

# Key Fire Department Contains Blaze

It took Longboat Key Fire Department and 10 other agencies nearly three days to douse a recent brush fire on Sister Keys. Thanks to a quick response from emergency personnel, the fire itself was rapidly contained to only four acres but firefighters spent an additional two days combing the area looking for hotspots to ensure the area would not rekindle.

The Coast Guard first reported the fire on the largest of the four islands at approximately 3:42 p.m. on Tuesday, May 2. By approximately 4:09 p.m., Longboat Key fire personnel arrived on the scene via fireboat, the only means of access to the island. Additional fire departments and support agencies were called in for assistance. The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office helicopter made 10 to 15 water drops before efforts had to be suspended due to darkness.

Mayor Joan Webster said that because the area was uninhabited and surrounded by water, the safest course of action was to suspend fire suppression activities until daylight.

By Wednesday, May 3, fire crews were back on the scene, along with a Florida Division of Forestry helicopter that made 40 to 50 aerial water drops. In all, nearly 12,000 gallons of water were applied to the fire. By nightfall, firefighters had identified and extinguished all visible hotspots.

Longboat Key fire crews and seven Florida State Division of Forestry personnel conducted a final inspection of the area on Thursday morning.

According to the Longboat Key Fire Department Fire Chief Julius Halas, firefighters employed the Minimum Impact Suppression Technique (MIST) to limit

harm to vegetation and animals in the area. Using this technique, firefighters limit the cutting of vegetation and trees unless absolutely necessary, return logs to their original position after checking for hotspots and employ other methods to minimize their activity in ecologically sensitive areas.

The Longboat Key Fire Department says the cause of the fire has not been determined at this time.

The following departments and agencies supplies personal and/or equipment: Longboat Key Fire Department, Longboat Key Police Department Marine Division, Longboat Key Public Works Department, Sarasota County Fire Department, Sarasota County Sheriff's helicopter, Florida State Division of Forestry, City



Courtesy of Town of Longboat Key

Nearly 12,000 gallons of water were applied to the fire.

of Bradenton Fire Department, Myakka City Fire Department, West Manatee Fire Department and East Manatee Fire Department.

## Be Heard, But Quickly

Lisa Hoover  
Staff Writer

Though public comments are welcomed at Town meetings, residents will need to get right to the point if they want to speak out. An ordinance adopted at Monday's commission meeting set a five minute time limit on all public comments. The ordinance also allows five minutes for rebuttal by a petitioner and sets a 20 minute time limit on presentations made during meetings.

The ordinance states that the time limits are only "guidelines, not strict limitations." It suggests that presenters or members of the public who have documentation they wish to share with the commissioners should provide it several days in advance of the public hearing. The ordinance then goes on to say, "If voluminous documentation is presented to the Commission at the time of the hearing, the Commission

may have no alternative but to postpone their decision in order to review the material presented.

The new also ordinance gives the Mayor authorization to modify the suggested time guidelines to insure that any matter brought before the commission is thoroughly heard and examined.

Prior to the vote, Commissioner Whatmough said he opposed the new ordinance. "I'm in the minority," he said before the vote. "I don't think this ordinance is necessary. Some people have talked too long; some of us talk too long."

"Our attorney has told us that these guidelines are a strong hint or recommendation. I suggest we pass this and move on," countered Commissioner Spoll.

The ordinance passed 6 - 1 with Commissioner Whatmough as the single opposing vote.

## Board Members Chosen

Lisa Hoover  
Staff Writer

Town Commissioners voted to appoint several Longboat Key residents to volunteer boards and committees at Monday night's commission meeting. Incumbent Planning and Zoning Board member Sandy Gilbert reclaimed his seat, as did incumbent board member David Brenner. Newly appointed local resident John Wild assumed Seat 7. Gilbert, Brenner and Wild will join fellow Planning and Zoning board members Patrizia Arends, Jim Brown, Walter Hackett, Allen Hixon, and George Symanski at their next meeting Tuesday, May 16.

The following residents were appointed to Town boards and committees:

• **Sally Boynton** - Zoning Board of Adjustment, seat 2

Occupation: Attorney. Active in several local and community groups including LBK Turtle Watch and Crowley Nature Center. Volunteer at Mote Marine Laboratory.

• **David Brenner** - Planning and Zoning Board, seat 9

Occupation: Ret. CPA and public official. Former Chairman of Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, worked in the public sector in finance and development.

• **Thomas Fuorri** - Code Enforcement Board, seat 6

Occupation: Ret. Marketing director for aerospace corp. Past president of Kiwanis. Involved in several community organizations.

• **Sandy Gilbert** - Planning and Zoning Board, seat 7

Occupation: Ret. publishing executive.

Active in PIC, START, water advisory committee and Friends of Tennis. Three years experience on P & Z Board.

