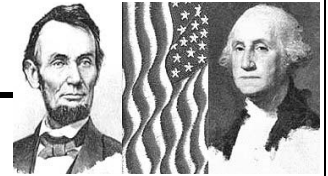




Civic Chatline

Be Aware! Be Alert! Be Informed!
Founded in March 1962, CCA is the Cape oldest civic organization



Volume X Issue II

Happy President's Day

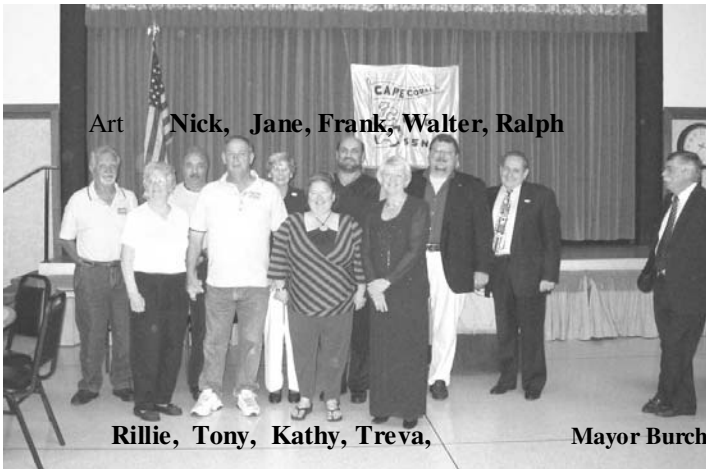
February 2009

Last Month at Civic Mayor Burch Installed New Officers

Civic expresses our thanks to Mayor Jim Burch for doing the ceremonial duties of installing the new 2009-2010 Civic Officers and Board of Directors. They include:



President - Treva Devers
Vice Pres. - Tony Farina
Secretary - Kathy Burgess
Treasurer - Rillie Hickey
ExOfficio - Ralph LePera
Trustees:
Walter Fluegel
Jane Longo
Frank Perry
Nick Tomacelli
Art Vitale



Art Nick, Jane, Frank, Walter, Ralph

Rillie, Tony, Kathy, Treva, Mayor Burch

Mayor Burch also served as our keynote speaker for the evening. He spoke about his trip to the US Mayor's Conference in Washington, DC during the presidential inauguration. During the conference, Jim indicated that he was able to speak to the foreclosure and unemployment issues and the economic stimulus that is needed for infrastructure in Cape Coral.



Financial Services Director Mark Mason at Civic on Feb. 24

With the collapse of the UEP (utility expansion program) Civic has asked Mark Mason to address the issue and what effect the UEP stoppage will have on the existing 50,000+ utility rate payers. It has been reported that there are existing financial utility expansion obligations and costs that are in excess of 300 million dollars that will have to be paid in spite of the stoppage by council. **The question is who pays?**

As in previous years, Civic is concerned about the recent discussions of a Public Service Tax. If adopted we would be taxed for electric usage. The PST discussion on Feb. 9 was prompted by an approximate \$42M reduction in revenue over the past two years and an anticipated \$30+M revenue shortfall for next year's budget.



While Civic understands administration's desire to diversify revenue sources and hedge revenue losses as a result of a down real estate market, property owners would lose the deduction for the PST from their Federal Income Tax. The issue of the PST has been a yearly exercise with council. The question is, will this be the council that enacts the Cape's first PST.

Mark joined the City of Cape Coral in June 2003, as the Financial Services Director. Mark has been a resident of Florida since 1972 and attended the University of Central Florida where he earned a B.S. in Business Administration and has been a Certified Public Accountant since 1991. Before coming to the City of Cape Coral, Mark's government experience was at the City of Sebastian and the City of Melbourne.

As part of Civic's desire to bring elected officials to our meetings, City Council member Derrick Donnell, District 7 has also been invited to attend and address the members.

Civic needs your "Economic Stimulus" 2009 Dues are Due

We want to thank those who continue to support your Civic Association. For those who have yet to send in your stimulus please be aware that dues are now due. **Please show your continued support for your Civic Association.**

Also remember that in November the members voted to increase the dues to \$20. per year/family due to our increased expenses. Dues may be paid at the general meeting or mailed to the return address on the mailing page of this Chatline. Please make out your CCA check today.

We value your membership!





Politics in Paradise

A look at bureaucrats and elected officials

It's Gone Again

Council member Donnell sponsored the last tree ordinance 140-08. Public hearing was held on Jan. 26. Donnell voted against his ordinance.



Once again Civic spoke against this ordinance since; a) it did not employ the right tree right place mentality, b) it did not directly hold individual property owners financially responsible for the cost of tree trimming by the power company. Board members Devers, Longo and Perry attended the meeting along with LePera who spoke to the issue.

