



FEDERATION
OF
MANATEE COUNTY
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS, INC.

MAY 2018 NEWSLETTER

Next Meeting – May 15, 2018 at 11:30 AM

GUIDED TOUR OF MANATEE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

6305 State Road 70 East

Meet in lobby of MTC main campus

Reservations are required by May 11. Contact Jim Kaiser at 747-2480.

AGENDA

Short Business at End of Tour to include:

- Reports and requests for assistance by homeowners and items of interest
- Dispensing of Reading of Minutes and Treasurer's Report
- Summer Planning for Board Members and any Updates

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - WHAT DRIVES YOUR VOTE?

As American Citizens we have the right and the responsibility to choose our elected leadership, and express our opinions that impacts our values and way of life. The factor by which that occurs is the basis for this article. Many of us unfortunately choose not to take advantage of this constitutional right; however many of us vote enthusiastically at each opportunity. How then do you arrive at the decision point as to whom and what you cast on your ballot? Let's share below those elements that make up those "decisive" factors.

INFORMATION - There are so many sources of information available it is nearly impossible to determine their validity. Television news programs local, national and world wide are broadcast 24 hours a day. Now with the Internet we can research issues at will and find more data than we ever had available. The utilization of this information by processing it through your personal criterion becomes a large factor in your voting process, as it should.

BACKGROUND - We are all influenced by our family and friends experiences. Often time's alliance to political parties are developed at a young age through observation and actions displayed by family members, particularly of the older generations, where gatherings of family members displayed strong opinions about events, political party affiliations and candidates. Where one is employed also plays a significant part in our decision making process. Many times labor parties or employee groups are specific about their support of actions towards issues of public figures or referendums. What part of your decisions is guided by background?

ALLIANCES - Organizations we choose to join and support provide themes that we choose to embrace, they be community service clubs, national organizations or just a neighborhood organization with a limited membership, all of these have opinions and or gatherings at which information and bias are shared among participants, this continues to add to our intelligence as we continue towards our decision point at the polling stations. Religion also can play a direct part in our decision making process. The belief systems within organized faith based groups may have a powerful impact on thinking and guiding decisions. What alliances do you find affecting you decisions?

WHERE WE LIVE - Our neighbors and neighborhoods may play a significant role in our decision process. Many of us choose not to participate in "gatherings" for varied reasons; however there are folks

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**"Eternal Vigilance
is the price
of Liberty."**

who are out meeting their neighbors whether an apartment complex, mobile home court or subdivisions many opinions and information are shared among the people who join in. Who do you talk with about decisions?

THE BOTTOM LINE - We are now at a point of determining a decision as an individual. What did you utilize from the above points to make your decision? Were you influenced at all by new information or has your mindset forbidden intrusion of “new data”? Do we really mentally exercise our thought processes to allow for a different path to decision? It is important to our community and to our own organizations that we “get it right” so to speak. What did you use to “get it right” for the candidate you chose or the referendum you voted on last?

HEALTHCARE ADVISORY BOARD (HAB) UPDATE

Unfortunately, the Manatee County created Health Advisory Board (HAB) is struggling at this time. Resolution R-17-035 which replaced R-15-173, specifically states that it was enacted by the Manatee County Commission (BOCC) to: (a) have access to the “insight, knowledge and experience” of “community stakeholders”; and (b) gain greater understanding of the best evidence based practices related to the providing of healthcare for those who are “medically needy”; and (c) HAB was to provide advice and insight of the above to the BOCC. Also, HAB was to be assisted by staff with available resources in carrying out the duties of HAB, including legal advice from the County Attorney.

Progress by HAB was slowly advancing after the two resolutions were enacted. However, before R-17-035 was enacted, without any input from HAB, the county hired a new County Health Care Manager (HCM) as a result of a donation of \$200,000.00 to the county by an unnamed donor.

Since that time, initially the HCM has helped in coordinating and providing health care information to HAB. However, it now appears that staff and HCM are preparing and presenting health care recommendations to BOCC, and participating in workshops with BOCC, without coordination and input with and from HAB.

Also, no help is being given to HAB and the BOCC by staff on new funding recommendations on how to lower the cost of medical care the county is presently paying, approximately \$22 million dollars, for the medically needy at 200% of the federal poverty level instead of 100% to 135%. This results in 41% of Manatee County’s population, approximately 380,000 residents, being eligible for health care subsidies from Manatee County taxpayers.

In addition, requests by me to staff for information from sources outside Manatee County for models showing best evidenced based practices of health care and funding models, and legal advice from County Attorney, which were required to be provided if requested by HAB members has been ignored. Additionally, there have been significant violations of meeting procedures, required by HAB meetings, by staff and certain members.

