

**Outreach Committee Meeting
City of Bonita Springs
Official Agenda
Bonita Springs City Hall
9101 Bonita Beach Road
Bonita Springs, FL 34135
October 10, 2017, 6:00p.m.**

Minutes

I. Call to Order –

Chairman Jesse Purdon called the inaugural Outreach Committee Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Present:

Jesse Purdon – Chairman
Lester James
Tony Lee
Suzy Valentine
Andres Paz
Juan Romero
Orlando Pallares

Absent:

Maria Wood

Staff:

Lora Taylor, Communications Director
Peter Simmons, Mayor
Peter O’Flinn, Vice Mayor

Guest:

Tamika M. Seaton, Executive Director
Florida Lions Eye Clinic

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Mayor, Peter O’Flinn, led the Pledge of Allegiance

III. Introductions

Chairman Purdon asked the Committee to introduce themselves:

Mr. Lester James – has been a resident of Bonita Springs for 11 years. Mr. Lester works in medical sales. He is hoping to bring the community together, add some diversity, some new events, and help support any under-represented populations in Bonita Springs.

Mr. Altony (Tony) Lee - Mr. Lee is Director of Major Gifts at Florida Gulf Coast University. Mr. Lee likes to contribute and encourage furthering and advancing education in the Bonita Springs community. In addition to being involved with cultural and diverse activities, he is also involved with the Bonita Springs Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Lee lives in Hawthorne. He loves his

community and the new high school. Mr. Lee went to the first high school game and is supporting that as well.

Andres Paz – Mr. Paz is Sales Manager for the Media Vista Group, a Bonita Springs based Hispanic Media Company. Media Vista owns Univision, D'Latinos Magazine, TV Azteca and UniMas. Mr. Paz has been a Bonita Springs resident for 7 years. Mr. Paz loves it here and is looking forward to spreading the word to the Latino community about all the wonderful initiatives that Bonita Springs is undertaking right now.

Juan Romero – Mr. Romero has been a resident of Bonita Springs for the last 30 years and has been working with the community in the agriculture business. Mr. Romero is also involved with education and organizing different events within the community. Mr. Romero is a founder of the Mayor's Cup Soccer Tournament. Mr. Romero works closely with the Hispanic community and wants to bring the community together and work as one family.

Suzy Valentine – Ms. Valentine has lived in Bonita Springs for 11 years. Ms. Valentine grew up in New Jersey, married a Brazilian and moved to Brazil, living there for 32 years. This experience gave Ms. Valentine a feeling for true international communities. Ms. Valentine started teaching sustainable agriculture for Central Latin American countries and the Caribbean with the Partners of the Americas organization. Ms. Valentine has a lot of experience working with people from all different places and languages, and states although her Spanish is not what it used to be, she does speak Portuguese. Ms. Valentine is a member of the Gulf Coast Garden Club and is President of the Bonita Springs Tropical Fruit club. Ms. Valentine would like to see the Committee have a common interest that really makes sense for the community.

Orlando Pallares – Mr. Pallares has worked for the Media Vista group for 10 years as Operations Manager. As well, Mr. Pallares hosts a local TV show. Mr. Pallares states it's about diversity and promoting entertainment in South West Florida. Mr. Pallares has lived in Bonita Springs for almost 20 years and wants to help grow the City of Bonita Springs and help people by being part of the diversity team.

Jesse Purdon – Mr. Purdon has been in Bonita Springs since 2006. For the last 3 years he has worked for the US House of Representatives for Congressman Curt Clawson. Mr. Purdon transferred to the private sector and currently represents 6700 realtors in the Naples area. Mr. Purdon was elected this summer to be a delegate to the Republican National Convention as a Florida delegate. Mr. Purdon states he was the only Latino candidate for City Council in the history of Bonita Springs. Mr. Purdon stated that over 22 percent of people in Bonita Springs are Latino, and the fact that he was the only one to run for a seat on Council inspired him to work on civic involvement in the community. Mr. Purdon wants to reach out to people who feel that they do not have a voice. He wants the people in the community to know that they now have a voice and they have someone to talk to; they can come to the Outreach Committee, they can tell the Committee their issues. It is Mr. Purdon's hope that Bonita Springs moves forward as a community. Mr. Purdon has seen so many cities in our country that are racially divided, but in Bonita Springs, Mr. Purdon has seen the Lee County Sheriffs taking little kids

shopping; he has seen first responders of every color and creed helping people affected by the flood, helping each other. That's the Bonita Spring that he knows, that's the Bonita Springs he wants in the future. This group can make Bonita Springs strong.

