

**CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 15, 2006**

Mayor Johnston called the meeting to order at 9:00 a. m.

Members present: Mayor Johnston, Vice Mayor Denham, Councilman Brown, Councilman Jennings and Councilman Rothman.

Vice Mayor Denham gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council welcomed Vice Mayor Denham.

Vice Mayor Denham thanked Council and Sanibel residents for their condolences.

Discussion ensued regarding the importance of the water issues, and staff should speak with Council regarding their schedules.

Mr. Cuyler advised Council that the City Manager or staff could check schedules for a Special Meeting.

Councilman Brown left at 9:10 a. m.

Vice Mayor Denham made a motion, seconded by Councilman Jennings, to excuse Councilman Brown from the remainder of the meeting

The motion carried by consensus.

Water Quality; Where Do We Go From Here?

Councilman Rothman explained the following:

- Would like for Council to be more proactive
- H2O matters website up and running
- Corps of Engineers received approval for the Deviation Plan up to level 1
- Releases smaller at 500 feet per second
- Several days of no releases
- Sanibel request no releases to allow seagrass beds to regenerate
- Rule out possibility of release water into the sugarcane fields
- Goal should be to prevent and/or stop making large water releases
- To keep the salinity down in the estuaries
- What are the top 10 things the SFWMD should be doing to stop making large water releases
- Operating Lake Okeechobee at a lower level between 12 to 14 feet
- The need for forward pumping
- Forward pumps would be operable sometime in 2009
- Discussions of temporary forward pumps
- How does CERP need to be change to service the water releases
- No official made statement that CERP would not solve the problem with wet years
- The need to understand CERP
- Sanibel's need to influence the SFWMD decisions
- Concerns not enough time or employees to handle water quality including the recent approval of another employee in the Natural Resources Department

Councilman Rothman passed out the Water Resources Advisory Commission purpose and Board membership, which acts as an advisory board to the governing board. He spoke to the need for a Sanibel staff member to be appointed as a member of the Water Resources Advisory Commission, such as Dr. Loflin, Natural Resources Director.

Ms. Zimomra passed out the agenda page regarding water quality issues on the February 21, 2006 City Council agenda, all the upcoming meetings, and spoke completing the H2O website.

Discussion ensued regarding Sanibel's position regarding water releases, Lee County does not have a written water release position, recent meeting attended by Councilman Jennings and a statement made that Sanibel was not in step with other governmental entities as to water quality and water releases, the need for other municipalities to embrace an opinion on water releases, March was seagrass awareness month, governor had completed a proclamation for seagrass awareness month, fishing industry depends on healthy seagrass, Councilman Jennings asked that Council allow him to speak with Director Castillo of the Environmental Protection Agency while in Tallahassee for Tallahassee Days, agency in charge of legislative affairs and seems to be the focus point for incoming requests that SFWMD keep to the schedule recommended by their scientist, Rookery Bay visited by the governor and president, which was near Marco Island, accomplish at this meeting was to move the water quality issues forward, concern that Council voted to have a group of City mayors to visit the governor and that had not happened, which was being arranged by the lobbyist, Vice Mayor Denham called the lobbyist office regarding the mayoral visit with the Governor, re-direct the lobbyist to get an appointment with other decision makers such as the Lt. Governor or Secretary of DEP, urgency to get the numbers of water releases agreed upon by other municipalities, consider report on alternative water storage, bring in outside experts to look at the modeling that SFWMD was using, look at issue and options of water purification, push SFWMD to begin neutralizing the Lake Okeechobee nutrients, water storage to lower Lake Okeechobee, only a program for forward pumps, but no instituted yet, requirements that commercial and residential developments for water storage, but had not been applied to agricultural lands, technology for cleaner septic tanks, release from Lee County regarding bacteria, Councilman Brown reviewing other health risks, and find out the leaders in the House and Senate that need to be influenced regarding water quality issues.

Ms. Zimomra recommended that Council direct staff to write a letter to the SFWMD Board members of having their last meeting in Lee County and due to the large Lee County contingency in attendance having a Lee County person on the Water Resources Advisory Commission in each category for Council to sign Tuesday, February 21, 2006.

Discussion ensued regarding water release numbers, with suggested water releases could Lake Okeechobee level be accomplished, important for Council to understand that water release requests work with the level of Lake Okeechobee, Federal Government fine ships going ashore in Key West and destroying seagrasses, 500 cubic foot released during the wet season and 600 cubic feet released during the dry season, using best technology to reduce nutrients from fertilizers, and green algae was deposited on rocks in J. N. "Ding" Darling Wildlife Refuge.

Public Comment:

Karen Storzjohann spoke to findings ways of the public to recognize

Barbara Cooley spoke to the Water Resources Advisory Commission, water releases and at what location, should releases come from S-77 or S-79, higher releases at S-79, and 600 ft per second at S-79.

Mike Valiquette spoke to a discussion with Kurt Hercorlode, SFWMD that forward pumps would be used for agriculture, forward pumps would not be the solution, but would help. He also spoke to septic tank usage.

Councilman Jennings recommended having a proclamation of treating water before it goes in to the C-43 reservoir.

Mr. Cuyler advised that Council could direct staff to investigate and bring forward a proclamation for Council in regards to the above-mentioned topic.

Discussion ensued regarding Commissioner Albert Ward speaking at the last SFWMD meeting that money was being spent north and south of Lake Okeechobee with no money being spent on the lake, and Councilman Jennings proposed that the lobbyist investigate the kind of authority different legislative committees had to direct the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Colonel Carpenter, Army Corps of Engineers retiring in July.

Mike Valiquette spoke to Colonel Carpenter being re-stationed.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:37 a. m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Pamela Smith, CMC
City Clerk