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Plan introduction sparks controversy

By BRIAN E. CROWLEY
News-Press Staff Writer

Bickering once again broke out between the pro-developer and pro-environment members of the Lee County Planning Commission Thursday night over the comprehensive plan.

This time, the arguments centered on whether to include what some describe as being an anti-environment, anti-government introduction to the plan.

Voting 7-3, the commission defeated a proposal to take the introduction out of the comprehensive plan.

First signs of a possible fight over the introduction came earlier this month when Paul Jacobs, commission chairman, made a last-minute presentation of the preface to the planners. It had been typed and passed out to the commission only a short time before the vote was cast.

Taking five minutes to read the five-page preface, the commissioners, over the objections of two of its members, Bill Hammond and Wiley Parker, with little discussion ratified the introduction last month.

During Thursday's public hearing on the plan, some observers told the commission that the wording of the introduction would make the rest of the 106-page plan worthless.

"Some of the remarks (in the introduction) would be contrary to the plan and create ambiguities that could destroy the plan," said Earl Schwartz, a member of the Citizens Advisory Participation Committee, a private group which watches over government activities.

Garland Clutz, a member of the county zoning board, described the introduction as pro-developer and anti-government. "It could negate much of what is in the plan," he said. "The whole preface should be wiped out, expunged."

Here's part of what the introduction says and what the protesters are complaining about:

- Until funding is available none of the plans recommendations will be implemented.
- In the event that any specific goal, objective, policy or implementing action is found to be uneconomic or unfeasible, it will be immediately rescinded.
- Government is to adopt regulations based on the economic realities of the marketplace.
- Consolidate construction permit procedures into a one-step process.
- Require that if the county declares land environmentally sensitive it must compensate the owner.

Jacobs defended his introduction as a necessary attempt to address the economic feasibility of the comprehensive plan.

Water use increase estimated

By BETTY PRICE
News-Press Environment Writer

Southwest Florida water consumption will increase by 90 million gallons a day by the year 2,000, officials of the South Florida Water Management District said Thursday in Fort Myers.

Population growth and agriculture will require the most water, with other uses putting a relatively insignificant drain on water resources, they said.

Speaking on the water use and supply plan now being formulated for this area, district officials also said Lee County is rapidly losing agricultural land to development.

Although the district is still collecting information for their west coast study, Joel VanArman of the district staff said several water supply alternatives have been formulated.

The Caloosahatchee River has been the main water supplier for Lee County, but the river is encountering problems with pollution and algae blooms, which give the river's water an unpleasant taste and odor.

VanArman said the district is studying reasons for the algae blooms, along with effects of fresh-water releases from Lake Okeechobee into the river and the delicate estuary areas.

Water supply alternatives include more wellfield development, water conservation, desalinization, wastewater reuse for selected purposes and deep aquifer water storage.

The district board, which moved from its usual West Palm Beach home to meet for the first time in Fort Myers, also discussed its abandoned well plugging program.

About $100,000 has been alloted for a matching-grant program with various communities wishing to plug abandoned wells. Those wells usually are several years old, in bad condition, and flow continuously, wasting thousands of gallons of water daily.

In addition to the continual flow, the wells also can provide an outlet that permits poor quality water flow through deteriorated pipes and contaminate better quality water.

Cape Coral, Fort Myers and Sanibel are among Lee County areas that have indicated an interest in entering a well plugging agreement with the district.

Under the agreement, the district would provide matching funds for the well plugging as well as work on an inventory of existing wells and provide technical assistance with the plugging operation.

Well plugging costs average about $1,500, district officials said, and taxpayers' money would be used for the program.

Use of the matching funds program to pay for the well plugging was questioned by board member Nat Reed, who said he felt the philosophy of who should pay for the well plugging -- taxpayers or property owners -- needed to be studied further.

Reed suggested that the problem be discussed with Southwest Florida's legislative delegation after the session in Tallahassee.

