

LOWER WEST COAST WATERSHED SUBCOMMITTEE

Held on August 21, 2008

The meeting of the Lower West Coast Watershed Subcommittee was held on August 21, 2008 at the offices of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council at 1926 Victoria Avenue, Fort Myers, Florida.

Those present included:

David Crawford	Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
Mayor Mick Denham	City of Sanibel
Rae Ann Wessel	SCCF
Jon Iglehart	Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection
Jim Beever	Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
Carla Palmer	CP&A
Karen Bickford	Lee County
Teresa Heitmann	City of Naples
Bill Byle	Charlotte County
Whitney Gray	SWFRPC
Pete Quasius	Audubon

Agenda Item #1 – Call to Order

Mayor Denham called the meeting to order at 11:20 a.m.

Agenda Item #2 – Approve Minutes from Last Meeting

Minutes were approved with no corrections.

Agenda Item #3 – Review of Committee Activities

Mayor Denham thanked everyone for the success at the RPC meeting on the first stormwater resolution and spoke about the state rule meeting. There were about 70 people there and they want to incorporate the stormwater resolution into the state rule.

Mayor Denham requested Mr. Beever to send signed copy to Mr. Kirk Spitzer of the Stormwater Association.

Ms. Palmer said that on September 11th in Orlando a stormwater workshop will be held which will include a lot of ideas from the resolution for the consultants and engineers and said that she would send anyone information about this if they would like.

Mayor Denham then discussed the next challenge of making sure that the local governments pay attention to what we have written and are using this as a means to have

city, state, county or local ordinances and asked how to make sure they are paying attention to this. Lee County is now considering a package treatment rule or ordinance. None of these resolutions alone have major impact, but collectively they have a major impact. Mayor Denham posed the question of how all the counties could do a better job communicating with the legislators to let them know this is important.

Mr. Beever said he has been in contact with local governments and their administrators and we have had very good luck with the coastal counties. Contacts to the interior counties (Hendry, Glades and cities) have not been responsive. Commissioners or Council members sometimes take strong interest, but sometimes it is not on their principal agenda. He stated that he has been working on trying to get package treatment plant work done. Lee County has a draft they are promulgating. The others associated with Lee County are planning on acting on this. We should probably be preparing for another grant cycle. He replied that Ms. Donley will know if one has been submitted per Mayor Denham's request.

Mr. Crawford said he would follow up with Ms. Donley.

Mayor Denham said important to deal with people below Commissioners and asked if this on the agenda for the next meeting of the RPC so that he could give them words of wisdom to encourage them to take action on the package treatment.

Mr. Quasius said the City of LaBelle (Paul Puletti and Shellie Johnson) may be the only receptive area. There is political will within the city, not in Glades or Hendry County Commission.

Mayor Denham stated that he realized there is a wall between Glades and Sanibel. We are talking about a major portion of the population.

Mayor Denham said he met with Lee County Natural Resources and Commissioner Hall on Sanibel and we are going to work together on how we approach this whole issue to make sure Sanibel and Lee County are on same page. Commissioner Hall said we have to find compromise to safeguard some of the issues. Mayor Denham said about 1 million people per year go to Ding Darling.

Ms. Wessel said it might be a good idea of sitting with a key Commissioner from Hendry and Glades regarding the applicability of furthering that bridging in talking about these resolutions.

Mayor Denham said had been to Dr. Elkowitz's farm and he was going to see Commissioner Jones.

Ms. Wessel said it might be valuable on these resolutions that the local connection would be helpful to bridge the relationship. Having direction from the University of Florida researchers will help in getting a better ordinance if certain issues are addressed in the

model that would then be effective and would then bring in Hendry and Glades Counties as they do not have the staff to do this.

Mayor Denham said a detailed study had been sent to the golf courses to get their responses and steps for ordinance on Sanibel. We are still struggling with why Sanibel River is polluted.

Ms. Palmer asked about if the golf course was living up to the Audubon standards.

Mayor Denham said no and that he would keep her posted.

Mr. Iglehart spoke about the U.S. Sugar buyout and said that they had two mills, one of which is gone and the other mill was brought in from Cuba in the 1950s. Hate to see environment blamed for loss of something and with respect to selling resolutions, we need to hit agents as the facilities said aren't equipped to do this and tell them this is coming down the pipe and they need to prepare.

