

Approved

Regular SWFLC Meeting

January 18, 2024

DoubleTree 13051 Bell Tower Dr FMY FL 33907

In attendance:

FPL/Universal Solar	Charlotte Miller
Comcast/Director Government Affairs	Justin Damiano
Woodard & Curran	Peter Simmons
Woodard & Curran	Paul Adams
Waste Pro	Ed Farmer
Former Mayor of Estero	William F Ribble Jr
Rapid Response team	Melanie Holliday
Lumen	Brandon Miller
VM: City of Bonita Springs	Deputy Mayor Fred Forbes
VM: Village of Estero	Vice Mayor Joanne Ribble
VM: City of Fort Myers	Councilwoman Teresa Watkins Brown
VM:City of Punta Gorda	Mayor Lynne Matthews
VM: City of Sanibel	Councilwoman Holly Smith
SWFLC Executive Director	Rachel Keesling
Sanibel Mayor	Richard Johnson
LaBelle Finance Dept	Gracie Morton
LaBelle Finance Dept	Jennifer Bentacourt
LaBelle	Jennifer Hubbard
Mayor Matthew's guest	Cherie Denham
President Smith's Guest	Craig Trapani
Estero Councilmember	George Zalucki

11:35 a.m. President Smith called the meeting to order.

Vice President Ribble conducted the invocation followed by Pledge of Allegiance.

Executive Director Keesling conducted the roll call of voting members, and the group was short one but had 2 members yet to arrive. President Smith explained that the reports would still be presented as per the agenda but could be passed at a future meeting if a quorum was not present at the time of the vote. President Smith welcomed all members, guests and sponsors and introduced Craig Trapani representing Florida CFO Patronis' Office. He was invited up to the podium and spoke on his background, work experience and gave details on his position within the CFO's office. Craig offered to help citizens in our region navigate their insurance problems and questions. He offered his business cards and will be speaking later in the meeting in more detail.

President Smith announced that the lunch was available, and all could get their meals during the business session presented by Executive Director Keesling. E.D Keesling recognized that voting member Teresa Watkins Brown had arrived, so a quorum was present for the action items on the agenda.

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Executive Director Keesling reviewed her report as informational and quickly moved onto the financial report. She reviewed the status of the dues collection, the stipend for 2024 and the upcoming expenditures.

President Smith asked questions and clarifications, none were brought forth. Voting Member Forbes moved to accept the financial report, seconded by Voting Member Ribble and the motion carried unanimously.

The second action item was presented and consisted of the meeting minutes from 11/08/23, as approved by the executive committee, President Smith asked for any clarification or changes, none were brought forth. Voting Member Ribble moved and Voting Member Matthews seconded the minutes for approval and the motion carried unanimously.

President Smith introduced the guest speaker Melanie Holliday of Rapid Response Team – Property Restoration Specialists in Southwest Florida. She described the quick response and hard work that had been done after Hurricane Ian and how this company conducted integral services in a disaster. Melanie Holliday took the podium and gave details on the company, the founder and the services offered. She then presented a collage slide that detailed the damages to municipal assets on Sanibel. She described how Rapid Response Team went about securing buildings and restoring services for city leaders and citizens, despite suffering personal loss. She gave examples on how the response efforts are coordinated with the company and government officials. She also spoke on how local business benefit from having response teams onsite as soon as safe to do so. President Smith thanked her for efforts and presentation.

President Smith led a discussion on bills of regional interest that have been filed and how the new legislation could affect city operations and revenue streams. She then went into a discussion on the FLC led legislative alerts and elaborated on how the policy committees help shape the league's work for the upcoming session. She spoke on bills regarding millage rate votes, homestead exemption expansion, unsafe structures, alternative mobility funding, environmental bills, vacation rentals and local business tax. Discussion ensued regarding each city's position on current legislation and how Legislative Action Days will be a very important trip for city officials to take this year.

President Smith then called Craig Trapani back to the stage to talk in-depth about insurance issues and constituent services that are offered to anyone having trouble navigating their claims. He spoke on insurance village events and other ways that citizens can reach out to get their case started and moving through the CFO system.

President Smith called on members for their city updates:

Voting Member Joanne Ribble from Estero gave updates on water quality projects, including the UEP and sewer conversions that continue to take place. She also announced the city was conducting a traffic study to look at growth in the area.

Voting member Lynne Matthews gave updates on Punta Gorda's seawall restoration efforts and getting FEMA to commit to funding for those repairs. She spoke on the electronic meter reading failures and asked if any cities have Zenner as a provider. She also spoke on septic to sewer conversions and how funding seems to be a challenge this legislative session.

President Smith called on Sanibel Mayor Richard Johnson to give up the update on the recovery efforts in her city. He spoke on recovery & resilience efforts, including restoring the natural beach barriers. He commented that loads of sand are being brought in so be careful on the roadways, the situation is temporary but necessary. He also spoke on causeway repairs and how there are ongoing closures. He mentioned that Lee County is considering changing annexation procedures, and all cities should be watching those changes and giving their input.

Voting Member Teresa Watkins Brown spoke on Fort Myer's pipeline project which has been completed after 10 years of work. She gave updates on their plan to build a new police headquarters and move city facilities to a central campus style. She also talked about the City of Palm Rec complex project and that a soccer-based operation, along with other amenities, was chosen through the contract process. She commented on the charter review for Lee County and mentioned that members should be involved in that process.

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Voting Member Fred Forbes spoke on Bonita Spring's revitalization of the Old downtown corridor and how it will be an attraction for visitors and residents. He also gave updates on the beach renourishment projects and how most of the work was completed and satisfactory to the residents.

Executive Director Keesling announced that the March meeting date has changed to 2024 SWFLC meeting Thursday, March 28, 2024 11 a.m. at Doubletree @ Bell Tower Shops and that FLC President Greg Ross will be the featured Speaker.

Adjournment was called by President Smith at 1:20 p.m.