



C THE LEHIGH ACRES CITIZEN

FREE Inside SHOPPER

PRSTD STD PAID Permit #521 Ft. Myers, FL

BREEZE NEWSPAPERS BreezeNewspapers.com



VOLUME 10, NUMBER 7

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 15, 2006

Prairie Creek developers meet with LACPC

Members suggest 'better use' of two acres for commercial consideration

By MEL TOADVINE

mtoadvine@breezenewspapers.com

While members of the Lehigh Community Planning Corp. seemed generally pleased with a presentation made before them by Fort Myers developer Daniel Dodrill and planner Tracy Bean of a new development on Joel Boulevard, near Alva, they voiced concerns over two issues — the lack of commercial use on the site and there being only one entrance into the community.

Dodrill and Bean met with the LACPC on Feb. 8 in the Veterans Park Recreation Complex on Homestead Road and gave details about a planned new development

and gated community to be known as Prairie Creek. The new development will contain 223 platted lots and is planned for northern Lehigh and borders the southwestern corner of Joel Boulevard and Tuckahoe Road, near Alva.

In fact, the planned community straddles lands recognized by the county in both the Lehigh community and the Alva community.

Members of the LACPC came to what member Charles DeFelice called a "sticking point" over a two-acre area of the community that has been designated as an amenity location that would include a clubhouse, swimming pool, tennis court and

playground. The plot for the amenity area is along Joel Boulevard but within the community, and that is what concerned LACPC members the most. They thought a better use of the two acres would be for commercial development.

Prairie Creek will be composed of 298 acres with approximately 74 acres in Lehigh and 224 acres in the designated Alva Community. There are also about 70 acres of wetlands.

LACPC Member Jim Fleming said he thought the two acres near the entrance "was too valuable to give up" to be a recreational area within the development.

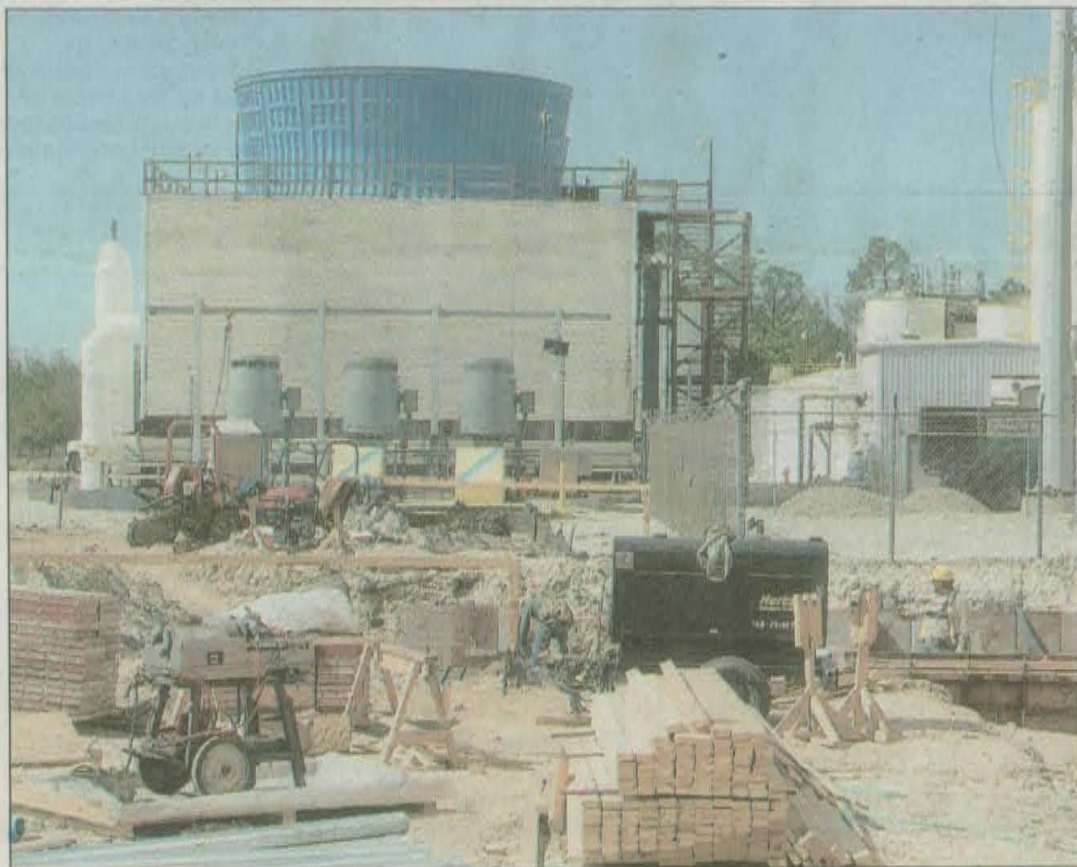
"Give up a couple of home sites and move it to another area of your community ... and use those two acres for commercial ... even a 7-

