

# WEST GALVESTON ISLAND PROPERTY OWNER'S ASSOCIATION

## MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

April 17, 2010

West Galveston Island Property Owners' Association Board of Directors Meeting was held on April 17, 2010. The meeting was called to order by Jerry Mohn, President at 9:00 a.m. and was held at the Galveston Country Club. A quorum of Directors was established by the attendance of Ron Coker of Bermuda Beach, Barbara Piersol of Spanish Grant Bay Side, Sidney McClendon of Pirates Beach, Steve Kendziera - Jamaica Beach, Carolyn Farmer - Terramar, Tom Booth - Condos, Debra Phelps - Pointe San Luis, Clay Lewis - Sportsman Road, and Peggy Zahler of Spanish Grant Beach. Janet Hampton, CKM Property Management was also present as acting secretary.

Current officials were introduced including Judge Jim Schweitzer, Brian Lamb - County Commissioner, and former District 6 City Council Members - Jackie Cole, Dom Mafrige, Johnny Smecca, and Dianna Puccetti. Also introduced was former Mayor Bo Quiroga. Planning Commissioners Dominic Sasser and Johnny Smecca were introduced. Former GISD President Board of Regents, John Ford, was introduced.

Jerry Mohn introduced candidates. Phil Roberts is running for Probate Judge for Galveston County and will be included on the ballot in November. Judge Jim Schweitzer running for re-election and stated that the crimes he sees are crimes of opportunity. People with no work for months and want to sit in jail for a traffic ticket. He recommends you close your garage doors; lock your car doors and home doors. Shop lifting cases - asking for more time in jail because they do not have anywhere to go.

County Commissioner Brian Lamb stated they are resurfacing the road all the way to 8 mile road and this will help the west end. FM 3005 is getting a more work. They are working on Avenue H, but have environmental issues. Commissioner Lamb stated he is up for re-election. He spends time on the west end and is involved in helping to make your quality of life better and has been here for you and will continue to be here.

The minutes were reviewed. Motion made by Tom Boothe and seconded by Peggy Zahler, the Board approved the minutes of March 20, 2010.

Discussion was held on the water tower going in at Isla Del Sol. Isla Del Sol Association and owners are asking the City of Galveston to look at another site. The City has stated that moving the tower from its proposed location would require mitigation of wetlands. The City never formally notified Isla del Sol of the proposed water tower and the WGIPOA is in support of their efforts to have a new location.

New Galveston Independent School District stadium will cost \$35 million dollars. Benefits of the new stadium were outlined in a brochure. Pros and cons were heard about the proposed stadium and each group was allowed a total of 10 minutes each.

Pros - Johnny Smecca. He has lived in district 5 and 6 all his life. Think about the neglect on the west end and you know the feeling of neglect. People advocate success for students. Email us and GISD with any questions. Great plans and leadership has gone into this plan and we need the voter's approval. Interest rates are at a favorable all time low for us, and the bids are very competitive and we know FEMA is going to raise the elevation in Galveston to 8' to get it to 13' elevation. We have a grand old lady that needs to be replaced. This stadium can be used for graduations, concerts, ceremonies, competitions, and meetings. Vote on May 8th.

Cons - Don Mafrige -Primary concern of Galveston Independent School District should be educating students. Students will be neglected in this process and the future is the education of the students. This is a feel good thing. They do need a new stadium, but they do not need this stadium. Please vote "No" on this bond.

Cons - John Ford - Superintendent - Ball High School is something to be proud of and has the facilities. This is beyond the needs of GISD and contrary to the mission statement to provide excellence in education. You cannot have alcohol for concerts. The Board and the Superintendent need to sit down and discuss the issues. GISD cannot afford this complex or afford to manage it.

Chula Ross Sanchez - Running for City Council for District 6, lives on the island, born in Corpus Christi, she spent 3 years on the Planning Commission as Vice Chair.

Dianna Puccetti - Running for City Council for District 6, has been active with this group since February 1999, and helped address those issues on the West end. Need affective leadership and an active voice for this area.

Moderator - Jamaica Beach Steve Kendziera - Vice President JBIC

1. What do you believe are the major issues associated with the West End? Please discuss how you will address these issues.

Chula Ross Sanchez - It is crucial that the City of Galveston to represent your interest and that they listen to your needs. Sewer and potable water are the two large issues. Other important issues are protecting beach to bay, and that is why you live here and protect them, safety in neighborhoods, feel safe when you are not here, to improve infrastructure is the top issue of this district.