Since the Chairman unexpectedly resigned, there have been problems obtaining a quorum for meetings because of lack of attendance by some members. Attempts have been made by me in the past and presently to try to resolve the above problems and I will continue to try to do. (ESM)

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU ARE PAYING SOME OF THE DEVELOPER’S IMPACT FEES?

The developers are paying 90% of the recommended impact fees. That seems like good news but it isn’t. It is better than the 80% they paid for one year starting in April, 2016 but is the same as they paid last year. And it is not the 100% they would now be paying except that our Board of County Commissioners voted on March 20th to “cap” impact fees at 90%. That’s it; they NEVER pay 100% of what they owe. That doesn’t seem too bad until you find out that 10% of what they owe is \$10,000 per day, EVERY DAY. That’s \$300,000 per month, or \$3.7 million per year which adds up to over ten-million-dollars in three years.

If the developers aren’t paying for the entire infrastructure that is required because of their new developments, infrastructure that would not be needed otherwise, who is paying for it? YOUR TAX DOLLARS are paying that \$10,000 every day instead of being used to fill those potholes you have to try to avoid every day or, maybe fix the traffic congestion problems we face every day. See: <http://ourmanatee.com/images/Impact-fee-chart.jpg>

When you see those potholes or are sitting in traffic, think about what the developers are doing with YOUR MONEY. Or think about what the Sheriff said about needing at least 50 more deputies to be fully staffed. And, just think how far that \$10K/day would go to help protect our school kids or how it could be used to help those who can’t afford medical care.

Don't forget what we are talking about. When the County pays \$10,000 for developer necessitated infrastructure, that's \$10,000 out of our budget. That isn't impact fee money, it's just the opposite. It is money that can't be spent to improve our quality of life or fix our water and sewer pipelines that are deteriorating more and more every day. That is money out of your pocket and is used to pay part of the developer's impact fees which they legally owe except that our Board of Commissioners decided to give them a discount and make us pay \$10,000/day instead of them.

And then think about how the developers are using YOUR MONEY (that \$10,000 they don't have to pay because the Board of Commissioners says you have to pay it instead). One thing we know for sure is that they are using some of it to donate to THEIR hand-picked candidates who get elected because of all the extra publicity that money (your money) buys. And then, once those candidates are elected, they "return the favor". One way they do that is to suspend, cut, or cap impact fees. They have done that repeatedly over many years. It does not have to be that way. One thing you can do is VOTE for candidates who aren't supported by the developers. Vote for candidates who care about us and will represent us by acting in OUR best interest. In our next Newsletter we'll tell you how to identify candidates who are using developer dollars (really your dollars) in their campaigns to get elected. In the meantime, you might want to visit this website: <https://www.votemanatee.com/Candidate-Information/Local-Candidates-Committees> (EG)

TRIBUTE TO HARLAN M. TWIBLE (3/10/22 – 4/08/18)
FORMER FEDERATION PRESIDENT

I have attended many memorial services and celebrations of life, but the one for Harlan was one of the finest I have ever had the privilege to attend. This occurred at the beautiful church he attend in Sarasota, Florida, named The Church of the Palms.

It was one of the most well thought-out inspirational descriptions of a man and his life, a person listening could ever want to experience. For those that knew him and his history, he emulated one of the highest standards that the Federation has stood for over the past 52+ years. He had an unwavering perseverance to do the right thing for those around him under the most challenging circumstances.

He was married to his beloved wife, Alice, who predeceased him, and is survived by four children. He was a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and served 11 years as a naval officer in both World War II and the Korean War.

It was during World War II that he demonstrated what God fearing perseverance is all about. In his first naval assignment on the U.S.S. Indianapolis, he was assigned a secret mission of delivering the first atomic bomb to Tinian in the Northern Mariana Islands. Four days after delivering the bomb, his ship was sunk at sea by enemy action, sinking so fast no distress call was sent. Though wounded, he and 325 men, out of 1500, spent 5 days and nights in shark infested waters with little or no water or survival gear. Harlan preserved and constantly aided 325 of his helpless men to survive. For this he was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps metals. A movie was later made of their ordeal. After leaving the service, he became CEO of Siemens Medical of America and other large companies. When he retired, he became president of a local homeowners association and a member of the Federation. He also enjoyed tutoring young people in high level math at our local high schools and helping Manatee County through the Federation. (ESM)

SECRETARY'S CORNER

Below is a brief synopsis of our guest speaker at the April 17, 2018 Federation Membership Meeting and serves as a courtesy to our members unable to attend our meetings.

