

**MINUTES OF THE
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
MARCH 16, 2017 MEETING**

The meeting of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council was held on March 16, 2017 at the offices of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council-1400 Colonial Boulevard, Suite #1 in Fort Myers, Florida. Chair Burch called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. Mr. Perry then led an invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Nichole Gwinnett conducted the roll call and noted that a quorum was present.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Charlotte County: Commissioner Ken Doherty, Commissioner Joe Tiseo, Councilwoman Lynne Matthews, Mr. Don McCormick

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

Glades County: Commissioner Donald Strenth, Mr. Thomas Perry

Hendry County: Commissioner Julie Wilkins, Mr. Mel Karau

Lee County: Commissioner Frank Mann, Councilman Jim Burch, Councilman Forrest Banks, Vice-Mayor Mick Denham, Councilman Greg DeWitt,

Sarasota County: Councilman Fred Fraize

Ex-Officio: Mr. Phil Flood-SFWMD, Mr. Jon Iglehart-FDEP, Mr. Stephen Walls-FDOT

MEMBERS ABSENT

Charlotte County: Ms. Suzanne Graham

Collier County: None

Glades County: Commissioner Donna Storter-Long, Councilwoman Pat Lucas

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

Lee County: Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Councilmember Jim Wilson, Councilwoman Anita Cereceda, Ms. Laura Holquist

Sarasota County: Commissioner Charles Hines, Commissioner Michael Moran, Mayor Willie Shaw, Commissioner Debbie McDowell, Mr. Felipe Colón

Ex-Officio: Ms. Tara Poulton-SWFWMD

**AGENDA ITEM #4
PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were made at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #5
AGENDA**

There were no changes made to the March 16, 2017 agenda.

**AGENDA ITEM #6
MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 16, 2017 MEETING**

A motion was made by Commissioner Doherty to approve the February 16, 2017 minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mulhere and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #7
DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Wuerstle announced that Mr. James Beever has been invited to speak at the 6th Annual World Congress of Ocean in China. She also explained that the RPC is exploring an upgrade to the audio system. She stated that this will not be an inexpensive fix, but it is important for the Council members who attend by phone be able to hear and participate. Commissioner Wilkins explained that the audio quality of the meetings is much better over GoToMeeting than over the phone.

Ms. Wuerstle presented the January 2017 financials and the budget amendments. There was nothing out of the ordinary with regards to the January 2017 financials. The budget amendments were necessary to determine the RPC's indirect and fringe rate, which needed to be provided to the federal government by the end of the month. The amendment added \$356,583 of additional grant revenue that the RPC has received since the budget was adopted. This revenue addresses the \$150,000 of program development funds that were in the adopted budget resulting in a net gain of \$206,583. Ms. Wuerstle explained that the indirect rate includes the building rent and utilities and that this year's indirect rate is consistent with last year.

Ms. Wuerstle added that the budget includes long standing debts that the RPC has been unable to collect and those may have to be written off. Chair Burch stated that he felt that we should attempt to collect on these debts. Ms. Wuerstle added that the audit will start next week. Commissioner Mann asked for more information on these "bad debts". Ms. Wuerstle explained that FRCA owes \$15,000 from work done in 2012. FRCA insists that this money will be paid. The RPC withheld \$15,000 of dues from FRCA stating that the RPC will pay them once FCA pays the RPC. The RPC is still in good standing with FRCA and has paid all of the current year's dues. Additionally, the Hendry County EDO owes roughly \$2,500 for work done a couple of years ago, Babcock Ranch owes \$1,900 for work done, and another entity owes \$1,500. Commissioner Mann stated that it's absurd for debt to remain uncollected for this long and asked if a direct conversation had been had with FRCA Executive Director Ron Book. Chair Burch answered that that will probably

