



**Lehigh Acres  
Community Planning  
Corporation, Inc**

CORPORATION NON-FOR-PROFIT 2004 FLORIDA



## **Community Visioning Session 12 October 2006**

### **Members in attendance:**

Willard Baker  
Liz Eilf  
Jacqui Hill  
John Miller  
Damon Shelor  
Bo Turbeville  
Edd Weiner

### **Members not in attendance:**

Linda Carter  
Charlie DeFelice  
Richard Georgian  
Frank LaRosa  
Keith Richter  
Azelma Simmons  
Patty Vealy

**Facilitated discussion by the Lehigh Acres Planning Committee (LACPC)  
Chairman Bo Turbeville centered around the currently active subcommittees:**

### **Conservation and Beautification, Chairman John Miller**

Edd Weiner noted that Lee County puts in too many palm trees and not enough shade trees; there is nothing to protect cars/buildings – we should address this with the Planner.

Edd proposed we give existing building owners a timeframe in which they have to go back and re-do their landscaping where it is lacking (for example, give them 5 years to comply with standards we come up with).

Edd also would like to see a street tree program for residential areas.

Bo mentioned that the local Chamber of Commerce with working with the MPO and County Commissioners for 2 attractive entrance to Lehigh Acres signs.

A citizen asked about what is being planned for the Gunnery Road median – John is working to upgrade what Lee County has deemed as “core” landscaping (it does include some irrigation per Mr. Miller); the citizen owns a tree farm and generously offered to donate / plant Washingtonia palms on Gunnery as he has on Lee Boulevard – Bo to get his contact information.

Willard suggested we consider xeriscape landscaping as we need to be conscious of water conservation.

Barbara Joe-Yen reminded us that the plants need to be able to withstand pollution.

## Water Management, Chairman Richard Georgian

Some general remarks from Bo Turbeville:

Lehigh Acres is serviced by the Florida Governmental Utility Authority, FGUA, who provides drinking water and wastewater service and infrastructure to various counties in Florida. Robert Anderson, the President of the Lehigh Acres Watchdog, sits on the Advisory Board for the FGUA.

The East County Water Control District, ECWCD, maintains a network of canals, water control devices, structures, and systems. They are responsible for both the discharge and recharge of our water resources to maintain a balance between flood control and conservation. Damon Shelor sits on the Board of Supervisors.

Richard Georgian is concerned about water resources for the current and future residents of our growing community. He only had one citizen present at the kickoff of his subcommittee.

The number of residents in Lehigh Acres has about doubled in the past six years.

A citizen asked about the possibility of widening and deepening our canals ... Damon Shelor said that only *widening* is an option and it is being planned. In Golden Gate, they damaged canals when they deepened them as they broke through rock layers.

Another citizen expressed concern about sinkholes throughout Florida. She suggested a moratorium on construction. Edd Weiner said that historically a moratorium makes the tax base fall apart. Florida needs agriculture, tourism, and construction for its economy to be sustained. Edd noted that we are proceeding with planning carefully to protect the environment.

## Architectural Review / Code Enforcement, Chairwoman Linda Carter

Over time, there have probably been about 50 different builders in Lehigh Acres contributing to our haphazard look

John Miller asked the citizens present in the audience to describe the architecture that they would like to see in Lehigh Acres ...

Input included:

- “Old Florida” (although there was difficulty defining exactly what that is)
- Front porches
- Ranch-style theme – such as having a bronze statue of Lee Ratner
- Since we are not on the Coast and don’t have the beaches as an attraction, it would be nice to have features in Lehigh Acres neighborhoods that make it “different”

### **Sidewalks and Bike Paths, Chairman Willard Baker**

Although originally part of the Utilities & Infrastructure / Roadways & Public Transportation subcommittee per the [LACPC web site](#), this group actually meets in conjunction with the Architectural Review / Code Enforcement subcommittee per Willard Baker.

Mr. Baker would like to see every house built include a sidewalk out front, as the Habitat for Humanity is now doing.

