

**MINUTES OF THE
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
MARCH 15, 2018 MEETING**

The meeting of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council was held on March 15, 2018 at the offices of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council-1400 Colonial Boulevard, Suite #1 in Fort Myers, Florida. Chair Perry called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM. Commissioner McDaniel then led an invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Margaret Wuerstle conducted the roll call and noted that a quorum was not present. A quorum was reached later in the meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Charlotte County: Commissioner Ken Doherty, Commissioner Joe Tiseo, Vice-Mayor Gary Wein, Mr. Don McCormick

Collier County: Commissioner Bill McDaniel, Mr. Bob Mulhere

Glades County: Commissioner Donna Storter-Long, Commissioner Donald Strenth, Mr. Thomas Perry

Hendry County: Commissioner Mitchell Wills, Commissioner Emma Byrd,

Lee County: Commissioner Brian Hamman, Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Councilman Fred Burson, Vice-Mayor Mick Denham, Councilman Greg DeWitt,

Sarasota County: Councilmember Mitzie Fielder

Ex-Officio: Mr. Phil Flood-SFWMD, Mr. Jon Iglehart-FDEP, Mr. James Golden- SWFWMD, Ms. Sarah Catala, FDOT

MEMBERS ABSENT

Charlotte County: Ms. Suzanne Graham

Collier County: Commissioner Penny Taylor, Councilman Reg Buxton

Glades County: Councilwoman Pat Lucas

Hendry County: Commissioner Julie Wilkins, Vice-Mayor Michael Atkinson, Mr. Mel Karau

Lee County: Councilmember Jessica Cosden, Councilwoman Anita Cereceda, Ms. Laura Holquist

Sarasota County: Commissioner Charles Hines, Commissioner Michael Moran,
Commissioner Willie Shaw, Mr. Felipe Colón

Ex-Officio: None

**AGENDA ITEM #4
PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Cheryl Cook stated that she sat on the RPC board for four years from 2012-2016. She now hosts a radio show called “Can We Talk?” on WKDW. She offered to have RPC board members on the show for PR. She plans to attend meetings to gather information on the RPC’s efforts.

Mr. David Urich stated that he is a charter member of the Responsible Growth Management Coalition. He explained that the RPC is one of the most valuable operations that the region has. He was concerned at several the things he has heard regarding the RPC lately, including the lack of quorum at this point in the meeting. He encouraged the Council to look at what it is doing and why it should continue. He stressed the importance of cross county line planning. He said that he spoke to Mr. Jim Beaver recently and was encouraged by that conversation.

Chair Perry responded that the Council is working on a plan to increase its relevancy.

**AGENDA ITEM #5
AGENDA**

There were no changes made to the March 15, 2018 agenda.

**AGENDA ITEM #9
DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

**AGENDA ITEMS #9(b)
Disaster Recovery Coordinator**

Ms. Wuerstle summarized the three Economic Resiliency Workshops that were held in SWFL last month. These meetings were hosted by EDA and many other federal agencies were in attendance. She explained that EDA also funded a disaster recovery coordinator to work out of the RPC for the next two years. She stated that Ms. Elly McKuen had been hired to fill that position. Ms. McKuen gave a presentation on how she plans to run this program. After the presentation, Ms. Wuerstle announced that the NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability) for the EDA disaster recovery funds should be released in the next 30 days. EDA has expressed interest in several of the projects that were submitted by the SWFRPC. Ms. Wuerstle offered the RPC’s assistance to any municipality that wants to apply. HUD funds will also be coming soon and will fund project areas that EDA won’t, such as affordable housing. Mr. Iglehart explained that he has been working with several of the municipalities to develop FDEPS’s infrastructure project.

AGENDA ITEMS #9(c)
Promise Zone Update-Immokalee Foundation Presentation

Ms. Wuerstle announced that the VISTA Program has offered to fund 50% of the salary for a full-time Promise Zone and VISTA coordinator. The funding will cover \$25,000 in salary and \$5,000 in VISTA travel. Mr. Aidan Bandy has been appointed to the Promise Zone coordinator position. Ms. Wuerstle has also submitted the VISTA application for the new year. SWFL has been awarded 10 VISTAs. She then introduced Ms. Ruby Castillo, a VISTA volunteer for the Immokalee Foundation. Ms. Castillo gave a presentation on the Foundation and their efforts in education.

Commissioner McDaniel asked for more information on the qualifications to be a mentor. Ms. Castillo responded that the largest barrier to be a mentor is having the necessary time available. Commissioner McDaniel asked to be sent a list of what the Foundation's specific needs are and asked what the typical time requirement is. Ms. Castillo responded that its 30 minutes per week. Vice-Mayor Wein explained that his wife is a part of a similar program in Charlotte County for 458 homeless students. He explained that a key issue is the lack of access to electronic devices and internet. Punta Gorda has refurbished and donated devices to this program. He was also pleased to see that this program focusses on vocational education. Charlotte County has a shortage of HVAC technicians at the airport. Ms. Castillo added that the Foundation just had a meeting where they tried to increase their focus on vocational education and combat the stigma that comes with it.

