

**BARRIER ISLANDS GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL (BIG-C)**  
**AUGUST 29, 2007 MEETING MINUTES**  
**City of Belleair Beach City Hall**

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The Meeting of the Barrier Islands Governmental Council, hosted by the City of Belleair Beach, was held at the City of Belleair Beach City Hall, 444 Causeway Boulevard, Belleair Beach, Florida. The Meeting was called to order by President Bill Queen at 9:00 a.m.

**1. Pledge of Allegiance.**

**2. Roll Call:** Each person present was asked to introduce him/herself.

**Members Present:**

Belleair Beach	Vice Mayor Kathy Mortensen
Clearwater	Councilmember George Cretelos
Indian Rocks Beach	Mayor Bill Ockunzzi
Indian Shores	Mayor Jim Lawrence
Madeira Beach	Vice Mayor John Wolbert
North Redington Beach	Mayor Bill Queen
North Redington Beach	Vice Mayor Jerry Knight
Redington Beach	Mayor Nick Simons
Redington Shores	Mayor Jody Armstrong
Treasure Island	Commissioner Phil Collins

**Guests Present:**

Sue Berfield	Legislative Assistant, Representative Jim Frishe
JJ Beyrouti	Redington Shores
Doris Burns	Legislative Assistant, Senator Dennis Jones
Paige Carter Smith	Governance, Inc.
Kristi Cheatham	Clearwater Gas System
Marlene Clausen	Councilor, Town of Indian Shores
Jose L. Coppen	Commissioner, Town of Indian Rocks Beach
Rudy Davis	Resident, City of Belleair Beach
Rodney Fischer	Executive Director, PCCLB
Linda Fisher	Program Planner, Pinellas Planning Council
Joan Herndon	Vice Mayor, Town of Indian Shores
Phyllis Johnson	Tampa Bay Sun
Sandra Knoebel	Planner, Pinellas County Government
Scott Maddox	Governance, Inc.
Ed Ruttencutter	Commissioner, St. Pete Beach
Melissa Seixas	Community Relations, Progress Energy
Bill Smith	Councilor, Town of Indian Shores
Steve Sutch	Councilor, Town of Indian Shores

### **3. Approval of Agenda:**

**MOTION** was made by Vice President Lawrence and seconded by Mayor Simons to approve the Agenda. **Motion** carried unanimously by voice vote.

### **4. Approval of Minutes:**

**MOTION** was made by Mayor Armstrong and seconded by Mayor Simons to approve the minutes of July 25, 2007 BIG-C meeting. **Motion** carried unanimously by voice vote.

### **5. Treasurer's Report:**

Secretary/Treasurer John Wolbert presented the Treasurer's Report. The balance as of June 30, 2007 was \$2,188.23. There were no expenses and no income, leaving a registered balance as of the end of July at \$2,188.23.

**MOTION** was made by Vice Mayor Mortensen and seconded by Vice President Lawrence to approve the Treasurer's Report. **Motion** carried unanimously by voice vote.

### **6. Old Business:**

There was none.

### **7. New Business:**

#### **A. Sgt. Dwayne Somers, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit**

Sgt. Somers gave an overview of the Marine Unit department. He spoke to the beaches' concerns with live-aboard and derelict vessels, what determines whether it is a civil or law enforcement issue, the environmental impact of these vessels, the disposal cost to the County for an abandoned vessel and how they seek restitution for these costs. His recommendation for the future was to contact Senator Dennis Jones and Representative Jim Frishe for changes to the Florida State Statute.

#### **B. Scott Maddox and Paige Carter Smith, of Governance, Inc.**

Mr. Maddox made a presentation for Governance, Inc., a resource company for governmental and quasi-governmental entities providing representation, advocacy, and research and grant writing before legislatures, agencies or Congress. Their mission is to provide local governments assistance in finding appropriations on a state and federal level. Mr. Maddox stated price is based on population and several towns could come together as one to retain Governance's services.

## **8. Miscellaneous:**

### **A. Legislative Update**

There were no legislative issues. Representative Frishe is in Alaska and Senator Jones, in Tallahassee.

### **B. Member Updates**

Mayor Queen inquired if everyone had read the newspaper that day regarding the taxes and advised it is an issue everyone should stay on top of, especially the beaches.

Each Mayor/Representative then gave a brief update on their municipality.

Councilmember Cretkos thanked the City of Treasure Island for their bridge opening; and he had the opportunity to see 104 turtles hatch and be sent off to sea at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium.

Commissioner Collins thanked everyone for attending the bridge opening and also thanked Sgt. Somers for his presentation.

Vice Mayor Wolbert stated the Madeira Beach Publix Shopping Center celebrated its 50th anniversary with an event having Radio Stations in attendance and a presentation by the Mayor.

Mayor Lawrence announced the Town will be having a Pole Eradication Ceremony, catered by Salt Rock Grill, on September 17, 2007 at 10:30 a.m. to celebrate the removal of all utility poles in the town.

Mayor Queen recalled the feeling of actually being able to see the sky when the Town of North Redington Beach removed its poles and complimented the Town of Indian Shores, saying it looked great.

Mayor Armstrong thanked Mayor Lawrence for the utility pole removal as it makes a great entrance into Redington Shores; and announced that Winter, the dolphin, is adjusting to her prosthetic tail and will be on the *Today* show.

Mayor Simons expressed his gratitude to Mayor Queen for his efforts in getting people to attend the BIG-C meetings.

Mayor Ockunzzi expressed his concern that the beaches contribution is up to 13.68% of the county's tax base but does not see the tax flow from the county to the beach communities increasing, and believes it may actually be decreasing.

Vice Mayor Mortensen thanked everyone for attending and noted the City of Belleair Beach is now in the midst of bridge reconstruction; and also looks forward to welcoming everyone to the new City Hall in the next year or two.

### **C. Taxes**

JJ Beyrouti stated taxes are the big issue. People who own businesses cannot afford the taxes. He suggested the BIG-C send a letter to the Legislature saying this is not acceptable.

Mayor Queen noted that the BIG-C had been represented to the State Representative and to the Senator, telling them about the issues and what needs to happen. The two most important points that were made before the Legislation, highest and best use and insurance, were not acted upon. He stated there may not be an easy fix, but a lot of people's eyes have been opened to what is going on and soon, all will have a chance to have a role in the property appraiser situation.

Kristi Cheatham of Clearwater Gas System stated 25% of the elected officials in Tallahassee come from the Bay Area so we have the opportunity to be heard, and for everyone to contact Florida House of Representatives' Bill Galvano, a member of the Bay Area Legislative Delegation.

Mayor Ockunzzi stated Pinellas County should spend as much money maintaining the beach as is spent maintaining the Pinellas Trail, such as money to clean the beach to provide tourism. He feels this group has a responsibility to speak in unison on these issues.

Councilor Clausen of Indian Shores believes a lot of the problem is in the Tax Appraiser's office and the need is to work with that office.

The next BIG-C meeting will be held at Indian Rocks Beach.

### **9. Adjournment:**

**MOTION** was made by Mayor Simons and seconded by Mayor Lawrence to adjourn. **Motion** carried unanimously by voice vote.

There being no further business to come before the Council the meeting was adjourned in due form.

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Mayor Bill Queen, President  
Barrier Islands Governmental Council

Patti Gentry, Administrative Assistant

City of Belleair Beach