

**MINUTES REPORT
EAGLE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(ETAC)**

Tuesday, October 13, 2020

Committee Members Present:

Laura Greeno, Chair
Mike Myers
Ed Elms
Betsie Hiatt, Vice-Chair

Excused / Absent:

None

Lee County Government Staff Present:

Becky Sweigert, DCD Planning
Nic DeFilippo, DCD Planning
Emily Gear, DCD, Development Services
Debbie Carpenter, DCD Administration

Outside Consultants/Members of the Public Present:

Paul Owen, Dex Bender

CALL TO ORDER:

Ms. Laura Greeno called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm in the first floor conference room 1B of the Community Development/Public Works Center, 1500 Monroe Street, Ft. Myers, Florida and introductions were made. Ms. Becky Sweigert introduced Emily Gear, a new employee in the Development Services section doing environmental plan review. Ms. Sweigert thought it would be helpful for her to attend the meeting and familiarize herself with the ETAC ordinance and issues.

Ms. Greeno announced that approval of the minutes, agenda item #2, would be done later and that discussion would begin with Item #3 of the agenda.

DECLARATION OF ABANDONED NEST LE-018

Mr. Paul Owen, Dex Bender Associates directed the committee's attention to the map he had provided that showed 2 nests, LE-018 and LE-018A, in the area outlined in yellow. According to Mr. Owen, the birds nested in LE-018 for several years and then moved to LE-018A in the 2011-12 nesting season. Since then both trees are gone. He conducted a site visit recently and there were few if any trees capable of having a nest, being all relatively young Australian Pines. He thought LE-018 had been in a mature slash pine and LE-018A in an Australian Pine but again, neither tree was there anymore. He understood that LE-018A had probably not been down long enough, but LE-018 has been gone for long enough for him to request a lost determination for that nest. Ms. Sweigert confirmed that Hurricane Irma (2017) damaged many of the pines on the property and although there was some activity in that year there has been no confirmed activity since then. Ms. Betsie Hiatt was not sure where these nests were so Ms. Sweigert pointed out the location on Stringfellow Rd. near the post office in a farm field north of the Conifer/Eagle Lakes subdivision. Ms. Sweigert was not able to confirm when the original tree (LE-018) came down but Mr. Ed Elms remembered it was a slash pine which was in bad shape for a number of years. Ms. Hiatt asked about the rules for how long a tree must be down

before being considered lost and Ms. Sweigert said it was 3 years. This request is only for LE-018 which has been down for some time, and not for LE-018A which looked to have been there until at least 17-18, fledged, then was gone after that. Ms. Sweigert said this meeting will focus on the abandonment of LE-018 and then possibly at the end of this nesting season there could be a discussion about LE-018A.

Mr. Elms made a motion to declare Nest LE-018 abandoned. Mr. Mike Myers seconded. The motion was called and carried unanimously.

Ms. Greeno asked if any monitoring would be done for the remaining piece and if access would be provided prior to declaring LE-018A abandoned if requested, since there is no concrete data and it would help substantiate the findings. Mr. Owen said he had not been asked to do any monitoring but if he happened to be in the area he would certainly look in on it. He could also ask the property owner about access.

Ms. Sweigert agreed to provide Mr. Owen with a letter confirming abandonment of LE-018.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 11, 2020

Ms. Greeno asked if there were any changes to the minutes. There were none.

Mr. Myers made a motion to approve the August minutes. Mr. Elms seconded. The motion was called and approved unanimously.

Member Reports

Ms. Sweigert announced that Ms. Cindy Bear would not be returning to the committee. Ms. Sweigert asked the committee if they knew of someone with knowledge of bald eagle biology and behavior that might be a good fit and if so to let her know and she would reach out. A brief discussion followed whether an FGCU student, an agency person, or an Eagle Watch volunteer might be options.

Ms. Bear's vacancy changes the nest assignments somewhat. Ms. Sweigert asked if Mr. Elms could take over the Pine Island nests like before and then she would look for someone to cover the North Fort Myers area. Ms. Greeno offered to help with some of those; Ms. Sweigert and Mr. DeFilippo could cover the NFM nests closer to downtown. Ms. Sweigert will get with Mr. Elms about what needs monitoring. She hadn't done the monitoring sheets yet but she will fix Mr. Elms' and Ms. Greeno's nest assignments and distribute at the next meeting. She wanted to be sure that there is no lapse in the data for nests that may have development or something coming up.

