

**MINUTES OF THE  
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL  
FEBRUARY 21, 2019 MEETING**

The meeting of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council was held on February 21, 2019 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 9:00 AM. Commissioner Wills then gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Margaret Wuerstle conducted the roll call and announced that a quorum was not present at the time of roll but was later reached during the meeting.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Charlotte County:** Commissioner Joe Tiseo,  
Councilman Gary Wein, Mr. Don McCormick

**Collier County:** Commissioner Penny Taylor

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

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

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

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

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

**Charlotte County:** Ms. Suzanne Graham, Commissioner Ken Doherty,

**Collier County:** Commissioner Bill McDaniel, Councilman Reg Buxton

**Glades County:** None

**Hendry County:** Vice-Mayor Michael Atkinson, Commissioner Emma Byrd, Commissioner Julie Wilkins,

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

**Sarasota County:** Commissioner Charles Hines, Commissioner Michael Moran

**Ex-Officio:** Mr. Wayne Gather, FDOT, Mr. Phil Flood–SFWMD

**AGENDA ITEM #4  
PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Cheryl Cook, a former council member gave her personal testimony on the council's importance and some of the good work that they've done in the past. She discussed water quality, the quality of life, the Promise Zone importance. She also pointed out that in 2017 the Attorney General gave an opinion that counties had to participate in the Regional Planning Councils. Council participation isn't as strong as it was in the past. She mentioned that the council helped the City of North Port with their comprehensive plan.

**AGENDA ITEM #5  
AGENDA**

There were no changes made to the February 21, 2019 agenda.

**AGENDA ITEM #7  
DECEMBER 2018 FINANCIALS**

Ms. Wuerstle presented the financials, she stated that there is currently a hole of \$109,000 in the budget for the year and this is typical for the time of year. Due to the government shut down the receivables were lagging. Despite this, the RPC is still on track with the budget. Mr. McCormick thanked Ms. Wuerstle for her work with the budget and explained that staff is working on obtaining grant funding to close the budget. The council waited to vote on this item until there was a quorum.

**AGENDA ITEM #8  
PRESENTATIONS**

**AGENDA ITEM #8(a)  
SWFRPC Relevancy**

Chair Perry explained that Ms. Wuerstle has been meeting with the counties on the council relevancy issue. She along with staff has developed a presentation on a future direction for the council. Ms. Wuerstle gave the presentation that covered what is required of regional planning councils by state statutes.

Commissioner Mann asked for an example of a Dispute Resolution involving the RPC. Mr. Trescott explained the history of the council's involvement in Dispute Resolution and added that it has mostly been used for land use issues. Ms. Wuerstle added that there have been no requests since she had been with the RPC. Chair Perry brought up that the RPC assisted with facilitating the agreements that helped create Florida Gulf Coast University.

Vice-Mayor Denham stated that the RPC no longer reviews DRI's. Mr. Trescott explained that the RPC is still involved in the DRI process with Palmer Ranch and Babcock Ranch. He stated that the RPC has been an advisory on DRI's since we lost our appeal authority over 20 years ago or more.

**At this point in the meeting the council achieved a quorum and moved to voting items.**

**AGENDA ITEM #6  
MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 20, 2018 AND JANUARY 17, 2019 MEETINGS**

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

**AGENDA ITEM #7  
DECEMBER 2018 FINANCIALS**

**A motion was made by Mr. McCormick to approve the financials as presented. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Shaw and passed by vote.**

**AGENDA ITEM #8(a)  
SWFRPC Relevancy**

Ms. Wuerstle continued the presentation and discussed the ongoing federal programs that are funded. SWFRPC has the fifth largest population, is the fourth largest in square miles and has the least number of employees. She discussed how the budget has changed over time and pointed out that assessments have never fully funded the RPC. In 2012 the RPC had 14 full-time employees. Today the RPC has 4 full-time employees, 3 temporary or part-time employees and 2 VISTA Volunteers. The issues that the counties identified as being the most important are the following: water quality, affordable housing and regional transportation. Climate change and storm resiliency, quality of life and intergovernmental coordination and communication were also listed as important issues.

Mr. Jim Beever presented on several water quality and storm resiliency projects that he has done over the years and the success of them. Councilman Wein added that the adaptation plan done for Punta Gorda directly reduced their flood insurance. Councilman Burson asked what specific adaptations are being implemented, Mr. Beever discussed several public works projects that address flooding in Bonita Springs as well as Punta Gorda implementing stricter fertilizer regulations. Commissioner Storter-Long questioned if there were any adaptation studies

changing the building codes or energy needs. Mr. Beaver stated that yes, the adaptation studies address those needs and gave examples.