"I wonder about agreeing to fix these wells before we have a standard for payment," Reed said. "We may have the cart before the ox."

Because one bad well may contaminate water for miles around it, board member Stanley Role said he believed the cost should be borne by the beneficiary, which would be the public.

No decision was made on the issue Thursday, but discussion is expected to continue this morning.

The board also voted to accept a hearing examiner's ruling on the controversial East Lee County Water Control District's water management plan which covered most of Lehigh Acres.

A group of eastern Lee County residents had objected to the proposed plan which they felt would have unforeseen consequences on the water flow of that area.

A compromise plan was worked out between the residents and the eastern Lee County district and that compromise was recommended by the hearing examiner to the district board.

Wildlife care group's demise is forestalled

By SUSAN DeFORD
News-Press Staff Writer

The possible demise of CROW, the Captiva-based organization that cares for sick and injured wildlife, was forestalled by its directors Thursday, but its lease on life remains tenuous.

In a meeting at the home of the group's president, Adelaide Cherbonnier, the directors of the Care and Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW) group agreed to continue the search for a permanent home.

Yet CROW could draw its last breath June 30 if it fails to secure a new home by that date.

CROW's present roost is the yard of Mrs. Cherbonnier's beachfront home on Captiva Island. Cages housing injured and permanently crippled animals are scattered amidst the lush vegetation. A guest house on the property serves as both animal hospital and home for CROW assistant Holly Davies.

Ironically, the group's success also could prove its undoing, Mrs. Cherbonnier said. In the last two years more than 800 animals have been treated, and the rapid growth of CROW's operations has outstripped its quarters, Mrs. Cherbonnier said.

Efforts to locate property for a new clinic-residence have so far produced little more than frustration for CROW's directors.

To avert that possibility, Dick Workman, director of the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, said the foundation may be able to lease to CROW 10 acres of land south of the American Legion Post 123 on Sanibel-Captiva Road. The proposal to lease the land is the fourth offer in two years.

Workman said he was authorized by the conservation foundation's executive committee to make the offer. He added that the foundation's board of directors will consider the lease arrangement at its meeting next Wednesday.

At Thursday's meeting, CROW directors also authorized the transfer of up to $5,000 from a $32,000 building fund to meet operating expenses through June.

Early in 1977, Mariner Properties Inc., an island development firm, proposed leasing a tract of land near the Gulf Pines subdivision, but objections from the subdivision's residents squelched the idea.

Later that year, CROW investigated leasing acreage from the state through the conservation foundation. However, one of the state's requirements for the arrangement — that CROW be open for tours and visitors — was unacceptable to the wildlife group.

About a year ago, the Island Water Association (IWA) offered to lease CROW about 14 acres of land along Sanibel-Captiva Road, Mrs. Cherbonnier said.

CROW was enthusiastic about the proposal, and started a fund-raising drive that netted $32,000 for construction and operation of new facilities.

The fund drive halted short of its $100,000 goal, however, when the IWA modified its offer, Mrs. Cherbonnier said.

The association said told CROW its relocation might jeopardize future expansion of IWA facilities on the site, she said. CROW directors felt the conditions added to the proposed lease by IWA made an investment in locating there too risky.

Dateline: Southwest Florida

Cape merchants sidewalk sale is Saturday

The 18th Cape Coral Merchants Sidewalk Sale will be Saturday.

About 50 merchants from around the Cape will participate in the event which begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 5:30 p.m.

Tables of sale merchandise will be set on both sides of Cape Coral Parkway from Del Prado Boulevard west to Coronado Parkway and on 47th Terrace, Vincennes Street, Candia Street and Lafayette Street.

Don Eisen, vice president of the Retail Merchants Association in Cape Coral, said he expects this sale to be even more successful than the previous ones.

In addition to sale tables, The Kiwanis will have a blood pressure table and the Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce and the Kidney Foundation will have booths.

First National to finance seawall plan

Cape Coral Bureau

The First National Bank of Fort Myers was the successful bidder for a $250,000 loan to the City of Cape Coral to finance part of the city's mandatory seawall program.