happen in the future. Commissioner Tiseo asked if FRCA considers the RPC in default for the withheld \$15,000. Ms. Wuerstle answered that they do not, but the withheld money shows on FRCA's monthly financials. Chair Burch said that he was assured by FRCA that this situation would be resolved. Commissioner Tiseo asked for more information on the \$1,900 owed to the RPC by Babcock Ranch. Ms. Wuerstle assumed that it is a disputed amount for work done by the RPC and she needs to sit down with them and have a dialogue. There has been no formal letter sent to Babcock Ranch. Commissioner Wilkins asked about the \$2,500 that the Hendry County EDC owes. Ms. Wuerstle explained that this was from a DEO grant and \$2,500 was disputed by the previous Hendry County EDC director. The RPC has been sending invoices, but no conversation has been had with the new director. Ms. Wuerstle was planning on sending the bill to the County Manager and copy Commissioner Turner. Commissioner Wilkins advised against this and recommended having a conversation with the EDC director, Brent Kettler. Mr. Flood and Commissioner Wilkins added that the EDC is a separate entity from Hendry County and does not report to them. Ms. Wuerstle agreed to contact Mr. Kettler.

A motion was made by Mr. Perry to approve the January 2017 Financials and the Proposed Budget Amendments. The motion was seconded by Mr. McCormick and passed unanimously.

Ms. Wuerstle recalled that at the last Council meeting it was recommended that a housing expert come to a meeting to speak on housing issues and definitions, specifically relating to housing affordability. She stated that she has spoken to the Florida Housing Coalition and they have agreed to send a representative to the next Council meeting on April 20. She is also considering inviting all of the elected officials in the region, which would require moving the meeting to a larger location. Commissioner Wilkins asked if the purpose of the meeting was to determine the definitions of workforce housing and affordable housing and recommendations on how to resolve that issue. Mr. Mulhere clarified that this is an educational opportunity. The various political entities in the region use different terminologies and the meeting was meant to help the Council understand those differences. He adds that the Council has no authority to resolve those differences. Ms. Wuerstle explained that the Florida Housing Coalition will also be informing the Council about funding sources for housing projects. Commissioner McDaniel cautions the Council to be wary about making group decisions about housing affordability. He believes that this meeting needs to remain educational. Every community in the region has different criteria for housing affordability. He explains that the various terms are comingled too often. Workforces housing, affordable housing, and housing affordability are separate terms with different definitions. Chair Burch explained that the purpose of the seminar is to educate the Council on these different definitions. Vice-Mayor Denham asked if the Council would like someone from Sanibel's affordable housing program to present to the meeting. Chair Burch believed that this was a good idea, but it would be better to have that presentation at a later meeting after the Florida Housing Coalition's presentation. Mr. Mulhere added that Naples, Collier County, and other communities around the region also offer subsidized housing. Commissioner Wilkins agreed with Vice-Mayor Denham and would like to hear from people with real world affordable housing experience within the region. Vice-Mayor Denham doubts that the Council understands Sanibel's affordable housing program. Mr. Perry states that the best course of action is to leave the Housing Coalition meeting with a shared vernacular and shared understanding of the available resources and then follow that up with a presentation from Sanibel as a real world, working example.

Ms. Wuerstle gave a brief update on the Promise Zone initiative, explaining that the RPC was working on hiring the VISTA volunteers. She added that two million dollars in funding has been awarded to the Promise Zone communities since the designation was awarded with another three million dollars in grants pending.

**AGENDA ITEM #8(a)
GRANT ACTIVITY SHEET**

Ms. Wuerstle presented the monthly grant activity sheet. Commissioner Doherty asked if the RPC initiates these grant application or the counties and cities contact them. Ms. Wuerstle explained that the RPC does not submit a grant for a county or city without involving them. If the RPC knows about projects that a county or city wants to have funded then the RPC will look for funding for those projects and send them to the appropriate person. The counties and cities also come to the RPC and ask us to write grants. Chair Burch and Commissioner Doherty agreed that an open dialogue between the RPC and local governments is important in applying for grants. Mr. McCormick implored the local governments to be proactive and ask the RPC about potential funding opportunities. Commissioner McDaniel added that the Council staff needs to be proactive in informing local governments about potential funding and offer assistance if necessary. Commissioner Wilkins explained that the DEO LaBelle grant came about from Commissioner Wilkins hearing about the opportunity at a Council meeting and reaching out to RPC staff. Ms. Wuerstle added that when the RPC learns of a grant opportunity there is typically only a 30-45 day window to submit the application. Counties and cities must move quickly once an announcement for funding is released.

