

LBK Residents to Have Say on Key Issues

Survey, from Page 1A

is a new concern.

"Years ago, you didn't have inhabitants living on the beach," Marlowe says.

He also says that the Town of Longboat Key is a little different than other governmental bodies he has worked with in Florida.

"Their regulatory process is different than other communities," he says. "The Town Charter requires a public vote, which most cities don't."

Marlowe says that it hasn't presented a problem, it is just a different way of doing things.

This new vision in the form of a citizen's survey will be shared for the first time today at 2 p.m. to Longboat Key Planning and Zoning board members at a special meeting.

They in turn will decide whether they will recommend to the Town Commission the final working draft of this citizen survey, or not.

"They (Longboat Planning and Zoning Board) will want revisions," Marlowe says. "And, the (Town) Commission will want revisions."

So, Marlowe says, it is impossible to know when the survey will be ready to be brought before the citizens again. But, Marlowe is pleased that the issues have

been identified, and after the revisions have been made, the survey will go back in front of the focus group.

He says he is not sure whether their subcontractors will do the actual survey work, or Town staff.

Town commissioners authorized funding for the survey, so that they could understand where residents stood on important issues and more importantly define what kind of vision could be possible for the Town of Longboat Key.

The Commission agreed to pay \$60,000 to Arrington-Marlowe LLC for their participation in leading the vision plan and survey. After that it will be up to the Commission whether it will pay them more for the actual survey work, or try to hand that responsibility on to the staff.

The finished and final Community Vision Plan — after being approved by the commissioners — could then be a "rudder" used by the Town for the next 20 years in determining its direction.

According to the Plan's focus group, key issues they addressed in the citizen's survey center on environmental concerns, commercial and tourism strategies, water supply and its infrastructure concerns, and recommends possible changes in the way the Town of Longboat Key is governed.

Environmental concerns were high on the list in pursuing potential problems

like red tides, beach re-nourishment and equipment, canal maintenance, protecting Sarasota Bay, tree canopy protection, and installing Florida-friendly landscaping.

Residents also felt that they were losing commercial services on the Key.

They recommended amendments to the zoning codes, so that businesses would be allowed more flexibility to operate, and to alter their spaces if need be to generate interest.

The focus group also wanted more retail store concentrations in the three Longboat Key shopping centers. They thought mixed-use zoning might be used, so that residences could be located above retail spaces.

Another recommendation shown in the survey would be to ease the height restriction for tourism facilities and establish special zoning districts for tourism.

An expanded use of reclaimed water for watering golf courses and right of ways, and up-to-date communications infrastructure to meet future needs for the Internet or cell phone technologies were also high on their list.

Improving the effectiveness of the Town government by questioning the roles and responsibilities of the Town Manager, the Commissioners, and the Mayoral system and changing the way

potential commissioners would run for office, creating a school for candidates and limiting campaign spending were all recommendations on the survey.

Some of the questions on the survey are rated questions on a scale of one to five. Sample questions on the survey (before the board's approval) include:

- Should the town spend some of its tax dollars on canal maintenance?
- Should we expand the tennis facilities?
- Should we provide more facilities and sites for health and dental care?

• Should improving the effectiveness of the Town government be achieved by:
1. Increasing the responsibilities of the town manager? 2. Increasing the responsibility of the Commission? 3. Should we have a stronger elected mayor system? 4. Or, should we leave two commissioners at large, with each of the five districts electing their commissioner from voters in that district?

The Town Commission will review the Plan over the weekend ready to make comment on the community vision survey questions at their commission meeting this Monday.

For a snapshot of the survey all residents will see, turn to Page 6.

LONGBOAT'S FABLED PAST

THE STORY OF LONGBOAT LIBRARY

The library will be 50 years old in January.

According to the library's history, Dorothy Bertolett is said to be one of the founders of the Longboat Library. She and the other founders wrote up their own mission statement, which reads:

"We, the Longboat Library Board and members, agree that the money invested in books and in libraries is money invested in light for the mind. Wealth in ideas is the most powerful and precious of all wealth."

As written in my column last week, the original name — Longboat Public Library — was later changed to what it is today. But, on Nov. 26, 1956 Mrs. Leon Chambers was said to have asked a group of women to meet in her home to consider the idea of a library on the Key.

The women who showed up was on a list of 12 women, as written down in 1956: Mrs. A.M. McMichen, Mrs. E.A. Bertolett, Mrs. Jos. Hoffman, Mrs. M.A. Ridyard, Mrs. A.T. Goodman, Mrs. J.B. Knight, Mrs. Gordon Whitney, Mrs. F.C. Nicol, Miss Jeanette Nicol, Mrs. G.M. Cobb, and Mrs. Leon Chambers.

