

**MINUTES OF THE
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 16, 2021, MEETING**

The meeting of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council was held on September 16, 2021, virtually via Zoom. Governor Appointee and past Chairman, Mr. Tommy Perry called the meeting to order at 9:04AM. Ms. Margaret Wuerstle conducted the roll call and announced that a quorum was **not** present.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Charlotte County: Councilman Jaha Cummings, Commissioner Ken Doherty, Commissioner Joe Tiseo

Collier County: None

Glades County: Mr. Thomas Perry

Hendry County: Commissioner Emma Byrd, Mr. Mel Karau, Commissioner Mitchell Wills

Lee County: Commissioner Frank Mann, Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Councilman Fred Burson

Sarasota County: None

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Charlotte County: Ms. Suzanne Graham, Mr. Donald McCormick

Collier County: Commissioner Bill McDaniel, Commissioner Rick LoCastro

Glades County: Commissioner Donna Storter-Long

Hendry County: Vice-Mayor Greg Thompson

Lee County: Vice- Mayor Ray Murphy, Councilman Jesse Purdon

Sarasota County: Vice-Mayor Erik Arroyo, Commissioner Ron Cutsinger, Councilwoman Mitzie Fiedler

Ex-Officio: Mr. Dennis Ragosta-SWFWMD, Mr. Wayne Gaither-FDOT

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

**AGENDA ITEM #9(b)
UPDATE ON RESILIENCY STRATEGY FOOD SYSTEMS**

Due to a lack of quorum the meeting started with agenda item 9(b). Ms. Wuerstle explained that last year the RPC applied for the CDBG-MIT grant for a Resiliency Strategy for Local Food Systems and was awarded the grant in January but just recently received the contract so the work will begin on this project within the next two weeks. This project includes 7 counties, the 6 of SWFL as well as Manatee County who asked to be involved in looking at local food systems. Part of this grant is looking for a National Consultant to guide this project. Ms. Wuerstle has prepared a Requests for Proposals, and it will be released shortly so that the RPC can get the consultant on board. The RPC is working through IFAS offices in each of the counties with this project, as well as the Food Policy Council. Ms. Wuerstle added that she will keep the board update as the RPC moves forward with this study. This grant is a \$350,000 grant for a two-year project.

Ms. Wuerstle added that last year the RPC received a grant called Healthy Cities, Healthy Counties. The purpose of this grant was to form a Food Policy Council in the SWFL region starting with Collier County. Ms. Asmaa Odeh was hired through this grant to work with the Blue Zones in Collier County to set up the Food Policy Council.

**AGENDA ITEM #9(c)
UPDATE ON COLLIER COUNTY FOOD POLICY COUNCIL**

Ms. Asmaa Odeh gave an update on the Food Policy Council. Ms. Odeh shared that some goals of the Food Policy Council include building local engagement and support as an effective body on policy and systems changes. Another goal is to support the resiliency ultimately of a supply chain for local growers. She explained that from January to July of 2021 the Food Policy Council prepared an interim report. She added that the Collier County Public School System was able to provide 59,572 meals to children 18 years old and under. The Food Policy Council also partnered with The Means Database, a food safety and food recovery nonprofit that assists with restaurants that has food leftover to try and eliminate food waste and reroute it to organizations through the Good Samaritan Act. Within 6 months they were able to recover 24,500 pounds of wholesome food that would've otherwise been thrown away to assist local nonprofits in Collier County to help those that are food insecure. As of today, the Food Policy Council has helped to save around 40,000 pounds of food in Collier County alone.

**AGENDA ITEM #9(d)
UPDATE ON EDA CARES ACT COVID 19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY**

Mr. Jim Burch explained that while working on this program one of the first things done was the field survey to try and grasp what local businesses are struggling with most and have the most

need for. Mr. Burch stated that the one thing that stood out the most was the people who felt like they have been left behind. He added that the RPC has been working on ideas as to what's happening, why its happening and what can be done to make things better. A wealth of information has been dispersed to individuals and small businesses including information on the Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) as well as information on how these small businesses can apply for loans through the CARES Act. The goal of this project is to find ways to help make our economy more resilient than it has been in the past.

Ms. Wuerstle added that one of the issues that the RPC will be bringing up to the board once there is a quorum is a request to create a resiliency coalition to work on a resiliency plan to address some of the issue that are present in SWFL.

AGENDA ITEM #9(f)
GRANTS UPDATE- INFORMATION ONLY

Ms. Wuerstle mentioned that there is a great deal of funding available through the American Rescue Plan as well as the second round of the CDBG Mitigation Infrastructure which closes September 17th at 5pm. She went on to say that the RPC submitted a \$16 million request for the City of Clewiston. One request was for \$14 million to upgrade and expand their sewage treatment plant and a \$2 million request to replace electrical distribution lines and transmission lines. Ms. Wuerstle added that the RPC is also working with Tracy Whirls to submit an application to the Build Back Better Regional Challenge program through EDA. Phase I of the project will be a \$500,000 planning grant. EDA will pick from the Phase I awardees to implement their plans, which can be another \$25-75 million. The SWFRPC project is to Develop an Inland Port System in Rural Southern Florida. These are huge programs and everyone in the state is working to get their applications in, Central and South Florida RPCs are also applying for this funding source.

