

**MINUTES OF THE  
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL  
OCTOBER 21, 2010**

The regular meeting of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council was held on October 21, 2010 at the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council - 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room at 1926 Victoria Avenue in Fort Myers, Florida. Chair Mick Denham called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Commissioner Carolyn Mason led an invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Senior Administrative Staff Nichole Gwinnett conducted the roll call.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Charlotte County:** Councilman Don McCormick, Ms. Andrea Messina, Commissioner Robert Skidmore, Commissioner Tricia Duffy

**Collier County:** Councilman Charles Kiester, Commissioner Frank Halas, Commissioner Jim Coletta, Councilwoman Teresa Heitmann

**Glades County:** Dr. Edward Elkowitz

**Hendry County:** Commissioner Karson Turner, Commissioner Tristan Chapman, Mr. Melvin Karau

**Lee County:** Councilman Mick Denham, Councilman Forrest Banks, Mayor John Sullivan, Commissioner Ray Judah, Commissioner Tammy Hall, Councilman Tom Babcock

**Sarasota County:** Commissioner Carolyn Mason, Councilman Ernie Zavodnyik, Commissioner Tom Jones, Mr. George Mazzarantani

**Ex-Officio Members:** Mr. Jon Iglehart - FDEP, Ms. Dianne Davies - SWFWMD, Mr. Johnny Limbaugh - FDOT, Mr. Phil Flood - SFWMD

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

**Charlotte County:** Mr. Alan LeBeau

**Collier County:** Mr. Bob Mulhere

**Glades County:** Commissioner Kenneth "Butch" Jones, Commissioner Paul Beck

**Hendry County:** Mayor Paul Puletti, Mayor Mali Chamness

**Lee County:** Councilman John Spear, Mr. Paul Pass, Ms. Laura Holquist

**Sarasota County:** Commissioner Jon Thaxton, Mr. David Farley

Ex-Officio Membership: Ms. Tammie Nemecek – EDC of Collier County

### AWARDS

Chair Denham presented membership plaques to the following members who will be leaving the Council as of November 1<sup>st</sup>: Commissioner Frank Halas, Collier County BOCC and Councilman Don McCormick, City of Punta Gorda.

### AGENDA ITEM #1 AGENDA

Commissioner Duffy moved and Commissioner Halas seconded to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

### AGENDA ITEM #2 MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2010

Councilman Zavodnyik noted that on page 12 of 69, the last paragraph under Agenda Item #5(d) Legislative Update the first sentence should read “Councilman Zavodnyik stated that a couple of days before after SB360. . .”

Commissioner Judah moved and Commissioner Mason seconded to approve the minutes of September 16, 2010 as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

### AGENDA ITEM #3 CONSENT AGENDA

Councilman Kiester moved and Commissioner Halas seconded to approve the consent agenda: Agenda Item #3(a) Intergovernmental Coordination and Review; Agenda Item #3(b) Financial Statement for September 30, 2010 & Grant Activity Status Sheet; and Agenda Item #3(c) 4th Quarter Executive Summary. The motion carried unanimously.

### AGENDA ITEM #4(a) 2011 Nominating Committee for Election of Officers – Counsel Liz Donley

Counsel Donley reviewed the item as presented.

Chair Denham requested that Commissioner Coletta be Chair of the Nominating Committee. Commissioner Coletta agreed.

Commissioner Hall moved and Dr. Elkowitz seconded to form the Nominating Committee and have the election of officers at the December 16<sup>th</sup> SWFRPC meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #4(b)**

**Lower West Coast Watersheds Implementation Committee Report - Chair Mick Denham**

Chair Denham reviewed the item as presented.

Commissioner Judah moved and Commissioner Hall seconded to accept the Committee's 2011 Proposal which consists of following the Fertilizer Ordinances, the issue of pre-emption and the implementation of the Stormwater Rule. The motion carried unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #4(c)**

**SWFRPC Appointment to the CHNEP Policy Board - Ms. Liz Donley**

Ms. Donley reviewed the item as presented. She noted that in accordance with the CHNEP's Bylaws that the SWFRPC's representatives does not have to be an elected official and that Councilman McCormick has expressed an interest in continuing to represent the SWFRPC on the Policy Committee if the Council will approve.

Commissioner Skidmore moved and Commissioner Halas seconded to have Don McCormick continue to serve as the SWFRPC's representative on the CHNEP Policy Committee. The motion carried unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #4(d)**

**SWFRPC Resolution #2010-06 - Resolution Regarding Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council Support for Public Acquisition of Edison Farms/AgriPartners Lands in the Flint Pen Strand Area of Southeast Lee County - Mr. Ken Heatherington**

Mr. Heatherington reviewed the item as presented.