**AGENDA ITEM #9
CONSENT AGENDA**

Chair Burch wished to pull Item 9(h): Sarasota County Comp Plan Amendment DEO 17-3ESR from the Consent Agenda for further discussion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tiseo to pull Item 9(h) for further discussion and approve the rest of the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Doherty and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #9(h)
SARASOTA COUNTY COMP PLAN AMENDMENT DEO 17-3ESR**

Mr. Trescott presented the item. He assured the Council that FDOT's issues had been resolved. Mr. Stephen Walls, the new director of the FDOT Southwest Area Office introduced himself. He confirmed the FDOT is satisfied with the designs presented and their issues have been resolved. Ms. Wuerstle explained that this amendment does not meet the requirements to be found regionally significant. The RPC staff report agrees with FDOT's comments. Mr. Trescott added that this project could be considered housing affordability.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mann to approve Item 9(h): Sarasota County Comp Plan DEO 17-3ESR as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Doherty and passed unanimously.

Commissioner McDaniel asked about the Comp Plan Amendment process. Ms. Wuerstle explained that the Council's recommendations are sent to DEO. Staff has 30 days to review amendments and since Council meetings only occur once a month, staff comments are sent to DEO before they come to the Council. If the Council wants to change the staff report, those revisions will be sent to DEO. Commissioner McDaniel asked if all of the local governments within the region receive every amendment from the other governments. Ms. Wuerstle and Mr. Mulhere confirmed that they do not. Mr. Mulhere explained that the RPC and other State Agencies will comment on the amendments, the local governments can choose whether or not to follow those comments, and DEO and the State Agencies can choose to challenge the approval if they wish. Commissioner McDaniel stated that he was having a difficult time being asked to approve amendments in jurisdictions other than his own without more information. He would like his staff to be aware of what's going on in the other areas. Chair Burch suggested that Commissioner McDaniel discuss this with Ms. Wuerstle at a later time. Commissioner McDaniel stated that every amendment will be regionally significant at some point in time. Commissioner Tiseo questioned if the Council had enough time to review and understand these amendments before they have to approve them. Mr. Mulhere explains that he relies on the opinion of the RPC staff and the Council representative for that jurisdiction because they should have had the amendment presented to them already by their local planning staff. Mr. Mulhere and Commissioner McDaniel agreed that having all of the amendments would be a good educational opportunity.

**AGENDA ITEM #10
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**AGENDA ITEM #10(a)
Budget & Finance Committee**

The budget amendments and January 2017 financials were discussed and approved in the Director's Report.

**AGENDA ITEM #10(b)
Economic Development Committee**

Councilman Banks reminded the Council that the Executive Board is meeting with FDOT to discuss the regional transportation plan.

**AGENDA ITEM #10(c)
Energy & Climate Committee**

No report was given at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #10(d)
Estero Bay Agency on Bay Management (EBABM) Committee**

No report was given at this time.

AGENDA ITEM #10(e)
Executive Committee

No report was given at this time.

AGENDA ITEM #10(f)
Legislative Affairs Committee

Mr. McCormick introduced SB 996 and HB 0997 which are companion bills which affects attorney fees on administrative hearings. He also introduced HB 17 which is an attack on Home Rule. Chair Burch added the HB 17 has caught the attention of the Florida League of Cities as well.

A motion was made by Commissioner McDaniel to draft a letter to voice concern about HB 17. The motion was seconded by Vice-Mayor Denham and passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM #10(g)
Quality of Life & Safety Committee

No report was given at this time.

AGENDA ITEM #10(h)
Regional Transportation Committee

Ms. Wuerstle reiterated that there is a meeting with the MPO directors and FDOT District 1 Secretary on March 24, 2017.

