



Martin County

Golden Gate Neighborhood Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Cassidy Center at Lamar Howard Park
2895 South East Fairmont Street, Stuart, Florida

Monday, June 1, 2026

PRESENT

Position	Name	Term Expiration
Chairperson	John Gonzalez	April 23, 2030
Vice Chair	Brad Tanzer	September 11, 2029
Members	Alicia Hill	May 5, 2029
	Saadia Tsafarides	September 11, 2029
	Stephan Mark Capps	September 10, 2028

STAFF PRESENT

Position	Name
CRA Program Manager	Joy Puerta
CRA Specialist	Dianne Racek
Environmental Resource Engineer	Amy Eason

* Indicates a motion

** Indicates a vote

*** For the record comment

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Agenda Item: 26-0931 DRAFT MEETING MINUTES– February 2, 2026

MOTION

* M. Capps motioned to approve the proposed February 2, 2026, meeting minutes as presented

**B. Tanzer seconded the motion, and the motion carried UNANIMOUSLY

COMMENTS

1. PUBLIC-

C. Cass - Announced his campaign for the District 2 Commissioner seat representing Golden Gate.

J. Dial - Announced his campaign for the District 4 Commissioner seat representing Port Salerno.

New Business

Agenda Item: 26-0932 GOLDEN GATE STA PROJECT

Amy Eason, Environmental Resource Engineer, provided a presentation for the Golden Gate STA Project.

COMMENTS

J. Pearce - Will it be dredged further?

A. Eason - Yes. At least two feet of muck will be removed, with final depth under evaluation. Improvements include converting dry ponds to wet retention, adding baffle boxes, and providing wetland mitigation. Overall, the project will improve water quality and treatment capacity.

C. Cass- What is the maximum depth?

A. Eason - The engineers are still determining the maximum depth.

C. Cass - Will there be a littoral shelf?

A. Eason - Yes. A planted littoral shelf will be included. Even with the shelf, there will be approximately a 10% reduction in volume.

J. Pearce - Are there fish in the STA now?

A. Eason - Yes. There are a significant number of fish in STA 3. A fish kill occurred last year.

A. Hill - Jefferson had a lot of dead fish.

A. Eason - Tidal influences allowed saltwater fish to enter the system. After a check valve was installed to prevent saltwater intrusion, the resulting freshwater conditions led to a fish kill. The saltwater fish should not have been in the system.

J. Dial - Where will the muck go?

A. Eason - Sediment sampling will be conducted first, and most material will be disposed of at the landfill.

A. Hill - Culverts on Jefferson are filling with debris, and flooding issues are beginning to recur. No maintenance is being performed.

A. Eason - A watershed plan is being prepared to address undersized pipes, additional swales, and potential property acquisition. The project was originally intended to raise the weir. With the BUILD Grant, the goal is to ensure the system is properly designed and functions effectively without ongoing issues.

S. Tsafarides - The culverts need to be cleaned first.

A. Eason - With the rainy season underway, it is important to identify and report areas where flooding is occurring.

A. Hill - A recent heavy rain event caused significant flooding. It has not flooded like that since the improvements were completed.

A. Eason - This is consistent with model results, indicating the culverts are likely obstructed.

OLD BUSINESS

Agenda Item: 26-0933 GOLDEN GATE NAC – LANDSCAPE VISION PLAN

Joy Puerta provided an update on the Golden Gate Landscape Vision Plan.

COMMENTS

J. Gonzalez- Was the open house well attended?

J. Puerta - No. There were approximately 18 attendees, mostly consultants and staff. Community participation was limited.

B. Tanzer - Did the open house take place after the most recent NAC meeting?

J. Puerta - Yes. The open house was last Wednesday, following the most recent NAC meeting.

B. Tanzer - Why not remove larger trees so signs are visible? Are crepe myrtles being removed and replaced with palm trees?

J. Puerta - Crepe myrtles are being removed and replaced with a variety of palm trees.

B. Tanzer - Why not remove the crepe myrtles and leave low vegetation instead?

J. Puerta - Palm trees have a vertical growth habit and do not interfere with the travel lane. Low vegetation (6–12 inches in crosswalk areas and up to 18 inches in landscaped areas) will be used to maintain sight distance.

B. Tanzer - The flashing lights are not visible until drivers are very close.

J. Gonzalez - Is there a rendering or picture?

J. Puerta - Not in this presentation; however, it was shown at the open house.

C. Cass - What type of palm trees?

J. Puerta - Four palm tree varieties were presented at the open house. Cotleur & Hearing will prepare the engineering plans, and additional public outreach will occur. This is a pilot project aligned with the CRA's landscape vision planning and the Golden Gate Vision Plan.

B. Tanzer - Is the curb line being addressed? Residents are having difficulty accessing their properties. Designers should experience the corridor through driving, walking, biking, and crossing to better understand existing conditions.

A. Hill - Vehicles stopping in travel lanes create difficulty for left-turn movements. Turning lanes should have been included.

