

Belleair Beach
Belleair Shore
Clearwater
Indian Rocks Beach
Indian Shores
Madeira Beach



North Redington Beach
Redington Beach
Redington Shores
St. Pete Beach
Treasure Island

OFFICERS

William Queen

President

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June 27, 2007

Minutes

Present:	Belleair Shore Clearwater Indian Rocks Beach Indian Shores Madeira Beach North Redington Beach Redington Beach St. Pete Beach	Mayor John Robertson Councilmember Cretkos Commissioner Jose L. Coppen Mayor Jim Lawrence Vice Mayor John Wolbert Mayor Bill Queen Mayor Nick Simons Vice-Mayor Mike Finnerty
Guest Speakers	Florida State Representative Florida State Senator	Jim Frische Dennis Jones
Guests Present:	Laura Berkowitz Doris Burns Marlene Clausen Rod Fischer Linda Fisher Nick Fritsch Joan Herndon Phyllis Johnson Sandra Knoebel-Ganache Bob MacPhersun Kathy Mortensen Ed Ruttencutter	TBCC and Pinellas County Economic Dev. Office of Senator Jones Councilor, Indian Shores Pinellas Cnty Construction Licensing Board Program Planner/Web Master, PPC Sand Key Civic Association Vice-Mayor, Indian Shores Tampa Bay Sun Pinellas County Beach Beacon-Bee Vice-Mayor, Belleair Beach Commissioner, St. Pete Beach

Bill Smith
Mary Sutch
Steve Sutch
Patricia O. Sullivan

Councilor, Indian Shores
Resident, Indian Shores
Councilor, Indian Shores
Board Reporter, City of Clearwater

Big-C President Queen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. at the Cabana Grill and Bar, Clearwater, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

To provide continuity for research, items are in agenda order although not necessarily discussed in that order.

3 – Approval of Agenda

Mayor Robertson moved to approve the agenda of the June 27, 2007, meeting. The **motion** was duly seconded and **carried** unanimously.

4 – Minutes Approval – May 30, 2007

Mayor Lawrence moved to approve the minutes of the May 30, 2007, meeting as submitted in written summation to each member. The **motion** was duly seconded and **carried** unanimously.

5 – Approval of Treasurer’s Report – June 2007

Secretary/Treasurer John Wolbert presented the Treasurer’s Report for June 2007. With no changes, the balance remains \$2,264.48.

Mayor Robertson moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report of June 2007, as submitted. The **motion** was duly seconded and **carried** unanimously.

6 – New Business

A. Property Taxes & Insurance

Mayor Robertson expressed thanks for legislation that permits Belleair Shore Commissioners to attend meetings outside of the town.

Florida State Senator Dennis Jones reviewed the constitutional aspects of the Special Session on property tax and the number of town hall meetings that preceded the session. The proposed constitutional amendment would not provide relief for business owners.

Florida State Representative Jim Frische said the proposed constitutional fix would return taxes to levels that track per capita income. Local governments could override the cap. The legislation, developed by the leadership team, did not address highest and best use or portability.

In response to questions, Senator Jones recommended that local leaders attend Tax Budget Committee hearings. Other anticipated ballot issues for 2008 include a portability benefit addition to Save our Homes, and a “30:40:50” tax reform plan, which would require huge government budget cuts. Concern was expressed that the tax reform plan would provide only an illusion of savings.

Senator Jones reported that state income had dropped significantly, with a billion dollar shortfall last year and an additional billion dollar shortfall anticipated this year. The state's economy is based on growth, which has slowed. While there are concerns regarding school board taxes, he said educational costs in Pinellas County have increased while the number of students decreased. Inequities will continue to grow unless taxes on non-homesteaded properties are capped. Homesteaded properties have created a burden for small businesses.

Representative Frische said spreading the tax burden is a challenge, as inequities exist. Another proposal would adjust tax values every four or five years. Property appraisers have opined that changing highest and best use to current use would require a change to the State Constitution. He said it is important to change the perception of Florida as a state with high taxes and insurance costs.

Senator Jones expressed concern that insurance problems were not resolved during last January's Special Session, as complaints continue regarding cancelled policies and increased premiums. All property owners will face assessments if the state is hit by a major hurricane. He said a long term solution requires a national or regional program.

B. Appointment to Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board

Rod Fischer, of the Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board, reported a seat, designated for a Barrier Island Building Official, will be open. Steve Andrews is the current board member. The board meets every other month for two to three hours. It was requested that recommendations for this seat be forwarded to Big-C President Queen before September 30, 2007.

C. START (Solution to Avoid Red Tide) Funding Request

Mayor Queen reported the BIG-C (Barrier Islands Governmental Council) had received a funding request from START for \$1,000 from each city.

Consensus was for cities to respond individually to the request.

7 – Miscellaneous:

A. Legislative Update

Discussion ensued regarding efforts to rebuild Gulf Boulevard.

Mayor Queen reported the next Big-C meeting is scheduled in St. Pete Beach on July 25, 2007.

8 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

President, Barrier Islands
Governmental Council

Mayor – North Redington Beach