

Flamingo Ditch Update – April 5, 2025

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 Flamingo 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 / Golden 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.