

Lehigh Pride Team
John C. Miller, Chairperson
Neighbors Building Community Pride

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 17, 2005 B & C MEETING (Beautification and Conservation Subcommittee)

The meeting was convened at approximately 7:00 PM in the pottery room of the Veteran's Park Recreation Center. Eleven people were present. Present on a very rainy day: Audrey Brown, Barbara Joe-Yen, Carmon Pratt, Damon Shelor, Sue Laleike, Nolan Joseph, Terence Wolfley, John Miller, Tim Tyler and guests Ollie Conover, Fred Elliott, and Robert Anderson.

First we listened to Fred Elliott as he suggested beautification for Duplexes which are often a bleak sight along Lehigh Acres roadways. Problems arise when too many cars are parked on the road right away and on other people's lots. Using examples from nicely done duplexes Mr. Elliott and Mr. Conover who accompanied him asked us to consider standards that would not only improve the general appearance of the properties but could get more cars up behind hedges or a decorative shield. The general feeling is that if all were held to the same standard price competition would be less and the first ones to beautify would be the first ones to attract new customers at a rental rate that compensated the owner for the extra expense. The Duplex zoning is only about 10% built out so it is a prime time to do this according to our guests. I invited them to return when this matter is brought up with consultants for formal action. Our team considered the need for low income housing as important for labor needs and starting new families. Old owners might be encouraged to do more if free trees and plants were provided. Driveways should be paved by some means. Changes to existing properties could be phased in.

There was a discussion of Homestead Road designated plants and the effect of requirements on car lots as seen at Car Web on Lee Blvd. Sue stated that standards are not enforced and that a greater variety of plants should be allowed.

Mr. Conover mentioned the widening of Gunnery Road and the trees and landscaping needed to go with this beside the Canal south of Lee Blvd. to SR 82. The Team discussed again the need for gateway look that can be developed from plant lists considered for the FGUA lift station. Mr. Wolfley and his committee will be working on these. A new subcommittee member, Carmon Pratt from Brazil is a professional artist and willing to work with Wolfley's committee and the High School Art class. She showed a novel idea for a facility to change it's appearance to a work of art.

Earth Day project is coming up. I have the Adopt a Road department ready with vests and tools. The number of people signing up is uncertain with High Schoolers on Community Service passes, LACPC board members, our subcommittee as captains, volunteers from the Spring Festival outreach, and Dept of Corrections working off violations. We hope the Sneet teen group will help. I had ordered 20 vests and things for a 9:00 AM start up on Friday and Saturday. Robert suggested that we get the whole community together with everybody that is adopting a road at 7:00 AM and I volunteered to ask Adrienne Solomon for the other groups with their roads. Damon said that we need many more than 20 a day to do all of Lee Blvd in our care and if we had enough we could branch out to clear Gunnery or a few other crossing streets.

Damon suggested that we meet once more to organize the effort with pick ups and the other groups. Barbara Joe-Yen said we need to get this in the paper quick. I said Jim Fleming is working with the DOT to pick up the signs and get an ad in the paper to warn sign stickers that they will be violated. Actually Jim got the ball rolling after that and I am following up with people who have all gone out of town for Easter. If we put an ad in the papers *the next morning* it will come out Wednesday April 6th. Free Tee shirts will; be given out and I hope to provide water and

snacks if we get enough sponsors. If the Bash is big enough the papers will cover it and emphasize the value of community involvement and planning.

We need YOU at the meeting **March 31** at the Old United Way Center between the Liquor store and the Sheriff's office 1303 Homestead at 7:00 PM use the door by the yellow SNEET sign. **Help!**

We discussed a program to change behavior of people littering the streets and dumping. Tim suggested that Contractors can help in this with employees and subs. He is talking with them. We are hoping to get bags for the drivers and fast food outlets with matching trash bins plus more road signs showing fines and community participation. Mentioned were the new Mayor, FGCU Community Service, the High School students and Tim is going to help on this. Halloween was suggested as a time to give out bags. I have discussed ideas with Debra Shuman, the Chamber President and informally with Ollie at his office.

Terry is going to talk to the Masons, Damon with the Kiwanis, Barbara to the Rotary, Sue to the American Business Woman's Assoc., John to the Lions Club. We hope to get one or two things, a representative from each group to bring their B & C ideas to us, and/or a chance to speak to them about the planning and preservation opportunities. Terry's Extension Service could also bring a presentation on conservation planting.

There was a discussion about uniform sign rules and we might have a say in that.

Sue wants more water filter marshes.

I asked people to think about a vision for the emerging community as we plan.

New important news. The award of \$25,000 will be used to set up the program to bring the projects through the pipeline and allow each subcommittee to submit community wants. Following that professional help will be utilized to prepare and process the proposals and changes to existing code. There may actually be a zone ready for our input soon. Now I am asking everyone to list favorite plants they like in Lehigh Acres and start to look for landscaping and beautification ideas. Our leaders will sort out viable plants in two categories, those that survive without special care and those that need water and care. If certain plants are not readily available at this time we can possible influence nurseries to be getting them started. **Take cameras go places get ready!** List your websites.

Side issues of importance Damon Shelor secured new trees and butterfly plants for the veterans Park Like side and he Terry, myself and TJ planted the trees and Myrtles. Eight new Earth Day volunteers came in and 20 new Subcommittee members through the Spring Festival. Wal-Mary gave six nice plants for prizes to new subcommittee members and everybody on Earth Day or a subcommittee gets a nice T-Shirt, compliments of Forestry Products a new Lehigh Business selling landscaping products. They also offered to help us out with the Arbor Day planting of Swamp Cabbages on ECWCD properties.

Respectfully submitted subject to your correction.
John C. Miller