

**MINUTES OF THE
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 16, 2017 MEETING**

The meeting of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council was held on February 16, 2017 at the offices of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council-1400 Colonial Boulevard, Suite #1 in Fort Myers, Florida. Chair Burch called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM. Mayor Shaw then led an invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Nichole Gwinnett conducted the roll call and noted that a quorum was present.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Charlotte County: Commissioner Ken Doherty, Commissioner Joe Tiseo, Councilwoman Lynne Matthews, Mr. Don McCormick, Ms. Suzanne Graham

Collier County: Commissioner Bill McDaniel, Councilman Reg Buxton, Mr. Bob Mulhere

Glades County: Mr. Thomas Perry

Hendry County: Mr. Mel Karau, Commissioner Julie Wilkins

Lee County: Commissioner Frank Mann, Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Councilman Jim Burch, Councilman Forrest Banks, Vice-Mayor Mick Denham, Councilman Greg DeWitt,

Sarasota County: Commissioner Michael Moran, Mayor Willie Shaw, Commissioner Debbie McDowell

Ex-Officio: Mr. Phil Flood-SFWMD, Mr. Jon Iglehart-FDEP

MEMBERS ABSENT

Charlotte County: None

Collier County: Commissioner Penny Taylor

Glades County: Commissioner Donna Storter-Long, Commissioner Donald Strenth, Councilwoman Pat Lucas

Hendry County: Commissioner Karson Turner, Commissioner Mitchell Wills, Vice-Mayor Michael Atkinson,

Lee County: Councilmember Jim Wilson, Councilwoman Anita Cereceda, Ms. Laura Holquist

Sarasota County: Commissioner Charles Hines, Councilman Fred Fraize, Mr. Felipe Colón

Ex-Officio: Ms. Tara Poulton-SWFWMD, Ms. Sarah Catala-FDOT

**AGENDA ITEM #4
PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were made at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #5
AGENDA**

There were no changes made to the February 16, 2017 agenda.

**AGENDA ITEM #6
MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 15, 2016 MEETING**

A motion was made by Councilman Banks to approve the December 15, 2016 and January 19, 2017 minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Perry and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #7
DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Wuerstle explained that she is looking into improving the Council's sound system. She heard complaints about the audio quality from those participating by phone. She then explained that the new list of the Council's standing committees was in the Council packet. Councilmembers can request to be added or removed from any committee. Also attached in the packet was a memo from Sarasota County's attorney regarding their withdrawal from the Council. Ms. Wuerstle stated that she and Ms. Nightingale will continue to research this issue and report back to the Council when they have a full recommendation. FRCA's annual report was then handed out to those in attendance. The report included a write-up on the Promise Zone. A list of bills that will be monitored by FRCA was also given out and noted that none of the bills impact the RPCs. Ms. Wuerstle stated that the two bills in the packet and would be presented under the Legislative Affairs Committee. A new list of endangered and threatened species list was also given to the Council.

Ms. Wuerstle went on to explain that the Promise Zone Steering Committee would be meeting directly after the Council meeting and noted that progress was being made with the hiring of VISTA volunteers. Mr. Stoltzfus added that over \$2 million in grant funding has been awarded to applications included in the Promise Zone since the designation was given and there are \$3.5 million in grants that are either pending or soon to be submitted. It was reiterated that the SWFRPC is one of only four rural Promise Zones in the nation and the only RPC in the nation to receive a designation.

Commissioner Tiseo asked about Sarasota County's status as a voting member of the RPC. Ms. Wuerstle explained that Sarasota County is still a voting member and is still paying their dues for 2017. Ms. Nightingale added that Sarasota County's wish is to not belong to any RPC rather than

join Tampa Bay. Commissioner Moran clarified that Sarasota County's wish is to not belong to any RPC, but the State will have a say on the issue.

**AGENDA ITEM #8(a)
GRANT ACTIVITY SHEET**

This item was for informational purposes only.

**AGENDA ITEM #9
CONSENT AGENDA**

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

**AGENDA ITEM #10
REGIONAL IMPACT**

**AGENDA ITEM #10(a)
Palmer Ranch Increment XXV Assessment**

Mr. Trescott presented the item. Vice Mayor Denham asked if the project will be connected to the central server. Mr. Trescott and Mr. Paulmann, representing the applicant, confirmed that it would. Commissioner Tiseo asked what the Council considers "workforce housing". Mr. Trescott explained that market rate is considered workforce housing. Mr. Paulmann added that Sarasota County is working towards 140% of AMI (Area Median Income) and most of this project is at 120% AMI. The Master Development Order for this project required 1,155 units of affordable housing (roughly 11%) and over 2,000 affordable housing units have already been provided.

