



Alva Inc. is dedicated to preserving the tranquility  
and beauty of Alva  
P O. Box 2022, Alva FL 33920

## Minutes of Alva Inc General Meeting of February 11, 2008

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present, following the Call to Order by President, Ruby Daniels. In attendance were 52 people.

**Secretary's Report:** Minutes of the January meeting, available at [www.alvafll.org](http://www.alvafll.org), were briefly summarized: Broadlands report will be provided by President Daniels, Hendry County Commissioners turned down the request for a vegetative recycling center, Steven Brown of the Conservancy of Southwest Florida is working with Jim Mudd of Lee County on Alva Inc.'s behalf to finalize the Alva Community Plan. Minutes were accepted.

**Treasurer's Report:** Beginning balance of \$5,005.68, receipts of \$150.00, expenditures of \$3.00, ending balance as of February 11: \$5,152.68. Report was accepted.

### President's Report:

1. Meeting Time: The start time for the monthly general meeting is henceforth 7 PM on the second Monday of the month.
2. Community Plan: With Mr. Brown's invaluable assistance, the wheels of progress are slowly turning....
3. Amazing Grace Land: President Daniels has successfully encouraged the landowner to offer the property for purchase by Lee County under the Conservation 2020 Program. The owner has submitted the offering. The 2020 Committee will meet to discuss on March 4, 3PM at the Monroe Street Community Planning Building, followed by a second meeting March 11 at 5 PM. All are encouraged to attend to demonstrate support. A motion was made and seconded that Alva Inc. support the 2020 purchase of the Amazing Grace land. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Vice President: President Daniels read a letter from Vice President Jim Mathisen stating his resignation from the position of Vice President and Board Member of Alva Inc. due to other demands on his time. A motion was made by Commissioner Mann that a letter be forwarded to Jim stating his resignation was accepted with deep regret and that we thank him for his significant contribution and accomplishments. Motion carried unanimously.
5. Broadlands: President Daniels summarized the January 14<sup>th</sup> Broadlands discussions (see January General Meeting Minutes), and a later meeting with the developer where an alternative site plan had been offered by Alva Architect Rob Andrys and declined by the developer. The developer subsequently withdrew his rezoning request submission from Lee County. He has stated his intent to submit instead a development order requiring no public hearings, suggesting this process would avoid any influence of or conflict with community input or preferences. While President Daniels expressed frustration that the laws might allow such a community end-run, Commissioner Mann conveyed that the Lee staff, who will review any

submission, is aware of community desires as well- expressed by Alva Inc. on many occasions, and is both supportive and protective of our community goals. The Commissioner stated he will insure Alva Inc. will be in the loop on Broadlands. President Daniels noted the property north of Broadlands, Argo Ranch, is under consideration for a Conservation 2020 purchase, and that a 2020 purchase of Broadlands would also be a desirable consideration.

### **Workshop: River Village Land Use Category**

President Daniels started the workshop by displaying a map, provided by Bonita Bay, identifying the area where the new land use category would be allowed: from I-75 eastward to the Hendry County line, both north and south of the Caloosahatchee River.

Two documents were handed out for review and comparison: The Standards of Development within the Alva Community Planning Area adopted by Alva Inc. and submitted to Lee County in September 2007; and a North River Village Project Design Commitments document (undated) provided to President Daniels by Bonita Bay.

President Daniels asked Mr. Steven Brown, Environmental Policy Specialist, The Conservancy of Southwest Florida, to speak on his comparative analysis of the above-mentioned documents:

Referring to Section A, Density/Carrying Capacity, Bonita Bay is seeking to gain approval for 3,000 units on a site where 997 are allowed. This is a direct conflict with this standard, and no valid justification is provided. Bonita Bay argues that Alva Community should support this gift density because they intend to provide public access to the river, and provide some unspecified improvements to the natural areas on the site. It would be totally inappropriate for Bonita Bay to be granted this gift density on any terms except as receiving area for a TDR/TDU that includes equal numbers of development units being retired and placed into conservation.

Lee County Smart Growth, on January 29, 2007 pointed out that the population projections do not support the additional development proposed by North River Village that would be in excess of the currently allowed density. The allocation tables for Alva Community designate a total of 1948 dwelling units allocated for the Rural designation in Alva, which is approximately 1,052 less than is proposed for North River Village alone. This would leave no room for development anywhere else in the Rural designation of projects that do not propose to develop at triple the allowable density. It is not safe to assume that the approval of North River Village under this scenario would mean that no further development pressure will be placed on the Alva Community, it simply sets a pattern for disregard of the allocations and the density control that is integral to the Comprehensive Planning process.