J. Puerta- Complete streets concepts often reduce turning lanes to slow traffic.

A. Hill - Accidents and fatalities have increased since the project was completed.

B. Tanzer - Large contractor vehicles cannot properly navigate openings, and turning movements often block travel lanes.

A. Hill- Drivers are forced to swerve at the last second to avoid collisions.

J. Puerta - This is a landscape project, not a roadway redesign. The corridor was previously modified through public input and commission direction to open certain access points. This effort focuses on landscaping improvements.

C. Cass - With palm trees in a narrow median, pedestrians may become difficult to see when partially obscured.

J. Gonzalez - Cotleur & Hearing may not be aware of visibility concerns. Adjusting tree placement could improve sight lines.

J. Puerta - The trees are set back, but I will raise visibility concerns with Cotleur & Hearing.

C. Cass - Sight distance should be reviewed.

J. Gonzalez - Please ask Cotleur & Hearing to evaluate whether relocating trees improves visibility for both pedestrians and drivers.

J. Puerta - I will discuss moving the trees further away from crosswalks with Cotleur & Hearing.

S. Tsafarides - Pedestrians are not consistently using crosswalks.

C. Cass - Pedestrians are crossing mid-block.

J. Puerta - Cotleur & Hearing will return with a presentation at the 30% design stage.

S. Tsafarides - The area used to be referred to as a "suicide lane."

A. Hill - There is a significant rat problem in Golden Gate. Can owl boxes be installed around the STAs?

J. Puerta - Please submit an RFS outlining the request.

A. Hill - Rodent control methods should avoid poison due to impacts on wildlife.

J. Puerta - Include your preferred method in the Request for Service (RFS).

A. Hill - Sugar cane fields use owl and bat boxes for rodent control without poison.

J. Puerta - The CRA would not manage this; an RFS would be required.

C. Cass - Business or public-private sponsorship could be an option.

J. Pearce - This sounds like a viable project.

C. Cass - It could be a community event.

A. Hill - The boxes would support great horned owls, screech owls, and barn owls.

J. Pearce - How would a project like this begin?

J. Puerta - The CRA cannot fund this as it is not part of the 2022 Golden Gate Community Redevelopment Plan. It may be possible through Art in Public Places.

J. Pearce - If it is not in the plan, how can it be added?

J. Puerta - It would require an amendment to the plan, including approval by the CRA Board and the Board of County Commissioners.

J. Gonzalez - It may be easier to identify a permissible pathway within the existing plan than to pursue an amendment.

S. Tsafarides - Subcontractors on the El Camino Trail are not actively working.

J. Pearce- The contractor selection was a mistake.

J. Puerta - Subcontractors have performed portions of the lighting and irrigation work; however, the general contractor has not completed paving, concrete work, or site cleanup.

S. Tsafarides - This issue needs to be addressed.

J. Puerta - The project is approximately 48% complete. Options include continuing with delays or terminating and rebidding, which would result in a 9–10-month delay.

A. Hill - Change orders are increasing costs.

S. Tsafarides - The contractor should be invited to a NAC meeting.

J. Gonzalez - Staff and the County are working to resolve issues without stopping the project, though cost overruns are occurring beyond the original bid.

A. Hill - Are change orders due to contractor error?

J. Puerta - Means and methods are the contractor's responsibility. The contractor has requested a 60-day extension with a waiver of liquidated damages. Change orders also stem from design issues, exposed utilities, and scope modifications such as full irrigation installation instead of temporary watering.

J. Pearce - What is the main reason for cost overruns?

J. Puerta - The largest change order to date resulted from revisions required to address incomplete electrical plans, at a cost of approximately \$160,000.

J. Pearce- The cost overruns are mostly due to the County.

J. Puerta- The engineer of record certifies the plans. County departments review design components, but issues may arise during construction that are outside County control. The engineer of record is no longer under a continuing services contract with the County.

C. Cass- What is the vetting process for contractors?

J. Gonzalez- Contractors are selected through a low-bid process.

C. Cass- There are some concerns with the vetting process.

J. Dial- Who approved the Dixie Highway design, and what is the cost to correct it?

J. Gonzalez- The project went through a public process intended to improve safety and traffic calming. After construction, unintended consequences were identified, and adjustments were made. Additional improvements are planned.

J. Puerta- Funding included an FDOT Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) grant. A Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)) project is also planned from Cove Road to Jefferson Street.

J. Dial- Oak trees are creating maintenance issues, with costs ultimately affecting taxpayers.

S. Tsafarides- The medians have created a higher-speed corridor rather than improving safety.

B. Tanzer- Why not simply remove the trees?

J. Puerta- I will discuss options with Field Operations.

C. Cass- Pedestrian safety remains the primary concern.

B. Tanzer- Field Operations should evaluate tree removal.

S. Tsafarides- Sight issues exist at Evergreen Avenue, and a palm near Indian Street obstructs visibility.

J. Gonzalez- That location is on private property.

J. Puerta- If this is a safety-related issue, an RFS should be submitted for review by Traffic Engineering, which will coordinate with the property owner if necessary.

ADJOURN – Meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM.

Recorded and prepared by:

Dianne Racek, Community Development Specialist

Date



John Gonzalez, Chair



Date

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