Flamingo Ditch Workshop

June 30, 2025

Israel Salinas

Psalm 145:18 The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

Root Causes of Outfall #5 Issues

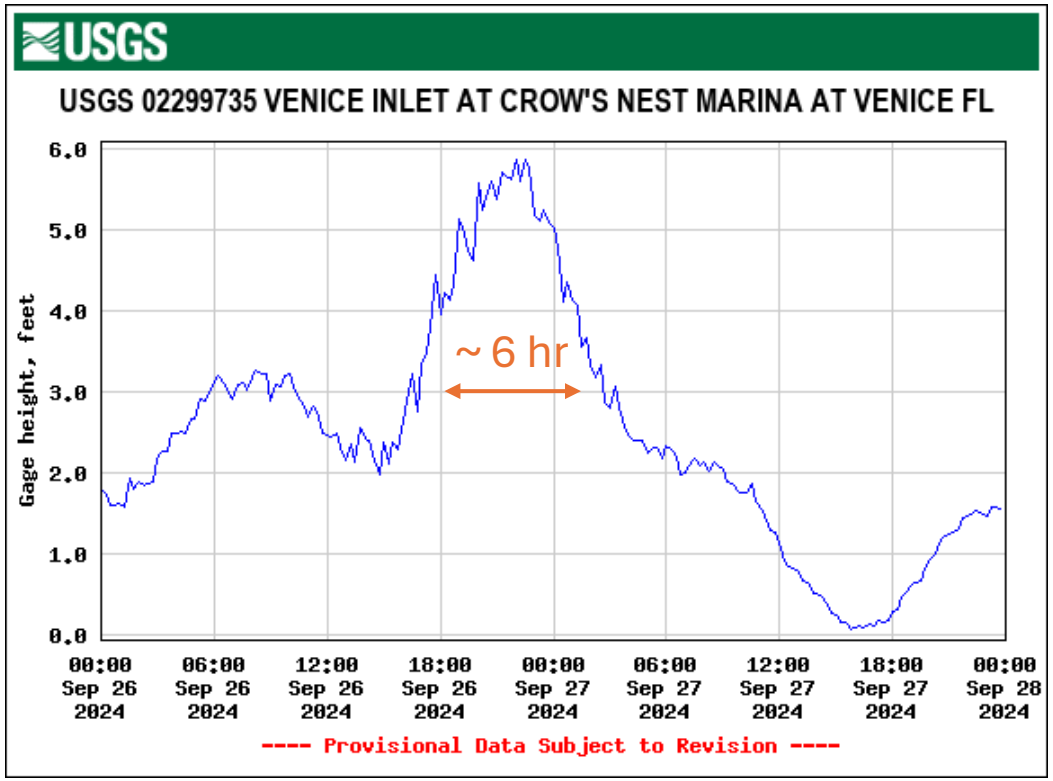
- Storm Surge
- Heavy Rainfall Events
- Elevation of Homes (built before current building standards)
- City’s Inability to Maintain Outfall
- Tidal activity causes sand buildup, routinely blocking Outfall sand berm
- Beach Renourishment Program creates significant challenges