• **Robert Krosney** - Citizens Tax Oversight Committee

Occupation: President and CEO of private investigation firm. Vice chairman of Jersey City Board of Adjustment for 7 years. Active in civic groups and holds Realtor's licence.

• **Robert McGuigan** - Code Enforcement Board, seat 7

Occupation: Ret. Insurance. Involved in community organizations, Bishop's Pastoral Board and Knights of Columbus.

• **George Pasini** - Zoning Board of Adjustment, seat 2

Occupation: Ret. Architect. Licensed Realtor, past ZBA experience, 20 years public entitlement work.

• **Seymour Rudes** - Citizens Tax Oversight Committee

Occupation: Ret. Attorney and insurance broker. Involved in LBK Rotary Club and Water Club Condo Committee

• **John Wild** - Planning and Zoning Board, seat 8 & MPO Citizen Advisory Committee

Occupation: Retired. Background in journalism and broadcasting, CEO experience, member of the American Planning Association. Member of Kiwanis, Boy Scouts of America and LBK G.O.P Club

• **Patricia Zunz** - Zoning Board of Adjustment, seat 7

Occupation: Landscape designer. Served 3 years on Longboat Key ZBA, 8 years on South Orange, NJ Board of Adjustment. Member of LBK Art Center and Longbeach Village Association.

## LBK Needs Bridge Plan

Lisa Hoover  
Staff Writer

As Town Manager Bruce St. Denis works on where to put debris in the event of a disaster, he is also paying attention to how it will get to its destination.

While the Town crafts plans for hurricane preparedness and recovery, St. Denis has expressed concern over the state of some bridges leading to the Key. St. Denis has said that not only are reliable bridges crucial to an effective evacuation but they are also important after a storm to allow for off-Key debris removal, recovery operations and re-access to the island by residents.

St. Denis shared his concerns with the Florida Department of Transportation this month in a letter written to FDOT District One Secretary Stanley Cann. St. Denis said wanted to call Cann's attention to the condition of eight local bridges:

1. The small concrete bridges on John Ringling Boulevard just west of the new

John Ringling Bridge in Sarasota

2. The small concrete bridges between St. Armands and Lido Key, which are just south of the New Pass Bridge on SR 789

3. New Pass Bridge

4. The Cortez Bridge

5. Anna Maria Bridge along Manatee Avenue

6. Perico Bayou Bridge along Manatee Avenue

7. Palma Sola Bay along Manatee Avenue

8. Longboat Pass

St. Denis concluded the letter by stating, "we recognize that evacuation must be the highest priority for the FDOT. However, the Town feels that strong consideration should also be given to return routes so that people and communities can resume the process of getting their affairs in order."

Town staff says they anticipate a response from the FDOT as soon as they have had a chance to review the bridges in question.

## 30-Day, from Page 1A

states during the summer, thereby limiting the amount of residents who can shop or eat at their businesses.

At Monday night's Commission Meeting, Moore spoke about his dilemma.

"In the next month I'm going to have to start dipping into my own pocket to keep my business going. We (business owners) are all paying out of our pockets to keep our businesses going through the summer. If I could get some kind of relief from the 30-day rental rule; so we can get relief from May to August. Right now it's cheaper for people to stay on the mainland and rent a car to go to the beach. Rates for hotels on the island went up. I understand that keeping out the undesirables are the concern."

Planning, Zoning and Building Director Monica Daigle said that the Planning and Zoning Board has placed the subject on the May 16 agenda, and it will have a display advertisement to let the public know about the topic being discussed. Commissioner Lee Rothenberg pointed out that the 30-day minimum rental requirement is a Town Ordinance in the zoning code and to change it will take a long time.

Town Attorney David Persson explained that because it's a zoning ordinance, the Planning and Zoning Board will have to agree on the change and recommend it to the Town Commission, where it would then have to go through two readings

before the ordinance could be changed.

Moore, who is acting along with the Longboat Key Chamber of Commerce, wants the 30-day minimum rental rule to be loosened only for the summer months.

"The Chamber is talking about only loosening the rule from May 1 through Oct. 1. We also talked with the commissioners about changing the ordinance temporarily for a three-year trial run, the years 2006 through 2008."

Moore hopes the proposed ordinance, reducing the amount of time renters are required to rent a condominium or house, would be approved around the middle of this summer. This would allow Moore and other business owners to have some relief for the upcoming summer slump in sales.

Moore also said that if the shorter rental time ordinance is adopted for the trial period of three years the Chamber would be gathering data on business sales to determine if the shorter rental time has increased revenue in businesses during those summer months. With this information, the Chamber could return to the Commission with the necessary data to indicate whether the shorter rental time is helping increase revenue for businesses or not. Then the Commission will have information to make the determination on whether the Town should continue the shorter rental time for the summer months.