

**MINUTES OF THE  
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL  
DECEMBER 14, 2017 MEETING**

The meeting of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council was held on December 14, 2017 at the offices of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council-1400 Colonial Boulevard, Suite #1 in Fort Myers, Florida. Vice-Chair Perry called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM. Commissioner Shaw then led an invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Nicole Gwinnett conducted the roll call and noted 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 Penny Taylor, Commissioner Bill McDaniel, Mr. Bob Mulhere

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

**Hendry County:** Commissioner Mitchell Wills, Commissioner Julie Wilkins, Mr. Mel Karau

**Lee County:** Commissioner Frank Mann, Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Councilmember Jessica Cosden, Councilman Fred Burson, Vice-Mayor Mick Denham,

**Sarasota County:** Commissioner Charles Hines, Commissioner Michael Moran, Commissioner Willie Shaw, Councilman Fred Fraize

**Ex-Officio:** Mr. Phil Flood-SFWMD, Ms. Tara Poulton-SWFWMD

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

**Charlotte County:** Ms. Suzanne Graham

**Collier County:** Councilman Reg Buxton

**Glades County:** Councilwoman Pat Lucas,

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

**Lee County:** Councilman Greg DeWitt, Councilwoman Anita Cereceda, Ms. Laura Holquist

**Sarasota County:** Mr. Felipe Colón

**Ex-Officio:** Mr. Jon Iglehart–FDEP

**AGENDA ITEM #4  
PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were made at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #5  
AGENDA**

There were no changes made to the December 14, 2017 agenda.

**AGENDA ITEM #6  
MINUTES OF THE JUNE 15, JULY 20, AND OCTOBER 19, 2017 MEETINGS**

A motion was made by Commissioner Doherty to approve the June 15, July 20, and October 19, 2017 meetings as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wills and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #7  
REGIONAL IMPACT**

**AGENDA ITEMS #7(a)  
Palmer Ranch Increment XXVII Assessment Report**

Mr. Dan Trescott presented the item.

Commissioner Mann asked about the referenced memorandum of understanding between Sarasota County and the SWFRPC. Mr. Trescott explained that Sarasota County developed their own questionnaire that applies to all projects over 1,000 dwelling units. The County realized that they liked having the RPC involved in the review process. Mr. Jim Paulmann added that this memorandum does not take any responsibilities away from the RPC. It adds additional information to be reviewed for large developments. Ms Wuerstle stated that the MOU is an agreement between Sarasota County and the SWFRPC. It has nothing to do with certification from the State. The review process is still coordinated through the RPC. Vice-Mayor Denham added that the State has removed any official ability for the RPC to approve DRIs. Mr. Trescott explained that this has not affected the RPC's ability to impact the DRI process.

A motion was made by Commissioner Shaw to approve the Palmer Ranch Increment XXVII Assessment Report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Doherty and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEMS #7(b)  
Palmer Ranch Increment XXVIII Pre-App Checklist**

Mr. Dan Trescott presented the item.

Vice-Mayor Denham asked for clarification on whether an adequate water connection will be enforced. Mr. Paulmann and Mr. Trescott confirmed that it will be enforced.

**A motion was made by Mr. Mulhere to approve the Palmer Ranch Increment XXVIII Pre-App Checklist as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Shaw and passed unanimously.**

Commissioner Mann asked for an introduction of the new members of the Council. Councilman Fred Burson with the City of Fort Myers, Councilmember Jessica Cosden with the City of Cape Coral, and Commissioner Mitchell Wills with Hendry County introduced themselves.

### **AGENDA ITEM #8 CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Wilkins had a question about Item 8(b): Glades-Hendry LCB Membership. She asked if the Counties and agencies had been asked to fill the vacancies in the membership. Ms. Gwinnett explained that the members of the board and the agencies have been asked to fill the vacancies. She added that candidates have filled out the application forms, but have been physically unable to attend meetings. She has asked for State assistance and stated that other LCBs in the State have been having these same issues. Councilmember Cosden, who chairs the Lee County LCB, then added that they have the same issue.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Doherty to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Mayor Wein and passed unanimously.**

### **AGENDA ITEM #9 DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Wuerstle began the Director's Report by presenting the Budget and Finance Committee Report.

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

Ms. Wuerstle presented the year-end amendments to the FY17 Budget. These amendments balance out line items in the budget. She added that the Council ended the year with an unaudited \$68,259 surplus and stated that the audit will begin in January.

**A motion was made by Mr. McCormick to approve the Budget Amendments as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Shaw and passed unanimously.**

Commissioner Pendergrass asked when the budget for next fiscal year was prepared. Ms. Wuerstle explained that the budgets are prepared in June to be approved by the Council in August.

