

**MINUTES OF THE
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
MAY 17, 2018 MEETING**

The meeting of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council was held on May 17, 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 9:04 AM. Commissioner Hamman then led an invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Margaret Wuerstle conducted the roll call and announced that a quorum was present.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

Collier County: Commissioner Bill McDaniel, Commissioner Penny Taylor, Mr. Bob Mulhere

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

Hendry County: Commissioner Emma Byrd, Commissioner Julie Wilkins,

Lee County: Commissioner Brian Hamman, Vice-Mayor Mick Denham, Councilman Greg DeWitt,

Sarasota County: Commissioner Charles Hines, Commissioner Michael Moran, Councilmember Mitzie Fielder

Ex-Officio: Mr. Phil Flood-SFWMD, Mr. Randal Landers-FDEP, Mr. Dennis Ragosta- SWFWMD, Mr. Zach Burch, FDOT

MEMBERS ABSENT

Charlotte County: Ms. Suzanne Graham

Collier County: Councilman Reg Buxton

Glades County: Commissioner Donald Strenth, Councilwoman Pat Lucas

Hendry County: Commissioner Mitchell Wills, Vice-Mayor Michael Atkinson, Mr. Mel Karau

Lee County: Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Councilman Fred Burson, Councilwoman Anita Cereceda, Ms. Laura Holquist

Sarasota County: Commissioner Willie Shaw, Mr. Felipe Colón

Ex-Officio: None

**AGENDA ITEM #4
PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were made at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #5
AGENDA**

There were no changes made to the May 17, 2018 agenda.

**AGENDA ITEM #6
MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 15 AND MARCH 15, 2018 MEETINGS**

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamman to approve the February 15 and March 15, 2018 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wilkins and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #7
REGIONAL IMPACT**

**AGENDA ITEM #7(a)
Babcock Ranch NOPC**

Mr. Dan Trescott presented the item.

A motion was made by Commissioner Doherty to approve the Babcock Ranch NOPC as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hamman and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #8
CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Trescott gave a brief overview of each Consent Agenda item.

Chair Perry abstained from the vote on Item 8(h): Hendry County Comp Plan Amendment DEO 18-1ESR.

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

AGENDA ITEM #9 PRESENTATIONS

AGENDA ITEM #9(a) Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program

Ms. Jennifer Hecker gave a presentation on the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP). They have worked very closely with the SWFRPC over the years. They cover an area that ranges from Venice to Bonita Springs to Winter Haven and they are looking into expanding those boundaries to include all of the Caloosahatchee River up to Lake Okeechobee. Their four focus areas are hydrological alteration, water quality degradation, fish and wildlife habitat loss, and stewardship gaps. The CHNEP provides \$35 of restoration for every \$1 of government funding that they receive.

The CHNEP is conducting a vulnerability assessment that included interviewing local experts (including the SWFRPC's Mr. Jim Beever) and a public workshop. The assessment identified four major stressors for this area: ocean acidification, sea level rise, precipitation changes, and warmer temperatures. She also referenced the climate adaptation plan that the CHNEP and SWFRPC did in 2009. They would be happy to help any community develop and implement these plans. They have also developed a water atlas that brings together various data sources.

Commissioner McDaniel asked how the data in the water atlas is maintained. Ms. Hecker answered that the data is coded differently depending on the source. The atlas lists the sources of all of the data. Vice-Mayor Wein, speaking from the perspective of a water treatment professional, verified that this data is very useful and accurate.

Ms. Hecker clarified that the potential boundary change discussed earlier would not effectively change the work that the CHNEP is doing because they are already involved in those areas.

Vice-Mayor Denham explained the history of the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) study mentioned in the presentation.

AGENDA ITEM #9(b) Immokalee Foundation- Workforce Initiative

Mr. Walt Buchholtz gave a presentation on a program developed by The Immokalee Foundation (TIF) to prepare Immokalee students to find a quality job in SWFL's job market. TIF provides a successful mentoring program for Immokalee students that has primarily been focused on preparing and supporting students for bachelor's degrees. However, they have found that over half of graduates with bachelor's degrees are underemployed. They have identified health care, business, and construction management as three career pathways that have quality, high-paying jobs that require either an associate's degree or a technical certificate. They are looking to develop a program that can help Immokalee students succeed in those careers.

Vice-Mayor Denham asked how the program is funded. Mr. Buchholtz and Commissioner McDaniel explained that the program is funded by philanthropic contributions. They also receive State funds for college scholarships. Commissioner McDaniel asked for the number one need of

the Immokalee Foundation. Mr. Buchholtz answered that mentors are the top need. Students in the program require a mentor. Mentorship takes an hour per week. Ms. Nightingale explained that travel restrictions have kept her from becoming a mentor, however there is a new pilot program that allows mentors to travel to Immokalee once per month and do the rest by Skype or FaceTime.