Psalm 145:18 The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

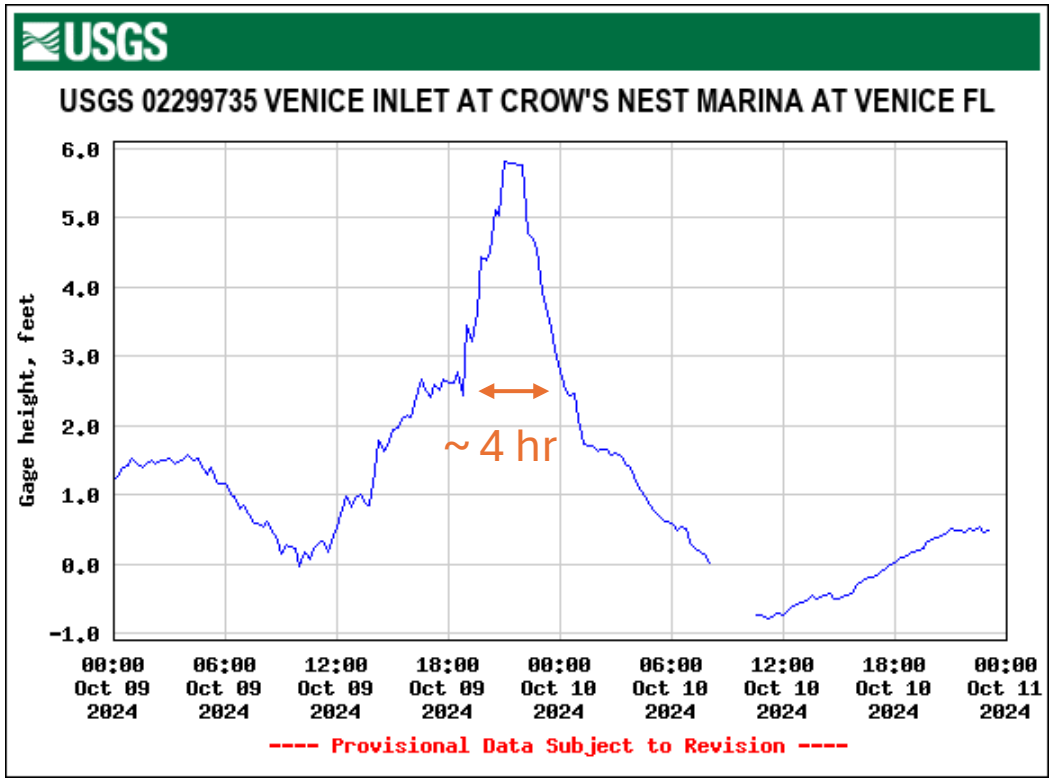
Storm Surge

- Storm surge has been the primary culprit blamed for the flood damages experience in Golden Beach in 2024
- Storm surge can be a relatively short duration event that often recedes quickly, with tide levels that drop below pre-surge event levels.
- The consultant, CPE, stated at the March 11, 2025 meeting… “Make sure there are emergency contracts in place, pre-season.. If an event happens that closes that ditch off, … you can get somebody out there right away to get it back open… even though it blocked up, once it was opened it drained very quickly within a couple hours.”

Storm Surge (Cont'd)



Hurricane Helene Storm Surge



Hurricane Milton Storm Surge

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History

- Beach renourishment program around early 1990’s
- Significant Engineering Studies conducted to address issues
- 1995-96: Training Wall Structure and Outfall Pipe added
- December 2011: Erickson Consulting Engineering Design
- 2013: Dredging Project
- 2018: Training Wall Structure Removed
- 2024: Numerous home damaged by storm surge which is significantly compounded by a sand-blocked Outfall.

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Beach Renourishment Program

Beachcomber 720 Golden Beach Blvd -- 1987

Beachcomber seawall, looking North
Note: Seawall was never removed

Psalm 145:18 The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

Beach Renourishment Program

Beachcomber 720 Golden Beach Blvd -- 1987

Beachcomber seawall reinforcement measures

Psalm 145:18 The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

Beach Renourishment Program

Beachcomber 720 Golden Beach Blvd -- 1987

Beachcomber erosion control Measures – before the Renourishment Program

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Beach Renourishment Program

Beachcomber 720 Golden Beach Blvd – 2025

Beachcomber same angle today, facing North
Seawall is buried under sand!

Beachcomber 80 yards wide x 6-8 feet deep with sand

Psalm 145:18 The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

Beach Renourishment Program

Beachcomber 720 Golden Beach Blvd – 2025

Beachcomber 1987

Beachcomber Today

Psalm 145:18 The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

Beach Renourishment Program

Golden Beach -- 1988

Rip-Rap Shoreline at Golden Beach

Psalm 145:18 The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

Beach Renourishment Program

Golden Beach -- 2025

Ocean Sands (center), Golden Beach Benches (Right)

Psalm 145:18 The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

Beach Renourishment Program

Island Shores – Circa 1985

Rip-Rap Protecting the Flamingo Ditch Outfall from Sand Buildup

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Significant Engineering Studies

- March 1993 Applied Technology and Management (ATM) delivers ***Coastal Stormwater Outfall Evaluation*** in response beach renourishment concerns.
  - Recommends modifications to Outfall No. 5 to eliminate the existing tidal connections by converting the outfall to a closed outfall system. [I believe this why the County installed the Training Wall Structure]
- 2004: ***Island of Venice Study Update*** released.
  - This report recognizes significant problems with Outfall #5 and provides strong recommendations for engineering improvements.

