

David Brenner Appointed to Planning, Zoning Board

Melissa Reid
Staff Writer

With a vote totaling six to one, David Brenner, former president of the Islander Club condominiums, was appointed to the Planning and Zoning Board to replace the vacant seat left when Robert Siekmann was elected to the Town Commission.

Two other candidates applied for seat nine, but six out of the seven commissioners voted for Brenner to fill the position. Brenner's first board meeting will be on April 9.

Brenner's inspiration for wanting to be on the Planning and Zoning Board mirror his goals for the Town of Longboat Key.

"I just felt, as being someone who is on the island all the time, I would like to be part of what it takes to maintain what we all like and enjoy about Longboat Key. I would like to manage the changes, so that there is a balance between the residential and the commercial. There's certain basic kind of business activities that go on, and you need those. You don't want to go to the mainland to go shopping for food. With my background I can draw on my experience doing this elsewhere and make a contribution," said Brenner.

His background includes work as an accountant with Arthur Young in the private sector where he grew up and lived in Philadelphia, Penn. In 1984, he began working for the city government.

"I spent a great deal of time as the finance director, commerce director (economic development), and served on the planning committee for the City of Philadelphia. There were more industrial concerns that we had there that we do not have here," said Brenner.

The Town of Longboat Key's visioning process, that will determine from residents how they would like to see Longboat Key in the future, is a project that interests Brenner.

"One of the things that has intrigued me was this whole visioning process, which is really a strategic planning exercise. One of the things I did in Philadelphia was to develop at strategic planning exercise for economic development. I look forward to this visioning process for Longboat Key. Once you figure out a plan, you can then maintain your strengths as a town, and minimize the impact of the weaknesses. The Planning and Zoning Board is going to have to take the goals from the visioning process and apply them."

Brenner and his wife first came to Longboat Key for vacation in 1967. Then, while on vacation in 1974, they bought a unit at The Colony. By the 1990s, the Brenner family was spending three to six months out of the year on Longboat, and in 2000 they were living on the Key year round.

Sister Keys Gets Green Light

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The Sister Keys cleanup project may be underway within the upcoming months. The owners of Paradise Pointe, LLC received the green light at Monday's Commission meeting to begin the mitigation project. Commissioner Jeremy Whatmough asked Jim Hutchins, the representative from Paradise Pointe, when the work would start and how long it would take for the job to be completed.

Hutchins responded that the agreement provides Paradise Pointe with one year, until March 2007, to start the job, which includes all the necessary permitting. It then has six months to complete the actual construction, which consists of removal of exotic foliage such as Australian pines and planting new foliage.

"We will haul most of the debris away.

Some may be burned, like the Australian pines, and some of the debris will be chopped up and hauled away, while another portion will be chopped up and remain on site. We will plant a combination of mangrove and smooth portgrass in place of the Australian pines. We'll also plant herbaceous material for the gopher turtles," said Hutchins.

The Town of Longboat Key's plan to maintain Sister Keys is to keep it free of exotic vegetation, maintain the natural flora and fauna and protect certain native species, such as the gopher turtle. The Public Works Department stated that the Brazilian pepper slash piles and downed Australian pine trees need to be removed, and other fallen vegetation that restricts tortoise travel. The island is heavily overgrown, according to Public Works, and needs to have the cover density of vegetation removed.

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for the position," said St. Denis.

In the near future, St. Denis will have to determine if Jeglie's position will be filled by hiring someone from within the Town staff or open the position up for all applicants. Litwhiler's position will be open to all applicants. "I am still working through things with Juan (Florensa, public works director) as to who will run Bayfront," said St. Denis. There is a possibility that Sherri Fidele, the previous

Bayfront Recreation Center Director, may help run the summer camp.

Jeglie was hired as a planner for the Town on May 3, 1999 and had a starting salary of \$43,284. She was then promoted to director of the Planning, Building, and Zoning Department on March 26, 2001 and had a salary of \$54,745. Jeglie currently has a salary of \$85,488.

Litwhiler was hired as Bayfront Recreation Center Director on Sept. 27, 2000 with a salary of \$40,000.40. Litwhiler currently has a salary of \$50,731.20.

TownHallHappenings

Town Manager Bruce St. Denis

Right now we're focusing on the upcoming hurricane conference and the training that I need and the staff needs to have with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). We have to be trained for this to be reimbursed by FEMA — all Town employees have to be trained. The hurricane workshop is in May.