Guest Speaker: **Corinne Tucker**, Public Involvement Coordinator, Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Board (MPO) was created under a 1973 Highway Act for areas of populations 50,000 or more. Funding comes from highway trust fund and local government and municipalities for all types of transportation. The Sarasota/Manatee MPO Board is regulated by input from three committees, 1) Technical Advisory 2) Citizens Advisory, 3) Bicycle, Pedestrian, Trails Advisory, and individual citizen input. To be a member of the MPO Board you must be an elected official. Speaker Tucker gave a slide show depicting the history and inner workings of our local MPO. Interestingly, this local MPO Board covers 2 counties, 9 cities/towns, 2 transit agencies, 1 airport, and 1 seaport. They have 9 staff members and their job is to enact the decisions made by the Board. MPO meetings are noticed and open to the public. There is a five-step process to implement projects and it may take 15 years or and more to complete a project. They have a long-range comprehensive

transportation plan that is updated every 5 years. MPO Board only reviews projects eligible for state and federal funding. Local funded projects are determined by County/City Council Commissions. Questions can be directed to Leigh Holt, Strategic Planning, Manager at leigh@mympo.org or 941-359-5772. Excellent and informative presentation.

LOOKING FOR A FAIR AND EQUITABLE NOISE ORDINANCE

A county can either create an enforceable ordinance to control excessive noise, or strip the ordinance of useful language and increase decibel levels to reduce their noise complaints. Leading experts state that noise issues are caused mostly by a poorly written ordinance and the inability to understand how to correctly enforce the ordinance. They further state that municipalities should seek expert help when drafting ordinances.

In Manatee County, the old Noise Ordinance in effect until September 2016, used expert recommendations, contained useful language, and treated commercial and residential property equally.

Draft 1 of the new ordinance was presented at the work session in July 2016; this provided an opportunity for a discussion that included the public. The document at this time stated: no increase in decibel levels, included the municipal City limits of Bradenton, and removed language used to support a noise complaint. The most alarming difference was that professionals were not consulted and language was changed within the ordinance, yet was not properly noted.

Draft 2 was presented and approved by Commissioners on September 13, 2016. The ordinance which passed removed all useful language that citizens could use to file a complaint, increased decibel limits, removed industrial zone limits, and made an inequity in noise on differently zoned properties. Most importantly, it allowed the agencies that enforce the ordinance to vet it and again, did not properly note document changes.

An engineer, hired by residents, who specializes in acoustics, stated that it appeared that the Noise Ordinance was changed after getting pressure from a few businesses which were in violation of the old ordinance and possibly increased to accommodate outdoor music. The expert stated that the ordinance does not cover residents with a constant noise source coming from commercial property. A residential neighbor and a commercial neighbor could generate the same decibel level of continuous sound and only the residential neighbor would be in violation.

How were Commissioners convinced to approve such an inequitable ordinance? A couple of contributing factors should be addressed. During the work session Code Enforcement brought a hand-held decibel meter and used it during the meeting while discussing the level of some sounds, this created a false sense of the level of sounds in general. It was stated that regular conversation registered between 50 and 65 decibels. While this is true, they did not discuss that sound registering between 70-77 decibels is the equivalent of standing 3- 5 feet away from a residential leaf blower. If Commissioners had been subjected to the leaf blower, instead of conversation, they may not have voted to approve raising the decibel level. Statistical data presented at the work session contained inaccurate information. Commissioners may not have been aware that sound limits were no longer being applied equally, but instead made an inequity between commercial and residential zones and gave the industrial zone no limit. Both Draft 1 and Draft 2 contained both added text and changes which were not correctly documented as such. Therefore, Commissioners considered and approved changes and recommendations they were not made aware were new or different. The inclusion of the City of Bradenton in Draft 1 created an outpouring of people in support for an increase in the allowable decibel limit as the ordinance would affect city bars and breweries that wanted to play outside music and favored an entertainment district. However, the new ordinance did not apply to the City of Bradenton. In addition, Manatee Chamber of Commerce stated that more than 500 members, all of which are “businesses and commercial property owners”, wanted an increase in decibel limits. Both of these examples made it appear to Commissioners that the public was in favor of an increase in sound limits. Were the Commissioners aware that those who vetted the ordinance removed specific language within the ordinance that citizen’s used to support and file a violation?

The new Noise Ordinance allowed the agencies that enforce it to “significantly vet” the ordinance, making it so vague that there is little left to enforce. It also appears that the ordinance is designed to specifically favor businesses and commercial property, over all other citizens. Manatee County needs a Noise Ordinance that provides safeguards and adequate soundproofing and mitigation so that it is in the public’s best interest and gives equal representation to all citizens’. (DA)

NOTE – The remaining meeting dates for 2018 are: September 18 – TBA, October 16 – TBA, November meeting has been moved to December 04 - TBA