Significant Engineering Studies (cont'd)

- 2011: Erickson Consulting Engineers (ECE) deliver detailed report, ***Flamingo Ditch and Deertown Gully Outfall Improvement Projects, 30% Design***.
  - Item 1.3 Project Goals and Objectives: "The primary project goals and objectives are to improve water quality *and* to reduce flooding for high frequency rainfall events (i.e., 2-inch event) and secondarily to reduce flooding during lower frequency rainfall events (25-year to 100-year return period).
  - City Engineer and Stormwater Engineer significantly reduce this project scope due to resistance from a single property owner. It is reduced to a demucking project, addressing only water quality.

2004 Island of Venice Study Update

2.02 Existing Flooding

A review of the City's repetitive loss list, which inventories claims that have been report to FEMA, revealed numerous property owners have suffered some sort of flood damage over the past 10 years. It is recognized that this is not a comprehensive list, as it only reflects those that have flood insurance and filed flood damage claims. The City has also reported numerous cases of flooding upstream of the Flamingo Ditch outfall, the north end of Industrial Park near Venice Avenue (not located on the Island), the Trophy Shop and the surrounding area, and the area around Osprey street. It should also be pointed out that a Beach Renourishment program that has occurred since the last major flood producing rainfall events may have further impacted some of the outfalls to the Gulf of Mexico. The existing conditions 100-year floodplain is presented on Exhibit 3.

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2004 Island of Venice Study Update (cont'd)

Goal

"To protect residents and their properties from flooding and to do so in a manner which will not incur negative environmental impacts"

Objectives

- Minimize the loss of life and property due to flooding;
- Support the preservation of aquifer recharge and wetland areas;
- Protect surface water runoff from contamination;
- Encourage the conversation of surface water runoff as a resource;
- Ensure that the stormwater system is maintained, operated and constructed in a cost-effective way; and
- Pursue governmental coordination so that the City will have input regarding drainage areas adjacent to the City.

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2004 Island of Venice Study Update (cont'd)

4.02.04 Flamingo Ditch, Outfall #5

The flood modeling efforts identified potentially thirty-six (36) flooded structures and fourteen (14) street segments that do not meet the selected FPLOS criteria. The majority of structures are located adjacent to the main outfall. Review of the flood modeling efforts indicates that the beach renourishment outfall system has significantly restricted this basin's ability to drain stormwater. An enlarged stormwater outfall system is recommended for consideration to address the existing structure FPLOS deficiencies. City officials identified that this area and its associated outfall having a history of flooding.

Based upon the alternative evaluation it is recommended that if the Flamingo Ditch outfall needed to be sized to accommodate stomacher under the beach, it would need to be 600' of triple 6' x 5' box culverts (or hydraulic equivalent). This is identified as Improvement No. 4B on Exhibit 3. also, 390' of 27" x 43" ERCP (or hydraulic equivalent) should be installed to replace the existing stormwater outfall between node 00401 and node 00400. This is identified as Improvement No. 4A on Exhibit 3. The preliminary estimate of probable cost for these improvements is approximately $1,650,510.00. It should be noted that with respect to the box culvert outfall to the Gulf of Mexico, this estimate only includes a standard installation cost and does not consider the unique logistics for such an endeavor, as it was considered beyond the scope of this stormwater study. Even so this component still represents a significant cost. From a cost and probably permitability perspectives, consideration should be given to an open channel outfall.

2004 Island of Venice Study Update (cont'd)

Island of Venice Basin Master Plan – June 2002

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Conclusions

- The simplistic, root-cause of the problem is sand blockages at the outfall at the tidal connection. This comes full circle back to the 1993 ATM study.
- This will only be resolved by 100% commitment to completing the stated objectives by governing authorities.
- Requires continuity to complete the objectives by succession (whether elected officials or hired employees).