From a rented room in the Twin Tarpon Shopping Center, located at 6350 Gulf of Mexico Drive, the library has now established itself as a viable haven in the community.

But, that's now, and this is 1958, when the budget for the library was only \$800.

The rent at the shopping center was \$712, so there was a challenge of funding, which they solved by fundraisers. A shell exhibit was planned, and cash came in with 2,400 books loaned that year. The library was open from 2 to 5 p.m. and was listed on the state library

list. Their annual report was sent to Tallahassee each year.

The first set of by-laws was adopted June 1959. By October, a letter was sent out to Longboat residents asking them to join the library. Another shell show was held. The library made a profit of \$153.48.

Tina Peverill held a book review in her home and at the recreation all

at Gulfshores Trailer Park. Mrs. Percy Leon, Tina Peverill and Carl Carmer were the book reviewers. Donations from the book review was \$16.45.

The annual tea was held Nov. 15, 1960. Unfortunately, there were no funds to buy books. At this point the library had 3,640 books on the shelves and 140 charter members.

January 1961 saw the election of new officers: Mrs. Coxen was elected president, Mrs. McMichen became the new vice president, Mrs. Milkens became secretary, and Mrs. Trapp became the treasurer.

Attorney Mr. Silvertooth drew up incorporation papers at no charge. So, that by March 20, 1961 the library became the Longboat Library, Inc. A board of directors would have to be chosen, so that the library could be established under the laws of Florida as a non-profit organization. Tax donations could now be exempt. The fiscal year would begin April 1, and end March 31 for this new non-profit library.

At the 1961 shell exhibit, 1,000 attended the event, showing how popular these events were. The library raised \$500.

Marriot Coxen, president, passed away in 1962, so Doris Jeschke took her place on the board of directors. They decided to move the library to a larger room, which would adjoin the Post Office due to overcrowding. A children's hour started with Mrs. Minds as reader on Saturday mornings.

The library was four years old that year. There were 4,000 books on the shelves

and the library membership was 114. The bank balance was \$2,562.28

Rae Will organized a book auction in 1963 at the Fire House. Jim Johnson was auctioneer. The library raised \$1,000.

Unfortunately, they auctioned away the Town's voice amplifier. The story became a headline story with little avail since the Town forgave them.

Anne Shipley succeeded Doris Jeschke in 1964.

The directors asked the Town Commission for money for its Longboat Library in 1965. The commission turned down the request.

Helen Minds was elected president in 1965, Jeanne Ullman in 1966, Mildred Knowles in 1967, Mrs. Lou Meyer in 1968, and in 1969 Dottie Bertolett again took over the presidency coming full circle. Maxine Nielsen and Betty Mansfield also took a turn at the presidency.

It was Jeanne Ullman, who made the suggestion that it may be time to find land and build a library when their space demanded plumbing and heating repairs.

Arvida Corporation told John Siegal that they planned to open up some land to serve civic purposes, and it was possible that the Library could be offered a site for a low cost.

The treasurer's report showed that there was \$7,521.13 in the bank. There were 6,500 books on the shelves, and the membership was 400 residents.

At the October 1967 meeting, it was asked that a building fund be set up. Gladys Bosanko made a generous donation in memory of her daughter, and money was generated from a number of fundraising endeavors.

Sam Gibbon told the directors in March that he was thinking of setting up a Town complex with a youth center and a room for a library. He offered it to the directors for \$11,000. Gibbon was thanked for his offer, but they took no action.

The board hoped that the four-acre parcel of land donated by Arvida for a municipal building site for the Town Commission would have a spot for their Library as well.

By 1970, there were 8,886 books at the Library and committees were formed to form a master plan to ask for funds. This master plan was written by Jack Hoopes.

Architectural plans were drawn, and the land was leased from the Town for 99 years at a dollar-a-year rent. The law required that money be deposited for the full amount it would cost to build the building before construction could be started. Bids were higher than expected.

William Pritchard of St. Armands Bank helped the directors through that time period.

Early in August, Dorothy Bertolett held the symbolic shovel during the groundbreaking event.

The new building, completely furnished and landscaped cost \$50,000 and was paid by membership fees, donations, and the work provided by volunteers. A bronze plaque on the Library east wall lists donors of \$500 or more in the building fund effort, which took place from 1970 to 1972.

Dedication of the Library took place Feb. 26, 1971.

From a circulation of 30 books in 1957, the Longboat Library, Inc. grew to 41,472 books circulated by 1979.

There will be a 50-year celebration of the Library's beginnings this year and next year. As arrangements are made, the LBK News will be sure to keep you informed.

The history of Longboat Library, Inc. was possible because of the careful notes of the founders of the Library, and the dedicated directors and volunteers since.