The Fort Myers bank offered repayment terms of 10 years at $25,000 annually, with interest payments to be made quarterly. The interest rate was set at 6.48 percent.

Other bidders were the Barnett Bank, who offered an interest rate of 7.20 percent and the National Bank of Cape Coral, with an interest rate of 7.50 percent. The Cape Coral Bank & Trust Company did not bid.

Man charged in burglary attempt

An 18-year-old Fort Myers man was arrested early Thursday morning on first-degree burglary charges he attempted to steal an undisclosed amount of meat from the Lee Vocational Technical School on Michigan Avenue, according to the Fort Myers Police Department.

Lawmen identified the arrested man as Willie James Bell, 18, address unavailable. According to the Lee County Jail logs, Bell also was arrested on charges of resisting arrest without violence.

According to the police department logs, Bell was transported to Lee Memorial Hospital where he underwent treatment for undisclosed injuries he sustained.

Police Public Information Officer Steve Schwein said he didn't know how the injuries occurred. Investigating officers were unavailable for comment late Thursday night.

The police logs said the meat was taken from the school's kitchen and that the burglar apparently fled through an opening in a fence at the southwest corner of the compound.

In a separate burglary attempt at the school earlier this month, burglars failed an attempt to steal meat from the school's kitchen. On April 3, more than 150 pounds of pork, steak, chickens and hamburger apparently was too heavy for thieves to carry from the kitchen of the school.

Lawmen found the meat several yards from the kitchen after they responded to an alarm at the school.

Bridge inspection demonstration canceled

Cape Coral Bureau

The Cape Coral Public Works Department demonstration of its new bridge inspection techniques, originally scheduled for Friday, has been canceled, according to Joe Centrone, public works director.

The demonstration would have shown the city's team of divers in action with their underwater television cameras. The team is trained to detect problems in the underwater structure of bridges, Centrone said. The department will reschedule the demonstration at a later date, he said.

Bill protects sound, harbor

By PETER G. JOHNSON
Gannett News Service

TALLAHASSEE — A measure protecting the waters and submerged lands in Gasparilla Sound and Charlotte Harbor was passed unanimously Thursday by the Senate.

Approved was a bill sponsored by Sen. Warren Henderson, R-Sarasota, that will create the Gasparilla Sound-Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserve and limit what can be done with public lands within the preserve.

Basically, the measure links four existing aquatic preserves in Lee and Charlotte counties into one massive preserve.

It also would extend protection to the Charlotte Harbor wetlands purchased by the state last year.

The designation would make it more difficult to dredge and thus preserve the area in its natural state, Henderson said.

A limited amount of dredging would be allowed for the maintenance of navigational channels or marinas, but only when it absolutely is necessary, according to the lawmaker.

In addition, the bill would prohibit construction of virtually any structure on public lands within the preserve.

But the bill and the aquatic preserve designation would not prohibit any building or dredging on private land, Henderson said. Neither does the designation prohibit commercial or sport fishing in the area.

Bicycle owner comes forward

By KAREN FELDMAN
News-Press Bureau

PUNTA GORDA — A man whose stolen bicycle was found near where Linda Piksritz was abducted and murdered last year has come forward to identify himself, as asked by Charlotte County authorities.

The man was the owner of a bicycle found in Port Charlotte Oct. 12, just one hour before the 12-year-old Port Charlotte girl was reported missing.

According to Byron Snowden, the sheriff's information officer, the owner of the girl's seven bicycles, who asked that his name not be released, told investigator Jim Jones the bike was stolen from the carport of his home on Easy Street the day before the murder, Oct. 11.

Linda was abducted on her way home from a local convenience store and then burned to death in a field on Tigard Street. Firemen summoned to put out the fire just before midnight found her body.

Her 10-speed bicycle was found the following day on East Broad Ranch Drive.