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Comments and Questions Regarding 25-0272:
Coastal Protection Engineering (CPE) Flamingo Ditch Feasibility Study Findings – June 30, 2025

- The ICPR models shown do not seem to include the entire 212 Acre drainage basin extending east, beyond business 41. Can you explain?
- The refined ICPR Model Updates (slide 10) seems to show some significant updates. How would you describe the adequacy of the pipe sizing for two primary drainage "arteries": Objectid 5036 and 8450 (as shown on the City of Venice Utilities Map). These two drainage RCPs extend from W. Flamingo Drive and Villas Drive, respectively.
- The Helene Simulation: Outfall Open vs. Closed (slide 14) shows there is no difference between the outfall being open or closed, however it does not include the **"third dimension", time/duration** after the event**.** As we know, storm surge elevations drop rapidly once the storm event passes through, often dropping the tidal elevation below pre-storm surge levels. Given proper drainage channels, the flood waters should recede rather quickly. Can you show this simulation in 1-hour increments after the peak storm surge?

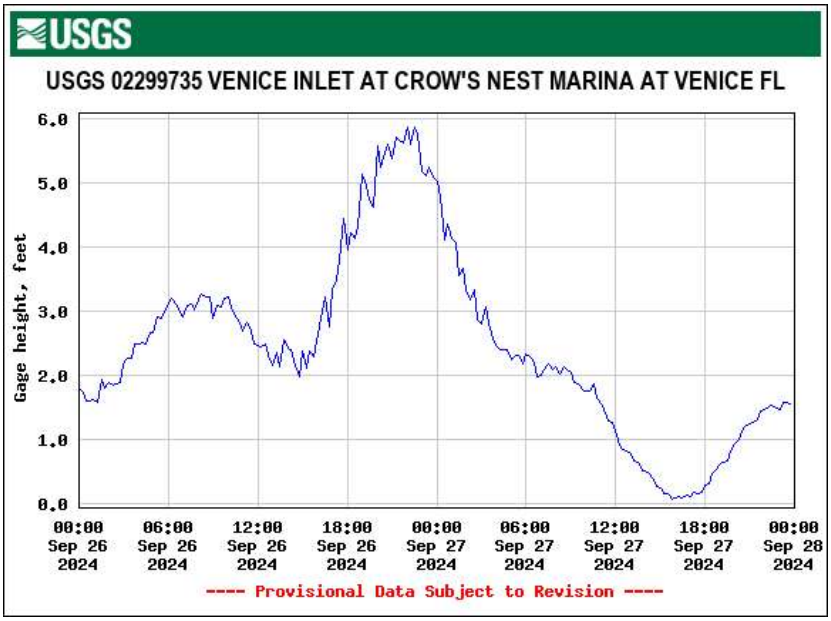

Figure 1: Hurricane Helene Storm Surge, 2024

- Your Alternative Analysis 1 (slide 17) shows the original "Erickson Design" concept, 2012 but does not include blocking in the model. Unfortunately, that design only incorporated a 7.5' elevation structure without a blocking headwall. Did you simulate a combination of Pipe & Pump with Block?
- Alternative 2: "Elevate or Raise Neighborhood", how many structures (homes) would need to be elevated and total estimated cost of this endeavor?

- Alternative 3 & 4: Storage and Upstream Retention. Do the model recommendations change if these were combined and the design included the ability to "purge" or pump out the retention capacity prior to an expected heavy rainfall or hurricane event?
- Alternative 4: Upstream Retention Pond. The map is not clear, is this potential pond located within the Venezia Park?
- Alternative 5: Dune/Seawall with triple gravity-fed pipes: please explain the location of those three pipes and "adverse trapping effect" that was assumed in the model.
- Slide 40 & 41: "A dune or seawall creates a barrier for surge protection but is likely to worsen flooding from rainfall. Have you explored a fixed seawall with one-way spillover gates? This would be in conjunction with possibly two of the other proposed solutions.
- Overall Study Findings (slide 42): "Consider other major improvements as potential components to the City's Stormwater Master Plan for rerouting…" I was not sure if the idea was adequately communicated with CPE but I was approached by a Civil Engineer that recommended connecting the 60" RCP drainpipe that ends at Poinsettia, adding to the run and diverting that flow to a new outfall pipe that would run between 624 and 550 W. Flamingo Drive. Additionally, he recommended a new outfall pipe between 700 and 710 Golden Beach Boulevard. Were these part of the three pipes discussed in Alternative 5?
- Has CPE studied how to reduce the sand deposits that frequently block flow from the Outfall? Somewhere I thought I saw a historic aerial view of the outfall with submerged breakers. Is this a consideration? I'll see if I can locate the website with this image.