Commissioner Judah moved and Commissioner Skidmore seconded to approve SWFRPC Resolution #2010-06. The motion carried unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #5(a)**

**Food System Planning Presentation -Robert A. Kluson, Ph.D.**

Dr. Kluson gave a PowerPoint presentation on Food System Planning.

Chair Denham asked Dr. Kluson what percentage of the food that is consumed is produced within the United States. Dr. Kluson explained that there is a trade deficit where the United States has to import food to satisfy the nation's needs.

Chair Denham explained that he recently visited Glades County and he spoke to some of the farmers and they told him that a number of the countries that the United States import food from still use chemicals such as DDT, which is a banned chemical in the United States.

Commissioner Halas expressed his concern regarding how much farmland is being turned into developments.

Ms. Messina asked how many counties within the Southwest Florida Region have done such assessments. Dr. Kluson replied none, there was an assessment done in Palm Beach County by a health department.

Commissioner Turner explained that the Hendry County Extension Office has reviewed the acreage breakdown of row crops versus citrus versus cane versus cattle. He noted that Hendry County has the largest organic farm in the State of Florida, but due to regulatory issues the owner has to take a portion of the organic farm and put it into the conventional portion.

Commissioner Judah asked what Sarasota County is doing with their comprehensive plan. Dr. Kluson explained that one of the policies is to look at county lands and make them available for more community based food production systems. There is also a local food purchase policy and a Farm-to-School Program.

Ms. Van Linkous explained that Sarasota County has an urban roads boundary and their 2050 Plan.

Dr. Elkowitz asked how the Death or Inheritance Taxes are handled when people are forced to sell off the land to developers in order to pay the taxes. Dr. Kluson explained that there are other ideas that come to reward farmers and ranchers for doing the right thing, such as ecological services.

Ms. Van Linkous stated that you can also place a conservation easement on the land.

Councilman McCormick asked if the program is written into Sarasota County's comprehensive plan. Dr. Kluson replied yes.

Councilman Babcock asked Dr. Kluson if hydroponics is viable to Southwest Florida. Dr. Kluson replied yes, hydroponics is one of the new technologies.

Dr. Elkowitz asked with all of the regulations that the United States has for their food industry, how it competes with such countries as Brazil. Commissioner Chapman explained one of things that citrus producers try to do is reduce their costs because it has been noted to USDA and the Florida Department of Agriculture that the United States is so regulated and that we do implement the best management practices. The Brazilians have a tremendous advantage over us where they bring in over 10 million gallons of orange juice on a cargo ship into Port Manatee with one USDA inspector who approves the shipment, while the local producers have continuous onsite inspections during the seven month processing season.

**AGENDA ITEM #5(b)**

**A Regional Food Study Presentation - Ms. Evangeline Van Linkous, AICP**

Ms. Van Linkous gave a PowerPoint presentation on a regional food study.

Councilwoman Heitmann suggested establishing a Regional Food Systems Planning Committee and she would be willing to be Chair of the committee. Mr. Heatherington explained that the committee structure would be appropriate for systems planning; however, there is the issue of funding the committee at this time.

Chair Denham suggested to Councilwoman Heitmann that she have the discussion with staff on the issue to discuss what an appropriate proposal is. Mr. Heatherington stated that staff will also work with Dr. Kluson and Ms. Van Linkous on the issue as well. Councilwoman Heitmann agreed.

Councilman Banks stated that he would like to hear from the agricultural industry. Chair Denham explained that there will be a follow-up discussion on the issue and that the agricultural industry will be included in that follow-up discussion.

Councilman McCormick stated that he would like to hear from the water management districts.

Commissioner Halas stated that when you look at the complete picture you need to also look at what is cost effective.

Chair Denham stated that he is very concerned with the nation's security issue. He heard a reference that approximately 80% of the nation's food that is consumed is produced locally, but it is declining. The more staggering number was more than 70% of our seafood products are imported.

Commissioner Turner explained that according to the Florida Chamber of Commerce the average citizen is willing to pay less for a food product even if it is from a foreign country. He believes that if the citizens are educated on where their food is coming from and how they can support their local farmers that they would be willing to pay the extra price.

**AGENDA ITEM #5(c)**

**Legislative Issues and Priorities Report - Mr. Ken Heatherington**

Mr. Heatherington reviewed the item as presented and distributed handout.

Chair Denham explained that his personal view is when you have a big packet of material and hand to the legislature it will never get read. He is a believer of having a small list of key priorities.

Commissioner Coletta stated that he agreed with Chair Denham and also that there is not going to be a lot funding in the upcoming year to spend on projects/programs, so we want to make sure that we highlight those priorities that are very important to us.

Councilman Zavodnyik noted that opposition to offshore drilling in Florida's territory waters was not included in the Council's 2011 Legislative Statement as it was in the 2010 Legislative Statement.

