront submissions sometimes get lost. Things that aren't needed for plan review, such as a Notice of Commencement, won't be needed upfront.
- The same thing was done with the Subcontractor-Affirmation forms.
- If you are searching by permit number, you must search under that group.
- The best practice for searching permits is by address, a property search, which provides the most information on a piece of property.

Mr. Curl questioned that, noting that he didn't see that option on that page. It was item four, not item one, or the third question.

Mr. Condomina said that's under the groups, but the portal's property search link is always available to click on to the left.

Mr. Condomina continued with the presentation:

- Self-issuing permits will not require a plan review. Based on your questions, it will go to self-issuing or staff. No staff are involved all the way up to when a permit is issued.
- If you select a contractor and that person is not qualified, it will not let you move forward. If you select the city of Naples or Marco Island, you can't move forward.
- When you hit the application button, you can pay fees online and print inspection cards and permits.
- Garage Sale and RV Permit will be much easier because no fees are involved. The application will load based on answers to questions.
- The permit page will continue to be updated and more resources will be available after January. The newsletter that went out on Monday, the guide, videos and this presentation will be on the webpage.
- If you want a demonstration, you can schedule time with our training coordinator or with me.

Mr. Curl asked if this was the new website, he'd seen two weeks ago, which he said was not intuitive.

Mr. Condomina said they didn't have that much involvement, so we're trying to fix our side of it. It has since been updated and they're working on it. The PowerPoint, newsletter and videos will be available on a subpage about the upcoming changes.

Chairman Varian asked if there were any changes to paper applications.

Mr. Condomina said there were no changes yet.

b. GMD Deputy Department Head Jamie French gave a presentation about vacancies and hiring discussions:

- The discussion with the County Manager’s Office to fill positions is set for January.
- He wants to fund 113 positions, including 35 plumbing, 26 mechanical, 26 electrical and 22 structural. These are all over the last calendar year, not fiscal year.
- Over 275,000 building inspections were performed last fiscal year, a 6% increase over the previous fiscal year.
- Nearly 23,000 inspections were performed monthly.
- Currently, 54 full-time inspectors across the trades are employed, averaging 26 inspections per day.
- The team is trying to squeeze all the efficiencies available to control reliability on paper and to push things, so if anything can be automated, it will be.
- Under the ISO standards and efficiencies, we adopted, 15 is a really good number; 10 was spoken about for average inspections but is not realistic under ISO standards.
- Under our operational design today, the average is 16 inspections. The reason why is the average inspector drives 80 miles per day, compared with five miles daily for the cities of Naples and Marco Island. They’ve got 12 miles as a coverage area and we’ve got 600 miles and that’s why we start/route inspectors from their homes, to capture as much efficiency as possible. That’s why we think if ISO says 10 inspections, we can still be 15-20.
- Under Marco Island’s operational design, they perform 20 inspections per-day, per-inspector, and that Building Official makes far less than the one in Naples.
- Plans Review and Plumbing processed 61,000 building permit applications in FY21, a 19% increase over FY20. They averaged over 5,000 per month, just in plumbing.
- Growth has placed significant pressure on staff to review plans under the established state deadlines. We’re still pushing for the 10-15-business-day goal, but we’re far from that.
- We need a licensed senior project manager in Jaime Cook’s group.
- About 4,000 planning application reviews were performed in FY 21, a 17% increase.
- There were more than 2,700 right of way permits processed. The ROW program was adopted with only two staff members from Transportation about five or six years ago at the County Manager’s request.
- Even though the state set guidelines of 10 inspections per day, per inspector, we’re pushing for 15-20 as a goal, but we’re not hitting it, not by far, and that’s the rationale for needing 15 more.
- About 4,000 plumbing applications were received in FY21, a 17% increase.
- More than 2,000 right-of-way permits were applied for, a 25% increase.
- We’ve seen such a drastic increase that we need someone other than just Alicia to do the reviews.
- This position would assist right of way, site development plan reviews, applications for stormwater management stations and utility standards. It would be a licensed engineer position. It’s one of the most sought-after jobs, the most vacant and hardest to fill because it’s highly competitive. Hopefully, after the payroll study, we can fill it.
- Field inspections (Joe Bianchi’s area) totaled about 19,000, an 11½ increase.
- There were nearly 8,000 right-of-way inspections.
- Well inspections are on-time serviced and decreased by more than 30% due to all the activity in Golden Gate Estates, and we have only one or two well inspectors.
- No contract well inspectors are available. We’ve got about five contracts, including one through Nova Property Inspections LLC, and the other contractors the city of Naples uses, but that didn’t work out. Nova can only provide five or six.
- On-time percentages of inspections in this area continue to decline and that slows down jobs on the CO side, not the Building Department side. It’s preventing jobs from getting COs. There are fewer of those inspectors and they’re also driving many miles.
- Fund 131 positions: A Development Review Planner is needed to provide another planner to Jaime’s group.