Ms. Wuerstle presented the financials for September 2017. Commissioner McDaniel wanted to make sure the Council went through the proper procedure for public notice for the auditors. He

also asked for an explanation on the deferred liabilities on the balance sheet. Ms. Erica Harp, a CPA who works with the Council, explained that there is a three year engagement with the auditor that was approved by the SWFRPC board. Ms. Rebekah Harp explained that the deferred liabilities are DRIs and NOPCs. Commissioner McDaniel wanted to have a future discussion on the accrued annual leave policy.

Ms. Wuerstle explained that the initial budget for FY2018 included a \$350,000 hole that needed to be filled by grant funding. She stated that staff has already made up about \$300,000 of that gap.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Shaw to approve the September 2017 financials as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. McCormick and passed unanimously.**

Ms. Wuerstle moved on to the 2018 Nominating Committee. The Committee needed to appoint two new members due to the retirement of Councilman Burch and Councilman Banks. The Committee recommended that Mr. Perry move from Vice-Chair to Chair, Commissioner Shaw be moved from Treasurer to Vice-Chair, Commissioner Storter-Long be named Secretary, and Mr. McCormick be named Treasurer. Councilman Fraize confirmed the recommendations as a member of the Nominating Committee.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Doherty to approve Nominating Committee's recommendations as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mann and passed unanimously.**

Ms. Wuerstle moved to the Promise Zone Update. Ms. Sheretha Davis, one of the VISTA volunteers working out of the RPC, gave a presentation on the opioid epidemic in SWFL. Ms. Wuerstle also introduced Mr. Mitchell Ross, another opioid VISTA volunteer along with Ms. Davis, Mr. Leif Olandese, the VISTA team leader, and Ms. Gina Malone, a VISTA volunteer working with ACT.

Commissioner Shaw asked who would be on the speaker's bureau. Ms. Davis explained that the goal was to have a diverse group of speakers including nurses and recovered addicts. Commissioner Shaw asked if staff was looking at what is happening with foster children. Ms. Davis told Commissioner Shaw that she will look into that issue. Commissioner Wills explained that in his experience there is outreach made to the extended family before going to foster care and they try their best to keep siblings together. These families are monitored to make sure they are adequately providing for the children.

Mr. McCormick asked for further explanation on Students Against Destructive Decisions. Ms. Davis explained that she learned of the program through Drug Free SWFL and it is offering peer-to-peer outreach. Commissioner Wilkins added that it is either through the health department or the sheriff's/police department depending on the area.

Vice-Mayor Wein asked if staff was going to look at how medical marijuana can help reduce addictions caused by pain medication. Ms. Davis confirmed that they will look into that issue. Ms. Poulton asked when the data in the presentation will be updated. Ms. Davis believed the data will be updated by the end of January, which would be data through 2016.

Mr. Mulhere asked what the cost of a treatment program would be. Commissioner Pendergrass, Ms. Wuerstle, and others attended a roundtable discussion with Senator Passidomo and Senator Benacquisto about this issue. Commissioner Pendergrass explained that the primary costs are EMS and hospital costs in the first 24-48 hours. Ms. Wuerstle added that a strategy will be released soon by the Hazelden Betty Ford Center showing a SWOT analysis for the region and laying out a strategy for adding weaknesses. Commissioner McDaniel added that he chairs the Public Safety Coordinating Committee in Collier County and has learned that there is no rehabilitation in incarceration. They have brought in caregivers to administer treatment and are looking to begin a coordinated effort to keep people in treatment. He added that science shows that drug addiction is not a choice. The Health Care Network is working to establish a juvenile health center in southern Lee County or northern Collier County.

Commissioner Storter-Long asked if Ms. Davis had any dollar amount costs. Mr. Ross answered that one overdose costs around \$50,000-\$94,000 and estimated that more comprehensive treatment would cost around \$150,000-\$200,000. Commissioner Storter-Long noted that there has been more discussion about this issue than Palmer Ranch. She attended her first Department of Juvenile Justice meeting and learned that prevention is greatly effective, but not being budgeted. She stated that the behavioral standards of society have deteriorated. Commissioner Pendergrass added that the cost to Lee County EMS was \$328,000 last year. Vice-Mayor Wein explained that these costs are conservative because not all overdoses are reported. Commissioner Wilkins reported on a presentation given at the Florida League of Cities by Dave Aronburg about a State run clinic that imports addicts from across the nation. She also added that the medicine used to stop overdoses is too expensive for Glades and Hendry Counties to provide. Commissioner Pendergrass added that Lee County spent \$320,000 last year on those shots.