Ms. Wuerstle announced that the SWFRPC has applied for the Opportunity Zone program. Their proposal includes a contiguous area in the region that included parts of Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee Counties (including the entire Promise Zone area). The proposal that was written by Mr. C.J. Kammerer was passed out to the members present.

Several members joined the meeting during the presentations and the Council reached their quorum requirement at this time.

AGENDA ITEM #6
MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 15, 2018 MEETING

The minutes if the February 15, 2018 meeting will be presented in the April Council packet.

AGENDA ITEM #7
REGIONAL IMPACT

AGENDA ITEMS #7(a)
Murdock Center Increment I NOPC

Mr. Dan Trescott presented the item.

A motion was made by Mr. Mulhere to approve the Murdock Center Increment I NOPC as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Doherty and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #8
CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Mr. Mulhere to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hamman and passed unanimously.

Ms. Wuerstle proposed a resolution that would assign the Glades-Hendry Transportation Disadvantaged program to the Heartland TPO (Transportation Planning Organization). Ms. Nicole Gwinnett, who recently left the RPC managed that program and the TPO, which covers Glades and Hendry among other rural counties, did not exist when the program was given to the RPC.

A motion was made by Mr. Mulhere to approve the sign the resolution as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McDaniel and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #10
STAFF SUMMARIES**

**AGENDA ITEM #10(a)
Grant Activity Sheet**

This item was for informational purposes only.

**AGENDA ITEMS #9(a)
Council Committee Appointments**

Chair Perry presented the updated Committee membership list. Ms. Wuerstle added that Mr. Flood would like to be added to the Legislative Committee. She also explained that Ms. Martha Simons is currently representing the RPC on the Estero Bay Agency on Bay Management, however she is no longer serving on the Council. Councilman Burson would like to serve on that Committee. Chair Perry recommended that Councilman Burson be appointed to that seat and Commissioner Hamman seconded the recommendation.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Wein to appoint the Committee members as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McDaniel for discussion.

Mr. McCormick was added to the Relevancy Committee. Mr. Mulhere pointed out that the importance of the Legislative Committee rises and falls depending on what's happening. He suggested that the Executive Committee could also be added to the Legislative Committee, since they already meet regularly. Chair Perry agreed. The Legislative Committee drafts the Council's legislative priorities and makes recommendations to the Council. Mr. McCormick explained that the Committee chose not to take any positions during the current legislative cycle. Chair Perry explained that the nomination of Councilman Burson to the Agency on Bay Management will be voted on in a separate motion. Chair Perry added that anyone can still be added to a Committee at any point during the year.

The Council voted unanimously to approve Committee membership as amended.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamman to approve Councilman Burson as the Council's representative on the Estero Bay Agency on Bay Management. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mulhere for discussion.

Commissioner Storter-Long asked where this would leave Ms. Simons. Chair Perry explained that the ABM has citizen members and Ms. Simon could serve under that capacity.

The Council voted unanimously to appoint Councilman Burson to the Estero Bay Agency on Bay Management.

**AGENDA ITEM #11
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**AGENDA ITEM #11(a)
Budget & Finance Committee**

Mr. McCormick reported that the RPC is on track and revenues are moving in the correct correction.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Wein to approve January 2018 financials as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hamman and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #11(b)
Economic Development Committee**

No report was given at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #11(c)
Energy & Climate Committee**

No report was given at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #11(d)
Estero Bay Agency on Bay Management (EBABM) Committee**

No report was given at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #11(e)
Executive Committee**

Chair Perry explained the Executive Committee asked for evaluations of the Executive Director. The responses were mostly positive, with a few constructive criticisms. He reviewed the positives and negatives with the Executive Director and she was receptive to what he said. The Executive Committee recommends that she continue employment for the next year at the same rate of pay and using her most recent contract.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Denham to approve the recommendations of the Executive Committee as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mulhere for discussion.

Chair Perry added that he has already seen the Executive Director address some of the shortcomings that were in the evaluations. He does not see any of the comments as severely negative, but as constructive criticisms.

Vice-Mayor Denham asked for a status update on the process of redefining the RPC. Chair Perry answered that there currently is not a definitive schedule, but he is trying to have that discussion in the first half of the year. He wants to make sure that there is as much participation in that meeting as possible. Vice-Mayor Denham thinks this should be a priority. Chair Perry stated that he has given Ms. Wuerstle direction on presentations for that meeting.

Mr. Mulhere noted that with 6.5 employees, the SWFRPC has the fewest employees of any RPC, has one of the lowest budgets, but covers the fourth largest geographical area. These need to be considerations when the Council begins to redefine itself. Ms. Wuerstle explained that she used to create a work plan that would be presented to the Council along with the budget that identified the Council's focus for the upcoming year. After three years of doing that, she was told to only present the budget. She believes bringing the work plan back would help with the relevancy issue. Mr. Mulhere and Commissioner Hamman agreed.