- More than 1,400 Planning Application reviews were performed in FY21, up 32% over FY20.
- Almost 24,000 Building Permits for planning requirements were reviewed, a 23% increase. Those permits required a planning review. Currently, only four staff members in this group perform this level of review.
- On-time delivery goals have continued to decline in this area due to the volume and complexity of the projects.
- Zoning is asking for a Principal Planner. From 2015-2018, the previous administration borrowed from us and never returned positions, but their work requirements remained.
- Staff was taken from Growth Management and never restored. This is part of the reason why petitions are slow. Ken Kovensky has shown where staff went over the past six to eight years, somewhere else in Growth Management. These were positions that you supported in the past and the BCC approved. It's all up to the County Manager's Office.
- In 2010, there were 299 approved FTEs. We never got to 299. After the layoffs, we were left with 168 FTEs when I assumed my position here. At the time, we averaged 21,586 permits during the calendar year, total plan reviews were 38 and total inspections were 74,000.
- 2016 was a good year, a year where we were balanced and getting efficiencies. There were 273 FTEs, with nearly 41,000 permits applied for, roughly 103,000-104,000 plan reviews, averaging 233,000-234,000 inspections.
- Using that total number of applied permits, if 2016 was a perfect year, I need about 306 FTEs to handle the 45,650 permits projected for this year. What I've presented today is nine more employees at a minimum, which will total 287 employees, not the full 306. That doesn't consider overtime or contract labor. I want to keep that option, so I think I'm better off asking for the nine employees that I really need.
- We also have more than 20 positions we've been unable to fill and there's always going to be a cycle of attrition.
- We're very supportive of the County Manager's efforts in doing a compensation study.
- We're using 70-80 contract employees and we're now over 4,500 hours of overtime, a couple million dollars, including positions that don't get overtime and receive hour-for-hour pay.

Mr. French asked the board if was going in the right direction and a discussion ensued:

- **Chairman Varian** agreed he was.
- **Mr. French** noted that the former deputy county manager said he needed to reduce fees to increase operating costs. I have no intention of asking for positions in exchange for a reduction in fees. That cannot be supported long-term to meet the obligation for the dollars that were collected that we owe you service for.
- **Chairman Varian** asked who was complaining about fees.
- **Mr. French** said no one was, but that was always the bargaining chip with the former County Manager's Office team every time we asked for something.
- **Mr. McClain** said many other municipalities have similar hiring issues. He asked how the committee could support him. He suggested that Mr. French ask for all employees he needs and to be satisfied if the County Manager's Office agrees to half. How do we manage clients' expectations? The county's turnaround times are well documented. Our clients can see they should have a building permit in two, three or four weeks, but that time goes by, and we have to explain that our hands are tied, we're understaffed and we're running late. We can only fix our end. How do we support you to fix your end?
- **Mr. Curl** noted that in the private sector, they pay more for employees than the county does. The county's internal model needs to be updated.
- **Mr. French** pointed out that Marco Island is paying a private provider a starting salary of \$94,000 yearly (he wasn't certain that included benefits) for a one- and two-family home inspector's license. In comparison, the county pays \$35,000-\$40,000 for that position. If private providers are paying that, local governments cannot compete. It's going to come down to whatever this payroll study says

whether I can hire employees in this competitive market. We need to keep morale up. I've been told many times that I'm pro-development. I'm not, I'm pro-committed and pro-customer service. Let's see what the payroll study says and support me.

- **Mr. McClain** asked if the committee could support him with a formal request to the county manager. He said clients call him daily about this problem, the delays, but noted that other municipalities also have this problem, so how do we formally help you?
- **Mr. French** said he was going to meet with the County Manager this month or next month and is hoping to get this on the BCC agenda in January or early February and he wants the committee to be there to support it. If you have additional numbers you can share, bring those so we're not speculating the market. He said he'd met with Florida's CFO and they're watching a lot of different numbers and markets nationwide. We think we're probably two to three years based on the state's projection, but the cost of living is not going down and property values won't deflate, as they did in 2010. We need to continue to recognize the impact your industry has on the local market. Without this industry, tourism, restaurants, housing and affordable housing don't exist. It creates jobs.
- **Mr. Dunnivant** said it was disappointing that Mr. French was being confined by staff who use pro-development as a negative.
- **Mr. Valle** said the development community provides the tax base. There is no real tax revenue to pay for services for the rest of county government. He noted that industry is paying fees to the Building Department for the entire 131 Fund, so why should we be asking anybody for any positions?
- **Mr. French** said his department has a fiduciary responsibility and the county is a very conservative government that doesn't like to increase staff. He's repeatedly asked the county to consider privatization. One reason we don't privatize isn't cost, but availability and control. Many plan reviewers from outside contractors do not work for us. It would take far more time. On the inspection and non-technical side, answering phones, it works.
- We'll get a full report once we meet with the County Manager's Office.
- He asked for a moment of silence to recognize the passing of John Williams.

8. Committee Member Comments
None.

9. Adjourn
Next Meeting Dates
Jan. 5, 2022, 3 p.m.
Feb. 2, 2022, 3 p.m.
March 2, 2022, 3 p.m.

There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned by the order of the Chair at 4:11 P.M.

**COLLIER COUNTY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**



Chairman, William Varian

These Minutes were approved by the Board/Chairman on 1/5/22, as presented , or as amended .