

**JOINT MEETING
SANIBEL CITY COUNCIL, SANIBEL PLANNING COMMISSION and
VEGETATION COMMITTEE
MONDAY, JUNE 27, 2005**

Mayor Johnston called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

The following were present:

City Council Mayor Johnston, Vice Mayor Denham, Councilman Brown, Councilman Jennings and Councilman Rothman

Planning Commission Commissioner Billheimer, Commissioner Lapi, Commissioner Samler, Commissioner Sprankle,
Commissioner Valiquette, Commissioner Veenschoten

Vegetation Committee Paul Duval, Ann Talcott, Robin Krivanek, Berdenna Thompson, Harold Theiss, Donald Schwartz,
Julie Schwartz, Phyllis Gresham, William Wollschlager

Jack Samler, Planning Commission Chairman gave the Invocation.

Julie Schwartz, Chairperson, Vegetation Committee led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Presentations:

**Lee County's Landscaping Plan for Causeway Boulevard
Council, Commission, Committee discussion**

Paul Wingard, Deputy Director Lee County Department of Transportation gave the following report regarding the Landscaping Plan for Causeway Boulevard:

- URS Corporation prepared the PowerPoint presentation
- Proposed plants would be trees and palms with suggestions from Sanibel residents considered
- Showed and explained the area at the end of Span "C" including the bike paths, which would be extended
- There would be three lanes at the entrance to the boat ramp because one lane will be used as a turning lane
- Two retention ponds would be built, 1 to the North of the tollbooth and 1 to the South of the toll, but would not be accessible to the public.
- Plantings would be done in informal groupings to preserve natural look
- All areas where vegetation had been disturbed would be restored
- The beaches along the Causeway would stay the same
- Areas that need to be protected from erosion would be planted with sea grasses
- Turn-off /access roads to beach areas would be built
- As Australian Pines fail, replacement trees would be planted to give shade
- Clustered plants would be planted in the weigh station area
- The new toll plaza had been designed to resemble "Old Florida" buildings
- The County working toward continuity along the roads from the airport to Sanibel

Discussion ensued regarding the following questions:

- Could traffic lanes be added 10 years from now
- Are there any recreational activities the County is trying to add or delete
- Was there a requirement for irrigation
- Was there a plan to remove Australian pine seedlings
- At one time there was talk about building concrete barriers to prohibit the road from being washed out. Is this still being considered
- Will the bike path under Span "C" support an emergency vehicle
- Could some of the trees be moved back so as not to hinder viewing the Independence Day fireworks
- Would Mangroves be planted where the Causeway meets the Island to prevent erosion
- Would parking at Bunch Beach be increased

- Would the wind surf area still flood after the word was finished
- What would be accomplished by making the Causeway four lanes when the bridges aren't wide enough for four lanes
- How high is the toll booth structure
- Are the bridges and roads wide enough to move a house on or off Sanibel
- What is the time line for completing this project
- Suggested that the Australian pines be removed in the beginning, and turf grass would grow naturally, but could be irrigated with salt water
- If provisions had been made for traffic turning form the right hand side of the Causeway to the toll booth
- Are there any bike paths on the Causeway Islands
- What was a frangible tree
- How salt tolerant are Royal Palms
- Can there be a walkway under the Causeway for pedestrians
- What will the retention ponds look like
- Are bathrooms going to be built on both sides of the Causeway
- Suggested that shade trees be planted before Australian pines are gone
- What vegetation will be planted on the slopes and how will this be watered

Mr. Wingard answered:

