

EAST CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

December 17, 2008

Commissioner Malcolm McLouth Presiding

IN ATTENDANCE:

County Representatives

Commissioner Elaine Renick, Lake County
Commissioner Fred Brummer, Orange County
Commissioner John Quinones, Osceola County
Mr. Atlee Mercer, Osceola County
Councilman Art Giles
Councilwoman Joie Alexander, Volusia County

Municipal Representatives

Mayor John Land, Tri-County League of Cities
Commissioner Cheryl Grieb, Kissimmee
Vice Mayor Mary Martin, Volusia County
League of Cities
Mayor John Bush, Seminole League of Cities

Gubernatorial Appointees

Commissioner Malcolm McLouth, Brevard County
Mr. Jon Rawlson, Orange County
Mr. Daniel O'Keefe, Orange County
Ms. Aileen Cubillos, Seminole County

Ex-Officio and Other Municipal Reps

Ms. Nancy Christman, SJRWMD
Ms. Vivian Garfein, FDEP
Ms. Cecelia Weaver, SFWMD
Ms. Susan Sadighi, FDOT
Mr. John Weiss, FDOT

Other Attendees

Gerald Livingston, ECFRPC Counsel
Mr. John Thompson, Volusia County
Mr. Don McKinna, CPH Engineers
Ms. Janna Senvorove, Orange County
Ms. Tracey Barker, City of Edgewater
Mr. Chris Testerman, Orange County
Ms. Betty O'Laughlin, Volusia County
Ms. Shelley Lauten, *myregion.org*
Mr. Eric West
Mr. Jim Morris, Volusia
Mr. Barbara Herrin, Volusia

Mr. James Miller, DBNT
Mr. Charley Williams, GEC
Mr. Pierce Jones, University of Florida
Mr. Brian Canin, Canin Associates
Mr. Josh Reive, Lynx
Mr. Stan Geberer, Fishkind
Mr. Justin Bansen, Kittelson & Assoc
Mr. Don Mears, GS Florida
Mr. John Florio, DWMA
Mr. Mark Hardcromer, PII
Mr. Michael Dennis, BDA
Ms. Lisa Kelley, FDEP
Ms. Carolyn Ansay, City of Edgewater
Mr. Tommy Boroughs, H&K
Ms. Kelli McGee, Volusia County
Mr. Greg Stubbs, Volusia County

ECFRPC Staff

Mr. Phil Laurien	Ms. Lelia Hars
Mr. Fred Milch	Mr. Keith Smith
Ms. Tara McCue	Ms. Ruth Little
Mr. Jeremy Mikrut	Mr. Chris Romano
Mr. George Kinney	Mr. Josh Hoffman
Ms. Tuesdai Brunsonbyrd-Bowden	
Ms. Claudia Paskauskas	

Members not in Attendance

Commissioner Robin Fisher, Brevard County
Commissioner Andy Anderson, Brevard County
Commissioner Welton Cadwell, Lake County
Commissioner Dick Van Der Weide,
Seminole County
Commissioner Mike McLean, Seminole County
Commissioner Patty Sheehan, City of Orlando
Mayor Rocky Randels, Space Coast League of
Cities
Mr. Al Glover, Brevard County
Mr. William McDermott, Enterprise Florida
Mr. Russell Gibson, City of Sanford

I. Call to Order and General Business

Chair Commissioner McLouth called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Ruth Little called the roll and announced that a quorum was present.

II. Consent Agenda

A MOTION to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Mr. Mercer and seconded by Mayor Land. After a brief discussion about the election of new Executive Committee officers in the November minutes, the MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA was PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. Restoration DRI

ECFPRC Introduction. Mr. Phil Laurien introduced Restoration DRI with a live GoogleEarth “fly in” showing the site location west of I-95 near an existing but under-utilized interchange with SR442. By using several map layers, Mr. Laurien demonstrated that the site is outside the coastal high hazard area, the desired location for future development. He also showed the Volusia County’s “Map A” and an overlay of the project design locates all development outside the eco-corridor.

Mr. Laurien said this is the first DRI submittal that includes all four concepts of the *How Shall We Grow* program. The developer has committed to 0.65 jobs per dwelling unit within the project, and they will be subject to additional impact fees if they do not meet that goal. The plan includes many positive features including bridges to allow for wildlife movement, diversity of dwelling unit types with 10% of all units guaranteed affordable, accessory dwelling units, and the use of green building standards including water wise, Energy Star, and dark skies protection.