See ACRES, page 3



Photo by MEL TOADVINE

Fort Myers developer Daniel Dodrill and planner Tracy Bean give details of a new development on Joel Boulevard to the local Lehigh Acres planning group.



This is the area at the Buckingham Waste to Energy facility where a third combustion unit is being built to increase the garbage-burning plant's capacity by 50 percent.

Photo by MEL TOADVINE

Expansion of the Waste to Energy facility celebrated

Officials hold ground breaking, barbecue

By MEL TOADVINE

mtoadvine@breezenewspapers.com

Wayne Holbrook of Pine Island paused after lifting the ceremonial shovel of dirt at the official ground breaking on Feb. 8 of a new addition to the Waste to Energy facility in Buckingham. Next to him was Lee County Commissioner John Albion, who along with county officials, waste management officials and construction people, broke ground for a third combustion unit at the waste management facility at 10500 Buckingham Rd. They talked about the beginning of the waste management project.

The current plant, with two combustion units, processes 1,200 tons of waste per day, approximately 390,000 tons of trash annually.

Officials said the combustion

process generates up to 36 megawatts of electricity, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Holbrook said he remembered the day some years ago in the early 1990s when there was heavy opposition to the building of the waste management facility.

"I was involved in fighting the opposition. I knew it was something that Lee County had to do and I was all for it," he remembered.

Holbrook said the fight was so bad that those who were against the building of such a facility were pushing coffins up the steps at the Lee County Courthouse, claiming that people would die from the chemicals expelled from the facility. "People like those in Greenpeace were against it as were many in the environmental move-

ment in those days," he said.

But since then the facility has been recognized all over the world for its engineering and technology.

Officials say the best available control technology has been used to ensure good combustion practices for the control of volatile organic compounds and carbon monoxide.

They are all implemented in the form of air pollution control equipment for the combustion unit.

This includes a spray dryer absorber (semi-dry scrubber) and fabric filter bag house for the control of sulfur dioxide, acid gases and particulate matter, a select non-catalytic reduction system for the control of nitrogen oxides, a dry carbon injection system for the control of mercury and a flue gas recirculation system.

New ancillary equipment,

See WASTE, page 2

Carter explains disability plan in Tallahassee

By MEL TOADVINE

mtoadvine@breezenewspapers.com

Linda Carter's emergency accountability program for disabled people may become part of Gov. Jeb Bush's emergency preparedness overall Florida initiative with the passage of two bills moving through the Legislature.

Carter, who lives in Lehigh, is back from Tallahassee after spending a day in the State House talking to legislative staff members and lawmakers about the plan that she has written for Southwest Florida. Carter chairs the ADA Southwest Florida Advisory Board.

On Feb. 6 Carter spoke before the Domestic Security Committee in support of SB1058 which is being sponsored by Sen. Steve Wise, of Jacksonville, and Sen. Alex Diaz de la Portilla, of Miami-Broward County. The bill deals with emergency preparedness and special needs sheltering and accountability for people with disabilities, said Carter. Her plan for Southwest Florida has caught the eye of state officials and the committee wanted to hear more about what she and the ADA Advisory Committee are doing in Southwest Florida. Carter's accountability plan was prepared by her a few years ago and has been tweaked since Hurricane Katrina left New Orleans' disabled people lost in the confusion of evacuation.

Carter has an extensive background in the U.S. military, having served in Vietnam. Part of Carter's work was preparing military evacuation and accountability plans for the U.S. military. After leaving the military and some years later as a resident of Florida, she wondered what might happen to disabled people in a natural disaster such as a hurricane or in a national disaster, an event that could split disabled people from family and friends.

