

**LEE COUNTY
BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN MEETING MINUTES
April 16, 2025**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dave Wheaton, Chair, At Large
Eric Spivey, Vice Chair, Bike Industry Representative, At Large
Paul Cohen, Affordable Housing Representative, At Large
Theodore (Pat) Connor, District 2
Paul Benvie, At Large
Steve Jansen, Walkable Community Representative, At Large

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jane Bowser, Secretary, At Large
Derek Felder, District 1
Damon Shelor, District 5

STAFF

Tom Marquardt, LC DOT
Jillian Scholler, LC DOT
Rob Price, LC DOT
Bridgette Blanchard, LC DOT
Bruce Littleton, LC DOT
Brandon Kaczmarek, Lee County Parks & Recreation

GUESTS

Dominic Konieczki, Lee County Sheriff's Office
Ron Gogoi, Lee County MPO
Joel DeGuzman, Lee County School District
Ruth Briney, Eagle Ridge
Chase Lopez, Timberwood Preserve

**Agenda Item #1: *Call to Order, Introductions, Review of Agenda and Motion to Approve
Agenda:**

Mr. Dave Wheaton, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. in the Community Development/Public Works building, 1500 Monroe Street, Fort Myers, First Floor Conference Room 1B. Introductions were made.

Mr. Wheaton asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Mr. Eric Spivey made the motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Paul Cohen.

The motion was called and passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #2: *Approval of the March 19, 2025 meeting minutes.

Mr. Wheaton called for a review of the March 19, 2025 minutes.

Mr. Eric Spivey made a motion to approve the March meeting minutes barring any last-minute changes unforeseen, seconded by Mr. Steve Jansen. The motion was called and passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #3: Public Comments:

- (a) Ms. Ruth Briney stated that she is here to represent Eagle Ridge. She said she thinks a bike path is important to have outside their community as there are many activities and lots of people walking and biking.

Agenda Item #4: Bike/Ped Facility Requests/Presentations:

- (a) **Shared Use Path on the south side of Griffin Drive from Gateway Blvd to Gateway Elementary School** – Mr. Chase Lopez stated that he has a proposal for crosswalk installation at Timbermarsh Ct and Griffin Dr. Mr. Lopez presented pictures of the location of the proposed crosswalk location.

Mr. Rob Price, P.E. advised that he would rather people walk to the sidewalk at the school on their side of the road and then use the crosswalk at the school to cross Griffin Dr. Mr. Price said crossing Griffin Dr at an unmarked location where there is not a crosswalk is not safe, and he would not recommend it. He also stated that it is not appropriate to install a stand-alone crosswalk at the location being requested.

Ms. Jillian Scholler stated that a better request would be a sidewalk from Timberwood Preserve to Gateway Elementary school.

- (b) ***Sidewalk on the south side of Penzance Blvd from Solano Dr to Six-Mile Cypress Pkwy** – There was discussion among the BPAC members regarding this project. Mr. Steve Jansen explained that he changed this project to Ranchette Dr because it is a residential collector street and in order to maintain walkable communities, there needs to be walkable facilities on both sides of collector streets and arterials. It was brought up by Mr. Dave Wheaton that there may be some issues obtaining right-of-way. Mr. Jansen stated he does realize that this project may not score well on a cost benefit and a large amount of drainage will be involved in getting this built as well. Mr. Rob Price mentioned that this project would most likely be phased and not be built to the west of the community until that area developed further.

Mr. Steve Jansen made a motion to add the sidewalk on the south side of Penzance Blvd from Six-Mile Cypress to Ranchette Dr to the BPAC List, seconded by Mr. Pat Connor. The motion was called. Four BPAC members (Pat Connor, Steve Jansen, Paul Cohen, Paul Benvie)

voted yes. Two BPAC members (Dave Wheaton, Eric Spivey) voted *no*. The motion passed 4 to 2.