He wants new and *existing* businesses to include a sidewalk in front of their property. He also proposes that connecting sidewalks be built on streets within a quarter mile of shopping centers for pedestrian and motorized scooter traffic.

Finally, he suggested that sidewalks be constructed within one mile of every school in Lehigh Acres so that so many students would not need to be bussed.

### **Parks and Recreation / Schools / Youth Activities, Chairman Frank LaRosa**

President Bo Turbeville noted that Dr. James W. Browder, Superintendent of the School District of Lee County, has met with the Planner already!

### **Roads and Infrastructure, Chairman Charlie DeFelice**

Edd Weiner remarked that we must find a way to adequately bridge our canal system. You are constantly faced with “dead end” roads in Lehigh Acres, as you come to a canal at almost every turn. Willard Baker noted that in the past, he was instrumental in having several important bridges constructed, such as that on Williams.

Bo Turbeville announced that he received an email from Senator Dave Aronberg that a stoplight at Joel / SR 80 has been approved.

### **Law Enforcement / Public Safety, Chairman Damon Shelor**

Damon Shelor said we need to get increased police coverage because Lehigh Acres continues to have more residents ... There are only about 67 patrolmen working 4 shifts to cover the large district of which we are a part – this works out to be only about 1 per 10,000 people.

Construction site crime continues to be a big problem and a special task force has been set up, per Mr. Shelor.

He also noted we have fortunately seen a decrease in gang-related activity.

Willard Baker suggested we have a holding station in Lehigh Acres, as when one of our patrolmen has to drive to/from a holding station in Fort Myers, that is one less person manning the roads in Lehigh Acres for a couple of hours. Mr. Shelor said that this issue has been raised before – and the conclusion was that if a station were to be built here, there would be no one to man it. The Sheriff’s total budget increase request was recently denied by the County Commissioners.

## Community Healthcare / Charitable and Civic Organizations, Chairwoman Liz Eilf

A citizen asked if we had a Rape Unit/Counseling Center for women in Lehigh Acres. Ms. Eilf reported that we currently do not, although she agrees that we need it – and has been working to get an ACT shelter here. With all the population growth we have had, we also need places for veterans’ services, job services, and medical buildings/services that are on bus lines for those without transportation.

Mr. Turbeville addressed a citizen in the audience re. members of the Lee County staff that are part of the LACPC, such as Lee County’s Principal Planner Jim Mudd and Wayne Daltry, Lee County’s Smart Growth Executive Director. The citizen would like to see them present at more of the LACPC meetings, as she would like to ask them questions and felt they have very valuable input to share.

The need for a cultural center was mentioned.

Another idea proposed was an outdoor band shell.

### **Miscellaneous**

A concerned citizen asked whether we have access to an Economic Council. Bo Turbeville stated that our local Chamber of Commerce is a member of one. The Horizon Council is the advisory board to the County Commissioners on economic development issues. Essentially, the citizen noted we need to bring attractive industry here. Mr. Turbeville explained that the lack of commercial property is hindering our efforts. Residential lots need to be “assembled” and rezoned. We are challenged by the fact that new model homes continue to be built on main roads such as Lee Boulevard.

Another citizen is concerned that we do not advertise the LACPC widely. Mr. Turbeville offered to include her on an email list. He pointed her to information on our [website](#) and also mentioned that both local newspapers, the [Lehigh Acres News Star](#) and the [Lehigh Acres Citizen](#), generously advertise our community meetings at no cost to us.

Citizen Barbara Joe-Yen made 2 suggestions about more free advertising for the LACPC:

- 1) The Towne Center’s lit billboard at the corner of Homestead / Alabama
- 2) The “Auto Web” billboard that is prominent on Lee Boulevard

(both owners have offered them for public service announcements)

Forestry Resources Landscape Supply has printed a large batch of nice-looking T Shirts that read “Lehigh Acres Pride Team” and “Lehigh Acres Community Planning Corporation” on the front and “Neighborhoods Building Community Pride” on the back.

Jacqui Hill  
Secretary, LACPC