

**MINUTES OF THE
TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
MARCH 21, 2008**

Chairman Hershey called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. She led the pledge of allegiance and requested roll call.

The following members and alternates were present:

Indian River County: Commissioner O'Bryan
 Councilmember Adams
 Councilmember Aherns
 Vice Mayor Neglia (Alternate)

St. Lucie County: Commissioner Coward
 Commissioner Grande
 Mayor Christensen

Martin County: Commissioner Smith
 Vice Mayor Christie

Palm Beach County: Commissioner Marcus
 Commissioner Koons
 Mayor Ferreri
 Mayor Golonka
 Councilmember Dr. Priore
 Mayor Jacobson
 Councilor Gottlieb

Gubernatorial Appointees: Herman Baine
 Susan Caron
 Laurence Davenport
 Kevin Foley
 Susan Hershey
 Richard Hurley

Ex-Officios: Lois Bush, Alternate, FDOT
 Mary Murphy, Alternate, FDEP
 Karen Smith, SFWMD

Council Staff: Marlene Brunot
 Michael Busha
 Zach Davis
 Kim Delaney
 Sandy Gippert
 Liz Gulick
 Stephanie Heidt
 Terry Hess

Trayce Jones
Peter Merritt
Greg Vaday

Council Attorney: Roger Saberson

Guest: Joann Golden

The Director announced a quorum was present.

AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Hershey noted that Commissioner O'Bryan requested to pull Consent Agenda Item 4D, Jupiter Comprehensive Plan Amendments DCA Ref# 08-1ER. Commissioner Smith moved approval of the Agenda and Consent Agenda with the removal of Item 4D. Commissioner O'Bryan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Motion

Items remaining on the Consent Agenda were: 4A, Financial Report – December 31, 2007; 4B, Financial Report –January 31, 2008; 4C, Minutes –January 18, 2008; 4E, Jupiter Inlet Colony Comprehensive Plan Amendments DCA Ref# 08-1ER; 4F, Loxahatchee Groves Comprehensive Plan Amendments DCA Ref# 08-1; 4G, Intergovernmental Coordination and Review Log; and 4H, 2007-2008 Hazards Analysis Grant Agreement.

Commissioner O'Bryan expressed concern that requirements for mandatory workforce housing units within local government comprehensive plans must ensure the units will actually be built and not provide the developer a buy out clause. With those comments, he moved approval of staff recommendation. Commissioner Marcus seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Motion

Staff assured Council there is close scrutiny of the local government Evaluation and Appraisal comprehensive plan amendments to ensure a commitment to workforce and affordable housing by the local governments throughout the region. Staff commended Jupiter on their policies and their workforce housing and incentive programs which will be taking effect later this year.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Staff noted the Joint Council meeting with the South Florida Regional Planning Council is scheduled for April 7 at noon at the International Game Fishing Museum located at 300 Gulf Stream Drive in Dania Beach. Staff asked Councilmembers to notify Liz if they plan to attend and invited Councilmembers to ride on Tri-Rail together to the meeting. The meeting will continue the discussion of regional visioning for the long term vitality and competitiveness of the seven counties of southeastern Florida.

Commissioner Smith asked if there had been discussion in the legislature of funding for visioning programs within the region. Staff stated there have been no funding allocations made and funding would be part of the April 7 discussion.

Staff noted a recent meeting with Congressman Mahoney. The Congressman has taken a great interest in the regional planning council and has a vision for creating a new economy from Polk

to Monroe County by making this region the number one producer of cellulosic ethanol. The Congressman asked staff to write an earmark for \$1 million to create a coordinating council to bring together the scientists, growers, refineries, suppliers, distributors, and all those involved in the production chain for cellulosic ethanol within the region. It was noted that the Congressman expressed an interest in addressing Council at the April board meeting and at the Energy Committee meeting on March 26.

Staff noted that in the state of Florida, public school buses travel almost 300 million miles a year with school fuel transportation costs constituting approximately 20 percent of the state's budget. The generation of a biofuel would not only offset the enormous cost of transportation, but would reduce the ½ million tons of carbon being emitted into the atmosphere each year.

Staff invited Councilmembers to the Work-In-Progress presentation of the Fort Pierce Downtown Marina Charrette that evening at the Fort Pierce City Hall.