Chair Burch asked if this project mitigates or exacerbates connectivity issues with I-75. Mr. Trescott explained that Palmer Ranch has done improvements to relieve traffic and he does not believe that this project exacerbates I-75 traffic. He added that FDOT has reviewed and signed-off on this project. Mr. Paulmann further discussed the area's roadway connectivity. Vice-Mayor Denham commented that I-75 in this area is a disaster. Mr. Paulmann stated that the roads developed by Palmer Ranch even out any impacts created by the development. Chair Burch asked what would happen to Sarasota County DRIs if the County is able to pull out of the RPC. Mr. Paulmann believes that these projects would still come to the SWFRPC and the RPC would still make recommendations, but Sarasota County would not have a say in the Council's discussions or decisions. Commissioner Tiseo pointed out that DRIs are required to have a traffic impact update component and the impacts of this project would be addressed in that update.

Councilman Banks asked for clarification on the workforce housing definition and asked if this was a development for the working class rather than retirees. Mr. Gillespie from AG Spanos explained that they open the community to the working class, retirees, and whoever else may want to live there. They expect monthly rent to range between \$1,000 a month for a one-bedroom to \$2,000 a month for their largest three-bedrooms. Mr. Paulmann added that further roadway improvements are on the horizon to elevate traffic by 2035. They are working with FDOT and Sarasota County

to accelerate this timetable. Chair Burch was concerned about the idea of one county taking away transportation department funding from the rest of the counties to fix problems that they create. Mr. Paulmann examined that in this instance, all roadways are Sarasota County roads, funded by the developer. Commissioner McDowell asked about the buffer between the development and the preserves. Mr. Paulmann explained the buffer and added that this parcel does not back up to Oscar Scherer Park. Mr. Trescott added that this project is great of example of how the DRI process works for large projects and several studies list Palmer Ranch as one of the ten best developments in the State.

A motion was made by Mr. Mulhere to approve the Palmer Ranch Increment XXV Assessment as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Banks and passed unanimously.

Vice-Mayor Denham asked that the Council considers more clearly defining low-market rate housing at a future meeting. Mr. Mulhere explained that every County and municipality has slightly different definitions of affordable housing. He added that most counties are currently experiencing a shortfall of rental housing, which drives the price up and an increase in rental units available will drive prices down. Chair Burch explained that Cape Coral was ground zero for vacancies in 2009 and the market largely determines this issue. Commissioner McDaniel added that the market has everything to do with the issue. Collier County recently had a study done on their housing needs. He adds that it is not the government's job to manipulate the market, but to provide for accessibility. Councilman Banks reported that he went to visit a CRA in Miami and explained that they had saved up \$20 million and leveraged that into a \$60 million bond with Wells Fargo. One project had the Alonzo Mourning Foundation build 184 units and the CRA gave \$7 million of the \$21 million required to build them. These units are subsidized and that is the only way to provide workforce housing independent of the market. Vice-Mayor Denham commented that the CRA's project was a true affordable housing project and the projects reviewed by the SWFRPC are not affordable housing.

AGENDA ITEM #11 COMMITTEE REPORTS

AGENDA ITEM #11(a) Budget & Finance Committee

Mayor Shaw presented the December 2016 financials. Chair Burch asked if the Council is in a stronger position than last year. Ms. Wuerstle explained that for the year-to-date, the Council has a \$2,200 surplus compared to a deficit at this time last year and the reserves are strong.

AGENDA ITEM #11(b) Economic Development Committee

Councilman Banks announced that Mr. Alan Reynolds is the new chairman of the Southwest Florida Economic Development Alliance. The Committee will be meeting with FDOT on March 24th to discuss the regional transportation plan. The plan is a component of the economic development overlay map.

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

This item was for informational purposes only.

AGENDA ITEM #11(e)
Executive Committee

No report was given at this time.