In closing, my main criticism is the models only illustrate peak flood elevation conditions and do not include a time/duration aspect following the event. As we know, the rapid removal of flood waters is essential in reducing and mitigating the effects of flooding. This hits the heart of the complaint that the outfall sand berm becomes blocked, preventing proper drainage.

Lastly, it is my hope that CPE and the City of Venice Engineers have taken a strong look at previous studies and follow their best solution to completion. There is a long history of unheeded studies and recommendations with no follow-through. For example, the **Coastal Stormwater Outfall Evaluation** released in March of 1993 recommends modifications to Outfall No. 5 to eliminate the existing tidal connections by converting the outfall to a closed outfall system – I believe this why the wooden training wall with 12" pipe was installed in 1995-96 (which was poorly designed and significantly under-engineered). The **Island of Venice Study Update** (aka. Island of Venice Flood Study Update) released around 2004 also provides significant preliminary engineering recommendations for Outfall #5. Then of course there is the **Flamingo Ditch and Deertown Gull Outfall Improvement Projects 30% Design** released December 2011. I could go on and on, but my point is, there needs to be continuity of the stated objective to completion.

Israel Salinas
591 Flamingo Drive
Venice, FL

Continued from Page 1C

open space when they purchased the land for their homes.

"When people buy a home in a PUD – Milano in my case – we expect to live in a community as advertised," Ollen Thomas told the council during public comment.

During his staff presentation, Venice Planning & Zoning Director Roger Clark explained that the real issue is a process for a developer to amend a planned-unit development.

Planned-unit developments have become desirable for municipalities because there is less uncertainty of how a project will develop and there is typically a reservation of 50% open space.

Development of a standard subdivision only requires a reservation of 35% open space.

During public comment, attorney Jeff Boone cautioned that if the city's process becomes too restrictive, developers may just opt to revert to a standard subdivision.

The council voted 4-3 to schedule a workshop based on a motion by Council Member Ron Smith, who favored an option that would require a hearing on a complete rezoning of a planned-unit development for a change, providing the developer had approval of a yet-to-be-determined percentage of the property owners.

The developer would not need 100% approval of the residents but likely more than 50%. He was also intrigued by a portion of another option that would preserve open space once half of the potential homes are occupied. After that, the developer would only be allowed to change the use of land earmarked for development.

Council members Joan Farrell, Rachel Frank and Rick Howard voted in support of that motion, with Mayor Nick Pachota, Vice Mayor Jim Boldt and Council Member Helen Moore dissenting.

Pachota said he did not want to see

"The problem is it's backing up and flooding city streets and trapping homeowners in their homes and we are responsible for stormwater on city streets."

James Clinch
Assistant City Manager

He later moved to have that workshop scheduled as soon as possible and direct staff to bring back the projected cost of hiring a consultant, so the city could see how other municipalities in the state handle the issue. That passed unanimously.

Airport to hire official to deal with noise concerns

In response to a recent flurry of complaints about increased jet noise and piggybacking off of discussions they had at the Feb. 5 strategic planning meeting, the council approved hiring an Airport Community Outreach Manager for the Venice Municipal Airport.

That official would be primarily charged with noise abatement, managing the airport Fly Friendly Program, as well as serving as a liaison with airport partners and a contract manager for the onsite manager at the Venice Mobile Home Park.

As part of the job, the official would set up microphones and monitor aircraft noise.

In a memo to the council, Airport Director Mark Cervasio said there is money in the current enterprise fund budget for the job.

Presentation to address flooding issues

In response to emails regarding recent street flooding in the beach area surrounding Flamingo Ditch, the commission directed staff to schedule a future presentation on drainage problems related to the ditch, possible improvements and potential funding solutions.

A natural channel near Flamingo Drive that is referred to as Outfall No. 5 among the city's 16 stormwater drainage points, this one has been problematic in

In 2011, stormwater flowing through the ditch was identified as being one of two most prolific sources of pollution that produced increased levels of enterococci, a bacteria found in human and animal waste.

Since then the city has conducted some maintenance on the ditch, including removal of invasive species and replacement with native plants.

