

**MINUTES OF THE  
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL  
DECEMBER 20, 2018 MEETING**

The meeting of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council was held on December 20, 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 9:03 AM. Vice-Mayor Atkinson then gave the invocation and led 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, Councilman Gary Wein, Mr. Don McCormick

**Collier County:** Commissioner Bill McDaniel, Commissioner Penny Taylor

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

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

**Lee County:** Commissioner Frank Mann, Vice-Mayor Mick Denham, Councilman Fred Burson

**Sarasota County:** Commissioner Charles Hines, Commissioner Willie Shaw, Councilmember Mitzie Fielder

**Ex-Officio:** Mr. Jon Iglehart—FDEP,

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

**Charlotte County:** Ms. Suzanne Graham

**Collier County:** Councilman Reg Buxton, Mr. Bob Mulhere

**Glades County:** Councilwoman Pat Lucas

**Hendry County:** Commissioner Emma Byrd, Commissioner Mitchell Wills,

**Lee County:** Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Councilman Greg DeWitt  
Councilwoman Anita Cereceda

**Sarasota County:** Commissioner Michael Moran, Mr. Felipe Colón

**Ex-Officio:** Mr. Phil Flood–SFWMD, Mr. Dennis Ragosta– SWFWMD,  
Mr. Wayne Gather, 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 December 20, 2018 agenda.

**AGENDA ITEM #6  
MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 20, 2018 MEETINGS**

**A motion was made by Commissioner McDaniel to approve the September 20, 2018 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Mayor Denham and passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #7  
CONSENT AGENDA**

**A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Denham to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. McCormick and passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #8  
PRESENTATIONS**

**AGENDA ITEM #8(a)  
Hendry/Glades Unmet Needs Coalition**

Ms. Margaret England and Mr. Greg Gunter gave a presentation on the Hendry/Glades Unmet Needs Coalition. Their mission is to partner with faith-based organizations, volunteer and social services agencies, government agencies, community-based organizations, businesses, and individual volunteers who seek to address the needs of disaster victims in Glades and Hendry Counties.

Vice-Mayor Denham asked for clarification on the primary function of the Coalition. Mr. Gunter answered that information gathering is their primary function. People send applications to them, they prioritize the applications, and they pair applicants up with case managers. The

group is still taking applications through their Facebook page and the United Way 211 referral help line.

Commissioner McDaniel added that Immokalee has a very successful unmet needs coalition and he invited the Hendry/Glades coalition to attend a meeting. The two organizations attending each other's meetings would open information sharing opportunities. He asked for more information on the 211 line. Mr. Gunter explained that the 211 line is for the entire State, if not the entire nation, and is for any social service, not just hurricane recovery.

Councilman Wein believed the stated recovery timeline is optimistic, based on Punta Gorda's recovery from Hurricane Charley. He cited business revenue and housing as two areas that still have not recovered.

Commissioner Mann asked about a grant the coalition received from the Red Cross. Ms. England explained that they received a \$500,000 grant from the American Red Cross to rebuild and repair and funding for construction consultants. About \$400,000 will be for direct assistance. Commissioner Mann noted that receiving a \$500,000 grant in their first year of operation is impressive.

Commissioner Wilkins thanked all the volunteers for their great work over the past year.

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

**AGENDA ITEM #9(a)  
FY17-18 Budget Closeout**

Ms. Wuerstle presented the budget amendment. She noted that there is an unaudited surplus of \$11,000.

**A motion was made by Commissioner McDaniel to approve the budget amendment as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wein and passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #9(b)  
August-October 2018 Financials**

Ms. Wuerstle presented the financials. August and September were for the last fiscal year, which the Council closed with an unaudited \$11,000 surplus. There is a dip in October, but the Council didn't do any billing in October, so that will go up. The \$360,000 program development budget item is now down to about \$60,000 thanks to grants received by staff.