It's Gone Again Too

After just one week of having made a decision to move forward with North 1-8 water only Utility Expansion, Council member Day on Feb. 9 asked council to rescind their previous decision to move forward.



What was so interesting is the very reasons Day gave to move forward the previous week, he now spoke directly against from the opposite side of the aisle.

On the evening that council approved N 1-8 there was a heated exchange between Day and Brandt after Brandt questioned Day's voting when he owned multiple properties that would be affected. The following week Day was making nice-nice with Brandt on this issue as well.

This council has been on again, off again with the UEP expansion since voting to halt the SW 6-7 on June 9 last year, after having gone forward with the design and bid process. It does not appear that council will be making any decision to bring the UEP back before the elections in November. Council member Deile indicated a need to "marinate" the issue which sounds like another word for procrastination. The end result may well be the existing utility rate payers paying an increased premium in their rates.



Crist urges property tax cuts

Crist's proposals could include:



- A spending cap that would limit growth in local government budgets to the rate of inflation, unless voters authorize a higher tax rate to meet local needs. (where have we heard this before?)
- A block on property tax increases when the value of a home drops. (This effectively would negate the Recapture Rule, which forces a 3 percent increase in assessments for full-time residents when their property values drop)
- Homestead exemptions for first-time buyers.
- Limits on assessments of commercial properties.

New Council Meeting Format

Beginning in March, City Council will hold regular voting meetings every other Monday at 4:30 p.m. The Council will conduct Committee of the Whole workshops on alternate Monday's each month. The workshops will also begin at 4:30 p.m. There is no public input during Committee of the Whole meetings, and while direction may be provided, there is no formal voting permitted at these meetings.

As a result, public input will be heard half as often.



February President's message

Dear Members and Friends,

The Executive Board had our first working group session yesterday, February 17 and I'm excited about the plan we are beginning to formulate! The oath that I took said that I would leave this organization in the condition that I received it or make it better. I fully intend, with all of your help, to make it better!! And I believe starting early is important to achieve this goal. The Executive Board decided that we needed to have the following committees, with some ideas for each of them to work:

1) **Public Relations** A. Newsletter – Coordinate putting the "Chatline" together each month. Suggestions: Begin doing a "Spotlight" on members and the Executive Board. Survey the members – is Chatline giving you what you need?

B. Advertising – Coordinate getting advertising for Civic Suggestions: Have a business pay the expense of producing the newsletter each month by giving them a banner at the top. Need a link on the City website to our Civic website, in addition, there should be links to all local Homeowner's Associations.

2) **Government Watch** – What are the issues that are being discussed at the City and County level of which our members need to be aware. Suggestion – What happened to the Adopt Median Program?

3) **Membership** – What incentives do we need to introduce to increase members and attendance at meetings.

4) **Sunshine** – Birthdays and illnesses, send cards to those members that have birthdays or are sick or in the hospital.

5) **Special Projects** – Fundraising projects

6) **Refreshments** – This is currently done by Jane Longo with refreshments provided by the Board of Directors

7) **Speakers for Meetings** – In charge of getting speakers for the monthly meetings. Suggestions: Fingerprinting children, GPS for adults and Neighborhood Watch Program. LCEC to speak about how to reduce your electrical costs. City Council and elected officials

As you can see from the list, the Board has a lot of enthusiasm and energy and from a person who was there, it was hard to keep up!

All of these ideas are wonderful but the Board cannot do it alone. We need your help! We have several Board members who are willing to take chair of some of the committees and in the near future we will be asking you to sign up also. PLEASE help us move Civic forward!

It takes a lot of work to provide the information that you have come to expect when you attend a meeting.

The Civic Executive Board and I look forward to seeing you at the meeting!

Treva Devers, President

"The Association is for the betterment of Cape Coral."

Civic expression of Sympathy

Civic wishes to express our heartfelt sympathy to Civic member Ricky Pistone and his family over the recent passing of Ricky's father, Alberico. May he rest in peace.

Civic also wishes to express our heartfelt sympathy to Civic member Tammy Hall and her family over the passing of Tammy's mother. May she rest in peace.

Cape Coral “Shovel Ready” Projects Requested for Federal Economic Stimulus

The total cost of all the projects submitted by Cape Coral is **\$461,300,000**. The total cost of all the projects submitted by Fort Myers is **\$283,253,000**. The total cost for all the projects submitted by Florida is **\$15,644,718,723**.

