

**MANATEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS MEETING  
BRADENTON AREA CONVENTION CENTER, LONGBOAT KEY ROOM  
One Haben Boulevard  
Palmetto, Florida  
May 3, 2022**

Meeting video link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUlgjuGhS-qV966RU2Z7AtA>

**Present were:**

George Kruse, Second Vice-Chairman  
Reggie Bellamy  
Vanessa Baugh  
Misty Servia

**Absent were:**

Kevin Van Ostenbridge, Chairman  
James A. Satcher III, First Vice-Chairman  
Carol Whitmore, Third Vice-Chairman

**Also present were:**

Dr. Scott L. Hopes, County Administrator  
William Clague, County Attorney  
Robin Toth, Deputy Clerk, Clerk of the Circuit Court



Town of Longboat Key Mayor, Ken Schneier, called the Council of Governments of meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

**AGENDA AND SIGN-IN SHEETS**

BC20220503DOC004

**1. TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY – HIGHLIGHTED INITIATIVES**



Tom Harmer, Longboat Key Town Manager, utilized a slide presentation to highlight initiatives underway in the Town of Longboat Key.

**Undergrounding Project**



The Undergrounding Project will cost an estimated \$15 million to relocate utilities (power and cable) underground for safety and aesthetics. Significant changes include new street light poles and replacing incandescent bulbs. The 3-1/2 year project is anticipated to be complete by December 2022.


Staff reached out to cell phone providers to address the deficiency in cell phone service on the north end of the Island. Verizon was approved to install nine, freestanding personal wireless facilities to enhance coverage, two, 25-foot-high poles in neighborhoods, and seven, 35-foot-high poles on Gulf of Mexico Drive (S.R. 789) right-of-way. The poles on Gulf of Mexico Drive are funded by an assessment to all property owners on the Island, and the work should be operational by the end of this year.

**Outdoor Venue/Town Center**




The development of a Town Center on five acres of town-owned property next to Publix on Bay Isles Road involves three phases. Phase 1 includes site work/demolition of the former Amore restaurant building and Phase 2 work is out for bid for walkways, lighting, landscaping, restrooms funded by a private donor. Events have already been held. Phase 3 consists of two parcels on the site for community center-type construction of a potential library function, educational space for classrooms and a large, multi-purpose space.


Fire Station

 A new fire station was constructed on the south end of the Island and the fire station on the north end of the Island was renovated, for a total cost just under \$6 million.


St. Regis Hotel and Residences Project


 Construction is underway for a 166-room luxury hotel and three, six-story residential buildings with 69 luxury condominium residences on 18 acres (the old Colony site) on the Gulf of Mexico. The project is expected to be a 30-36-month construction project, with an anticipated opening date of June 6, 2024. The developer estimates the value of the project between \$500-\$800 million.

2021 Beach Nourishment Project

 The Town just completed a project of one million cubic yards of sand and five rock groin structures on the north end, starting at Greer Island and working around to preserve the north end of the island where the pressure is as the current goes south. Sand sources were Passage Key, Longboat Pass, and New Pass. The installation of the groins filled with sand significantly enhanced the recreational activity around Greer Island and the north end of the Island.


Greer Island Sand Spit

 The Town is working on an ongoing Sand Spit Management Plan with signed permits from the Department of Environmental Protection and Army Corps of Engineers, to remove sand from the Pass to the beaches on a recurring basis. The Town is working with Fish and Wildlife Conservation and Manatee County to establish some type of exclusions on swim areas, while allowing for the continuation of existing activities in an organized fashion.


 Mayor Schneier thanked Manatee County for contributing sand to the Greer Island portion of the Renourishment project.

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2. WATER TAXI INITIATIVE UPDATE


 Elliott Falcione, Convention and Visitors Bureau Director, gave an update on the Water Taxi Initiative. Staff talked to several water taxi operators that do not do business in the Bradenton/Sarasota area. They are curious, having had long-term success operating water taxis around the State of Florida.


Several water taxi companies are coming to the area to serve the waterways. Details involve landing spots that make sense, accessibility/depth of channels, locations that may and may not need much parking, and where people may want to get on/off the water taxi based on the amenities. The companies were provided tourism data to cross check with their ridership demographics to determine if it aligns with the County's target market. Staff plans to meet soon with two water taxi operators to get their data and their recommended watercraft. Staff is looking at a 25-50 passenger water taxi with an enclosed area for weather conditions. The Island trolley and bus systems would need to align with the water taxi service. The media is excited, but staff is proceeding cautiously with details. This would be a public/private partnership.


 The name Sheraton will no longer be seen on the side of the future hotel adjacent to the Convention Center. An announcement was made that the hotel is going to be a full-service Marriott and an enhancement to the urban core to Palmetto. The role of elected officials is very important and meetings will be held with the individual cities.


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3. **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**


 County Commissioner George Kruse stated the County learned that different organizations in the County are working individually with groups to facilitate affordable housing. A recent meeting was held with the City of Bradenton on the need for organizations to collaborate to provide affordable, workforce housing. There is consensus that affordable housing is critical to the future of Manatee County and it must be addressed. Several County officials plan to attend the annual Housing Coalition conference in August, and information would be shared with interested City officials.

 School Board Member Charlie Kennedy stated the School Board is waiting for the results of their Impact Fee Study. Plans are for the School Board to coordinate with the County to reduce impact fees. The School Board discussed partnering with a builder to build affordable housing for School employees using vacant School Board property, but this does not appear to be the will of the School Board at this time. Mr. Kennedy thanked the County and City of Bradenton for in-depth ideas shared at the recent affordable housing meeting (4/19/22).

 Discussion ensued on whether the School Board has property that can be used for affordable housing projects, School Board has vacant property, but some of the properties are far away from anything, other properties have size concerns and the School Board may need the property for future school sites, two or three properties are viable for 15-20-unit buildings, conversation is ongoing, but the School Board is not close to a decision point at this time, there are options and pieces of land (parcel across from the Boys and Girls Club), the County Commission and School Board need to collaborate, the County, City of Bradenton and School Board could facilitate workforce housing for School Board employees, the School Board has the biggest need for affordable housing based on the size of its employment base, two potential sites at Bayshore and Wakeland schools, and the County is ready to take the next step and hold a joint meeting with the School Board to move this forward.


 City of Bradenton Mayor Gene Brown spoke on the need for everyone to think outside the box and work together to create more density to build affordable housing. There are developers who would do these projects if they were tasked and given land. BC20220503DOC007

**PUBLIC COMMENT**


 Andra Griffin stated Manatee County is no longer an affordable community. She thanked everyone for addressing the affordable housing crisis. The Governor should be petitioned to reduce the gas tax, because retirees cannot afford to drive to important appointments.

There being no further public comment, Mayor Schneier closed public comment.

**OTHER COMMENTS BY OFFICIALS**

 There were no comments by Officials.

4. **NEXT MEETING**

 The next Council of Governments meeting is scheduled for August 2, 2022, at 4:00 p.m., in the Longboat Key Room at the Bradenton Area Convention Center.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Mayor Schneier adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.  
Minutes Approved: July 26, 2022