IV. Public Comment

Vice Mayor, Peter O'Flinn, stated he has known some of the Committee for a while and considers all friends. Mr. O'Flinn said it has been a long time coming and he is thrilled it is here. Bonita Springs has always come together, but there is more reason to come together now. Mr. O'Flinn thanked the Committee for serving.

Ms. Tamika Seaton, Executive Director of the Florida Lions Eye Clinic. Ms. Seaton explained that the eye clinic is located in downtown Bonita Springs off Old 41. They provide free eye care to those who do not have medical insurance and are 200% below the poverty level. Ms. Seaton was encouraged to come to the Committee meeting and wants to know more about the organization and how the Florida Lions Eye Clinic can get involved and help out.

Mr. Purdon shared that he has known Ms. Seaton for years when worked she worked for Collier County government as the right hand of Mayor Sorey. Ms. Seaton has worked for the shelter for woman and abused children. Mr. Purdon stated that Bonita Springs really scored big when we got Ms. Seaton and thanked her and her organization for all they have done.

Mayor Simmons, stated how happy he is that this evening and the organization is finally here. When he first moved to Bonita Springs, the Mayor was looking for a good barber and found Rosa's on Old 41. Mayor Simmons thanks Rosa's in large part for the culmination of this happening due to the conversations they had there. Mayor Simmons shared that through those conversations he learned there had been very little outreach to the Hispanic/Latino/African American communities in Bonita Springs. As a result, one of the first things he wanted to accomplish when he was elected Mayor was to continue the outreach. Mayor Simmons reported that the first festival, Fiesta Bonita/Cinco De Mayo celebration was held last year. It was a great kick off and Mayor Simmons is looking forward to years of long overdue involvement with this segment of the community that feels unrepresented.

V. Selection of Vice Chair

Mr. Purdon opened the discussion for selection of Vice Chair. Mr. Purdon explained the responsibilities of the vice chair are similar to Vice Mayor, representing the organization in a leadership capacity.

Mr. Romero asked how long the term is, Ms. Taylor responded one year.

Mr. Purdon asked the Committee for nominations for Vice Chair. Mr. Paz nominated Mr. Tony Lee.

Mr. Juan Romero asked Mr. Lee about his thoughts of bringing the community and the committee together.

Mr. Lee responded he is a huge advocate for diversity. In his role in education, Mr. Lee considers himself a “behind the scenes” influence, paving the path for others to be successful, furthering the advancement of minorities in higher education. Mr. Lee has been very involved in Media Vista and Univision. As well, he has been involved with the Horizon Center introducing individuals to that center and providing some care in terms of tutors and financial resources. Mr. Lee stated he has been a face for diversity for Florida Gulf Coast University by attending events four nights a week from Marco to Charlotte County. Mr. Lee shared that he was recently selected to be a representative for Leadership Florida Connect whose mission is “to educate, engage and inspire our state’s top young leaders”¹.

Mr. Lee said that diversity is something he is very proud of. He is a Leadership Bonita graduate and has been featured in 40 under 40. Although it is difficult for Mr. Lee to talk about himself, he does like to talk about the impact. Mr. Lee shared that he recently worked with the Living Waters Church to deliver 12,000 pounds of supplies to people in need. Mr. Lee stated it was very rewarding and he would not have been able to do that by himself; he was able accomplish it with the contacts he has from the City.

Mr. Romero stated that Mr. Lee’s credentials are impressive. Mr. Romero’s concern is that Bonita Springs has a high percentage of students in the community who drop out, ten percent are Hispanic. Mr. Romero asked to hear more about what the Committee can do to keep the students in school and send more students to college. Mr. Lee said he understands and assured the Committee they would have an advocate for education. Mr. Lee was on the committee to choose the new principal for the high school. He pushed hard to get a local person. He attended the first high school game. Florida Gulf Coast University has an office at the high school. Mr. Lee is a champion of education and waives that banner proudly.

Mr. Purdon stated he has known Mr. Lee for 5 years and that Mr. Lee was a perennial member of the circuit in the community scene throughout South West Florida. Mr. Purdon said Mr. Lee has a personality that makes people feel comfortable talking to him. Mr. Lee is successful in what he does and he has the ability to communicate with folks and believes the Committee could not be better served than by Mr. Lee.

Mr. Paz made a motion to vote Mr. Altony Lee as Vice Chair; Mr. James seconded; motion Pazed unanimously.