The Council voted unanimously to approve the recommendations of the Executive Committee as presented

**AGENDA ITEM #11(f)
Legislative Affairs Committee**

Mr. Flood asked about the DRI legislation that passed. Ms. Wuerstle explained that it took away almost all the DRI review from the Council and possibly the comprehensive plan amendments as well.

**AGENDA ITEM #11(g)
Quality of Life & Safety Committee**

No report was given at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #11(h)
Regional Transportation Committee**

Ms. Wuerstle explained that she was in Tallahassee the previous week and met with FDOT. They are working on the US-27 corridor plan and have asked the RPC to work with them in identifying issues. They are in the data gathering phase. She stated that widening US-27 through Clewiston was in their work plan. Ms. Sarah Catala with FDOT wasn't sure what plan Ms. Wuerstle was referring to and clarified that there is no widening imminent for US-27. They would do a feasibility and corridor study before any plans are made to widen a SIS road. FDOT has simply identified that

there will be a capacity need for US-27 from SR-80 to Palm Beach County in the future. Ms. Wuerstle thanked Ms. Catala for the clarification.

Councilman Burson asked if the capacity issues with US-27 had anything to do with FedEx possible coming to AirGlades. Chair Perry responded that there has been no official or unofficial talk of FedEx coming to AirGlades. Councilman Burson added that federal aviation approved lengthening the runway. Chair Perry confirmed that this had occurred to alleviate traffic from Miami International, specifically perishable imports.

Commissioner Pendergrass asked to hear Hendry County's thoughts on US-27. Ms. Catala explained that Hendry County is part of the Heartland TPO and the County's plans are made through that organization. She spoke to the TPO about US-27 today and they have not had any issues so far. She stressed the difference between identifying a need and planning for construction. If anything were to happen with US-27, that process would include significant public involvement. Commissioner Wills added US-27 could not be widened through Clewiston without destroying buildings. The County welcomed the increased traffic that the AirGlades improvements would provide because it will open opportunities for businesses and infrastructure. He stated that US-27 was not one of their pressing concerns right now.

Vice-Mayor Denham asked what the relationship is between the RPC and the MPOs and if the RPCs involvement was redundant to the MPOs. Ms. Wuerstle explained that FDOT asked to meet with her and they are only in the fact-finding phase. The RPC was involved partially because they completed a downtown revitalization plan for Clewiston through DEO. She does not know if the TPO is working on the non-transportation planning issues that the RPC could speak to. Commissioner McDaniel explained that he asked Ms. Wuerstle to focus on regional transportation, including a regional transportation map. This is an important regional issue and its important for everyone to know what their neighboring counties and municipalities are planning. Mr. Mulhere clarified that planning is a broad term. The MPOs, TPOs, and FDOT focus on the transportation planning and the RPC could provide expertise on the other areas of planning.

Mr. Tim Walker gave an update on the regional transportation map, including the addition of a regional future land use map. The Council commended Mr. Walker on his excellent work. Mr. Mulhere encouraged everyone to share the link with people outside of this Council.

AGENDA ITEM #11(i)
Interlocal Agreement/Future of the SWFRPC Committee

No report was given at this time.

AGENDA ITEM #11(j)
Water Quality and Water Resources Management

No report was given at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #12
NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business brought to the Council.

**AGENDA ITEM #13
STATE AGENCIES COMMENTS/REPORTS**

Mr. Iglehart announced that next month's FDEP workshop (April 11) will be an environmental business expo.

Mr. Flood stated that this was a good legislative session for water projects. Projects included a septic-to-sewer project in Glades County, a \$2 million nitrogen sewage treatment project in Sanibel, a roughly \$750,000 creek project in Fort Myers, and a septic-to-sewer project in Charlotte County. There was \$293 million in funding for Everglades projects as well. Vice-Mayor Denham stated that the SFWMD has done an outstanding job. Mr. Flood offered to give a presentation at a future Council meeting. Mr. McCormick asked if any of these projects will be impacted by the \$400 million diversion into school resources. Mr. Flood responded that these projects have made it into the budget and the Governor's desk.

**AGENDA ITEM #14
COUNCIL LEGAL CONSULTANT'S COMMENTS**

No comments were made at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #15
COUNCIL MEMBER'S COMMENTS**

Commissioner McDaniel asked if the information regarding the various disaster recovery funds has been sent to county and city staff. Ms. Wuerstle responded that she has not yet because the NOFAs have not been released yet. Commissioner McDaniel also announced that Collier County has been awarded a \$13 million TIGER grant for Immokalee's complete streets program.

**AGENDA ITEM #16
ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting will be on April 19, 2018. The meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m.

Commissioner Donna Storter-Long, Secretary

The meeting was duly advertised in the March 2, 2018 issue of the FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER, Volume 44, Number 43.