Mr. Milch showed photos of the site visit and the existing condition of the property. The evolution of the project’s sustainable design was shown. The early design plans included commercial development near the interstate, a golf course, and traditional residential lots. When the NRORS map was overlaid on the development plan, there was substantial overlap with bear habitat, gopher tortoises, cranes, and other wildlife habitat. The applicant was asked to make a more compact footprint, conserve natural resources, and reconsider the need for a golf course, resulting in the third version of Map H with commercial development confined to the eastern portion of the property, higher densities, and a conservation hamlet. The final design moved the conservation hamlet further east, and provided a secondary access.

The staff’s biggest concern is the 585 acres of wetland impact. However, 68% of the total site will be preserved, and the wetlands impact is more than offset by the commitments to restore and enhance the remaining wetlands to WMD guidelines.

Mr. Milch then briefly reviewed the existing and planned roadway plans and provisions that have been agreed to by all parties. Green sheets were distributed with last minute changes. Mr. Milch congratulated everyone involved for their hard work over the last several weeks and a very good final outcome.

Chairman McLouth thanked Mr. Milch for his presentation and the complete paperwork with only minimal last-minute changes. The Chairman then recognized Mr. Ted Brown of Baker Hostetler to present on behalf of the applicant.

Applicant Presentation. Mr. Brown introduced Dr. Pierce Jones, Director of the Program for Resource Efficient Communities at the University of Florida, to focus on the unique aspects of this development. Dr. Jones explained that the property, an existing tree farm, will be converted to a mix of conservation and development. Because water supply is a concern for the entire state, projects that reliably reduce water demand are important. Reclaimed water will be used for common area irrigation, and all irrigation systems will have smart controls or soil moisture sensors. Additionally, the overall compact design of the community decreases demand for landscape irrigation.

All residences are required to have energy star reflective roofing, and ductwork and air handlers in conditioned space. Units will be pre-plumbed and pre-wired for solar thermal and photovoltaic at a cost of about \$100 at the time of construction, so that the homeowner can add these features easily and at a lower cost. The use of more multi-story and attached housing also uses less energy.

Dr. Mike Dennis, the project's environmental consultant, spoke next. Dr. Dennis addressed the environmental features of the land, which has been severely altered from its original state over the years with a grid of canals to modify the wetlands for tree farming. He said the applicant has taken a landscape and a ecosystems approach to the design by considering the natural characteristics and designing the project to conform to the land. He restated that roughly 68% of site will be preserved with both wetlands and uplands being restored. Storm water will be treated before it goes into retention or wetland. Lastly, instead of a golf course, nature is the amenity in this community. The site will be restored, there will be a nature center, educational opportunities, and potential research facility.

Mr. Brian Canin spoke next on three planning innovations: organizing the land use, transportation and urban core. One goal is to have a walkable community that is also transit ready. The entire development, except for 500 units in the conservation hamlet, is organized around the multi-way boulevard with all shops and residences within a 10 minute walk of the spine. The design accommodates the addition of street cars within the first 3 years. Mr. Canin said the balance of jobs and housing is key to the success of the project, so that people can walk and drive short distances.

Mr. Ted Brown concluded by introducing other consultants of the applicant's design team. He thanked the Council for their consideration and expressed his personal enthusiasm for the project.

Discussion. Chairman McLouth opened the floor to discussion and recognized Mr. Charles Lee of the Audubon Society. Mr. Lee supported the opportunity to take 3500 acres of land and restore it to the mixture of wetland and upland ridges that were originally there. He said the design is a good example of the *myregion* model, with a town center, transportation corridors, and conservation as well as green technology. Restoration presents an opportunity to take an impacted site and make it better environmentally. Mr. Lee

supported the Staff Recommendations and said if more developers to consider this strategy, it could solve many problems in protecting Florida's environment.

Mr. Mark Rokowski, City of New Smyrna Beach, expressed his support of the design as a progressive move away from sprawl to a new urbanism model. The City is encouraging other developers to adopt the same model which he believes may help with some concerns over drainage and storm water issues. Councilman Giles said he has served on the Volusia County Council of Government's smart growth committee and he is encouraged to see this type of development. He strongly supports approval. Councilwoman Alexander agreed and said many aspects of the project could be used as a model for development orders within the county.

FDOT and FDEP are supportive of approval. Ms. Christman of the SJRWMD said all their recommendations have been included in the final document and offered to work with the City of Edgewater on adopting a water facilities work plan to continue to insure water supply.

