



9/27/2018 Wheeler Estates Town Hall Meeting Summary

The Wheeler Estates Town Hall Meeting was convened at 6:00 p.m. on September 27, 2018, at the Hendry County Emergency Operations Center, 4425 S.R. 80, Labelle, FL

The purpose of the meeting was to provide an open forum for residents to discuss questions and concerns with Hendry County, and also to discuss the Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant project relating to land uses in Wheeler Estates. An agenda was provided as a handout and is attached hereto as Exhibit "A". The sign-in sheet demonstrating 45+/- attendees is attached hereto as Exhibit "B".

The following staff members and service providers from Hendry County were in attendance:

Commissioner Mitchell Wills – District 3 County Commissioner/Chairperson
Margaret Emblidge, AICP – Planning and Community Development Director
Shane Parker – Public Works Director/County Engineer
Sheriff Steve Whidden – Sheriff's Office
Chief Deputy Sheriff Kevin Nelson – Sheriff's Office
Josh Rimes – Fire Chief
Richard Lehmkuhl - Emergency Management
Adrian Damms – Emergency Medical Services
Wanda Rota-Reina – Code Enforcement

Margaret Emblidge welcomed attendees, made introductions, and explained the purpose of the meeting. The County Representatives then each gave an overview of their current services and shared applicable updates. Following these briefings, the floor was opened to attendees. The following questions/comments were asked by those in attendance. Please note this is not a verbatim record of the comments, questions and responses, but a general summary of the discussion.

(1) What about the people living in communes/tents (in Wheeler Estates)? The commune on 21st Street is back.

RESPONSE: The communes on various properties are being dealt with by Code Enforcement.

(2) Often times four wheelers do donuts on newly paved roadways, or on the dirt roads. Along with speeding vehicles. Need more police patrol.

RESPONSE: The Sheriff recognized that those issues are occurring and stated plans were in place to patrol the area on a more frequent basis.

(3) What about access to SR 80? Can't the County do eminent domain?

RESPONSE: There is currently no legal access or funding in place to build a roadway connection from the community to SR 80. A series of easements need to be obtained in order to be able to complete a roadway connection. As people come into the County to develop their properties, the Staff can request easements. It was explained that eminent domain is very expensive for the County to pursue and has no guaranteed results.

(4) Is there \$1.7 million in a MSBU fund to build roads?

RESPONSE: No. The money available goes towards maintenance costs. Also, it's important to note that building a road is much more than just paving the existing dirt road. It requires drainage, stormwater, and other infrastructure improvements.

(5) Maybe paving the roadways will get rid of the "riff-raff" that speeds and does donuts?

RESPONSE: Possibly, but paving could also increase the likelihood of speeding.

(6) We would like to put up signs that say, "no trespassing".

(7) The County is working with the Post Master to get mail delivered.

(8) Can I put speed bumps in front of my own property? If not, what can I do?

RESPONSE: We are moving away from doing speed bumps like most Counties. We will be patrolling the area more, but speed bumps are not recommended. Signage is another alternative to getting cars to slow down.

(9) We've tried signs, but they get removed or vandalized. There is also issues with people coming into the neighborhood for target practice and to dump household waste, such as appliances.

RESPONSE: So noted. There was discussion from the Sheriff on increasing patrols in the area to increase public safety. Attendees noted there is a significant difference in criminal activity when the Sheriff task force patrols the area.

(11) Can the Lee County Sheriff's Office patrol the area?

RESPONSE: They do not have jurisdiction to patrol the area. They respond to emergency calls based upon our interlocal agreement, but are not able to provide regular patrol service.

(12) Weekends are the worst for gunfire and target practice.

RESPONSE: There was an explanation from the Sheriff on state laws permitting shooting on private property over 1 acre of land.

(13) Why do certain properties require FEMA flood insurance and others do not?

RESPONSE: The FEMA flood maps were shown to attendees and the County Engineer offered to discuss individual properties in relation to the map following the meeting.

(14) Someone is dumping yard waste on Wheeler and 2nd Street and also behind the canals. Also tires, paint buckets, etc.

RESPONSE: The waste does not get picked up off of private lots by WSL. Code Enforcement would issue a letter of violation for junk and debris. If nothing is done in 30 days, a citation is issued, and then court and fines.

(15) Sometimes my trash doesn't get picked up.

RESPONSE: Commissioner Wills encouraged attendees to call Solid Waste or him directly when these issues arise, so he can address them directly. He also indicated that new trash pickup dates were sent out recently that changed the schedule.

(16) Does the County pick up washing machines?

RESPONSE: Yes, and tires with no rims too, but you have to call.

(17) We need more mosquito control.

RESPONSE: North and South Wheeler Estates is being assessed for mosquito patrol.

(18) Can we get the mosquito truck out twice a week?

RESPONSE: No, it comes once a week.

(19) Is there going to be a bridge across Townsend canal?

RESPONSE: Not that we know of.

Following this open forum, Margaret Emblidge introduced Alexis Crespo with Waldrop Engineering. Alexis explained the community planning process funded by the state grant. She explained the focus will be on the zoning districts and Future Land Use within Wheeler Estates and getting input from the community on how to address land uses within the community. She noted the effort would focus on agricultural activities, such as the keeping of domestic livestock, as well as neighborhood-scale non-residential uses, such as churches and general stores. She noted a survey would be distributed and further input would be taken at the next community meeting on October 17th at 6 p.m. at the Emergency Operations Center.

There were further questions from attendees on the AG-2 and AG-3 zoning districts, concerns about minimum standards for modular homes, and locating trailers and RVs on properties. Margaret Emblidge explained that the zoning is A-3 on the majority of the properties with some having A-2, RG-1 and Industrial. Both site built homes and modular homes are permitted however, Mobile Homes and RV's are not.

Ms. Emblidge thanked the attendees and provided her contact information. She invited the attendees to take business cards and reminded them of the next public input meeting opportunity on October 17, 2018 at 6 p.m. The meeting was concluded at approximately 7:30 p.m.