



STEERING COMMITTEE

MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 30, 2007 MEETING

PREPARED BY:

WilsonMiller

WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THE



Meeting Called to Order

Tracy Holiday opened the meeting stating that she had invited several representatives from the Baldwin County EMC to discuss the underground electricity progress in Orange Beach and what it entails. She introduced Tommie Werneth and Steve Irvin to the group.

Underground Utilities Update

There is a small surcharge that is placed on each resident's bill every month. That money is placed in a fund which funds the placement of the electric lines underground in the City of Orange Beach. Fees for the engineering (of these lines) are also paid for from these funds.

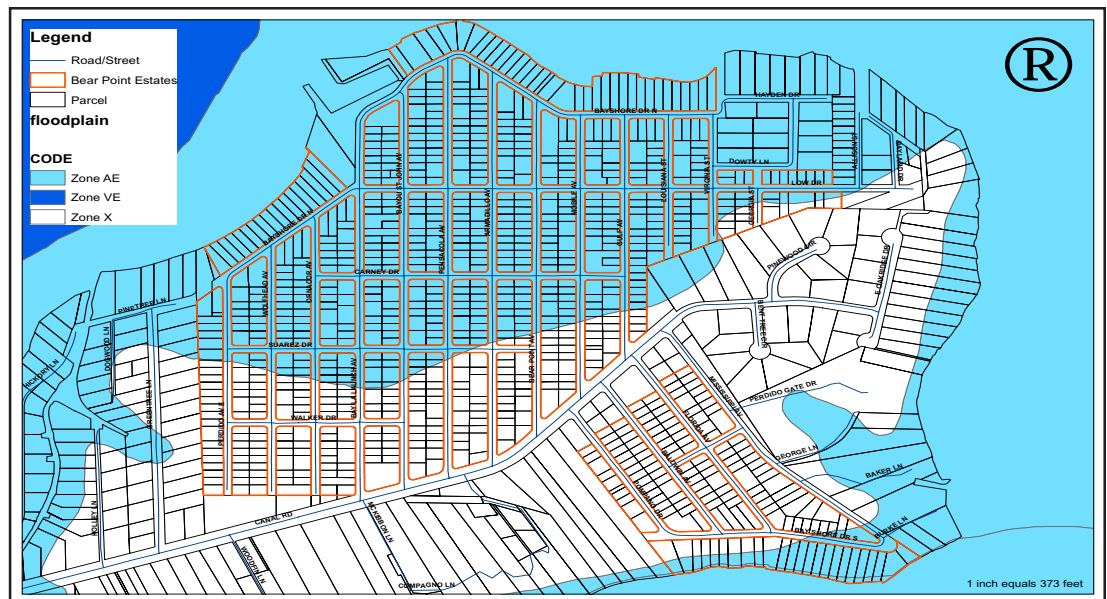
At the present time, the City has prioritized the placement of the electric lines underground along the Beach Road, which is the most important place to start. There are also private funds (from developers) that are used to do this, as well.

Once the underground lines along the beach road have been completed the City Council and Mayor can designate other areas where this activity can proceed. There is one project underway near Wilson Boulevard that should be completed within the next few months.

Any newly approved subdivisions in the city must have the electricity placed underground. It was in the design stages for over a year, due to ditches having to be filled in.

Mr. Irvin mentioned that a number of small individual projects have been completed over the last 6 to 7 years (since the City's ordinance was passed) which have placed the utilities underground.

The money that comes into the pool (or kitty) has been allocated to pay EMC and there has been only a month's worth which has been in the black. Typically, the City of Orange Beach has always owed EMC money.



It is largest electric cooperative in the state of Alabama, serving approximately 68,000 customers. It has approximately 58,000 members.