We are also busy compiling agenda items for the commission meetings and workshops.

Public Works Director Juan Florensa

We're getting ready for hurricane season, developing the possible re-entry scenarios. Depending on how severe the damage is on the Key, we may be able to drive in, or have to wait for debris removal by the contractor. We are looking at ways to inspect the island to try to determine what damage has occurred, and if we would come back by air or by boat if the bridges are out.



We are working on the inline booster station. We have been working with the dredge contractors. We've been doing some cleanup and landscaping walkways.

We attended a workshop on SMART irrigation; a 30% review of interconnected potable water with Sarasota. Bids are going out for pump station 5 and 6. We are working with Manatee and Sarasota counties for debris removal. We are working with the Town Attorney on the FEMA 50% rule. Public Works is also

getting information for the emergency response system.

Planning Building and Zoning Director Jill Jeglie

The discussion of rebuilding of nonconformities after a natural disaster was continued at the March 21, Planning and Zoning Board meeting. Planning Manager Monica Daigle led a discussion of a draft document incorporating changes to the Town Code. A draft ordinance will be prepared incorporating the P&Z Board's recommendations for discussion at their April 18th meeting.



Community Visioning Plan Meetings

At the Planning and Zoning Board's 9 a.m., April 18th meeting, Herb Marlowe will review the findings of the Stage 1 Discovery Phase of the Town Community Visioning Process (Town Commission Chambers). The Planning and Zoning Board has also invited the Chamber of Commerce Board and commercial task force group to discuss commercial themes and strategies. This joint workshop meeting will be held on the same day at 3 p.m. in the Town Commission Chambers.



At 1:30 p.m. on May 1, the Town Visioning Consultants will discuss strategies with the P&Z Board and members of the public in the Town Commission Chambers.

Commercial Vehicles

The Planning, Zoning and Building department is reviewing residential and commercial vehicle ordinances of mul-

multiple local government jurisdictions for methods of enforcement, which will be discussed at the April Town Commission workshop.

Flood Ordinance, FEMA Changes

The Planning, Zoning and Building department is also working with the Town attorney to incorporate Town Commission changes and FEMA model ordinance into the Town's Flood Ordinance.

Hurricane Plan (Emphasis Recovery)

Planning, Zoning and Building staff have reviewed and updated the department's 'Hurricane Plan.' This is ongoing.

On-line Permitting

Management Information Systems with Planning, Zoning and Building is working on online permitting for minor permits. This is part of the ongoing improvements to the Town's permitting systems.

Police Chief Al Hogle

I usually try to address items that are "public safety" or "police" related. I will stretch that agenda to a comparison with Longboat Key and the coast of Mississippi. Last weekend, I visited the coast of Mississippi to see the damage from Hurricane Katrina. I observed the damage from Ocean Springs to Bay St. Louis. This coastline area is a beach approximately 26 miles long similar to Longboat Key and twice the length.

The damage can be described as nearly a 90% loss of all building structures along the entire length with a distance from shore of one quarter mile. Eight months later (after Katrina), the debris is just approximately 75% cleaned up with earth moving equipment. Access was limited in this area to residents and documented construction or debris workers until two months ago. Access was controlled with military and concertina wire, not too different than "martial law."

There are "junk yards" of fairly new

appearing cars, RV's, boats, fire trucks, etc. that would encompass the entire south golf course of Longboat Key.

I will be preparing a PowerPoint Presentation over the next few weeks to show the Longboat Key vs. Mississippi coastal damage for presentation here on the island.

I would recommend that there are two very important lessons for everyone:

1. Evacuate when asked, as it can be a fatal mistake to "weather" the storm.
2. Maintain flood insurance, as many of the lost homes in Mississippi were not covered with that type of coverage and the home owner owns a vacant lot with a mortgage payment as the residence is "gone."



Fire Chief Julius Halas

We are having our Assistant Medical Director Dr. Joel Gerber teach an advanced class to all paramedics on advanced studies in reading and analyzing our EKGs so that we're treating the proper arrhythmia. To have Dr. Gerber teaching the class is very helpful. It is called the Advanced Cardiac Life Support refresher course (ACLS).



The American Heart Association published new guidelines, so we did a refresher course that renews everyone's license for two years. We have a new rescue unit on order, which should be ready in May or June. We're also working on developing our budget submission which is due in April to Terry Sullivan.