Vice-Mayor Denham asked about the anticipated revenue for this year. Ms. Wuerstle answered that it will be impacted by the loss of local assessments. The budget will be closed if the Council is able to bring in the extra \$60,000 in grants. Commissioner McDaniel expressed concern over

relying on grants to fund the RPC. Chair Perry added that costs and personnel have also been cut to help account for the loss of assessments. He also explained that the grants are not for general operations. They are for regional projects and initiatives the Council is performing.

Commissioner McDaniel asked when the big picture discussion about the future of the RPC will occur. Ms. Wuerstle stressed that the assessments have never fully funded the RPC. The assessments have only accounted for 25% of the budget. They have always needed grant funding, DRI fees, and service contracts. Chair Perry explained that the Relevancy Committee has met several times. At those meetings, Ms. Wuerstle was asked to meet with the Counties. The meetings were delayed by the elections. Ms. Wuerstle has met with Charlotte County and has meetings scheduled with Lee and Sarasota Counties in January. Commissioner McDaniel recalled that the Relevancy Committee meetings also included a desire for a discussion at a full Council meeting. Vice-Mayor Denham voiced concerns over the RPC's future. He asked if the change in the Governor will affect the role of the RPCs. Chair Perry was told that it is too soon to tell. Vice-Mayor Denham and Commissioner McDaniel asked to have a serious, open discussion about the RPC's future at an upcoming Council meeting.

Councilman Wein agreed that the Council needs to start moving forward based on the Relevancy Committee discussions. Mr. McCormick added that the counties and cities that have withdrawn funding have now had to live without the RPC and face the alternatives. Trying to implement regional concepts without the structure of the RPC becomes daunting. He mentioned a regional group on the Caloosahatchee River that failed after one meeting. Commissioner McDaniel cited changes at the State level as a cause for the relevancy issues. Vice-Mayor Denham added that Babcock Ranch would not be the success it is today without the RPC, but the RPC has been removed from that process. Mr. Beaver added that although those days are gone legally, the developers associated with those projects still reach out to and work with the RPC. Vice-Mayor Denham pointed out that the RPC never had the authority to tell anyone what to do regarding development, it was always advisory.

Chair Perry shares the frustrations about the process moving slowly. He believes that the feedback gained from Ms. Wuerstle's meetings with the counties will help the Council move forward. Councilman Wein stressed the importance of return on investment, maintaining assets, employment, and quality of life as the Council looks to redefine its purpose. Councilman Burson pointed out that the Regional Planning Council had only one planning item on its agenda and it was on the consent agenda. Commissioner Mann added that he's been off the Council for a year and now they are having the same discussions.

A motion was made by Commissioner McDaniel to have the RPC's relevancy added as a discussion item to the January agenda. Chair Perry asked for time to determine a direction for that discussion before bringing it to the Council. He suggested bringing it to the February meeting. Commissioner McDaniel agreed to have the discussion in February and withdrew his motion.

**AGENDA ITEM #9(c)**  
**Nominating Committee**

Chair Perry suggested the following Councilmembers to form a Nominating Committee for 2019's Executive Committee: Commissioner Tiseo, Mr. Mulhere, Councilman Burson, and Commissioner Wills.

**A motion was made by Commissioner McDaniel to accept the Chair's suggestions for the Nominating Committee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mann and passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #9(d)**  
**FRCA Policy Board Appointees**

Ms. Wuerstle explained that the Council also needed to appoint FRCA Policy Board members. The Board requires one Governor Appointee and two elected officials for each region. Chair Perry is already serving as the Governor Appointee. The Board meets twice a year. Vice-Mayor Atkinson and Councilman Wein volunteered to join.

**AGENDA ITEM #9(g)**  
**Biosolids Resolution**

Ms. Wuerstle explained that FRCA has asked all the RPCs to submit a resolution of support on the biosolids issue. This was on the September agenda and the Council advised staff to send the resolution out to the counties and cities for comment. All comments received were in the packet. Mr. Beaver added that a letter from Collier County has supported the aspirational aspects of the resolution and many of our communities are already either already doing or planning to do the things listed in the resolution. This deals with water quality and better use of resources. The resolution recommends actions but does not require anything. DEP is already looking at these issues. The City of Venice has already passed the resolution and other communities have it on their upcoming agendas.

