

Minutes
Gasparilla Island Special Improvement Unit
Boca Grande Community Center
November 20, 2009

Attendees: Ron Gutman
John Bourgoïn
Dick Ryan
John Shaw
Libby Walker – Lee County
Donna Deberry – Lee County

Bernice Constantin - USDA
Mike Avery - USDA
Mike Kennedy - USDA
Norm Schoch - USDA

Absent: Jim Ardrey

Prior to the opening of the meeting Libby Walker handed out a document showing the term expiration dates of current Unit members as well as that of new member, Jim Ardrey.

A special guest in the audience was Alex Roman, an Eagle Scout candidate.

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chair, Ron Gutman, at 2:00PM.

Minutes of the April 23, 2009 Meeting were unanimously approved after a motion by D. Ryan and second by J. Bourgoïn.

There was no formal Agenda distributed. The meeting was to feature a pre-announced update of USDA activity in both Charlotte (Boca Grande only) and Lee Counties.

Mike Avery gave an impressive Power Point presentation which included research results from Charlotte County in 2008 and 2009 as well as Lee County in 2009. It indicated, from extensive research of captive species both dead and alive, significant declines year to year, in the size of iguanas captured, and corresponding declines in reproduction potential of both male and female of the species.

Perhaps the most important element of their research was the discovery of an effective toxicant, ZINC PHOSPHIDE, a common household item widely used for rodent control. The standard dosage for rodent control is four times that proven to be effective for iguanas. However, if improperly presented it could prove harmful or even fatal to squirrels, small pets and other animal species.

The next steps in the USDA process are to collect data on the types of bait (red cherries have proven effective) to be used, the method of delivering the bait, the efficacy, and most importantly, to develop the preceding in order to avoid harm to non-target species. Once this has been accomplished they hope to present the data to the EPA and gain approval for use sometime in 2010.

There were several questions from the audience, most prominent being “When can we halt current spending levels and migrate to a less costly maintenance level?” Response was that we continue the current program on a year to year basis until results indicate that control has been achieved, likely after the toxicant has been approved and is shown to be effective. The expectation is that there will never be complete elimination. Rather, control will be similar to

current rodent control.

George Cera, initial trapper in the first two years of the Lee County program, commented that the eradication contract should be awarded to a local business instead of to the US Government.

A motion was then made by John Shaw, seconded by John Bourgoïn and unanimously approved, to forward the USDA contract and balance of the Budget to the County Commissioners for approval. The contract is for 1730 man hours of work at a total cost of \$103,800. The balance of the Budget results in a total cost of \$119,712, or approximately \$78 per million dollars of Taxable Value per residence.

There was no new business and the meeting was adjourned at 3:20PM..