A more ambitious plan to remove nutrient pollution was shelved because of cost and the fact that the city doesn't actually own Flamingo Ditch, and easements could not be negotiated with the property owners that surround the ditch.

Assistant City Manager James Clinch, who was a stormwater engineer when that plan was shelved, said that even if it had been adopted, that would not have alleviated the flooding issue.

Smith, who asked for the future presentation, noted: "The problem is it's backing up and flooding city streets and trapping homeowners in their homes and we are responsible for stormwater on city streets."

Citizen advisory board members named

The council picked seven at-large members of a new Citizens Advisory Board, which replaces recently disbanded parks, environmental and arts advisory boards.

Mary Moscatelli, executive director of the Venice Arts Center, was guaranteed a seat on the board, as is a yet-to-be-named student representative.

The seven at-large members – Lloyd Weed, Roger Effron, Steve Carr, Phillip Ellis Kaitly Panfil, Nancy Dixon and Mary Davis – were the top 7 of 15 candidates, whittled down from 31 submissions.

John Holic, potential board candidates would file an application and when an opening came up, the mayor would pick one, subject to the approval of the other six board members.

That all changed once Ron Feinsod was elected mayor. First Holic preemptively reappointed Barry Snyder and Shaun Graser to the Venice Planning Commission, prior to leaving office.

Eventually the council changed to a group process, which also had issues.

Pachota said that while he had issues with the public vetting process, he did not want to go back to the mayor choosing the candidates.

He then noted that shortly after he moved into the mayor's office he found a hard-copy email to the private account of a previous mayor from a local political party suggesting potential advisory board candidates.

He gave that piece of paper to the city clerk's office.

That email, sent Dec. 15, 2019 and supplied to the Herald-Tribune following a public records request, came from Barbara Desmond, then an officer at the Venice Area Democratic Club, to Feinsod.

The email, a list of a dozen of city residents who could serve on advisory boards, was sent along with the notation "Hope this helps. Please let them know I recommend them. Let me know what Boards u need to fill and I'll keep an I out for candidates."

Feinsod, contacted at his new home in Tucson, Arizona, at first did not recall the memo then later said that after he found out there was no advertising of open positions, he wanted to create a slate of people available for choice.

Asked why he did not forward the email to his public account, Feinsod said that he did not realize it was a potential Sunshine Law violation

Flamingo Ditch Update

From: news@goldenbeachassociates.com

To: news@goldenbeachassociates.com

Date: Saturday, April 5, 2025 at 02:06 PM EDT

Flamingo Ditch Update

Venice City Council Members held a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Workshop on Thursday, April 3 to discuss the city's 2026 Proposed Capital Improvement Program.

Although it is not yet included in the Capital Improvement Program, Flamingo Ditch / Golden Beach flooding was discussed at great length. Council members, both individually and collectively, were very supportive of taking action on the problem "as quickly as humanly possible." City Mayor Pachota and Council Members assured that as soon as there is a defined project and cost estimate, it will be added to the CIP budget, and that the City is in the process of hiring an outside contractor before hurricane season to ensure that the mouth of ditch is kept clear -- including nights, week-ends, and Holidays.

The Workshop is well worth viewing for a complete detail on what was said and by whom.

Video of the session is here:
https://venice.granicus.com/player/clip/1818?view_id=2&redirect=true

The Flamingo Ditch / Golden Beach section begins at 1:46:29, and ends at 2:09:10.

Council member Ron Smith opened the discussion with these remarks: "... time to ask my questions about Flamingo Ditch and Golden Beach. I actually have a motion I would like to make as a preface to discussion. I move that we add a Flaming Ditch / Golden Beach storm-water drainage project to the capital improvement plan this year, because the consultant is going to be coming out with their final recommendations in June and we will need to start addressing this critical public safety issue in the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. That would be my motion, Mayor." (At this point, the City Attorney observed that motions cannot be made at Workshops, but that the Council can treat this opportunity as a "Consensus Discussion".)
Councilman Smith continued: "... (the City has budgeted) $4.5 million to spend over 5 years on 7 projects, and they are all important, but there is no mention of Flamingo Ditch. This is what I'd like to say: it has been pointed out by residents that the Flamingo Ditch / Golder Beach project is crucial, and it is clearly in alignment with our Strategic Goal #4 to upgrade and maintain City infrastructure and facilities. The Council made the good decision to hire the Coastal Protection Engineering firm, and they are hard at work. Some of their early recommendations, such as hiring outside contractors to keep the outfall open and implementing regular maintenance schedules may not be capital improvement projects but they are things that certainly need to be funded this year, and they do envision some capital improvement projects for us starting with the installation of back-flow valves that they've already discussed would be for those pipes and outfalls to the Gulf."