Additionally, the Lee Plan currently designates the property that is the subject of the North River Village proposal as Rural, Wetland and Outer Islands on the Future Land Use Map. Policy 1.4.1 describes the Rural Land Use Designation:

*“POLICY 1.4.1: Rural areas are to remain predominately rural – that is, low density residential, agricultural uses, and minimal non-residential land uses that are needed to serve the rural community. These areas are not to be programmed to receive urban-type capital improvements, and they can anticipate a continued level of public services below that of urban areas. Maximum density in the rural area is one dwelling unit per acre (edu/acre).”*

Bonita Bay argues that with regard to the proposed North River Village “...the property is in an area that no longer fits the rural character described in policy 1.4.1...with the development of Babcock Ranch the property is in an area that is transitioning from rural to suburban character.” This statement is a direct assault on the Vision Statement that Alva has adopted as part of its Community Plan, and a denial of the first of the standards adopted to implement that Vision:

“The mission of the people of the community called Alva, Florida is to preserve and protect its unique historical, rural, agricultural and small town flavor. Alva is the oldest settlement in Lee County. With its huge oaks and cypress trees, the Caloosahatchee River, citrus groves, and cattle ranches, Alva has a unique country ambiance that is rapidly becoming hard to find in Florida. Southwest Florida is experiencing extremely rapid development. It will take a concerted effort to ensure that the growth in Alva occurs in a manner that maintains the character and lifestyle of this area. As Alva grows, we aim to work together to make sure Alva remains a place we want to live in and call home”.

Alva Inc. adopted the recommendations of the County Staff to not create a separate Future Land Use Map Category for Rural Village, based on the advice that the use of the Planned Development Overlay as a more efficient and effective means of accomplishing the Community’s goals and objectives for the Commercial district. It therefore not advisable to support Bonita Bay in creating a new River Village land use category.

Referring to Section B, Natural Systems: Bonita Bay has not provided mapping of the surrounding areas in conformance with the Standards to allow the assessment of the connectivity of natural areas and flowways.

A spirited discussion followed, well orchestrated under President Daniel’s leadership and gavel, so that all were given an opportunity to speak without being interrupted. (well, **almost** without interruption...!)

Jim Green spoke next, reaffirming Mr. Brown’s words that density was **the** issue and that the Bonita Bay proposal was counter to the Alva community vision to

remain rural, resulting instead in a massive Alva area converted to urban sprawl. The Alva Standards permit only density levels allowed for by the current Lee Plan. The Bonita bay proposal exceeds by significant measure the densities in both Verandah and River Hall communities that are adjacent to a four to six lane highway (SR 80) in a more urban area. Other positions taken by Alva Inc. for developments to remain within current allowed densities (or lower) included Amazing Grace and River Hall – both density increase requests were subsequently denied by the BOCC. Both Lee County and the State have taken positions challenging the Babcock Plan for a town of 45,000 people north of the Bonita Bay property because of the traffic impact on SR 31 and surrounding roads. Endorsement of 2,500 homes in the same traffic area could be used by Babcock to counter Lee County's opposition – just as Bonita Bay used the Babcock proposal for justification of their proposed sprawl.

Mr. Robert Quillen stated Bonita Bay is an excellent developer, and had made many changes to their plan based on community input. He supported the density increase. Mrs. Cheryl Quillen echoed his comments.

Commissioner Mann spoke: We are headed for a Fort Lauderdale look-alike. Even if there are no density increases beyond the current Lee Plan, homes for 800,000 additional residents are permitted. Adding to today's population of 600,000, that puts Lee at the same population and density as the Lauderdale area. Today we have the Babcock proposal burden to contend with; significant development at the Lee/Hendry/Charlotte/Glades corner is on the table, and new roads and bridges shredding the rural area are contemplated. Alva must continue to move forward with and enhance the Community Plan or we will be (urban) dead ducks. He reaffirmed his Manifesto position of no density increase beyond the current plan. Eternal vigilance by all is required to protect Lee County from the impacts of overdevelopment.

President Daniels reviewed the continuing dialog between herself and Bonita Bay: They solicited input on community desires relative to development. They were provided with the Standards of Development within the Alva Community Planning Area. President Daniels said they have adopted many of the community desires to include: clustering of homes, rural edging at the adjacent roads, public access to Owl Creek and the village center, draught-tolerant landscaping, and preservation of oaks where not unavoidable.

Discussion followed from the floor with statements that Bonita Bay was a first class developer. Some had visited their developments and praised their work in urban areas. Larry Murphy conveyed there was no lack of acceptance to pending development, rather the goal is acceptance of development while maintaining our quality of life.