Ms. Wuerstle talked about what the council has done in affordable housing and public safety and added that she recently met with HUD and they're interested in working with us on affordable housing in this region. There will be a Promise Zone meeting on March 18, 2019 at 1:45pm that will include a discussion on affordable housing. Vice-Mayor Denham mentioned that Sanibel has a very successful affordable housing program.

Mr. C.J. Kammerer presented on the Brownfield assessment grant that is a 3 year/\$600,000 grant covering Glades County, Hendry County and Immokalee. The end goal of the Brownfield Program is to develop potentially contaminated vacant sites. Sites that go through the program are eligible for tax credits and incentives. The assessment base will determine the type and extent of cleanup as needed and the estimated cost. The consultant should be ready to begin phase I of the assessment soon.

Ms. Wuerstle briefly touched on Regional Transportation and addressing the future of it as well as the projects that have been worked on. She also discussed the project areas that the RPC will continue to work on including water quality resolution, adaptation planning, vulnerability assessment updates, evacuation study updates, affordable housing, quality of life and healthy futures as the VISTA's work on developing the opioid taskforce. The RPC always offers grant writing to the community.

Chair Perry stated that he wanted to initiate discussions regarding which of the items that the RPC addresses are seen as important, whether the RPC is all inclusive or too inclusive. Commissioner Mann stated that the RPC should focus on legislative mandates rather than looking for projects or grants to fill position and not fulfilling missions. Mr. McCormick brought to attention that the counties providing the missions are not providing the funds and who will complete the missions in the future if the SWFRPC is not? Vice-Mayor Denham explained that Florida's mayors are putting together a strategy on water quality and the MPO's are working on transportation. He suggested picking one to three focus areas due to the councils limited resources and serve as a forum to share best management practices. Mr. Beaver detailed how the Regional Planning Council worked to implement stricter fertilizer ordinances throughout the state, as well as septic tank and waste water policies.

Commissioner Shaw spoke about Congressman Mast's House Bill 350 on water quality and it all came through a lot of the work that the RPC is doing.

Commissioner Storter-Long stated that the RPC budget primarily comes from pursuing grants. She asked how a staff of four that can raise that much funding and complete so many projects could not be relevant. She added that the council needs to go where the money is. Commissioner Taylor weighs in to say that the council should focus on planning regional transportation and where it will go in the future with infrastructure.

Commissioner Wills explains that he has seen the relevancy of the RPC and the conversations with other counties has helped him tremendously. Commissioner Tiseo comments on the decreased role of the RPC as DRIs have been phased out by the state. Commissioner Storter-Long suggested meeting quarterly.

Chair Perry wanted to focus on actionable items rather than aspirational and would like the relevancy committee to meet with the county commissioners or a representative of each county at the end of the quarter. Vice-Mayor Denham asked for a chart that shows which RPC programs are funded.

**AGENDA ITEM #9  
New Business**

There was no new business this month.

**AGENDA ITEM #10  
STATE AGENCIES COMMENTS/REPORTS**

Mr. Iglehart announced that FDEP has a new Secretary and will be focusing on adopting a new statewide wastewater reuse program.

Mr. Ragosta announced that they had their first subcommittee meeting on their cooperative funding projects.

**AGENDA ITEM #11  
COUNCIL LEGAL CONSULTANT'S COMMENTS**

No comments were made at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #12  
COUNCIL MEMBER'S COMMENTS**

Mr. Mel Karau announced that the Swamp Cabbage Festival is this upcoming weekend and a large attendance is expected.

Commissioner Storter-Long thanked RPC staff for producing the presentation and their hard work in raising funds.

Mr. McCormick asked that the council look at BMAPs (Basin Management Action Plans). Mr. Iglehart explained that they're working on that issue and he will be prepared to give a presentation in a few months. Vice-Mayor Denham added that Sanibel is using BMAPs with the Jordan Marsh project.

Commissioner Shaw stated that the Florida Delegation is on board with water quality as a top priority and stressed that the counties are more impactful working together than separately.

Chair Perry reminded everyone that there is a promise zone meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:45pm and he encourages everyone to attend.

**AGENDA ITEM #13  
ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting will be on March 21, 2019. The meeting adjourned at 10:36 a.m.

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Commissioner Donna Storter-Long, Secretary

**The meeting was duly advertised in the February 5, 2019 issue of the FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER, Volume 45, Number 24.**