**Councilman Zavodnyik moved and Commissioner Judah seconded to re-insert the exact language from the 2010 Legislative Statement into the 2011 Legislative Statement regarding the opposition to offshore drilling in Florida's territory waters. The motion carried unanimously.**

Commissioner Duffy noted that the Council also voted on and sent letters to the legislative delegation on renewable energy projects and solar projects.

Commissioner Judah stated that one way to address both Commissioner Duffy's and Councilman Zavodnyik's concerns are to request that the legislature adopt an energy renewable portfolio standard. This opens it up to the private sector and doesn't require any funds from the government and it places the emphasis on alternative fuels versus oil exploration.

Commissioner Duffy explained that Charlotte County held the Charlotte County Energy Road Show and it was a regional event, but only one State Representative attended. She doesn't believe that the state legislature understands the issue and it goes beyond the renewable energy, it is also about economic development and incentives for bringing manufacturing companies to the region. Chair Denham asked for Commissioner Duffy to work with staff on the language to incorporate into the legislative statement.

Councilwoman Heitmann explained that she is on the Florida League of Cities and she is Chair of the Environment and Energy Quality Committee and as Commissioner Judah noted the one thing that the State is missing is a energy policy, so it could be as simple as inserting a State Energy Policy that allows solar energy companies to come into Florida and being consistent with another lobbying group's mission.

Councilman Zavodnyik stated that he wanted to make the point that when the 2010 Legislative Statement was adopted by the Council the Deepwater Horizon incident hadn't happened and he can't imagine that we have forgotten that already.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #6 PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were made at this time.

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

Mr. Heatherington noted that the monthly publication of the Economic Views was distributed.

Mr. Heatherington announced that Mr. Mazzarantani was elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of FRCA, but he heard at Friday's FRCA meeting that he was elevated to the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of FRCA. So he will probably be President of FRCA next year.

**AGENDA ITEM #8  
STATE AGENCIES COMMENTS/REPORTS**

Ms. Davies stated to Councilman McCormick that in reference to his question about the water management district opinion on the regional food study and she would be able to give him a contact name.

**AGENDA ITEM #9  
COUNCIL ATTORNEY'S COMMENTS**

Ms. Donley stated that she had no comments at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #10  
COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS**

Commissioner Hall reminded everyone to go out and vote.

Ms. Messina referred to Amendment 8 and stated that schools need the flexibility and asked that everyone support Amendment 8.

Commissioner Duffy stated that at the Energy Road Show there was a whole session on the PACE Program and funding opportunities and options. She mentioned that she will try to arrange for Charlotte County staff to come and give a presentation to the Council.

Commissioner Turner stated the following:

- Hendry County has been receiving a lot of negative press lately where it was listed as the 11<sup>th</sup> most economically distressed county in the nation.
- Hendry County has hired a new Economic Development Director, Mr. Roger Harrison.
- Hendry County also hired a new Tourism and Development Director.
- Hendry County has a new Pilot Privatization Program. Airglades Airport has made the fifth and final slot for application for the Pilot Privatization Program that the Federal Aviation Administration offers.
- The Lake Okeechobee Regional Initiative, the SFWMD has closed on the deal for the 27,000 acres on the US Sugar Lands which will help with the Everglades Restoration.
- The American Indian Art Celebration is being held at the Big Cypress Reservation on November 5-7 with tribes from across North America.
- Honor our Veterans on Veterans' Day (November 11<sup>th</sup>).

Commissioner Judah noted that recent headlines of the recent opening of the Algenol facility, which converts algae to ethanol. He then stated that there was a company out in Hendry County

using a similar technology. Commissioner Turner said that the company is called Southeastern Renewables.

Commissioner Coletta gave an update on the Everglades Interchange on I-75 which has been recognized as a need improvement within the region. It has also been recognized by both the Collier County MPO and Lee County MPO as a priority. The Collier County BOCC has made it their first federal priority for the past six years; however, a snag has appeared which a Cumulative Effects Evaluation Study needs to take place. This is the first time that it has ever taken place and it is an "environmental study on steroids." It will go all way back into the 40s to set as a benchmark and then come all the way forward to the day into the future for a 20 mile radius around the interchange. On November 4<sup>th</sup> from 6-8 pm there will be community meeting held at the Palmetto Elementary School in Golden Gate Estates and Collier County has invited three state agencies that have raised objections to the project.

Chair Denham stated that during his visit to Glades County with the local farmers they gave a presentation to him on the ecotourism project which is currently in permitting.

**AGENDA ITEM #11  
ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.



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Commissioner Karson Turner, Secretary

The meeting was duly advertised in the October 8, 2010 issue of the FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE WEEKLY, Volume 36, Number 40.