Vice-Mayor Wein asked if Mr. Buchholtz would be able to give this presentation to other counties. Mr. Buchholtz said he would be happy to present anywhere. Vice-Mayor Wein explained that Charlotte County has a mentor program for homeless students. Commissioner Byrd would also be interested in having a presentation done for Hendry County.

Mr. McCormick asked how the Foundation interfaces with the Board of Education. Mr. Buchholtz answered that they have a great interface with the Board of Education, but that since these programs are after school, the Foundation works more with the high school and technical college than the Board. Chair Perry asked if there are any statistics on whether these students return to Immokalee after college. Mr. Buchholtz explained that there is a very high percentage that comes back to Immokalee and SWFL. Chair Perry asked what percentage of Immokalee high school students are enrolled in the program. Mr. Buchholtz answered that it's around 25%.

Commissioner Hamman commended Mr. Buchholtz on one of the most realistic presentations he has seen on the state of education. He explained that his family has been able to create high quality jobs that don't require a four year degree. He doesn't remember anything like this ever being discussed when he was in high school and he believes a disservice has been done to the youth by stressing the importance of a four year college degree. Vice-Mayor Denham differentiated the American education system to the apprenticeship program in Europe. He explained that one of the biggest job gaps in the US is in welding and they can't find people to fill their apprenticeship program.

Mr. Buchholz can be reached at walt.f.buchholtz@gmail.com or (202) 253-1647.

**AGENDA ITEM #10
DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**AGENDA ITEM #10(a)
Budget Amendments**

Ms. Wuerstle presented the budget amendments. The amendments account for additional revenue brought in since the budget was adopted.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Wein to approve February and March 2018 financials as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. McCormick and passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM #10(b)
February and March 2018 Financials

Ms. Wuerstle presented the financials.

A motion was made by Commissioner Taylor to approve budget amendments as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. McCormick and passed unanimously.

Vice-Mayor Denham asked about the payment status of the cities and counties that have pulled out. Chair Perry responded that Lee and Charlotte Counties have been paying, but their 12 month notice period is expiring soon. Earlier this week, the City of Cape Coral voted to pull out and stop paying. This is being built into next year's budget. Sarasota County stopped paying in January. Ms. Wuerstle explained that next year's budget will be brought to the Council next month. The revenue lost from the counties and cities that have pulled out is roughly \$300,000. Commissioner McDaniel asked if that loss would be made up by using the reserves. Chair Perry explained that the Council will look to reduce costs and receive more grant funding. They are not looking to take money out of the reserves. Commissioner McDaniel asked if next year's budget can be presented with a comparison to last year's budget. Ms. Wuerstle responded that the budget is typically presented with the last 5 year's budgets for comparison.

AGENDA ITEM #10(c)
Promise Zone Update- Federal SECD Programs

Mr. Aidan Bandy passed out information on federal SECD grant programs. Projects within the Promise Zone receive an extra 20 point for these programs. He also announced that they are restructuring the task forces and a poll has been sent out to determine a date for a steering committee meeting. Ms. Wuerstle stressed that VISTA volunteer slots need to be filled by July. Currently, there are two with the RPC, one with the Immokalee Foundation, and one with ACT. Mr. Leif Olandese, a VISTA with the RPC, added that Hendry County has just filled their VISTA position.

AGENDA ITEM #10(d)
Disaster Recovery Coordinator Update

Ms. Wuerstle explained that Elly McKuen, the previous disaster recovery coordinator, has taken another job and the RPC is looking to fill that job. EDA Region 4 has been allocated \$147 million in disaster supplemental funds. Region 4 covers 8 states and the applications are on a first come first serve basis. Ms. Wuerstle recommends contacting the RPC or Greg Vaday with EDA and preparing applications as soon as possible. The RPC has already submitted an application for a sustainability study for small to mid-sized farmers in the 6-county region. This grant only requires a 20% match.

The HUD disaster supplemental funding is supposed to come out in the fall. She also recommended preparing those projects as soon as possible and the RPC is happy to help with the applications. Vice-Mayor Denham asked if this funding was available to cities, if the funding needs to be for disaster related projects, and if funding can be used retroactively for projects already completed. Ms. Wuerstle responded that cities will be eligible and there has to be a nexus to

disaster recovery. The funds can be used for acquisition, rehab, elevation, and some infrastructure. The EDA fund is the primary infrastructure money. She did not believe that the funds can be used retroactively for completed projects, but she said that she would look into this matter.

The Immokalee CRA is working with the RPC on an EDA grant. Hendry County is also working on an EDA project with the City of Clewiston.

**AGENDA ITEM #11
STAFF SUMMARIES**

**AGENDA ITEM #11(a)
Grant Activity Sheet**

This item was for informational purposes only.