Dianna Puccetti - Need for continued infrastructure improvements-sewer, water, drainage and roadway improvements; Beach and bay erosion with need for continued beach nourishment as well as selection and application of technology that will maintain the sand and allow the beaches to accrete vs. erode. The balance and protection of natural resources is another critical issue.

2. Do you believe emergency services, including police, fire, EMS, are adequate for the West End? Do you envision improving such services in the near future and how?

Dianna Puccetti - Police patrols have been increased, but I would like to see an additional patrol unit added during the next two budget cycles; fire protection was improved in terms of response when I was on Council previously and actively lead the push to have four men on a truck-this increase in manpower allowed firefighters to begin entry as necessary immediately upon arrival vs. having to wait for additional units to man the two-in two out requirement. I would like to see EMS units allocated to each fire station in the west end to improve emergency response time especially during summer months when traffic and limited access can create significant delays.

Chula Ross Sanchez - Safety is a major concern, the MUD District building should be fixed and made into a hub for City services, EMS with the Fire Department. If the City is looking for ways to cut costs, put these services under one roof where possible. Looking for ways to cut costs would be to put them together. Police are working to reduce those burglaries.

3. Do you favor gambling on Galveston Island or West Galveston Island? Please explain your position.

Chula Ross Sanchez - I am against gambling and feels that it is a state issue and then a local issue. Would

have to see what the public decides and if this is a pressure area.

Dianna D. Puccetti - Not personally in favor of gambling in Galveston. Must watch what is going on the state level. Gambling will be talked about since there is a short fall and may go for a vote for 2011. If approved the citizens should decide casino gambling. She opposes.

4. The future development of West Galveston Island is controversial in some circles. Do you favor the recommendations set forth in Galveston's current Comprehensive Plan relating to West Galveston Island, particularly relating to density (the number of units per acre) and elevation (the number of feet or stories in height)? Do you favor or oppose any changes in the Comprehensive Plan relating to West Galveston Island?

Dianna D. Puccetti - The committee that worked on this for 18 months tried to define the guideline for the west end. What should development look like out here? On the committee since 1998 and believe west end needs to be reviewed. We have the funding to move forward.

Chula Ross Sanchez - Approve a lot of projects and some good and some not so good. Gives bonus to larger/bigger developers. We have been using the comprehensive plan as an ordinance and it is not an ordinance and needs to be rewritten. The heights and high-density overlay zone would allow any height and this is an eroding beach. Different situation here and need to find ways to keep the sand on the beach naturally and to plan appropriately.

5. Would you pledge to vote against increases in the property tax and sales tax rates during your term in office?

Chula Ross Sanchez - Yes absolutely and we lost 26% of our tax base. Look for ways to cut and if you stay here you cannot afford more taxes. We are still getting homes and businesses back in shape.

Dianna D. Puccetti - It is not possible to predict what will happen. It will take time. Dianna has worked with the city with financial difficulties in the past. At or below the current level. Galveston is at the maximum for sales tax.

6. Would you make it a priority to spend a greater percentage of city revenue over time on infrastructure and capital improvements?

Dianna D. Puccetti - Yes, the City currently budgets from the enterprise funds and that is where improvements are funded.

Chula Ross Sanchez - Absolutely finding funds for infrastructure is a priority for water, sewer and roads.

7. Do you favor implementation of the proposed local wetlands ordinance?

Chula Ross Sanchez - I read the current draft and glad to see it and am in favor. It is good to have something on the table and this is the first serious document. Wetlands are a vital part of the beach. This needs work and can no longer leave this up to the Federal agencies and we need to take the protect into our own hands.

Dianna D. Puccetti - The current ordinance needs additional changes and which were brought to the city counsel and I support that. Support the adoption of the ordinance to be done on this island but it needs additional work. Looking to enhance the local area of the wetlands.

8. Do you believe that Galveston's regulation of new development on the island is too rigid, not

strict enough or about right? Explain.

Dianna D. Puccetti - Developers need clear guidelines. We need to protect our existing neighborhood with guidelines and to raise the bar for elements because of the way the high density and the way the zones fall outside these zones would not be protected so they are important part of process.

Chula Ross Sanchez - Like to go to the height density zone because we spend lots of money designing this. It did protect the neighborhood and went to counsel in tact and outline and counsel approved the height and density on these buildings.