Project Description	# Jobs	Cost	Program Type
Chiquita Boulevard widening from 4 to 6 lanes	436	\$ 60,000,000.	Streets/Roads
Citywide roadway maintenance – resurfacing of deteriorating roads	36	\$ 10,000,000.	Streets/Roads
Utility Expansion Program to replace well & septic SW 6-7, North 1-8	1359	\$ 345,400,000	CDBG
Chiquita Boat Lock, construct for clean waterway on the south spreader	100	\$ 13,000,000	CDBG
Sidewalks & Curbing program retrofit 4-lane divided roadways	36	\$ 10,000,000	CDBG
Construct perimeter walls around new reverse osmosis & water reclamation facilities	20	\$ 2,800,000	CDBG
Environmental building construction	80	\$ 9,200,000	Energy
ASR Treatment System , Treatment for alternative storage & recovery wells	20	\$ 7,500,000	Energy
Everest Odor Control-upgrade odor control system at the water reclamation facility	20	\$ 2,600,000	Energy
No. Cape Guard House for Homeland Security at Reverse Osmosis water plant	20	\$ 800,000	Public Safety

On The Lighter Side, Church Bulletins

- The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.
- The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on Water.' The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'
- Our youth basketball team is back in action Wednesday at 8 PM in the recreation hall. Come out and watch us kill Christ the King.
- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
- The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled due to a conflict.
- Don't let worry kill you - let the Church help.
- The Rector will preach his farewell message after which the choir will sing: 'Break Forth Into Joy.'
- Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married Oct. 24 in the church, ending a long friendship that began in their school days.
- A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.
- The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.
- Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.
- The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind and may be seen in the basement Friday afternoon.
- Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.
- The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

Overhead or Underground

While there is no question that the citizens of Cape Coral would most likely be in favor of underground electric utilities, there is no doubt that the cost would be staggering. Such was the Administrative Discussion item before city council on Feb. 9 regarding the LCEC South Cape Transmission Lines.

The CRA (Community Redevelopment Agency) and a number of citizens, spoke during an expanded citizens input to convince council of their desire to bury the transmission line from Del Prado Blvd to the LCEC Sub station located west of Del Prado Blvd, within the CRA, a distance of about 1.2 miles. Several routes are being proposed that bring the lines from Del Prado Blvd to the sub station. We understand the cost to do this is going to be approximately 6 to 7 million dollars if the line is buried. As reported, the CRA recently voted 7-0 to pay up to \$1.9 million of that cost. Under their reasoning LCEC would pay another \$1.9 million and the city would have to pay the remaining \$2.2 million.

We also understand that an overhead line would cost \$3.8 million, and LCEC would pay that entire amount. However, residents and business owners are baulking over the overhead power line and 75-foot high poles within the downtown CRA. We would also question why LCEC, would reduce by half, their financial responsibility from \$3.8M for overhead lines to \$1.9M if the line is buried. The transmission line is a backup to the current line in the event of a failure during a major hurricane.

According to Mayor Jim Burch, putting the lines underground seems like the best idea. But paying for that might require additional fees to electric users. “Those lines aren't for the residents (along Southeast 46th Street). Those lines aren't for the CRA. They're for a shared power grid. They're for a shared expense through out the city.”

While the transmission line may well be for a shared power service, we understand the cost would be picked up by LCEC if it went over head, just like it is along DelPrado Boulevard.

Civic Chatline



Be Aware! Be Alert! Be Informed!
Cape Coral Civic Association
P.O. Box 152171
Cape Coral, FL 33915 - 2171



Next General Meeting: Tues. Feb. 24 @ 7 p.m. CC Yacht Club

Chatline is a publication of the Civic Assn. and intended solely for the education and enjoyment of its members
Civic Web Page: <http://www.capecoralcivicassociation.org>

2009-10 CCCA Board of Directors
Phone: (239) 945-4658
e-mail: CapeCoralCivic@Yahoo.com

President:	Treva Devers
Vice President:	Tony Farina
Secretary:	Kathy Burgess
Treasurer:	Rillie Hickey
Trustees:	Walter Fluegel
	Jane Longo
	Frank Perry
	Nick Tomacelli
	Art Vitale
Ex-officio	Ralph LePera

City Council member directory:
Council Office Phone: 574-0437

Mayor:	Jim Burch	jburch@capecoral.net
Dist: 1	Gloria Tate	gtate@capecoral.net
Dist: 2	Pete Brandt	pbrandt@capecoral.net
Dist: 3	Bill Deile	bdeile@capecoral.net
Dist: 4	Dolores Bertolini	dbertolini@capecoral.net
Dist: 5	Eric Grill	egrill@capecoral.net
Dist: 6	Tim Day	tday@capecoral.net
Dist: 7	Derrick Donnell	ddonnell@capecoral.net

Council email: council@capecoral.net
Cape Citizen's Action Center: 574-0425
City Web Page <http://www.capecoral.net>