Ms. Greeno said that in the past staff had provided a list of heads-up type projects and Ms. Sweigert said she and Mr. DeFilippo have been working on that but because of technical difficulties with the new permitting program, had not been able to come up with that list yet. Some things she knew about: the Captiva work wrapped up last week; St. Charles also wrapped up last week – the birds were there early; Caloosa Cay - they were supposed to delineate the 660' zone, and it looked like a little work had started at Bank of America. Ms. Sweigert said nothing had come in for Edison Oil and she thought it may have been because of the proposed conservation measures and how restrictive they were; she had talked to them about it being an incidental take situation. She had some reports from residents about Jonathon Harbor, the birds are there. The nest at the entrance is still good but the perch over by the old nest is where they hang out.

Member Reports

Mr. Myers:

- St. Charles Harbor. Didn't see any birds there, but did see the exotics and it looked like they had been cleaned out.
- Caloosa Palms. Nothing there. The old pine snag's completely grown over with vines.
- Daniels Marketplace. The tree there is dead. Saw no activity.
- Roballo. Really can't see that one because the fishtale palm is so big. Ms. Sweigert has reached out but has not received anything back about getting access.
- Jonathon Harbor. He saw one adult perched near the old nest location.
- Sanibel Sunset. The nest is mostly gone from the Australian Pine. Saw no activity.
- Alico Road. Good nest, still there. Did not see any eagles.
- Lakes Park. No birds perched at the cell tower.
- Pub & Pickle. Good nest. Saw no activity.
- Lexington Middle. Has a big nest. Saw no activity.
- Sora Drive. The nest is pretty much out of the pine tree. Saw no activity.
- Tortuga. There is still a nest structure in the Australian Pine (the nest tree). He noticed they've sprayed most of the Australian Pines around it. He assumed, and Ms. Sweigert confirmed, that the county had done that. The nest used to be on A&W Bulb, moved to Caloosa, is now west of A&W Bulb and just north of Gladiolus, across the street from the entrance to Tortuga, which is county property and part of the Deep Lagoon Preserve.

Mr. DeFilippo said he had seen the Alico eagles, just circling, not at the nest.

Mr. Elms:

- Littleton Rd./Bell Tower. Ms. Sweigert said no number has been assigned to this yet. Over the past two weeks he had seen one adult, twice on the tower itself and once in the nest doing housekeeping. Has not seen the 2 adults together.
- Bayshore Commons. The nest looks good. Has seen 2 adults flying or perched at the top of the tower at Coon and Donald Roads.
- Pritchett Bayshore. The eagles are around and housekeeping, but they are still feeding one of the juveniles that fledged in July but never left. The group wondered if the birds would delay this season because of how late they were the last.

Betsie Hiatt:

- Had nothing to report. The only thing she knew of was the Bank of America and she had not seen the eagles yet. The nest is there but she had not seen them around.

Ms. Sweigert asked about Pacosin. This is a nest near Alden Pines that she has been getting calls about. Ms. Hiatt recalled that ETAC reviewed a management plan for the marina not too long ago. The nest falls down at the end of every nesting season and they rebuild in in an Australian Pine right at the end of the clearing. Ms. Sweigert asked Ms. Hiatt to let her know when she had a chance to get there and take a look at it. Neither had heard from FWC about clearing.

Laura Greeno:

- The Galt birds are back early, the trail is closed.
- Pine Island Flatwoods birds are around but not at the nest yet.
- She reminded Ms. Sweigert that the old nests on Pine Island needed to be declared abandoned or lost.

- Imperial Marsh. No sign of the birds. She is convinced that the FPL work pushed the birds out of the nest. They were there right before the work started and then did not work on the nest at all last year. However, she said you could hear them off in the distance.
- Wild Turkey. Not sure if the birds are back yet.
- Nothing at the official Lehigh nest. There is a nest but the birds are not around.

Ms. Greeno asked for an update from the last meeting. Ms. Sweigert said Kim Schlachta had come to the August meeting after being approached by potential buyers for property on McGregor (Roballo nest) looking for some guidance. After hearing the committee's recommendations, she had hoped to have a preliminary plan ready for the next meeting, but Ms. Sweigert had reached out to her and had not heard back.

There was no public present and no further discussion. The meeting adjourned at 3:39 p.m.

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for November 10, 2020.