Then came Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans. Several thousand people were displaced because many were not able to evacuate New Orleans before the levees broke bringing flood water that left most of New Orleans covered with water to the rooftops.

As most TV viewers saw on national news programs and cable programs, evacuees were plucked from rooftops, taken to the Superdome and when conditions worsened there, were plucked again from the crowds and sent in all directions of the country, often without family members knowing where their parents, spouses, children, and siblings were.

Many of those people were disabled and that is what Carter said she found as a horrific problem that could happen again if a major hurricane were to hit the country or, even worse, some other type of natural or unnatural disaster.

Carter developed accountability forms with information from disabled people listing items that are important in the case of a disaster. "It gives us a way to keep up with disabled people in a disaster so we know where they are and what needs they may have," she said.

"As a note, 94 to 95 percent of the disabled population don't fit the criteria that go into Special Needs Shelters —

See DISABILITY, page 8

Disability

Continued from Page 1

they mostly shelter at home (during a disaster), some go to general shelters or evacuate," Carter told members of the Domestic Security Committee.

"The data base (that Carter's plan encompasses) would monitor the disabled, to have the ability to know where they are and what post storm needs may be.

"This creates accountability and safety first through education," she said.

Carter, who has vision problems and uses a power wheel chair to get around, also told legislators that the No Person Left Behind program had been designed, maintained and run by persons with disabilities in Southwest Florida and has the support of local emergency management and disability groups.

"The program is a data based program that creates a registry for 100 percent accountability for all persons with disabilities. The program identifies the basic needs of each person or disabled family members," she said.

A similar House bill is also being considered and Carter's plan could be incorporated in both bills.

Carter has sent copies of her No Person Left Behind plan to legislators and a news story was published by The Lehigh Acres Citizen several weeks ago.

"Since then doors have opened for us. We are very excited. We have had a positive reaction from our legislators, very positive," Carter said.

Carter said the eight to 10 senators that she spoke to in a committee setting listened attentively to her when she was seated before them to explain how her plan could become a part of the Senate bill.

Prior to appearing before the committee, Carter said she met with the Domestic Security staff, giving them a one-hour presentation in detail of her plan.

Carter said she worked for two days with

Paula Shea, of the Department of Education in Tallahassee, and also a full-time employee with the Government Affairs and Emergency Preparedness committees.

"After meeting with the legislators' staffs, we were told to write two bills using legislative language to bring our bill into their legislation. Paula plans to tweak my plan and send it to me in bill legislative form and I will review it and get it back to her. I am getting a crash course on writing in the legislative language," she said.

"It has to be ready by Feb. 22 for the committee and I will be going back to Tallahassee to appear on the twenty-second of February before that conference committee for further explanation and to answer their questions before they vote," Carter said.

"I think that when I explained the program for the senators, some of the staff members' bottom jaw would have fallen off if it was not attached," she said. "They seemed excited that I had written the plan ... it was all done ... it just needs to be tweaked with legislative talk," she said.

"When they asked me about my credentials, I told them that I had about 35 years of military experience behind me. I feel good about this ... and it will be a great thing for the disabled people of Florida should it be implemented in the governor's overall emergency preparedness program," Carter said.

A pilot program for all of South Florida is now the aim of Carter who was asked to set up such a plan from Okeechobee to the Keys and from the east coast to the west coast, including Miami and Broward counties.

Carter said she also met with Deirdre Finn, a deputy chief on Governor Bush's staff. "We had a half hour meeting and Mrs. Shea and I explained the program. She was going to pass on the information," Carter

said.

"They have to be aware that all of this can be part of the governor's initiative for hurricane preparedness for people with disabilities.

"This is the whole package. This falls right in line. There is no way they can turn it down," she said. "The plan gives them a solution."

Carter said that state Sen. Burt Saunders, who represents much of Southwest Florida and who is chairman of the Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee, will also get the bill when it's finalized.

Carter went to Tallahassee with the endorsement of the Lee County Commission. On Jan. 31 commissioners wrote Gov. Bush and called Carter's plan "a blueprint that may serve as a pilot for such a statewide effort is the ADA Advisory Board of Southwest Florida's No Person Left Behind program.