VI. Discussion on the background of how the Outreach Committee became a Committee

Mr. Purdon stated that there is an issue with under representation within the Hispanic community. Bonita Springs has the best soccer organization in the state of Florida and won

¹ <http://www.leadershipflorida.org/connect-program>

state two years ago wearing our City's name on their jerseys. Mr. Purdon thanked Mr. Romero for carrying the banner and all he has done. Soccer is a big part of the Hispanic community and we are going to tie that community back in. The days of it being ignored by your City leadership are over. Mr. Purdon stated that the Mayor's cup was organized to bring the Mayor to the field to meet the families and thanked Mayor Simmons for his support, being at the fields, visiting the neighborhoods and checking the situation to see what we need. This has been a huge step forward for our community. This is going to be a great tool for us to be in touch with the administration.

- VII. Purpose – To encourage broad and inclusive participation, civic involvement by those who have not traditionally participated in City Government. This Committee wants to involve them, learn from them and create a more productive vision forward. This Committee will build bridges and help to lead the way to a more unified tomorrow, one Bonita.
- VIII. City Programs - #1 Taco Fest (10/15) #2 Mayors cup Participation (Juan Romero) and #3 Fiesta – Cinco De Mayo Festival (Select Date)

Mr. Romero asked about the three events, specifically the Taco Fiesta, which he was not familiar with. Ms. Taylor explained that the Taco event was not a City event. It came through the special event permit process. There are two types of events, City run special events and permitted events. Current City events are Holiday in the Park, Celebrate Bonita and the Arbor Day event, which is hosted by the Tree Advisory Board. Private organizations can have an event in the park if they fill out a permit, ensure it is a safe event, follow the correct procedures, provide insurance, ensure the food is okay to serve and get the appropriate waivers from the sheriff's office and fire department. The Taco event was held by the Caleb's Crusade organization with proceeds benefiting childhood cancer. It was approved by the City through the special event permit process, which was the extent of the City's involvement.

Mr. Purdon asked what the process would be if the Committee wanted a table at an event not sponsored by the City. Ms. Taylor stated the Committee would have to contact the event organizer.

Mr. Romero requested that the Taco Festive not be included with the Committee's events because it is a private event.

The Committee discussed the events to be included are the Hispanic Heritage Celebration, the Mayors Cup and Fiesta Bonita/Cinco De Mayo.

Mr. Romero explained that The Mayors Cup is an event has been going on for 17 years, next year will be 18, and does not require funding.

Due to so many families being displaced from Hurricane Irma, Mr. Lee recommended having something for the children at Riverside Park for Halloween. Mr. Lee said working class moms with school age children will need a place to trick or treat. As a community we can be

champions for those families who are impacted. Mr. Lee said restoring the quality of life for children is very important. Ms. Taylor stated B.E.A.R. used to host a Halloween event, but they did not approach the City for permitting this year. Ms. Taylor recommended Mr. Lee approach B.E.A.R. Mr. Lee will ask B.E.A.R. about the cost to put on the Halloween event. He would like to restore that for the children and families that will not be able to trick or treat because their neighborhood was destroyed. Ms. Taylor stated there is no budget for it this year.

Mr. Purdon asked about the funding available and the process to allocate for the events and what is available this year. Ms. Taylor stated the Committee does not have a budget as a committee at this time. Ms. Taylor explained that during the budget process this year, the Mayor made sure Fiesta Bonita had funding. The budget is \$10,000, however, the budget for this event is under the Special Events Sub-committee and typically the Special Events Committee plans the events, but the Outreach Committee would be able to work with the Special Events Committee or request to host the event through the Outreach Committee. Mr. Purdon advocated that Fiesta Bonita is the main event of this committee and made a motion that the Fiesta Bonita event be under control of the Outreach Committee.

Mr. Purdon would like a motion to remove Taco Fest, add the Mayor's Cup, Hispanic Heritage Celebration, Fiesta Bonita and Halloween if we can get B.E.A.R. on board. Mayor Simmons suggested Martin Luther King Day. Mr. James shared that Columbus, Indiana is a very diverse city with three Fortune 500 companies. They host an Ethnic Expo which represents all cultures and they celebrate with dance and food from each culture. They celebrate everyone, but every year they highlight one country that gets to exhibit things specific to that culture. Mr. Lester recommends making this a cultural event with other cultures and ethnicities. If we do that and we do that properly other businesses that look to move their companies to SWFL, will look at Bonita Springs.

Mr. Purdon made a motion to claim and incorporate the two events Hispanic Heritage celebration and the Fiesta Bonita/Cinco de mayo to be run by the Outreach Committee; Mr. Lee seconded; motion Passed unanimously.

Mr. Purdon stated as we move forward into February we will discuss activities for Martin Luther King Day.

