

Ex-Officios: Lois Bush, FDOT
Jon Moore, FDEP for Jason Andreotta

Council Staff: Sarah Kammel
Kathryn Boer

Agenda Item 3: Agenda Approval

Council Action: Councilmember Parrish, Gubernatorial Appointee from St. Lucie County, moved approval of the Agenda. Commissioner O’Bryan from Indian River County seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 4: Consent Agenda

Chair Townsend called for public comment on the Consent Agenda. There was no public comment.

Items on the Consent were: 4B1, Financial Report – February 28, 2022; 4B2, Minutes – February 25, 2022; 4B3, Martin County Amendment No. 22-01ESR; and 4B4, Wellington Amendment No. 22-01ESR.

Council Action: Commissioner O’Bryan moved approval of the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Minuse from the City of Vero Beach seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 5A: Proposed Budget Amendment for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Mr. Lanahan provided an overview of the proposed Budget Amendment, which represents a 34% increase (\$707,021) to the currently adopted budget. He noted that there are no changes proposed in the State category, and only a slight change in the Federal category for the Brownfields revolving loan restricted fund. Under Local contracts, there will be a little less revenue than anticipated from the Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency and Riviera Beach Community Redevelopment Agency contracts; and additional revenue will be received from the Wellington State Road 7 study.

Mr. Lanahan noted that contracts received after the adoption of the budget in July of 2021 include: the Port St. Lucie Boulevard Corridor Study; Conceptual Roadway Designs for North Palm Beach; form-based code work for Stuart; Open Space planning for Martin County; Lake Worth Beach CRA downtown planning work; Tequesta Commercial Corridor Master Plan; the Fellsmere Economic Development and Resiliency Plan; a Master Plan for Lantana; and master planning for the Port St. Lucie Civic Center.

Under expenditures Mr. Lanahan noted that some adjustments are proposed to position salaries to align them equal to work and responsibilities and there is a request for an additional planner position. Mr. Lanahan stated that he is proposing a one-time bonus of \$1,000 for all staff members to recognize all the extra work staff did over the last two years to keep Council operating during the pandemic. Under the consultant category, the increase is driven by the additional work being undertaken with the new contracts.

Mr. Lanahan noted that the increase under Capital Outlay represents the need to replace Council’s vehicle, which was sold due to the significant amount of mechanical work that was needed. Additionally, funding is being increased in the Building Fixed Asset Replacement Budget to ensure there is adequate protection for future repair expenses and restore funds expended in prior years.

Chair Townsend noted that the Budget and Personnel Committee met on May 11th to review the proposed budget amendment and approved the proposed budget as presented.

Council Action: Commissioner O'Bryan moved approval of the Proposed Budget Amendment for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. Commissioner Linden from the Town of Lake Park seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 5B: Personnel Policy Update

Mr. Lanahan noted that this item represents an adjustment to the Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual, Appendix A, Job Grades and Pay Ranges table, which was last updated in 2017. The proposed adjustments include adding a category for interns; updating pay ranges and modernizing titles for administrative and planning positions; and adjusting salary ranges to be in line with what is currently being offered elsewhere for these positions. He noted that no changes in pay for staff are proposed with these changes, which were approved by the Budget and Personnel Committee at the May 11, 2022 meeting.

Council Action: Commissioner Mitchell from St. Lucie County moved approval of the Personnel Policy updates. Vice Mayor Weiss from Palm Beach County seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 6: Stuart Triangle District and Federal Highway Master Plans

Jessica Seymour, Council's Regional Planner, provided an overview of the Stuart Triangle District and Federal Highway Master Plans. She noted that in October 2020, the City of Stuart engaged Council to work on two separate but adjacent and interconnected projects: a study of existing conditions and redevelopment opportunities along US 1 (Federal Highway) and a master plan for the Triangle Gateway area adjacent to downtown along the FEC Railway and abutting US 1. The Federal Highway work was funded through a grant to the City of Stuart from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity and the Triangle District work was funded by the Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA).

The planning process included an online survey, interviews with businesses and residents, and a well-attended walking tour of the areas with opportunities for public input at the conclusion of the tour. The master plans created provide for improved safety and mobility, redevelopment opportunities, and enhancements to community character. The key recommendations resulting from the planning efforts include: adopting the Master Plan; designating a name for the area to enhance identity; surveying and protecting historic assets; taking a "district-wide" approach to parking; creating an Artists' Alley program with murals; committing to Vision Zero for safety of all road users; using city street projects to improve safety and context sensitivity; improving federal highway; rebuilding the Frazier Creek Bridge with safe sidewalks; improving Sailfish Circle as previously proposed; and continuing coordination with FEC Railway and Brightline regarding double-tracking and the future station location.

Mayor Searcy from the Village of North Palm Beach asked about public perception of a problem with traffic volume in cases where the vehicular traffic volume does not support the conclusion that there is a problem with traffic volume. Ms. Seymour noted that in the case of the Stuart Federal Highway Study area, a perception of residents and users of the corridor comes from applying the experience of one concentrated area or intersection to a larger portion of the corridor. In Stuart, an example of this is that to the north Kanner Highway traffic volumes are higher, which confuses where

attention for addressing the issue should be placed for citizens and policymakers. The other perception of a traffic problem observed in the study area is a conflict between the physical cues given to drivers as they travel the Federal Highway/US-1 corridor and the posted speed limit. The cross-section of Federal Highway/US-1 largely does not change in Stuart between the posted 50-miles per hour, 40-miles per hour, and 35-miles per hour sections of the roadway. The lanes, sidewalks, and medians are of similar width and similar configurations. The building setbacks, street lighting, and landscaping are very consistent. There are very few cues to drivers they are entering an area where there is more pedestrian activity, more cycling, and more transit users and therefore driver behavior should change. The expectation and message to the driver from the built environment are to maintain the same speed, which naturally creates a point of frustration for a driver. A way to mitigate this driver frustration would be to change the built environment to match community expectations, which has the added benefit of also making the corridor safer and more attractive.