Mayor Denham said he will put pressure on them.

Mr. Beever said that areas outside of area and state have been requesting information about resolutions. He also spoke about how this information was released. New England has shown an interest in what we are doing with efforts regarding water quality. We worked with the University of Florida on the fertilizer resolution as they have been booster of the idea. We will set up some tables for those that are ordinanceable resolutions.

Ms. Wessel asked if there was a statewide stormwater rule and would it be driven by the Water Management District.

Ms. Bickford said that the state makes a mandate and DEP helps with this. The implementation is done by the Water Management District. Local governments can have more strict rules. Her concern was that Eric Livingston was running the Task Force and wanted to make sure he is in the loop.

Mr. Beever said development review standards, not in separate stormwater rule, will cover the stormwater resolution.

Mayor Denham wants copies provided to all groups making rules and to keep communicating well with all groups, lower levels and Commissioners.

Ms. Wessel said Lee County defers to the state. If this isn't something implemented at state level and if there is ERP issue, Lee County is hands off.

Mr. Beever said will come in LID and not as local government stormwater rules, but as low impact development rule

Mayor Denham said it was important to keep communication lines open.

Mr. Beever informed Mayor Denham about the reduction in the DCA funding budget to the Regional Planning Council as a large amount of the work has been through DCA funding which is being reduced 1/3.

Mayor Denham asked about the Lee County view on this. Karen Bickford responded stating that it looks like it fits into landscape development code and be dealt with through compliance and enforcement. Ms. Bickford said that this should be taken to the BOCC as a presentation that this is what we are doing if you are interested.

Mr. Beever said he would talk about the resolutions at the DRI workshop which will be in October. Mayor Denham said he would be at the workshop.

Mayor Denham discussed Resolution 5B.

Mr. Beever discussed the resolution for retrofit development. This document without red was the first redraft and is called resolution for retrofit development where have existing developed area and will be upgrading stormwater management system without tearing everything up.

Ms. Palmer discussed as it is pre-rule or as a retrofit for something that is not working right where local government has TMDL staring in face and have to look are best places to do some retrofit to meet TMDL.

Ms. Palmer discussed the resolution changes and info was put in on funding Where are we going to get the money and also based on the talk today, tearing out and down is the proper way of disposal and taking out things that are not needed for new development.

Mayor Denham said that he didn't want the impossible dream and that it is something that can be done.

Mr. Beever said would put together two into one document. Ms. Palmer said she would have additional material. One of the things we could use help with is how to fund this.

Mr. Beever said this would be e-mailed to the members.

Agenda Item #4 – Discuss content of Second Stormwater Resolution

Mayor Denham asked that governments be sent a draft stating that this is what we are working on, but that he be given a copy of it to review before it is sent.

Ms. Bickford spoke about the Cape Coral needs.

Mr. Beever discussed the timeframes.

Agenda Item #5 – Public Input

Ms. Beever said it would be a good idea to send draft to Jack Merriam in Sarasota County as they have done a low impact development manual and have quite a bit of technical resources.

Mr. Quasius broached the idea about water reservations for our eco economic system.

Mayor Denham was asked to be on this Congress. He has spoken with Phil Flood at the Water Management District so that he can represent this area very well. He would be representing Southwest Florida and the Florida League of Cities.

Mr. Byle asked what the scope of this committee was as the past meetings have been on fertilizer and stormwater issues as there are a lot of watershed issues.

Mayor Denham said scope is to focus on urban water pollution and mandate to look at five areas: fertilizer, package treatment plants, wastewater treatment, septic systems and stormwater treatment. He stated he wanted to finish these before proceeding onto other issues. Don't want scope to get any wider than it is now. Want to say that this committee has done its job.

Mr. Byle responded with his perspective on the issues and project specifics and concerns.

Mayor Denham said that in the next 5 to 10 years, the Regional Planning Council is going to have water as one of its predominant issues. We are open to suggestions on what that focus should be on.

Mr. Byle said he knows there needs to be a working committee and expressed concerns about Cape Coral spreader issue. What we are doing compared to the watershed is minimal. Would like the group to not lose sight of these things.

Mayor Denham said would like RPC to say here is the next mandate because he will not operate outside of the mandate.

Mr. Byle said he was not trying to get the group to take on new issues, but did not want the group to lose sight of the bigger issues.

The next meeting will be on September 18th.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