AGENDA ITEM #11(f)
Legislative Affairs Committee

Mr. McCormick reminded the Council that the decision was made to keep a low profile this legislative session and not make any requests. He also added that any Senate bill must have a House companion bill to pass. Ms. Wuerstle provided a list of proposed bills that FRCA will be monitoring. She highlighted HB 333 regarding the Rural Economic Development Initiative and SB 286 regarding human trafficking education in public schools. She believes HB 333 proposes positive changes. Human trafficking is a key Promise Zone issue. Chair Burch sees these bills as an example of good work by the legislature. Mayor Shaw applauded Dr. Brooke Bello and the More Too Life organization for their great work with human trafficking in Sarasota. He requested that they present at a future Council meeting. Mr. Perry clarified that the Council is not discouraging meeting with State Representatives or Senators to express opinions.

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

Mayor Shaw stated that he wishes for his Committee to meet with the Promise Zone task force and coordinate quality of life efforts.

AGENDA ITEM #11(h)
Regional Transportation Committee

Ms. Wuerstle reiterated that there is a meeting with the MPO directors and FDOT District 1 Secretary on March 24, 2017.

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

Chair Burch is still having conversations about the interlocal agreement, but he is not ready to bring recommendations to the Council at this time.

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

Vice-Mayor Denham stated that the most contentious and expensive bills of this legislative session will be water related. There is a Senate and House bill proposed. The Senate bill deals with moving water south. The House bill allows water to be stored up to 19 feet in the dike. Representative Francis Rooney is pushing hard at the federal level to get the WRDA (Water Resources Development Act) passed. He stated that he believes that most of it will be funded in the next 3-4 years. He is running for re-election because he believes there will finally be some resolution to the water issue in the next 4 years and he wants to be there to see it. Vice-Mayor Denham met with Representative Rooney this past week and there has never been somebody at the federal level who understands the water quality issue better than he does. He thinks he will be a great ally for this region. Chair Burch also wished to give Representative Clawson credit for exposing the problems related to this issue. He also stressed that making this an economic issue will make people listen. Vice-Mayor Denham added that the Florida League of Cities put together a group of 163 communities who are working in this issue. Mr. McCormick pointed out that this effort has full bipartisan support in Florida. Councilman Buxton stated that Representative Rooney expects the President to be in Florida in October and there may be a resolution then.

AGENDA ITEM #12
NEW BUSINESS

AGENDA ITEM #12(a)
FDEP: Revolving Loan Program

Mr. Thomas Montgomery gave a presentation on FDEP's Revolving Loan Program to improve the quality and quantity of water. Chair Burch added that Cape Coral has made great use of this program. He asked how the bonds affect credit ratings. Mr. Montgomery explained that it should not affect the local sponsor. The SRF interest rates are lower than any previous funding that the sponsor has seen. Chair Burch stated that this is a great program for pre-platted communities. Mr. Montgomery clarifies that there is not match requirement for the SRF.

AGENDA ITEM #13
STATE AGENCIES COMMENTS/REPORTS

Mr. Iglehart thanked Mr. Montgomery for his presentation.

Mr. Flood reminded everyone that we are in the dry season and it has been dryer than normal thus far. On March 2 the Water Resources Advisory Commission will be meeting in Collier County. Chair Burch asked about red tide. Mr. Flood explained that red tide is naturally occurring and forms off-shore, but factors such as fertilizers and nutrients can accelerate red tide. Lake levels are currently at 13.5 feet, a little lower than normal. Releases are being made to the Caloosahatchee River.

Mr. Jim Kelter of the Game Commission introduced himself. He stated that he plans on attending the Council meetings from now on and will be commenting on dredge and fill applications.

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

No report was given at this time.

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

Mr. McCormick pointed out that Western Michigan University at Kalamazoo has entered into an agreement with Florida Southwest College and wants to expand their services in Charlotte County.

Commissioner McDowell acknowledged the presence of Ms. Cheryl Cook, former Commissioner. Ms. Cook stated that she appreciates the gesture, but asked that Commissioner McDowell not do that again.

Councilman Banks announced that the City of Fort Myers had adopted the White Paper on the water quality issue.

Chair Burch thanked everyone for putting up with his first meeting as Chair.

**AGENDA ITEM #16
ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Mr. Mulhere to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mayor Shaw and passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:36 a.m.



Councilman Forrest Banks, Secretary

The meeting was duly advertised in the February 6, 2017 issue of the FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER, Volume 43, Number 24.