**AGENDA ITEM #12
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**AGENDA ITEM #12(a)
Budget & Finance Committee**

This was covered under the Director's Report.

**AGENDA ITEM #12(b)
Economic Development Committee**

No report was given at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #12(c)
Promise Zone Steering Committee**

There is a poll out to determine a meeting date and time.

**AGENDA ITEM #12(d)
Estero Bay Agency on Bay Management (EBABM) Committee**

Mr. Jim Beever gave the report. The EBABM met on May 14. They reelected the existing officers and presented awards for outstanding service. There was a presentation on coordinating mass transit within the Estero Bay watershed. Mr. Beever gave an update on his flood reduction plan for the City of Bonita Springs.

**AGENDA ITEM #12(e)
Executive Committee**

Chair Perry explained the Executive Committee met this morning and discussed legislative affairs and the budget.

AGENDA ITEM #12(f)
Legislative Affairs Committee

Chair Perry stated that the Committee does not have any priorities that they are pursuing. They will include priorities if requested by a county or city.

AGENDA ITEM #12(g)
Quality of Life & Safety Committee

No report was given at this time.

AGENDA ITEM #12(h)
Regional Transportation Committee

Mr. Tim Walker gave a quick update on the regional transportation map. The update included two new layers: FDOT Functional Classification and Business Parks. The interactive map can be found on the SWFRPC's website.

AGENDA ITEM #12(i)
Council Relevancy & Restructuring Committee

A poll was sent out to determine a date and time for a Committee meeting. Chair Perry is working towards on making a major presentation in September. Commissioner Wilkins asked to be added to the Committee.

AGENDA ITEM #12(j)
Water Quality and Water Resources Management Committee

The Committee met in May. Mr. Flood explained that he and Ms. Wuerstle were looking at a septic to sewer projects, educational opportunities, and legislative priorities. Sanibel and Charlotte County have made strides in this area. Commissioner Hamman asked if Mr. Flood looked at Cabana City in North Fort Myers. Mr. Flood responded that it sounds like something the Committee would be supportive of and they are looking at funding sources. Vice-Mayor Denham brought up the Captiva issue.

Vice-Mayor Wein added that small isolated communities can look at companies that have aerobic digestion systems. Vice-Mayor Wein then agreed to join the Committee. Commissioner McDaniel discussed the work he has done in Golden Gate Estates. County staff has found that the community is having no septic issues. Mr. Hecker added that the CNHEP has helped study this issue in Charlotte County and talked about a statewide effort to establish an estuary fund for the state to deal with coastal issues such as septic to sewer. Commissioner Wilkins explained that the City of LaBelle made septic to sewer a legislative priority. Mr. Beever added that the Council used to address these issues and they have resolutions for model septic tank inspections and septic conversions. He would be happy to assist any community with these activities.

**AGENDA ITEM #13
NEW BUSINESS**

**AGENDA ITEM #13(a)
Intercoastal Waterways**

Ms. Wuerstle explained that she was forwarded an email from Commissioner McDaniel's office regarding intercoastal waterways and requesting that this be discussed at a Council meeting. Mr. Beever addressed the email and requested more information from the individual who contacted Commissioner McDaniel's office. Mr. McCormick suggested coordinating with the West Coast Inland Navigation District.

**AGENDA ITEM #14
STATE AGENCIES COMMENTS/REPORTS**

Mr. Ragosta introduced himself as the new appointee for the SWFWMD representative.

Mr. Flood announced that the SFWMD is having a public workshop on June 1 and commended Mr. Beever on his water forum presentation.

Mr. Landers reminded the Council that the Brownfield Symposium will be taking place on June 7-8 in Sebring. Brownfield assessment and cleanup open economic development opportunities and the symposium will include grant information. Chair Perry and Ms. Wuerstle announced that the RPC received a \$600,000 Brownfield Assessment Grant for the Promise Zone from EPA since the last meeting.

Mr. Burch announced that FDOT's Fort Myers office has a new director, Mr. Wayne Gather. He also announced that sections of SR 82 in Lee and Collier will be closed over the weekend.

**AGENDA ITEM #15
COUNCIL LEGAL CONSULTANT'S COMMENTS**

No comments were made at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #16
COUNCIL MEMBER'S COMMENTS**

Commissioner Wilkins requested that she be included on coordination with her City's staff. She did not know about the VISTA need.

Commissioner McDaniel wanted to make sure that the consent agenda items are still being sent to his staff. Mr. Kammerer confirmed that they are.

AGENDA ITEM #17
ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be on June 21, 2018. The meeting adjourned at 11:17 a.m.



Mr. Thomas Perry, Chair

The meeting was duly advertised in the May 2, 2018 issue of the FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER, Volume 44, Number 86.