Ms. Karen Kamener conveyed, in addition to her personal opposition to this density increase, that Lee Public Safety Emergency Management also opposes the density increase because the property is in the Costal High Hazard Area, subject to tropical storm surges, and that the proposal is inconsistent with Lee Plan which suggests reducing densities in this area as opposed to increasing

them. She did not favor Bonita Bay's proposal of partially funding an emergency center in Hendry County as a density increase offset.

Mr. Ed Kimball noted adoption of the proposed River Village land use category would override and supersede the hard work funded by Lee County and performed by local citizens. Community planning accomplished by Caloosahatchee Shores, Olga, Buckingham, Bayshore and Alva does not support the new land use category proposed for these areas by Bonita Bay.

Mr. Kimball further astutely noted Babcock, with their 45,000- people Charlotte County plan - which was presented as justification for the Bonita Bay density increase – also owns thousands of undeveloped acres in Lee County just to the north of the Bonita Bay property. Allowing Bonita Bay's density increase would then offer Babcock a justification for density increase on their Lee County land, thus returning the favor and completing the density-begets-density cycle.

Mr. Bill Gross described issues that had plagued Palm Beach Blvd in prior years, and citizens' efforts resulting in a "Survivors of State Road 80" alliance. A property owner on both sides of the river, he is now contemplating a "Survivors of CR-78" alliance to oppose density increases and preserve our rural character. After much discussion, Mr. Gross made the following motion: ***That Alva, Inc. oppose any density increase by Bonita Bay on the North River Village property.*** Emily Erickson seconded.

Additional discussion followed. President Daniels provided opportunity for all present to speak, with a special invitation to people from adjacent communities.

Prompted by a question from the floor, President Daniels described the actions Alva Inc. has taken to inform the community of activities. Meetings and results are posted on our website, [www.alvafl.org](http://www.alvafl.org). Monthly newspapers are distributed to local retailers, emailed to known interested addressees, and posted on the website. Announcements of public meetings regarding the community plan submissions have been advertised in the local newspaper. Monthly meetings and board meetings are open to all interested parties.

Comments from the floor:

- "Alva is going to h\_\_\_ with all this development being allowed."
- Regarding Bonita Bay Project Design Commitments document:
  - Mr. Andy Erickson said many items were not commitments because of words used such as "seek certification", "impacts... unavoidable" " to ...extent feasible"
  - Mr. Bill Redfern noted that while some of these commitments are desirable to the community, they also just make good business sense independent of the community preference, and are not of significant negative financial impact to the project.
  - Mr. Pete Quasius, President, Audubon of Southwest Florida, commented while retaining the density ceiling, to the extent there exist commitments valuable to the county and community, a

financial offset by Lee County to Bonita Bay might be a consideration.

- The point was raised by Mr. Robert Quillen that not accepting Bonita Bay's terms opened the community for the possibility of worse fates. This fear did not appear to gain traction with those present.
- Steven Brown said all the Bonita Bay "commitments" are required by the Alva Standards of Development, and, when the Standards are adopted by Lee County, compliance is not optional.
- Mr. Bill Redfern provided insight into the proposed Inner Island land use category which would allow hotels and bed and breakfast establishments. He believes higher buildings are planned at the river, counter to, as stated by Mr. Mel Karu, Hendry County's stated preference for single-story only at river's edge.
- Ms. Cherie Foster reminded those present of the water shortage issue, specifically recalling the plethora of dry wells that occurred shortly after the Verandah opened. The higher the number of homes the higher the water consumption.

After all present had been offered the opportunity to speak and share their opinion, President Daniels called for a vote on Mr. Gross's motion: ***That Alva, Inc. oppose any density increase by Bonita Bay on the North River Village property.*** Motion carried 49 "for" and three "opposed" (Mr. Robert Quillen, Ms. Cheryl Quillen, and Ms. Diane Sterlacci voting "opposed").

Commissioner Mann noted the large crowd present (one count was 52, another was 55), and that the overwhelming majority (all but three) supported the motion and opposed Bonita Bay's density increase request.

The general consensus from the meeting appeared to be, as spoken well by Ms. Sherry Collier: ***Alva wishes to retain its rural character. By meeting the Alva Standards of Development, including the current density ceiling, the North River Village project is welcomed by the community.***

**Board of Directors' Meeting:** February 27, 7 PM, MOGHOP.

**East Lee County Business Council Newsletter:** Motion made and seconded for Alva Inc. to purchase a modest ad in the newsletter. Motion carried.

**Other:** Senator Aronberg's newsletter will be posted on the Alva Inc. website. President Ruby thanked attendees for the participation and for contributing to their community.

**Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Green  
Secretary.