Commissioner Doherty explained that the Florida Association of Counties held a legislative policy conference in Tampa in November. The Growth, Agriculture, Transportation, and Environmental Policy Committee looked at this topic. They decided to take all water issues to a Water Policy Committee that is currently being formed. Commissioner Doherty requested membership on that Committee. He requested that the Council defer action on this until they see what comes out of this Committee. Commissioner McDaniel asked Commissioner Doherty to send any information about that meeting to Ms. Wuerstle, so she could send it out to the Council.

Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Wilkins and Commissioner Starter-Long see this resolution potentially having negative effects on the rural counties.

**A motion was made by Commissioner McDaniel to defer the resolution indefinitely. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Doherty and passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #9(e)  
Promise Zone Update**

Ms. Wuerstle introduced Ms. Tia Herman and Mr. Michael Bennett, the RPC's new VISTA volunteers working on the opioid issue. She reminded the Council that the opioid VISTAs cover the entire region, not just the Promise Zone. VISTA has also requested the creation of a regional opioid taskforce.

Ms. Herman and Mr. Bennett gave a presentation on their progress. Commissioner Shaw asked about class action suites against pharmaceutical companies. Mr. Bennett will get back to Commissioner Shaw after the meeting. Commissioner McDaniel asked if this information has been sent to county and city staff. Mr. Bennett will send the information out after the meeting after receiving input from the Council. Commissioner McDaniel would recommend pushing the date of their event back to give county and city staff more time. Ms. Wuerstle added that the Manatee Hospital suggested this date. Chair Perry has been told that Ms. Herman and Mr. Bennett have been doing great work.

Ms. Wuerstle is working to setup a meeting to refocus and reset the Promise Zone in March 2019. The March date allows the federal agency partners time to work it into their schedules. Ms. Wuerstle will be the new lead on the Promise Zone. Commissioner McDaniel asked for consideration to move the Promise Zone initiative out of the RPC. He is displeased with the performance of the Promised Zone and is concerned with the Executive Director taking on the program in addition to her existing duties. He would like to have that discussion before the proposed March meeting.

Ms. Wuerstle contacted the coalition of Promise Zones and the federal representatives and their position is that the contract is with the SWFRPC and that's where it stays. Commissioner McDaniel said that was contrary to the information he has. Chair Perry stated that this is a conversation that Commissioner McDaniel and Ms. Wuerstle need to have outside of the meeting. Commissioner Shaw asked to be involved in any conversation regarding the Promise Zone. Commissioner McDaniel would be glad to include Commissioner Shaw and suggested a meeting in January with the Councilmembers in the Promise Zone. Vice-Mayor Atkinson would also like to be involved.

**AGENDA ITEM #9(h)  
FRCA Monthly Report**

This item was for informational purposes only.

**AGENDA ITEM #10  
STAFF SUMMARIES**

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

This item was for informational purposes only.

**AGENDA ITEM #11  
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Chair Perry asked that the counties and cities send their legislative priorities to the RPC, so the RPC can support them.

**AGENDA ITEM #11(b)  
Promise Zone Steering Committee**

No report was given at this time.

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

For the sake of brevity, Mr. Beever referred the Council to the written report in the packet.

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

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

No report was given at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #11(f)  
Council Relevancy & Restructuring Committee**

No report was given at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #11(g)**  
**Water Quality and Water Resources Management Committee**

Vice-Mayor Denham sent a letter to 433 mayors in Florida regarding water quality best management practices (BMPs) in Sanibel with the goal of starting a dialogue. He has received about 60 responses so far and intends to follow up in January.

**AGENDA ITEM #12**  
**NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business brought to the Council.

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

No comments were made at this time.

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

No comments were made at this time.

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

No comments were made at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #16**  
**ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting will be on January 17, 2019. The meeting adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

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Commissioner Donna Storter-Long, Secretary

**The meeting was duly advertised in the December 3, 2018 issue of the FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER, Volume 44, Number 233.**