

Sept. 8, 2008

Public meeting on Beach Road drainage improvements set Sept. 16

Sarasota County will hold an informational, open house-style public meeting on planned Beach Road drainage improvements from 5-7 p.m. Sept. 16 at St. Boniface Episcopal Church, 5615 Midnight Pass Road, Siesta Key.

Residents will be able to learn about the project, including water quality and circulation in the Grand Canal, park plans and the status of the Roberts Bay Watershed. Attendees also will have an opportunity to find out what they personally can do to help improve water quality.

The drainage improvements project began in 2005 when high levels of bacteria were found in the Gulf waters at Siesta Beach Park, resulting in several no-swim advisory postings at the public beach. Investigation showed that the source of bacteria was from animals, not humans. The primary source was stormwater runoff from Beach Road and the Siesta Beach parking lot.

A solution to this serious water quality problem centers on constructing an improved stormwater system to collect and treat runoff and a pump station to pump the runoff to the Grand Canal. Construction is anticipated to begin in fall 2008 and be finished a year later in fall 2009.

The project is funded by the penny surtax (1-cent sales tax) and Southwest Florida Water Management District grants. It will not be funded by the annual stormwater maintenance assessment.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000.