

UCCP DARK SKIES COMMITTEE MEETING 5 Dec 12

The duly noticed, public meeting at SHC clubhouse began about 11:10.

Panel members present: Zeke McDonald and David Tompkins.

Islanders present: Dean and Sandra Richardson, Linda DeTure, Maxine Otis and Marcia Andrews.

Members recalled that the work toward protecting North Captiva night skies from unenlightened light pollution began with impetus from Jane Mason. She provided references early in the Panel's deliberations and progressed to code writing with consistent support from islanders, several of whom responded to notice of the meeting with encouraging e-mails.

Tompkins offered the group pages of lighting code language from County Staff and Code writer Bill Spikowski. He provided two pages of illustrations he had created to show potential lighting design and fixtures. The illustrations are based on material from national night skies groups, local organizations and remarks from Margaret Banyan's associate professional code-writer Spikowski, who worked with the panel's suggestions for specific code for the island.

Tompkins noted that Spikowski's work had been reviewed by Lee County staff and the comments were available. Revisions were often to strengthen directives and change the word "should" to "must."

The group discussed the outdoor lighting on the island, noting that there would be some exceptions to limitations, such as lighting for outdoor events and for seasonal decor.

The topics included:

- \* McDonald recalled the 2000 Sanibel/Captiva adoption of lighting code and the initial widespread fear of costs to revise commercial lighting and signage. It was written with a 15-year compliance rule, meaning all lighting must comply by 1 Jan 2015
- \* McDonald suggested that North Captiva consider setting a five to eight-year implementation period. New construction would comply immediately upon adoption of the code.
- \* Several people reported that owners of a proposed project under County review had included some version of night-sky lighting in their plans.
- \* Richardson said that SHC has outdoor lighting rules, primarily to keep fixtures on structures.
- \* Others added that some BIG lights, such as the SHC wharf lights, have been aimed away from the structure, a glare for incoming resident boats. Poorly designed security lighting just blinds people in the area being protected, while the crooks skitter around the edges.
- \* Tompkins added that during a five-year changeover, code would require night-skies worthy replacements of any old lighting. He referred to the Dark Sky Association Model Lighting Ordinance, a long complex tome, pointing out that the MLO covers many non-island-applicable regulations for parking lots, gas stations, auto dealerships and stadiums.
- \* McDonald recalled that the Committee of the Islands informed rental managers that dark skies are a premium attraction, sought by astronomers.
- \* Tompkins: Shall North Captiva specify the bulb types? Allow more latitude by providing list of preferred types? Allow that any type of light homeowner chooses is OK for his/her own property IF IT'S PROPERLY SHIELDED to shine on only that property. Those guidelines would seem to meet the objectives of the code: Don't scatter light to the sky. Be assured that your neighbor's light will not intrude on your property.
- \* Tompkins: Shall North Captiva set height limits? With proper shrouding, will a 15-foot height limit on pole- and tree-mounted fixtures serve safety needs?

Tompkins was assigned to write a summary of the committee's agreements for the full panel meeting 10 a.m. Tuesday, December 11, at SHC.

Meeting closed about 12:15.