IX. Misc. discussion – other items

Ms. Valentine recommended the Committee be mindful of the Sunshine Laws stating that Committee members cannot discuss Committee business outside of a meeting. Ms. Taylor said she would have City Attorney, Audrey Vance, come to a meeting and go over the Sunshine Laws.

Mr. Romero observed that there were no committee members from Districts 3 and 5 on the committee. Mr. Romero recommended having representatives from each district on the committee. Mr. Purdon asked Ms. Taylor how to add two more people to the Committee. Ms. Taylor explained they would have to go back to Council and amend the resolution to add more

members. Mr. Purdon stated he is open to amending the resolution for the Committee from 7 to 9 members, but if we do not get any recommendations by next meeting, we will move on. Mr. Purdon is very familiar with District 5 and the Committee will take care of them.

Mr. Romero also voiced his concern that there does not seem to be any organization with the small businesses and participation of Hispanic businesses, these small businesses are always working by themselves. Mr. Romero believes we have to work together as a committee to get these small businesses together. Mr. Purdon asked if it was in his purview to select a participation chair to work on concerns such as the ones Mr. Romero brought forward. Ms. Taylor said that he could task an individual to work on specific projects. The Veterans Advisory Committee does this for certain projects and on occasion the chair designates a sub-committee.

Chairman Purdon cautioned the Committee about setting the bar too high on day one stating the issue of Hispanic education rate is very important and large reaching, however, he does not believe it is going to be solved by this Committee. Mr. Purdon wants to make sure that people feel they are included in the City and know that they are a part of the heartbeat of Bonita Springs. That's really the purpose of the Committee. Mr. Romero stated he understands, but feels that part of this committee is to try to get integrated community benefits such as education and housing, thereby working hard to get better opportunities for everyone in the City.

Mr. Purdon asked the Committee to email Ms. Taylor a list of the initiatives/goals that they think can be accomplished by this committee. Through working with Univision and Telemundo, we can start working towards the goals we are talking about.

X. Hurricane Update – Mayor Peter Simmons

Mayor Simmons stated the Hurricane Irma was as a month ago Sunday. Bonita Springs got coverage around the world. The Mayor explained, as bad as things were, it could have been worse. Because Hurricane Irma hung on to Cuba for as long as she did, when it came to Marco, it approached it as a Category 3. The back half of the storm broke up just enough so Bonita Springs did not have the tidal surge. Bonita Springs had flooding because of the torrential rain, and a lot of damage. Mayor Simmons reported that Governor Scott has been “boots on the ground” and has reached out to us. City Council has all been involved. FEMA is here. It has been a team effort.

Mayor Simmons explained we have short term needs but need to separate that out with long term solutions. This is going to be emotional and it's going to be financial. For years we have been talking about protecting our environment and wetlands. The answer is not to build in the wetlands. We need to look at long term solutions to the water. We are down river here and the water flows south. Seventy-five percent of that water comes west, we are west and we are down river. We are going to have to deal with these water issues forever. We have looked at these issues short term with the Governor's office, FEMA and Congressman Rooney. Water does not know city lines, county lines, it just knows it wants to get to the Imperial River and the

Gulf of Mexico. Mayor Simmons said Estero is on board and the County is on board and Mayor Simmons has been working with Commissioner Larry Kiker.

The City has debris and garbage removal. The Bonita Springs Assistance Office has done a wonderful job as well as the American Red Cross.

Mr. Purdon thanked the Mayor and commended the Bonita Springs Assistance office, Teri Lamaine and her team, for a great job. Mr. Purdon asked, for the communities that were heavily flooded the first time and then flooded again, is a dam the solution or dredging the Imperial River? Or is relocation an answer? Mayor Simmons responded that the City has retained Jim Beaver who is an environmental and water management expert as well the City is also working with South Florida Water Management. Mr. Beaver is studying the situation and we are going to get some answers from him. Ms. Taylor added that City Council is meeting every week to discuss these issues and it is number one priority. Mayor Simmons said when a sub division and buildings pop up there are consequences with the water. Those days are over. People need answers and we are striving for those answers.

XI. Set next meeting date

The Committee confirmed the next Meeting date as **Tuesday, November 7, 2017, at 6 p.m.** in Chambers.

Ms. Valentine reminded the committee to send their thoughts on initiatives/goals for the Committee to Ms. Taylor to be discussed next meeting.

XII. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Nadine Chiaramonte,
Receptionist/Office Assistant

APPROVED OUTREACH COMMITTEE:

Date: _____

AUTHENTICATED:

Jesse Purdon, Chairman

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