Mrs. Werneth then asked Steve Irvin to discuss some of the specific technical issues which the group may have. He has been working with EMC for 14 years. He is aware of the fact that most new subdivisions have to place the utilities underground, at their cost. Any new service that goes into Orange Beach now is on the surcharge program. The company averages about one crossing per month where the lines are placed under the road. These applications have to be paid for by the homeowner requesting this service. Once they are closed out, they do go into the surcharge program meaning that they have to also pay the monthly surcharge, as part of their bill.

The Wilson Boulevard project actually involves placing underground utilities on three streets. There was a small condominium project that was approved several years. The developer laid the underground lines; however, EMC had to run overhead lines to serve the building for a while until it could design the underground utilities for the entire area. Drainage pipes had to be placed in there to make it functional. There were also easement issues that had to be worked out - that's why it has taken so long.

The present project that EMC is working on is from 161 east to the Alabama Point Bridge. There are overhead lines with the largest wire that they use to build their lines. These lines, which are on both sides of the road, were almost at full capacity before (Hurricane) Ivan. Last year, they were a little worried about capacity but ended up very lucky. The last few summers have not included several condominiums that were destroyed from Ivan. The system has therefore not been at full capacity. This year, they have added a new circuit, as part of the underground project so the lines will be energized here around Memorial Day. There is also a new substation that has been put in near the city water tower. Everything coming out of this substation is underground. This took a load off of the Orange Beach substation, located across 161 (north of Canal Road).

Raymond Conway asked Mr. Irvin if an individual disconnects from service in Orange Beach (in other words, if an individual disconnects the wire from the house), doesn't the homeowner have to go back with underground service. Mr. Irvin responded that yes it was part of the city's ordinance and like most ordinances, there may be variances given. However, he was not aware of any variances being given by the city. The customer is responsible for paying all the costs associated with placing the wire underground on his/her property.

Tracy Holiday asked Mr. Irvin how long it would take the company to complete the underground project along the beach road and begin looking to other projects in the city.

The project is being phased. They have been working on this project for

approximately eighteen months. From 161 to the Alabama Point Bridge is about two miles. Because of the amount of utilities in that right-of-way, they put in six conduits that can each handle feeders. There were two feeders going down that road. They have added a third conduit which will help them make it through next summer. The third feeder will keep them from overloading their circuits. They now have the capacity for three more. One of them will basically be loaded out with the buildout of Turquoise. When the four buildings of Turquoise come online, the circuit will be completed loaded. The buildings will totally load up one of the circuits. This gives them the capacity for two extra feeders in the future. Mr. Irvin feels this capacity should last them quite some time.

The north side should be completely underground in another six months. A cost estimate is being worked on for the south side but it has not been given to the city, at this time.

If the city decides to select a street or two in the Bear Point Estates area, then the power company would certainly place it in its list of projects and could be worked on as the same time. Such an effort wouldn't be as costly as the project along the beach road because the area wouldn't need as many circuits. The real challenge with underground wiring for Bear Point will involve placing drainage pipe in the area so that the lines can run under them. Obviously, there will be a good number of private easements that will most likely have to be secured before such a project could proceed. Mr. Irvin suggested prioritizing a street at a time and then converting them over. He stated that ideally they have to start at the end of their power lines.

In the Bear Point community, there are a lot of homes which have the above ground electricity running from the road to their houses. The city will have to decide how to combat that issue. It wouldn't make a lot of sense to have the utilities underground and the poles in front of each house running overhead line to each house.

Mrs. Diane Horst asked how much would it cost to have the lines run underground for each house. Mr. Irvin speculated that could cost anywhere from \$500 to \$800 per house but the cost is up to what an electrician would charge.

Jim Lawson asked what kind of right-of-way would the power company need to work in to complete type of project. Mr. Irvin mentioned that a 50 to 60 foot right-of-way is typically the minimum. A lot of that depends on what utilities are already there. They could work in a 5 foot corridor with a work easement.

Other considerations for such an endeavor will involve boring under the street, trenching down the street, and the big trees that exist in the right-of way.

Tracy Holiday thanked Mrs. Werneth and Mr. Irvin for their time and

their willingness to help out. Both exited the room.