BUDGET/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE BUDGET AMENDMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007-2008

Commissioner O'Bryan noted the proposed amendments to the budget. He advised that the Budget/Personnel Committee unanimously approved the proposed amended budget at its March 10 meeting. He moved approval of the proposed amended budget. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Motion

COUNCIL DUES ROLLBACK

Commissioner O'Bryan noted that due to the passage of Amendment One and the reduction in local government budgets, the Budget/Personnel Committee voted unanimously at the March 10 meeting to retain the per capita charge at \$.43 and to freeze the County dues at the 2007-2008 rate. He noted this recommendation would be subject to written confirmation from Wachovia bank that this would not constitute a default on the loan documents for the new building. Commissioner O'Bryan moved approval of freezing County dues at their current rate subject to approval by Wachovia Bank. Mayor Christensen seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Motion

CONSTRUCTION LOAN REFINANCING

Commissioner O'Bryan noted that at the December meeting Council had discussed using reserve funds to provide the additional funds necessary to complete the new office building. During the March 10 Budget/Personnel Committee meeting, it was shown the current reserves were approximately \$229,000. The Committee determined it would be in Council's best interest to finance the loan rather than deplete the reserves. Staff noted for the Committee that Wachovia, the current lender, offered to redo the loan at no cost to Council and would reduce the interest rate from 4.92 to 4.58 percent, the only restriction being this would lock Council into a twenty year term. The Committee instructed staff to inquire with other financial institutes to possibly obtain better terms. The only bank that showed an interest was SunTrust, who had not given staff a firm commitment in time to report at the Council meeting. Additionally, staff is communicating with the Northeast Florida Regional Council as they received very favorable financing for their

building. Commissioner O'Bryan motioned for Council to give the Budget/Personnel Committee authority to approve a favorable financing package. Commissioner Marcus seconded the motion.

Motion

Councilmember Dr. Priore asked if additional banks had been contacted. Commissioner O'Bryan stated that staff has been inquiring at other financial institutes but there has been very little interest.

Mr. Saberson asked that the motion include giving the Budget/Personnel Committee authorization to approve the loan transaction and authorize the Council officers and the Executive Director to execute the loan documents. Commissioner Smith confirmed the need to give the Committee and staff the flexibility to make a final decision.

Commissioner O'Bryan restated his motion to give the Committee authority to approve a favorable financing package adding the authorization to approve the loan transaction. Commissioner Marcus seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Amended Motion

NEW MARKETS TAX CREDIT PROGRAM APPLICATION

Staff made a presentation to Council with respect to the New Market Tax Credit Program which encourages private capital investment into the nation's urban and rural low-income communities. The investments are used to promote community development, stimulate economic growth, and create jobs. The New Market Tax Credit Program is the largest federal economic development incentive program under the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund of the U.S. Department of the Treasury. It provides a credit against Federal income taxes for investors that make Qualified Equity Investments into Community Development Entities. These Community Development Entities use the proceeds of these investments to make Qualified Low-Income Community Investments for businesses, mixed use and housing programs, redevelopment, and community facilities.

The Florida Economic Development Fund, LLC was formed as a partnership between the Farm Credit of South Florida, ACA and the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council to serve as the Community Development Entity applicant. Certification was applied for on February 6, 2008 and the New Market Tax Credit Allocation application was submitted to the Community Development Financial Institutes Fund on March 5, 2008. The allocation will be awarded in September of 2008. Program benefits to Council include: bringing scale to Council's Economic Development Program; fulfilling Council's economic mission to spur high wage job growth and wealth creation in the Region's distressed communities; implementing the CEDS plan; and accelerating important economic development projects such as the Riviera Beach Marina Redevelopment Plan, Piper Retention project, and the Palm Beach County Public Market.

Chairman Hershey asked how an applicant would submit a project. Staff noted that a number of projects have already been identified, but the list can be modified to include other projects that arise. Individuals, local governments, community redevelopment agencies, or other entities across the region can qualify for the funding.

Mayor Golonka noted that the materials indicate the projects must be in urban and rural low income areas. She asked staff to clarify who would qualify. Staff noted the projects must be within a list of nationwide qualified low income tracts.

Commissioner Marcus noted the Riviera Beach Marina project was listed and inquired if they were aware of this possible funding. Staff noted that the list provided is only a conceptual list of possible projects within the region that can be done if the allocation is awarded. It was noted that the Riviera Beach Community Redevelopment Director, Floyd Johnson, was aware the project was included.

Chairman Hershey asked how this differed from an enterprise zone. Staff noted that it is not an enterprise zone because it is not spatially defined in terms of a service area. It is a financing tool that does not limit the terms of size and scope of the projects and is not specifically subject to the perimeters of a geographic area. The New Market Tax Credit is designed to work with enterprise zones, Brownfield redevelopment areas, and other designations that may overlay an area.

Commissioner Koons stated he would like to see a plan developed to determine all the multiple funding sources and how they can be combined to accomplish goals for the entire region. He asked that staff take the initiative to help those local governments that may not have the skill sets to apply for these types of programs. Staff noted that one of the components of the New Market Tax Credit Program is funding for financial counseling and other services to help those in need. Mayor Ferreri concurred with Commissioner Koons that there needs to be a more comprehensive plan for the future combining of such initiatives as workforce housing and redevelopment.

Commissioner O'Bryan asked staff if there had been any indication if the application will be approved. Staff stated nothing is released until the award announcement in September. If the application is not approved, then there will be a debriefing to help make the application stronger for the future. Staff noted the application is very strong with the Farm Credit of South Florida as a partner and strong financial loan commitments from institutions across the country. Chairman Hershey suggested staff speak with Congressman Mahoney about the application.