Agenda Item #5: Other Business

MPO Updates – Mr. Ron Gogoi shared the MPO direction on the Pine Island Shared-Use Path Project from the March 21st meeting. He stated that the MPO Board asked MPO staff and Lee County DOT staff to proceed with segment 3, which is the segment from Veterans Pkwy in Cape Coral to the eastern limits of Matlacha.

Toward the end of March, FDOT notified the MPO that the State of Florida was returning \$878 million in federal funds to the US Department of Treasury, which included \$320 million in carbon reduction program funds. This impacted projects funded in the Adopted Work Program and the new Tentative Work Program (2026-2030).

Mr. Gogoi shared information for the Caloosahatchee Downtown Multimodal Feasibility Study. He did state that a volunteer from the BPAC committee would be needed to serve in the PSC (Project Steering Committee) meetings. Mr. Steve Jansen stated that he would be willing to serve as a volunteer for the PSC Meetings.

Agenda Item #6: Member Comments:

- (a) Mr. Pat Connor wanted to know if there is any way we can give Eagle Ridge an estimated timeframe of when they will make Tier 1 on the BPAC list.

Ms. Jillian Scholler explained that while there's not as many projects in the SW road impact fee district, money is going to be very tight. Mr. Rob Price added that we cannot give the members of Eagle Ridge an estimated time of when their project will be added to Tier 1 of the BPAC List.

Mr. Connor also asked for clarification on road impact fee districts. He stated that if he understands Rob Price correctly, if the system needs it, they can use money from any impact fee district to complete these projects.

Mr. Rob Price explained that that is not what he has said. He stated that as of now, they are tapping out their impact fee monies. Impact fee money does not cover the costs of building roads. We're paying for roads with gas tax money, property taxes, and surplus toll revenue.

Ms. Jillian Scholler stated that beyond the 5-Year Work Program, we cannot give any estimation of when projects outside of Tier 1 will be completed.

- (b) Mr. Steve Jansen asked if there is a possibility of taking the half dozen smaller projects (200-300 feet long stretches of sidewalk) and completing those first to get them off the BPAC list.

Ms. Jillian Scholler explained that this would come up when we review the projects we want to fund in the next budget cycle. There are currently seven projects that have been allocated as the next

projects to be funded. She explained that money is very tight the next five years, and they are not moving any other projects into Tier 1. There is the possibility that the 7 projects that are next in line for funding could be swapped out for some of the smaller projects.

- (c) Mr. Paul Cohen asked for clarification on a comment made about a developer being able to pay a fee in lieu of building a sidewalk. Mr. Cohen asked what that fee amount would look like.

Mr. Rob Price stated that the fee in lieu process is outlined in the land development code. It requires a developer to demonstrate an absence of need, which is a specific test that's in the code. The fee in lieu would require them to design the sidewalk and get an opinion of probable cost. Mr. Price stated that we try not to agree to fees in lieu.

- (d) Mr. Dave Wheaton shared that Caloosa Riders Bicycle Club is sponsoring A Ride of Silence, which will take place May 21st, 2025. The ride will start at Bell Tower and go up Cleveland Ave and back. The right lane of traffic will be closed.

Agenda Item #8: Staff Comments

- (a) Lee County Parks & Recreation - Mr. Brandon Kaczmarek stated that they received the final bids for the Able Canal Project. They will award the bid in June. There was a recommendation of June for construction at the last Board Meeting.

Agenda Item #9: Other Government Entity Comments

- (a) Lee County School District – Mr. Joel DeGuzman stated that they received good news from the Army Corp. of Engineers. The high school site at Joel Blvd and Tuckahoe in Lehigh received approval for no permit required. Assuming they get the rest of their permits in order and the bids out on time, they should be breaking ground in the fall and provide that school one year sooner than originally planned.

Agenda Item #10: Upcoming Meeting Items

Next Meeting date - **Wednesday, May 21, 2025**

Adjournment

Mr. Dave Wheaton adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

COULT

BPAC Chairman

5/21/25

Date

Jane Baysen

BPAC Secretary or Vice-Chair

5-21-25

Date