Vice-Mayor Wein explained that the needle issues with heroin are leading to AIDS epidemics in Ohio and Indiana and the homeless issue goes hand-in-hand with opioids. Commissioner Shaw explained that the opioids issue is reflective of the crack epidemic in regards to the difficulties involved in treatment.

Ms. Malone gave a presentation on human trafficking and ACT. Due to time constraints, Ms. Malone was asked to come back to finish her presentation in January.

**AGENDA ITEM #10  
STAFF SUMMARIES**

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

This item was for information purposes only.

**AGENDA ITEM #11  
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

The report was presented and approved during the Director's Report.

**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**

No report was given at this time.

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

No report was given at this time.

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

No report was given at this time.

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

No report was given at this time.

**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**

**AGENDA ITEM #12(a)  
AG Opinion**

Chair Perry explained that the Council has received the Attorney General's opinion. It was distributed to the Council through the Council packet and been sent to the County managers. Mr. Mulhere thanked Commissioner McDaniel for his complementary words about the RPC's progress. Commissioner Hines explained that the Sarasota County attorney is not in agreement with the attorney general and will look at it again. He stated that he will take a very serious look at the organization's budget and what it is doing to meet statutory requirements if the County is forced to stay in.

Commissioner Pendergrass explained that the Lee County attorney's opinion was that Lee County is obligated to participate, but any decision on payment is up to the Council membership. The membership could vote to reduce the budget.

Commissioner Doherty added that Charlotte County has not discussed the attorney general's opinion yet. Their County attorney will discuss the opinion with the attorneys of Sarasota and Lee Counties. He added that the discrepancies between the interlocal agreement and the bylaws are an issue.

Commissioner Taylor stated that Collier County has decided to stay the course until the situation with the other three withdrawing Counties plays itself out. Commissioner McDaniel added that the RPC needs to continue to move forward in defining its relevancy and mission.

Mr. McCormick explained that the withholding of State funding has led to a unilateral nullification of the RPC. Commissioner Hines stated that this is not why Sarasota County has withdrawn funding. Vice-Mayor Denham found this conversation sad given the diminished role of the RPC in the planning process. He stressed that more time needs to be spent on how to redefine the RPC because there is still a need for a regional approach to development planning.

Vice-Mayor Wein explained that he asked his City Council to be put back on the Council because he sees a value to these regional discussions, such as the Lake Okeechobee discussions last year.

Chair Perry explained that he does not foresee the Council taking the route of suing the Counties and believes a solution will be reached.

**AGENDA ITEM #12(b)  
FDEP Letter**

This item was for information purposes only.

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

Mr. Flood explained that, in regards to Lake Okeechobee, the SFWMD is moving forward with the Everglades Agricultural Reservoir and they are meeting all of their timelines. They have also been awarded a \$16 million storage project for Lake Hicpochee in Glades County and a \$60 million dollar contract for the third C43 Reservoir contract outside LaBelle.

Ms. Jennifer Hecker, director of the CHNEP, added that on January 18 the CHNEP will be having their policy committee meeting. This meeting will set the stage for the future of the program. The boundary of the program may expand to include the rest of the Caloosahatchee River. Funding will also be a topic of discussion, following the President and EPA's decision to zero out the National Estuary Program's budget nationwide. The CHNEP's role in advocacy will also be discussed. Vice-Mayor Wein pointed out that this meeting conflicts with the next Council meeting.

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

No comments were made at this time.

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

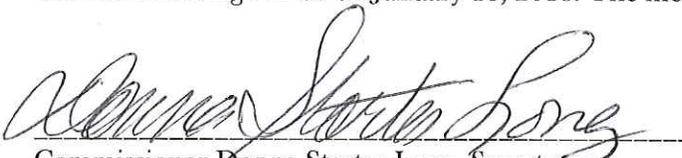
Commissioner Mann explained some of the history behind the RPC. He still believes in the importance of regional planning, but believes the RPC has expanded its mission beyond the original intent of the legislature. He believes the RPC can narrow its focus and still serve a role. At this point the RPC can find its relevancy and move forward efficiently.

The Council wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Chair Perry thanked everyone for coming and added that the next Council meeting will include a presentation on Sanibel's affordable housing program and the continuation of the ACT presentation.

**AGENDA ITEM #16  
ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting will be on January 18, 2018. The meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

  
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Commissioner Donna Storter-Long, Secretary

**The meeting was duly advertised in the December 1, 2017 issue of the FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER, Volume 43, Number 231.**