"What I believe is needed here is for the Council to give a clear communication to the residents of Golden Beach, and assurance that we will be implementing any feasible fixes as quickly as humanly possible. We can start to do that by listing Flamingo Ditch / Golden Beach in this Capital Improvement Plan, with some uncertainty what form that's going to take, but if we need a budget figure we had a previous recommendation on what might be done there. I know that is not going to be the project, but it does give us some scope and we need to finance this, whether it be from federal grants, or the storm-water fund, or the 1 cent sales tax or however we need to fund it, but I'm hoping that the Council today will give a clear direction that we want the Flamingo Ditch / Golden Beach drainage situation addressed in the FY2026 Budget. Thank you."

The Mayor, Councilors and City staff discussed and were in support of Councilor Smith's observations. Please watch the video to fully appreciate their individual thoughts and suggestions. They are committed to doing the right thing.

https://venice.granicus.com/player/clip/1818?view_id=2&redirect=true

GBAI hopes that the Council or Smith will re-introduce his motion at the April 8th City Council meeting, and that it will be adopted with the unanimous support of our City Council.

On behalf of all our residents, GBAI wants to thank two neighbors who have helped so greatly in helping us reach this point. The contributions of Sue Lang and Béat Lehmann for the past two years cannot be overstated. Izzy Salinas has joined the team on April 4th as Co-Chair of the Steering Committee, to assess the soon to be available preliminary engineering solutions by Coastal Protection Engineering Group.

Peggy Parys, President, Golden Beach Associates, Inc.

6/11/2013

Venice forced to scale back stormwater treatment plan

Contact Josh at jtaylor@mysuncoast.com | Posted: Wednesday, May 15, 2013 5:56 pm

VENICE, Fla. - In the past few years, Venice has dealt with several beach advisories due to unwanted bacteria in the water. Now plans to fix the problem are being scaled back because estimates for the projects are skyrocketing.

Seven runoff outfalls line Venice Beach. The problem is, officials say the underground tanks, which hold runoff water during the dry season are breeding grounds for bacteria. City engineers say even with a scaled back project to fix it, they're hopeful they can still work on the problem.

Dolores Swanhart was relaxing by the clear blue gulf water Wednesday, when suddenly she saw a dark spot in the water. "I sat up; I thought it was maybe a school of fish or something. But that's not what it is."

It was coming from one of Venice's outfall pipes. "It smells like stinky stagnant water."

City officials say it's a result of relining some of their stormwater pipes -- the latest in their efforts to fix a recurring problem.

"The beaches are extremely important to us. It was the number one council priority," says Venice city engineer Kathleen Weeden.

A number of times in the past few years, county water quality tests have indicated high levels of bacteria typically found in animal waste. It resulted in multiple beach warnings. "With the drought conditions we have had, we felt there was some concern with rodents or some other type of wildlife getting into the storm water system to use it as a drinking source."

In the dry season, the water runoff from sprinklers and other sources can sit stagnant as the bacteria grows. After months of investigating, engineers with the city came up with a plan to treat the water before it hit the beach. It included a UV filtration system.

However, the estimated cost of the project has now nearly tripled. "Initially we had intended to do a larger scale project at Deer Town Gully and Flamingo Ditch. When the cost estimates rose from $1.2 million for one outfall to $3.6 million, the cost benefit ratio just wasn't there."

For now they will work to fix the problem by cleaning out ditches and swales that run towards the outfalls. "What we have decided to do as a benefit is take that funding and do restoration at all three outfalls. This fall we hope to have that underway," says Weeden.

She says cleaning up where the water sits should help as they wait for more funding and grants for a more long term solution. "While it is not what we intended to do, this is a great first step."

The city says some of that money was to bury some of the pipes deeper underground and pump the water farther offshore.