

Lehigh Pride Team
John C. Miller, Chair 334-0313
The Beautification and Conservation Subcommittee
Lehigh Acres Community Planning Corporation
P.O. Box 1408, Lehigh Acres, FL 33970

Dec. 22, 2005

December MINUTES of the Beautification and Conservation Subcommittee

Meeting convened at 7:10 AM Dec 15 as scheduled.

Present were Barbara Joe-Yen, Damon Shelor, John Miller.

First discussion was the situation regarding dumping on vacant lots and streets. Chair furnished a photo of a recent truckload of household materials and general trash on Albert Avenue at Billings. The load was left within three minutes of the County Waste Management Facility on Buckingham load. Other loads are present in the same area including old tires, wheels, and bags of garbage. The committee attempted to determine the reason why dumping is out of control and concluded that County law is not effective with regard to these practices.

A sense of lawlessness permeates the culture of people who are involved with these practices and will not improve until the law is enforced. An article in the local papers was suggested and requests of the Sheriff's Department and County government. Certainly there will be an attempt to strengthen law enforcement when the subcommittee prepares its report to Smart Growth. Damon Shelor has volunteered to report the dumping on Albert Ave as part of the Community Council's normal activities. Perhaps the Community Council will help raise public support for a sign as well as the Chamber.

Next subject was the requirement that FGUA (water and sewer company) ante up approximately \$78,000.00 as a community service to be spent over the next five years. We are going to get involved again with FGUA to ask that the lift station at Alabama and Homestead be fixed up properly with color and landscaping. Since the Lehigh Senior High Environmental club had mentioned that Lake Camille be beautified into a park for people to enjoy and even organize youth activities there we will try to get the ECWCD involved with the young people for this purpose. A note has been sent to the Senior High Environmental Club Advisor and I have been to see Barbara Kerby (FGUA) (Dec.20) who is very receptive to the Lehigh Pride Team getting involved with them.

Chair made a report on swamps in Lehigh and the result of my attempts to find out if these low areas are safe for homes to be built. A locally involved Geological Engineer with Ardaman and Associates; Mr. Gary Drew, PE stated that he is convinced that the swamps identified on aerial maps of Lehigh are not sinking at a rate that will cause houses built on them to crack if the grading and filling is done correctly. We therefore can not claim to these areas as Open or Green Space even though in some cases water stands year around. A brief study of the Lehigh Map shows numerous ponds and lakes across the southern sections that are hopefully going to be saved for open space.

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I asked those present if I should arrange for the County DOT to let us save space for a Lehigh Welcome sign on Gunnery Boulevard north of SR 82 to be designated for this purpose. I saw Nicole Maxey on Dec 21 and she was very helpful to show me the possibilities. Nicole will use her experience and knowledge to lay out suggestions for this subcommittee which I will furnish in January. It looks very hopeful that we can have a piece of space on the NE side of the Gunnery and SR 82 intersection set aside for a welcome sign. Water and electricity for this site are not simple to get. Lee County is able to contract with a local entity to upkeep landscaping but will not pay for anything. I suggest that we consider art work that is reflective of Lehigh to accompany the sign. Past meetings of the Lehigh Pride Team have heard several suggestions from participants that a duplicate of the downtown welcome sign in an appropriate size be replicated at gateways. This sign is located at Lee and Homestead Boulevards.

Damon Shelor reported that the County requirements for landscaping on home sites does not apply to Duplexes. We have been concerned that many duplex dwellings are barren and must at least meet the same standards as single family homes and the equitable solution is to require older duplex owners to bring their properties up to standard within five years. Previous meetings have brought out that the whole front yards are used for parking cars and these areas should be buffered with plants towards the street. This should be part of a codified standard applicable to all new Duplex homes.

Damon also offered to check for the owner of the property along the Canal to the East of Muggs and Juggs to see if it could be used for a park in any way. Linda Carter has expressed an interest in seeing a place to pull off of Lee Boulevard there and find a shelter or at least tables and some nice trees.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM

Respectfully submitted.

John Miller

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