According to Snowden, another bicycle was found on the night of her murder on Edgewater Drive near Waterway Drive, Port Charlotte.

Sometime between Oct. 12, when the bike was found, and Nov. 12, when it was sold at a sheriff's sale, a man came to the sheriff's office, identified it as his and said he did not want it back.

Lawmen issued an appeal Wednesday that the man, who did not give sheriff's officials his name at the time, contact Jones.

He did so Wednesday evening, Snowden said.

Jones, who recently took over the murder investigation, is now trying to determine if there is a connection between the stolen bicycle and Linda's murder.

Calm returns to school after brawl

By ALLEN BARTLETT
News-Press Bureau

EVERGLADES CITY — Calm has returned to this village's high school after a racial brawl between students and nonstudents that erupted before spring vacation.

"As far as I can tell, there is no tension," Thomas Chambers, Everglades High School principal, said Thursday.

The brawl involved about 14 students, half of them whites, and half blacks, about a week before Spring vacation began April 6, according to authorities and sources. There were no news accounts of the racial brawl at the time.

"I don't think it was a riot . . . It was a racial disagreement among a bunch of kids," said Doug Caperton, supervisor of the Collier County Sheriff Department's youth relations program.

Two deputies with the program were summoned to talk to students involved and their parents, authorities said. The deputies were to try and sort out what happened, authorities said.

Authorities said there were no serious injuries or charges filed. Chambers confirmed two students were suspended for five days, but wouldn't name them.

Nelson Shadrick, who worked on the case along with Youth Relations Deputy Thomas Davis, said the brawl started between one white and one black student, neither of whom he would name.

Murder suspect said to resent women

By ALLEN BARTLETT
News-Press Bureau

NAPLES — Arnold Anderson, accused of the rape and beating murder of a 14-year-old Naples girl, resented women in part because a housekeeper made him watch Liberace as a youngster, a psychologist says in a sworn statement.

Anderson, 25, is accused of the rape and murder of Laura Ford and the bludgeoning of Michael Ford, 10, last July. He also is charged with trying to burn down the Ford home the same night.

The psychologist and a psychiatrist also said in sworn statements that Anderson claims he was at the Ford home twice on the morning of the July 6 beatings.

Anderson contends he found the Fords beaten when he first went there and later returned to burn down the house because he had left his fingerprints and he feared being blamed, the physicians said.

The statements are part of lengthy pre-trial testimony of Dr. Frank Dennis, a Naples psychiatrist, and William Love Jr., a Naples psychologist.

Advertised party site questioned

"The Biggest Party Ever Held In Southwest Florida" will not be held at the Cape Coral Country Club as advertised Thursday in the News-Press, according to the club's general manager, John H. Cranford Jr.

A 36-hour "disco-thon" is being sponsored by the ERA Real Estate and WSWF (107 FM) radio station.

It was advertised by the sponsors and by the Muscular Dystrophy regional office as a fundraiser for muscular dystrophy to be held at the country club May 11-13.

However, Cranford said he did not give his permission for the event to be held at the club, and that he does not intend to do so.

Richard Anglickis, president of American Heritage Real Estate, said Cranford's secretary booked the event. "I have unquestionably obtained a firm commitment from his secretary. I understand there's some confusion with her boss," he said.

American Heritage is a licensed broker for ERA. Cranford said his secretary told the sponsors that the May dates were open, and that confirmation of the event would have to come from Cranford.

"I was astounded to see this thing in the paper," Cranford said. "No decision had been made, and I don't know a damn thing about it."

The "disco-thon" was advertised in a full-page News-Press ad Thursday. The advertisement stated that the disco-thon was for adults over the age of 18, and that it would be a B.Y.O.B. dance. B.Y.O.B. means bring your own bottle.

Cranford said the club does not have a liquor license for a bottle party, and does not have a license for liquor to be served for 36 consecutive hours.

Anglickis said he and other sponsors are attempting to work out the problems with Cranford, and continue to hope the dance will be held at the club.

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