Comparing Densities

Jim reconvened the meeting by mentioning that the city had prepared several materials that they wanted to share with the members. A document which highlighted the location of each lot, each house and the number of lots in the Bear Point neighborhood was available for everyone to review. Jim mentioned that it appeared the Bear Point subdivision was somewhere around 8.5 units per acre. With the large number of vacant lots available in the area, the present density isn't as intrusive as it will be once everything is built.

Goals

Ralph Moore presented a set of goals (from the Bear Point Civic Association subcommittee meeting) which could be considered immediate. The list included: eliminating the reference to the "e" in Bear Pointe, painting centerlines and edge line strips on the streets, defining the edge of the streets, building a few curbs perhaps around the Marina, making the street shoulders consistent, repairing the shoulders (when necessary), and creating and identifying crosswalks around the restaurant.

These are things which will show the residents that the City is serious about improving the area.

The group agreed that lighting and sidewalks were something that they wanted to see but they were more of a mid to long term goal - after the area had its utilities underground.

Jim mentioned that once he gets the surveys of Bay La Launch and Bayou St. John, he wanted to sit down with Steve Irvin and discuss with him the underground utility issue. Jim would like to see if the City could improve one or two streets in the area and make them the showcase streets. The holdup on this effort has simply been the lack of an immediate response from the surveying firm.

Jim reminded the group that the neighborhood plan should have immediate, middle and long range goals. The first element of the plan would include the physical neighborhood cleanup that was done. He and Jeff Silvers have already talked to the Public Works Superintendent about some of these things (restriping the streets). Jim suggested that he would get with Public Works Department and talk about what this group would like to see done. He then would go to the Council and seek their endorsements on this.

Someone mentioned that in the area around the restaurant, there needs to be a dramatic decrease in car speed there. Perhaps flashing lights or caution signs could be placed there for safety purposes. A children at play sign was suggested.

Jim suggested that Bay La Launch could become the first trial street where each household is contacted about the underground utilities. A

program similar to the sewer connection fee (from septic tanks) could be implemented for each household - a deferred payment for the costs.

When Jim receives the survey, he'll sit down with the power company and see if they can estimate the costs for placing underground utilities there. Jim can then go the City Council and report to them how much the underground electricity is expected to cost for that street. The City could fund this effort and seek reimbursement over a longer period.

Chuck Smith reminded everyone that there are a lot of new homes on Bay La Launch which were required to run underground utilities from their homes to the street. Such an effort might not be as costly as is imagined.

Jim responded that before we could get started, the City would need "work easements" from every property owner in the area. These are some of the issues which have to be worked through before we undertake something of this magnitude.

If someone refuses to participate, the City, as a last resort, could pursue these easements through eminent domain procedures.

Someone mentioned that the Neighborhood Plan process would incorporate our plans for the next twenty years. There were discussions about creating a showcase street which is addressed with all the amenities that we have discussed (including the entranceway sign). Jim mentioned that he visualized the plan with a series of general statements (such as "this is a single family area", and "place all the power underground") and drawings to go along with the statements. Jim envisioned this process including phases which would highlight what type of improvements that could be made over the short, mid, and long term. The plan could be updated every few years to check on the progress and determine what new goals might be considered. It would be most difficult for us to prepare a plan from start to finish and present it saying that this plan is all inclusive - that it's done. Neighborhood plans need to be ever evolving to suit the neighborhood, its residents, and outside forces.

Future Goals might include general statements like "design guidelines or an overlay district" would be considered for the area.

Jim pointed out that streetscape improvements (intersection work) and period lighting would be quite costly. He was very concerned that the group consider "small bites" instead of "big bites", due to the present neighborhood skepticism. The fact that some of the neighborhood would have to pay for some of these improvements themselves (due to the high costs) might be enough for some residents to be opposed to this planning effort.