"Launched over 10 months ago, this program registers those with disabilities and tracks them after a storm to see if they need help. The program was very helpful to those disabled in Lee County last October," wrote Tammy Hall, chairwoman of the Lee County Commission at the time.

Hall wrote that the commissioners believed Carter's plan would be "a valuable addition to the governor's culture of preparedness initiative and (we) offer our endorsement to this proposal put forth by the ADA Advisory Council of Southwest Florida."

"People in Tallahassee understood and asked me what we could do to get it started now. Emergency management, senators, agencies, I got a favorable reaction," Carter said.

Carter's proposal is already written — 120 pages of suggestions of how to implement the plan — and if accepted in most of

its form, it would mean the state plan is basically written as far as accountability for the disabled.

Carter said that one-third of Florida's estimated 6.3 million households include at least one person with a disability and over the last two years, with multiple hurricane threats in various counties, it became even more evident to her that dedicated support for emergency preparedness for persons with special needs of all ages is critical.

"Those who have medically stable conditions but need a source of power, specialized personnel or equipment may not have considered all their options related to being able to shelter-in-place or needing to evacuate.

"In our plan, there is no standardized template for pre-registration, nor any easy-to-understand state information source for who should consider going to special care units or special needs shelters," she said.

Now Carter says she is preparing to meet with other disability groups in South Florida.

"We need to get the pilot program up and going. We need to set it up. We can do this with the help of everyone involved with the disabled. It can be done.

"And I think that if bills with the plan in it are included in the governor's emergency preparedness initiative (and) are approved, we can go statewide and get thousands of names registered before this year's hurricane season is over," Carter said.

"We have a little more than four months to get this going. I think it can happen. If we can get it underway, maybe we won't have a situation like they had in New Orleans when nobody knew where people had been sent and people with disabilities were just forgotten and it took months for people to find their disabled relatives.

"I think we can do it in Florida. I'm ready to go. I'm excited," she said.



CARRIERS NEEDED

FOR TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY OR SATURDAY DELIVER!

Pick up at our new distribution center on
Jetport Loop Rd in Fort Myers.



Sharon
Harrington

Harrington to speak at Democratic Club

Sharon Harrington, supervisor of Lee County Elections, will speak at the Lehigh Democratic Club on Feb. 22 at 7 p.m. at the Veterans Park Recreational Center at 55 Homestead Rd.

The public is encouraged to attend. For information call club president Phyllis Conners at 368-5973. The Lehigh Democratic Club has doubled its membership since it started a year ago this month.

All the representatives from other Democratic clubs in Lee County will be in Lehigh during the Spring Festival.

Conners also said that State Committee Woman Erini Bono-Price, Lee County Chairman of the Democratic Executive Committee Lyndia Bradley, Pete Burkert, who is running for state representative for District 73, which includes six precincts in Lehigh; U.S. Rep. Jim Davis, of Tampa, and State Sen. Rod Smith, who are both running for governor, and State Sen. Dave Aronberg will ride in

ADVERTISEMENT

Eliminate Credit Card Bills Once And For All

Credit Card payments Got You Down? Pay Them Off & Give The Credit Card Companies The Boot!

Plus Bonus Get A Tax Deduction At The Same Time!

With the appreciation homes in Southwest FL have seen in the last couple of years, certainly you have a lot of equity just sitting in your house. Call Today And We Will See How Much Your Payments Will Drop By Refinancing Your House & Paying Off Your Credit Cards!

Borrow \$200,000 for as little as \$643 per month!

I understand how easy it is to spend money on credit cards, heck with six children! You bet I understand. For years we have been helping families consolidate their debt, and put together a budget to avoid future over spending.

"Last year we spent so much on Christmas, we couldn't pay our bills." Bob helped us refinance our house, pay off our credit cards, & put together a budget so that doesn't happen again." Thanks Bob, you have been a blessing to us.
—Steve & Monica Dean

"Helping that young couple with a two little kids get into their first home & build equity that someday will help finance the college education of their children, just makes me feel like a hero. I love what I do!" All you have to do is, Call Bob Hahn Immediately at 239-823-2005 to get all your questions answered for FREE.

*Based on 1% payment ratio (6.819 APR). The APR may increase when the loan closes. Does not inc. taxes & insurance. Rates & terms may change without notice. This is not a commitment to lend. Call For Details.