9. If the Marquette requests for re-zoning: High Rise construction and the entire Marquette Plan were to come to City council again after you take office, knowing what we now know about the project, would you vote yes or no?

Chula Ross Sanchez - There are five components to this project. Objected to the zoning. Took away from the power of the planning department. Why grant them recreational? When it came back from planning and made no concession we lost all that sand so I was against the develop agreement to give away the island for 30 years for a special developer. Why did we give those rights up? I Would continue to vote the same.

Dianna D. Puccetti - Market development presented a master plan development phase for 20-25 years. They have not come back for anything and do not need to. If the plan came forward today she would have to look at the plan today and what has been raised by Ike and the urban poor.

10. Do you believe that the City of Galveston should be required to give more notice to the public then notice in the Newspaper, such as notice in the water bill concerning construction and placement of City structures?

Dianna D. Puccetti - The City of Galveston gave notice in the Galveston County Daily News and that is not adequate notice. If you are within 200 feet of proposed city changes you should receive a notice and maybe we should increase this range giving notice. FM 3005 at Spanish Grant has a problem with lighting and Tex Dot was involved. She got the property owners involved on what they wanted to replace the lighting by working with the community. This is incumbent on the counsel member to be an advocate

Chula Ross Sanchez - 200 feet would have put very few on the list to be notified. It is a private development and they were given plenty of notice. The city would also need to grant that to the citizens. Per Karen Mahoney moving that tower would cost 1.2 million in 2 years. The city should be a good citizen just like the rest of us.

11. It seems to be an attitude of city council, that people should know better to buy on the west end. Are you going to try and swing that attitude and how will you go about that?

Chula Ross Sanchez - Buying on the west end speaks for itself for the life style and not everything is perfect. I would say buyer beware. Jump into the community and try to make it a better place. Rules need to be stated and things need to be clear.

Dianna D. Puccetti - the west end is one of our true jewels of our community and those who choose to live here because of the communities and they sign a risk agreement of the risk living on an island. Having all the nature around you in a true gift and the desire to enjoy those amenities.

## **Questions from the audience:**

Question - Are you in favor of an Ike Dike?

Chula Ross Sanchez - 6 counties have endorsed the study of the dike. Need a large space. Protecting the border of Houston and this is enough water and putting a dike does not protect Galveston. There are many considerations to be taken in account. A first line of defense for Houston needs to be considered.

Dianna D. Puccetti - Galveston needs to be in tune with this discussion and look at the research and what does it mean. Look at means to protect our beach and bay areas.

Question - There are two property setback ordinances considered one 200' back and 2nd 50' buffer zone around.

Dianna D. Puccetti - 2 sets favor 75' setback for building. The wetlands for protection ordinance on the island, again needs more work and we have the funding for a consultant to look at the variable to look at the platted or non-platted lots. Needs to see more information and this is not a black and white answer. She would need more information to answer.

Chula Ross Sanchez - Come to meeting next Tuesday for setbacks. Planning for 75' with the exception of the wetland rule and not to render your land un-buildable. Right now do not have dunes and people are coming for construction permits. Please pick a line. Three surveyors can go out in the same day and come up with different information. With the absence of dunes and a vegetation line, there is an ordinance coming.

Question - Please comment on our new lighting ordinance.

Dianna D. Puccetti - West end light pollution is a concern. Any ordinance needs to make sure that it is not intrusive and provides the safety for lighting. You do not want the same bright lights and on the West end it needs to be a lower level of lighting.

Chula Ross Sanchez - 2006 #1 objection was the lighting ordinance. The West end luminance is allowed for safety and water zoned. All of the west end is a water zone. The beach is a different zone and the lighting was calculated for the West end. I am very proud to have campaign that ordinance. Some businesses have too much light and will be enforced. If you see too much light let the city know.

## **Parting comments**

Dianna D. Puccetti - Thank you this is a sample of the major issues the city is dealing with progressive, action oriented and conservative approach. I am honored to serve as representative in your area. Need a balance in everything that we do and it is critical. I have proven I can do this from the past. Major thoroughfare that links you to the island and need to improve that access. Redevelopment and capitalization. Vote for me.

Chula Ross Sanchez - Development is always an issue. People will always want to come to the beach and we need to plan ahead. At home with maps and planning and plan ahead for infrastructure, better development and long term gains. Plan ahead, reactive permitting and reactive planning. It is a perfect time to make master planning for the island and the west end. Move out of recovery and a bright future for Galveston. Vote for me.

Meeting ended 10:30 A.M.

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