AGENDA ITEM #9(a)
MEETING SCHEDULE DISCUSSION

Ms. Wuerstle presented the 21-22 SWFRPC meeting schedule. She stated that two years ago the SWFRPC board approved quarterly meetings and in November a workshop would be held at the meeting to determine what issues should be of focus and what speakers would be good to hear from at each meeting. Ms. Wuerstle asked if the board would still like to have a workshop in November to determine items to be addressed for the 2022 year. Vice-Chair Mr. Tommy Perry stated that he believed it would be a good idea to have the workshop in November so that there is a direction to move forward in together. There were no objections to moving forward with the schedule as presented. It was established that the next meeting would be in-person. Mr. Perry went on to add that one of the benefits of the RPC is bringing a diverse group of representatives from a number of counties together where items of mutual interest can be discussed, having an in-person meeting better fosters that conversation.

AGENDA ITEM #8

UPDATES

AGENDA ITEM #8(a)

BABCOCK RANCH COMMUNITY MASTER DEVELOPMENT ORDER AMENDMENT REVIEW

Mr. Dan Trescott explained that at the June 17th meeting the Council recommended conditional approval of the Development Order Amendment. In July 2021, the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners approved the Development Order Amendment. A copy of the development order was rendered to the SWFRPC on July 30, 2021. Staff review of the attached development orders finds that it is consistent with all regional issues and recommendations identified within the Council's recommendations. Mr. Trescott presented a slideshow of visuals of the Babcock Ranch Project.

A quorum was still not present at this time, so voting did not take place.

AGENDA ITEM #8(b)

BABCOCK RANCH INCREMENT II DEVELOPMENT ORDER REVIEW

Mr. Dan Trescott explained that this second increment was also reviewed by the Council on June 17, 2021 and recommended conditional approval of the assessment report. The regional issues are wildlife mitigation, wetland impact mitigation, stormwater management and floodplains and transportation mitigation. On July 27, 2021, the Board of Charlotte County Commissioners approved the Babcock Ranch Increment II Development Order.

There were no questions or comments from the Council concerning the Incremental Development. Mr. Perry stated that an Executive Board Meeting will be scheduled to take action on all voting items.

AGENDA ITEM #7

FINANCIALS

AGENDA ITEM #7(a)

MAY- JULY 2021 FINANCIALS

Ms. Wuerstle explained the RPC's financials were in the red \$62,000 in May, in June there was improvement, and the budget was \$52,000 in the red, and at the end of July \$39,000 in the red. This trend is the same as it was the previous year. The RPC anticipates that we will break even this year or end the year with a small surplus. Ms. Wuerstle added that at the next meeting there will be a report for the August 2021 and September 2021 financials.

Ms. Wuerstle pointed out that the assessments collected by the SWFRPC are somewhere around the \$40,000 range and all the work that the RPC is doing is completely grant funded.

Mr. Jim Burch thanked Ms. Wuerstle and her staff for the grant money accumulated and services provided to the region. He stated that the hard work of Ms. Wuerstle and her staff

should not go unnoticed. With the overall budget of the RPC being almost a million dollars and the assessments only counting for \$39,000 of that, the RPC has been working tirelessly to secure funding from other sources like grants.

AGENDA ITEM #11

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Wuerstle stated that the New Business Items that she wanted to discuss were the Resiliency Coalition and the November RPC meeting, which were already discussed. Until there is a quorum there can be no voting or approval of these items.

AGENDA ITEM #12

STATE AGENCIES COMMENTS/REPORTS

Jon Iglehart of FDEP stated that the Wetlands Permitting Program in the last 365 days, there was a little over 10,000 permits in the SWFL region and that is 46% of all the permits issued in the State of Florida.

Phil Flood of SFWMD gave an update on Everglades Restoration. He stated that there has been a lot of great work going on with great success. In July, the Kissimmee River Restoration was completed. In addition to providing Habitat Restoration North of Lake Okeechobee by substantial water storage it also improving the quality of water to Lake Okeechobee. Also completed was a major pump station for the storm water treatment area North of Lake Okeechobee as well, improving the quality of water entering Lake Okeechobee. initiated was Construction was initiated on a series of ocular storage located on the Kissimmee River in Glades County. These wells capture the surplus water coming down the Kissimmee River and store that water underground to prevent it from entering Lake Okeechobee, which helps to limit Lake discharges. During dry season, the water is pumped back out into the system.

Mr. Flood added that the work on the c43 reservoir is continuing to move forward without issues. There are around 250 people working on site each day and the work will continue through December 2022.

AGENDA ITEM #13

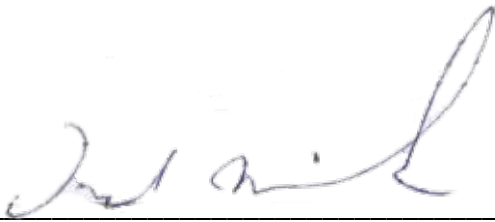
COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS

There were none.

AGENDA ITEM #16

ADJOURN

The next meeting will be on November 18, 2021, in person. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.



Don McCormick, Chairman

The meeting was duly advertised in the September 9, 2021 issue of the FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER, Volume 47, Number 175.