Chairman McLouth asked for public comment next and recognized Barbara Herrin of New Smyrna Beach. Ms. Herrin read a letter from the Edgewater Citizen Alliance for Responsible Development (ECARD) which opposes the Restoration DRI. The objections include density, problems with the extension of Williamson Blvd., the glut of existing housing, and national economic and credit problems.

Sandra Walters spoke next and said that she met with the ECFRPC Director in April of 2008 to discuss the Restoration project. She asked that if the Council is truly new and improved as reported, they should not disrespect the state of Florida, the City and County Comp Plans, and the people of Volusia who will be affected by additional traffic problems and water shortages.

Mr. Eric West of Daytona Beach said that he has read the Develop Order and sees many positive aspects to the development that should be written into law. However, he still feels this is a bad project because of Volusia County's water situation. He cautioned that the increased density will result in additional water use. Mr. West stressed that they are not against growth, but they are against silly growth. He asked the Council to deny approval.

Betty O'Laughlin said that she has seen the presentation and agrees that it looks beautiful on paper, but warned that high density growth is not as pretty in person. She referred to aerial photos of the project site showing wetlands and questioned who was going to oversee the restoration. Ms. O'Laughlin said placing a large scale development in a poorly drained area is a bad idea because of flooding impacts.

Mr. Jon Rawlson expressed his appreciation for the public involvement and briefly explained the advisory role of the Planning Council in the DRI process. He encouraged everyone to stay involved in the decisions and future of their local community.

Vice Mayor Mary Martin added that the Volusia Growth Management Commission has not yet formally approved the DRI, although no unfavorable comments have been brought to that Commission. Ms. Martin thinks the developer has met the criteria the RPC is looking for, even if other issues remain at the city of county level.

Mr. Mercer made a MOTION to approve the Staff Recommendations. The Motion was Seconded by Commissioner Grieb. Councilwoman Alexander asked for a correction to the greens sheets in the conservation clause to remove the language “no less than 3,500 acres or” and keep “approximately 68%.” Mr. Mercer and Commissioner Grieb agreed to make that correction part of the MOTION.

Mayor John Bush asked about water supplies and the City of Edgewater’s compliance with the Comprehensive Plan amendments. Mr. Laurien stated that the Development Order requires water availability for phase one, but the Water Management District will require additional studies before subsequent phases are approved.

Chairman McLouth asked for final comments and hearing none called for a vote of the motion on the floor. THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE RESTORATION DRI STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IV. Chairman’s Report– *Commissioner Malcolm McLouth*

Commissioner McLouth asked that a Nomination Committee be formed to fill the position on the Executive Committee left by Mr. Mercer’s departure in January. Mayor Land agreed to again chair the Nominating Committee made up of himself, Mr. Glover and Vice Mayor Martin. Mayor Land asked Council Members to contact the Executive Director with recommendations and nominations to be passed along to the Nominating Committee.

Mr. McLouth recognized the following outgoing council members with a certificate of appreciation from the Council: Commissioner Chuck Nelson and Commissioner Helen Voltz from Brevard County, Mr. Atlee Mercer of Osceola County, Councilman Art Giles of Volusia County and Commissioner Mike McLean of Seminole County.

V. Executive Director’s Report– *Mr. Phil Laurien*

Mr. Laurien referred to the blue handout which provides an update on agency contract and outreach programs. He specifically pointed out the contract with Seminole County for a study of the 17-92 corridor and the possibility that additional studies will follow.

Mr. Laurien then discussed the upcoming workshop on January 29, 2009, “Reclaiming the Commercial Strip,” which ties in closely with implementing the region’s vision.

Next, Mr. Laurien introduction George Kinney, the new Planning Manager.

Negotiations for leasing office space at 715 Douglas Road are continuing. An internal space plan is now complete, which will be used to estimate costs for the owner’s approval. Mr. Laurien hopes to be able to present a lease proposal at the January meeting for council approval.

VI. Announcements /Comments

Commissioner McLouth provided an opportunity for Council members and members of the public to bring up events, issues or other items of interest.

Mr. Laurien recognized the Mr. Jon Rawlson for his years of service on the Executive Committee. Mr. Rawlson will continue to serve on the Council as a gubernatorial appointee.

Councilman Giles expressed his thanks to the Council and recognized the RPC's importance in Volusia County. He specifically mentioned the Council's involvement in the Smart Growth initiative and the Director's active participation in getting smart growth implemented. He said he has been happy to be a part of the Council and feels that with the dues that we pay, it is a bargain.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 11:58.