- It would be difficult but it could be done, however, pavement would have to be added and the right and left turn lanes would be lost
- There were none; the County is trying to keep the islands the same as they are
- Yes; seedlings would be removed as they grow
- URS determined the benefit from doing this would be very minimal so it would not be done
- The path is 8' wide and will support an ambulance or fire truck on an emergency basis
- They could be moved back
- The shoreline was being moved back, the seawall was being removed and the contractor does not believe erosion would be a problem
- This area is being looked at
- An additional structure would have to be built to make the bridges four lanes
- The structure was 19'3" and was higher than the legally required height
- The structures would be wide enough, but if the house were extremely large it could be barged
- Early February 2007 including demolishing the old bridges with the exception of landscaping, which would be completed after February
- Vehicles could drive toward Sanibel until they come to a left turn lane
- There are no bike paths on bridges or islands but that the bridge shoulders are 8' wide and could be used for bike traffic.
- A frangible tree is a tree that is less than 4" in diameter and one that will break if hit by a car.
- This was being investigated.
- The bridges would be high enough for people to walk under.
- The South Florida Water Management District required these ponds enabling water to sit and let impurities settle; the ponds would be 1 ½' deep and would remain without rain
- Parks and Recreation control this, but should be looked at as a Safety issue
- This would be done
- The approaches to the bridges would have a slope of 3 or 4 to 1 and the City of Sanibel had asked that no irrigation system be used, but that the Lee County Landscaping Committee asked for temporary irrigation

Dr. Rob Loflin, Natural Resources Director spoke to the following:

- Thanked Mr. Wingard for using native plants
- He had no problem with a temporary irrigation system, because once the plants were established the temporary irrigation system could be removed
- Requested that flags be used to designate where the bike path and/or roadways would be located at the boat ramp before the City's planting begin
- He had no problem with the slope and that a water truck could be used to water the plants.

Discussion/Questions resume as follows:

- Had the County looked at the Periwinkle Corridor Restoration plan
- Causeway vegetation should tie in with the Periwinkle Corridor vegetation
- Suggested that the County involve Sanibel residents in talks with Keith Trowbridge of the Lee County Landscape Committee
- Mr. Trowbridge expressed interest in reviewing the Periwinkle Corridor Restoration plans with the Lee County Landscape Committee
- Is there a picture of the railings

Mr. Wingard continued to answer questions as follows:

- Lee County had not
- URS hoped to have a commonality from the Airport to Sanibel boat ramp
- The meetings were open to the public so the plans could be presented
- The proposed railings were easier to look through than the existing railings
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Public Comment:

Barbara Isham spoke to any trees planted should be very tall when planted; shade was very necessary and there should be colorful flowers, especially Periwinkles, planted along Periwinkle Way.

Council recessed at 10:28 a. m.

Council reconvened at 10:45 a. m.

Periwinkle Way Restoration Project (Vanasse-Daylor)

Bob Mitchell, Vanasse Daylor, presented "The Periwinkle Way Corridor Restoration Master Plan" as follows:

- The plan includes ideas gathered from residents of Sanibel
- The #1 community priority – Landscape the Lindgren/Periwinkle Intersection back to the bridge
- Periwinkle Way is very complex – there were open, residential and commercial uses, and shared use paths
- Defined - Canopy – Trees that have the capacity to create an umbrella effect; and Buffer – Smaller plants to block the view
- Shared Use Paths were very important to the community and in many places not wide enough
- No plantings done that would be in the way when these paths are widened
- The community had a distinctive character and residents want this character to remain
- Community safety – a clear line of sight had to be maintained at intersections
- Utility lines were overhead (some should be put underground)
- Limitations when plantings are directly under overhead lines and the canopy would be compromised
- Reviewed various species of plants that could be planted in certain areas
- The plant list was created with the help on Sanibel's Natural Resources Department
- Plants could all grow together as a group for canopy areas
- Periwinkle Way would have areas of shade/canopy and also areas where sunshine could come through
- There were conflicts with the residents due to different interest; i.e. canopy, diversity, shade, palms and color
- "T" shade intersections were good locations to appreciate palms and their effect on shadow and light
- Two dangerous situations – a. People stop in the middle of Shared Use Paths and others spill out onto roadways, b. pedestrians and bicyclists use the same entrances to shopping centers that motorized vehicles use
- Landscape could help control speed
- Appreciate special plants when walking or stopping rather than when driving
- Endangered plants could be planted in certain areas and these areas could be named for the plants
- Suggested amenities and areas for these amenities, i.e., pavilions, shelters, trash cans, drinking fountains, bike racks, picnic tables, etc.
- SCCF confirmed that the recommended areas were sufficient
- Would review installation and maintenance of plantings
- Installation - decide which areas to work on first due to funding issues
- Maintenance – critical issues
- Plants should be irrigated until they were established – this could be 1 to 3 growing seasons
- Pruning regiment – less is better
- Gurgling – When mowers and weed wackers cut into the base of trees

Discussion ensued regarding the stage of the process, input still being gathered, areas immediately behind the right of way were places palms and natives could be planted; bougainvillea and colorful plants could be added; non-native plants could be used.