SOUTH FLORIDA EAST COAST CORRIDOR STUDY - UPDATE

A presentation was done by Mike Moore, Regional Office Director for Gannett Fleming, which is the lead consultant for the project. The presentation included an overview of the project which focuses on North-South mobility issues in the 85-mile study area centered on the Florida East Coast Alignment. The project also encompasses Tri-Rail and future Florida East Coast alternatives and addresses east-west and other feeder connections.

Phase I of the study concludes that there are unmet travel demands in the corridor; Tri-Rail service alone is not sufficient; travel demands span county lines; and US 1 and I-95 are not viable alignments. A project status was given as well as the Phase II approach which will include regional system analysis and detailed sectional analyses. Recent north county activities include a North County Travel Survey to identify travel characteristics of residents and a Station Area Planning Group that will review potential station area locations and comprehensive plan policies, and meet with local governments.

Staff has been working on the study with the Florida Department of Transportation, consultants, and the metropolitan planning organizations from the three southern counties for the last 2 ½ years. Staff provided an overview of Council land use/transportation planning assistance being provided for study. This assistance includes the Station Area Planning Group; Town of Jupiter

Transit Oriented Development Charrette; Riviera Beach Charrette; West Palm Beach Transit Oriented Development Charrette; detailed station area evaluations; transit-supportive comprehensive plan policies and anticipated station area planning.

Councilmember Dr. Priore asked if there were provisions being made for western and central Palm Beach County municipalities to reach these facilities. Staff noted discussions with the Department of Transportation for the need to look at the larger transit picture in all southern counties. There is a project underway to establish some type of premium transit service east-west in Palm Beach County. A recent recommendation is to have service on Okeechobee as far west as the fairgrounds with a commuter lot at the fairgrounds and an express bus that would take commuters directly into downtown West Palm Beach. Mr. Moore noted this study is on the Metropolitan Planning Organization's website.

Commissioner Smith asked if a household travel study had ever been conducted to determine the trips from Martin/St Lucie Counties to the airport. Mr. Moore stated he is not aware of a study of this type. Commissioner Smith expressed his concern that if there is not a push now to include Martin and St. Lucie Counties this will never occur. He encouraged rethinking a station in Tequesta to capture the ridership further north. Mr. Moore noted external connections will be addressed in the federal agency review.

Staff noted that the Commissioner's concerns may not be addressed through Tri-rail, which has a certain operational characteristic that may not necessarily lend itself perfectly to the land use conditions that exist to the north. In other regions of the country, there are regional rail services that work, providing limited but consistent service. It was noted there is a meeting scheduled with Amtrak next week to discuss Amtrak service on the East Coast Corridor in Florida.

Commissioner Smith stated Martin County is considering a significant public project that would combine multiple programs, one of which would be a train station. A potential location for this project would be the fairgrounds. He stated if Martin County is not included in plans to expand Tri-Rail north, then this project will likely move further west. He said Martin County is now doing long-range and major capital investment planning that could be counterproductive to Tri-Rail expansion plans. Staff stated there could be coordination to determine the Department of Transportation's next phase of the study and bring that scope and cost estimate to the northern metropolitan planning organizations.

Mayor Jacobson offered the Department might want to contact Palm Tran. He also asked what is being done to accommodate getting the working commuters and the elderly on fixed incomes to the points of departure. Mr. Moore indicated that Palm Tran is on the steering committee and has been working hand-in-hand with the Department. Additionally, he noted there is a transportation disadvantaged component to the study that provides special outreach to these individuals. He stated the information is available for downloading on the project website. Commissioner Koons noted there will be more commuters on the local transit than the rail system.

Commissioner Koons complimented Council staff on its unique skill sets and the tremendous assistance that has been provided with strategic planning in the counties to the south. Staff noted that efforts could not be successful without elected officials working to build good relationships with agencies such as the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority, the Florida

Department of Transportation, and the various metropolitan planning organizations. One of the reasons for the formation of regional planning councils was that it was not financially feasible for each of these agencies to employ a staff to do urban design, land use, and transportation planning. Staff stated that it is a collaborative effort with the support of the elected officials and governor appointees.

Commissioner Koons stated the Palm Beach County Metropolitan Planning Organization will be hiring the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council to do regional greenways planning. In South Florida, Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties reached an agreement to adopt each others greenways and trails on a regional basis as part of their comprehensive plans. Meetings will be coordinated to discuss water system restoration and the SR 710 study.

Commissioner Koons also noted that Palm Beach County and its municipalities have an interlocal agreement to conduct a study as part of the Long Range 2030 Plan on preserving commercial and industrial lands.

COUNCIL MEMBER INFORMATION EXCHANGE

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

STAFF COMMENT

Staff reminded everyone of the April 7 joint meeting with South Florida Regional Planning Council and asked that anyone wishing to attend contact Council offices to coordinate travel.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Hershey adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m. This signature is to attest that the undersigned is the Secretary or a designated nominee of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, and that the information provided herein is the true and correct Minutes of the March 21, 2008 meeting of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council.

Date

Signature