AGENDA ITEM #10(i)
Interlocal Agreement/Future of the SWFRPC Committee

No report was given at this time.

AGENDA ITEM #10(j)
Water Quality and Water Resources Management

Vice-Mayor Denham stated that the City of Sanibel has applied for two bills on local water quality and he thanked Representative Ray Rodrigues for his help with those bills. He added that he has received feedback for the legislature that there are not enough of these kinds of water quality projects done at a local level. Chair Burch commented that Cape Coral has done a tremendous amount. Commissioner McDaniel added that creating measurables is imperative due to differing opinions on the issue. Vice-Mayor Denham explained that in all of his years working on water quality, the biggest criticism people have raised is the lack of scientific evidence. As a result of that the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation has spent three years producing a thousand page

report of scientific review on water quality on Sanibel. They have been addressing many specific issues that were brought to light by this report. Commissioner McDaniel would like to be able to use what Sanibel has done to benefit Collier County and added “at the end of the day, we all live downstream”. Councilman Banks commented that Fort Myers’s problem is crime.

**AGENDA ITEM #11
NEW BUSINESS**

None

**AGENDA ITEM #12
STATE AGENCIES COMMENTS/REPORTS**

Mr. Flood reminded everyone that we are in the dry season and the WMD is trying to get the message out on water conservation. He added that Cape Coral is having serious issues with water levels and Lee County is issuing a press release encouraging conservation. On March 23rd there will be a West Coast Water Supply Plan meeting in Bonita Springs.

Mr. Iglehart stated that FDEP hosts a monthly meet-up on the first Wednesday of every month. These are informational seminars. On April 5 they will have an open house for small businesses in the environmental field. Chair Burch reminded everyone about the revolving loan fund that FDEP presented at the last Council meeting.

Mr. Kelter from the Fish and Game Commission reintroduced himself to the Council.

Mr. Walls added that he looks forward to working with the Council.

Ms. Sandy Walters from the South Florida RPC introduced herself.

**AGENDA ITEM #13
COUNCIL LEGAL CONSULTANT’S COMMENTS**

No report was given at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #14
COUNCIL MEMBER’S COMMENTS**

Commissioner Tiseo thanked Ms. Wuerstle for presenting at the Charlotte County BOCC meeting.

Mr. McCormick also thanked Ms. Wuerstle for presenting at a symposium that he held. He added that the new Western Michigan University research staff in Charlotte County is interested in helping the region in any way they can and some projects are already under way. He also thanked Ms. Wuerstle for acting as a sponsor for a 319 grant for the Conservation District.

Mr. Mulhere asked about the gubernatorial vacancies in the Council membership. Ms. Wuerstle explained that candidates need to be encouraged to submit applications.

Councilman Fraize reported on a program that the City of Venice has that puts people in the shoes of police officers. He encouraged everyone to get in touch with Venice's police chief for more information.

Commissioner Wilkins added that she listened in on last month's meeting but was unable to speak over the computer and she would like that noted in last month's minutes.

Commissioner Mann, after stepping out into the cold this morning, was made painfully aware that global warming is not working. He asked Mr. McCormick, as head of the Energy and Climate Committee, to comment. Mr. McCormick gave no comment.

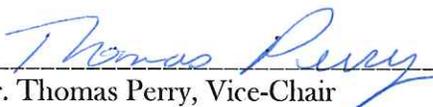
Councilman Buxton added that he has learned more from Commissioner Mann in the last 10 minutes than he's learned in the last 10 years.

Commissioner McDaniel commented on the topic of gubernatorial appointees. There are candidates volunteering to serve who are not being moved through the system. He also thanked Ms. Wuerstle for presenting to Collier County.

**AGENDA ITEM #15
ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Mr. Mulhere to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman Buxton and passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.



Mr. Thomas Perry, Vice-Chair

The meeting was duly advertised in the March 7, 2017 issue of the FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER, Volume 43, Number 45.