Councilman Jennings was excused from the meeting at 11:41 a. m.

Discussion continued plants attracting birds, butterflies and wildlife, providing color, plantings being done during the rainy season, Gates Castle, Public Works Director, should be involved in the Shared Used Path issue, the vegetation plan should be tied in with Lee County and Captiva, putting utility lines underground, amount of the monetary investment for this project warrants watering, contacting LCEC regarding underground utility lines, canopies can be "V" notched so they don't affect power lines but this could be done with palms, underground lines good for aesthetics, but not more reliable, rest areas and temporary drip irrigation to conserve water were good ideas, why not use Cypress trees, Cypress trees being a specialty plant and not certain if they are sensitive to salt, would include Cypress trees to the list of trees, concerned with where to go from here, what to do next, concern of money and time constraints, general priorities from the Community were to replace the canopy areas and areas D & E shown on their boards, start a fund raising project, Sanibel Beautification had been able to raise money, get watering hoses and recruit volunteers with a great job at Lindgren/Causeway/Periwinkle Way intersection, assumed drainage would be handled by the City, underground wires could not be serviced when flooded, funding could be made possible by residents sponsoring the purchase of a tree or trees and then have a plaque with all the sponsors' names, if Lee County's work stops at the boat ramp and Vanasse Daylor's work starts at Lindgren, what happens to the Causeway in between these two areas, Ms. Zimomra commented the area was purposely omitted because there was no final decision as to what type traffic pattern would be used at the intersection of Periwinkle Way and Lindgren, amount of signs starting at the City limits and the intersection, does Florida State Law require for plantings along emergency evacuation routes, Ms. Zimomra commented that it would be inappropriate to approve a plan due to the need to written priorities from Vanasse Daylor,

Dr. Loflin spoke to the following funding:

- Department of Forestry – Special Hurricane Recovery Grant (\$375,000 with a 25% match). The City would need to have \$93,750. This will be granted August 15, 2005
- DOT Right-of-Way Beautification – Maximum of \$300,000 with a match of 50% (the City would need \$150,000). This will be granted September or October 2005

Ms. Zimomra explained that there would be a fee for moving power lines as regulated in the franchise agreement with Lee County Electric Co-op (LCEC).

Public Comment:

Doug Dietrich, Bicycle Club member, spoke to the Bicycle Club appreciated being given the opportunity to participate with other groups. He also stated that it is hard to get a handle on drainage and that on pages 59, 60 and 63 of the Vanasse Daylor presentation the tree trunks and shrubbery were shown too close to the paths.

Bob Mitchell said set back limits are included in the text.

Steve Greenstein, Chamber of Commerce Director, thanked the City for including Sanibel Beautification, Inc. in the process and for soliciting public input.

Barbara Isham spoke to the importance to have color on the corridor and questions what the community wants, she reported that within 20 minutes she and her husband gathered 56 signatures of residents that want color and a tall canopy, planting 20 to 30 foot Royal Palms and suggested a referendum to see what the people really want.

Eric Lindblad, SCCF Executive Director agreed the presentation was very good and that SCCF would help with methods for funding. He stated that the project was both economic and environmental and that native plants should be used because it was the natural environment that drew people to Sanibel. He also offered to attend the Lee County Landscape Committee meeting.

Council asked Dr. Loflin what native vegetation were growing back and if staff could prepare a report for the next City Council meeting.

Councilman Rothman made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Denham, to adjourn the meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Beck
Recording Secretary