There was considerable debate about regulating the design of new homes which would be built and whether there is a need for regulating design standards in the area. Jim suggested that when the area has gotten

cleaned up then there may be a consensus amongst the neighborhood that design standards be developed for the area. This could be five, ten or even fifteen years down the road. An overlay district could be considered at that time. Jim pointed out that if too many regulatory items are inserted into a neighborhood plan now, there might be a backlash which dooms the City's neighborhood planning effort.

As part of a long term goal, we could include desired elements for houses such as front porches, roof pitch, etc.

It was decided that the subdivision's covenants and restrictions needed to be updated and revised to include certain design elements, in order to address these concerns.

Willie Gray suggested that the City consider having the streets in the entire neighborhood blacktopped, relined and the right-of-ways cleaned up.

Another suggestion was made to put in the main sign (very low scale) near Wilson Boulevard. Make sure that it's not susceptible to aging. Many signs look outdated soon after they've been put up.

It was suggested that WilsonMiller work on some ideas and bring them back to the group to review. The group wants the sign to be consistent with the present city signage.

Raymond Conway complimented the group, stating that the willingness to get along with each other was commendable and refreshing.

Renee Smith asked the Bear Point Civic Association representatives if they could assist the City by notifying the property owners of any issue that looks to be in violation of city code or regulations. If no action is taken by the property owner (as a result) then the City could then get involved and move to have the violation corrected. This would be an attempt to use peer pressure as a means to correct a matter that might not even be addressed in the city codes. Perhaps the City could create some kind of form letter(s) for the Association to use for such occasions.

Plan of Action

Jim mentioned that he would sit down with the Public Works Director, and the City Engineer (on our drainage issues) and cost out what it would take for the City to accomplish the short term goals (that were presented today). He'll take that to the City Council. (He'll let the Committee Members know when he is to do this.)

He may not have to take it to the City Council if he includes Jeff Moon, the City Administrator in the discussions.

As soon as he gets the surveys (of Bayou St. John and Bay La Launch), he, Raymond and Larry would sit down with Steve to discuss the right-

of-ways and see if they are adequate for underground utilities.

While this is going on, Jim and Mike Lane will begin putting the plan together (assembling the goals in the format discussed today) and dealing with the sign concerns.

Cynthia Hollingshead expressed her gratitude to Chuck Smith for his organized "clean sweep" efforts in the area. Chuck asked the group just to be patient. He was really working on getting the area cleaned up.

Density Followup

Griffin Powell informed the group that after reviewing the City's G.I.S. Maps, he was able to determine the appropriate densities of Bear Point Estates, Captain's Cove and Beaver Creek Subdivisions.

Bear Point Estates:

There are 981 lots that comprise this subdivision, which is approximately 112.6 acres in size. Each lot is approximately 50' x 100' which accounts for 8.7 units per acre.

Captain's Cove Subdivision:

There are 87 lots that comprise this subdivision, which is approximately 27.95 acres in size. The subdivision's density is 3.1 units per acre.

Beaver Creek Subdivision: (end of Canal Road)

There are 94 lots that comprise this subdivision, which is approximately 20.52 acres in size. The subdivision's density is 4.6 units per acre.

Next Meeting Date.

The group then decided to have the next meeting on Monday, May 14, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. in the same location.

Meeting Adjourned.

**Steering Committee
Bear Point Neighborhood Meeting
Attendance Roster**

Present:

Larry Autrey	Raymond Conway
Willy Gray	Tracy Holiday
Cynthia Hollingshead	Diane Horst
Judy Moore	Ralph Moore
Diane Pugh	Renee Smith

Staff :

Sean Brumley	Larry Ellis
Jim Lawson	Griffin Powell
Chuck Smith	Paulette Taylor

Guests:

Jared L. Acy, WSA Design
Mike Lane, Wilson Miller
Steve Irvin, EMC
Tommie Werneth, EMC

Respectfully submitted by:
Mike Lane, AICP
Senior Project Planner