Councilmember Bournique, Gubernatorial Appointee from Indian River County, commented on the importance of water quality and the impacts on the Indian River Lagoon and St Lucie River. He stated that Kathy LaMartina and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) have done a tremendous job implementing projects that have improved stormwater discharges to the Indian River Lagoon. Ms. Seymour clarified that many of the parcels in the study area are older and therefore pre-date the current regulations from SFWMD. They were not planned with any stormwater retention or detention and have existed in that form for decades. Therefore, redevelopment is an opportunity to bring these parcels up to modern stormwater regulations and convert impervious asphalt which has a negative impact on stormwater quality and quantity to infrastructure with a net positive impact. Ms. Seymour noted the challenge has been how do we encourage a property to add stormwater infrastructure, it will most likely occur when property owners see a financial gain in redevelopment. Infill on the large commercial sites creates an opportunity to infill housing where people are already actively working and living reducing the traffic and infrastructure impact of the city. Whereas development on a greenfield site further exacerbates our traffic issues and has a more damaging effect on stormwater and infrastructure needs.

Vice Mayor Weiss commented on the impact land development regulations have on development patterns and asked what incentives for encouraging the desired redevelopment pattern were recommended or incorporated. Vice Mayor Weiss also noted covered walkways as a successful way to enhance the usability of sidewalks and promote alternatives to vehicular travel. Ms. Seymour noted that in the Master Plan updating the codes to align with the vision gathered through the outreach is a recommendation. The City of Stuart with the CRA has engaged in a code re-write for a portion of the Federal Highway/US-1 Corridor.

Councilmember Bournique noted the impact a mature tree canopy has on a city referencing the City of Gainesville as an example of a city whose aesthetics and quality are greatly improved by the presence of mature shade trees. Mayor Gerwig from the Village of Wellington noted that trees are attractive and make the environment much better, and asked about the best practice provisions for roots and the disruption of grass and sidewalks. Ms. Seymour noted planting healthy shade trees in the case of redevelopment is more straightforward a process than where there is existing development. In the case of infill, codes can be updated to require that a tree is planted in a way that maximizes its benefit with tree boxes, grows to its full maturity, and with appropriate permeable materials around the shade trees. Ms. Seymour noted the challenges of working with existing overhead and below-ground utilities and infrastructure to tree placement.

Commissioner O'Bryan noted that in addition to more pedestrian lighting and attractive streets to encourage more use of underused on-street parking spaces, there are innovative solutions to parking

with technology and dynamic pricing which can be more widely adopted to price the most convenient and desirable parking spaces. Commissioner O’Bryan noted systems should be designed with input from the local businesses.

Commissioner O’Bryan commented that many street fronting businesses on Federal Highway/US-1 or State Road 60 face similar issues with visibility for customers. Commercial buildings have not been effective at communicating their address or locations. Commissioner O’Bryan noted concentrated placemaking signage, which is clear and attractive and more than every mile is another way to identify unique places along vehicularly dominated corridors. Ms. Seymour agreed and noted the City of Stuart CRA is pursuing consistent signage and iconography in the City through another effort so it was not a focus in the master plan.

Councilman Hmara from the Village of Royal Palm Beach asked if there are lessons learned for soliciting engagement across different age demographics in particular younger citizens. Ms. Seymour stated that having established social media accounts on multiple platforms helps since each platform tends to reach different age demographics. The study also received a lot of positive engagement from using door hangers which can be effective in reaching all demographics since it engages neighbors and neighborhoods.

Commissioner Linden asked about outreach efforts and what was successful in bringing that level of engagement from the community for the walking tour. Ms. Seymour noted the success of the community-wide survey prior to the event introduced many people to the City's effort on soliciting feedback and attendees already thinking about ideas from the survey. Citizens were already engaged when they got information about the Walking Tour and were rewarded with a beautiful sunny day in January that was a unique and fun, family-friendly way to engage the community.

Commissioner Clarke noted the active CRA and CRB and the numerous projects and planning underway to improve branding, parking, and stormwater in the City. She noted the importance of a master plan for engaging developers to be part of the vision early in the process. She thanked Council and expressed gratitude for the positive comments that came up regarding the City of Stuart from the Councilmembers.

Agenda Item 7: Remote Participation in Council Meetings

Mr. Lanahan noted that since the onset of the COVID-19 restrictions in March of 2020, Council meetings have been held virtually, which has been a valuable tool in continuing Council operations. Starting in December of 2020, meetings have been held with the hybrid setup currently used of in person attendance with a virtual option. This has provided the ability for Council members who otherwise were not able to attend meetings to participate. However, with that has come a loss of engagement and the collegial spirit of the Council meetings. Mr. Lanahan noted since he has received several questions from Council members asking if Council meetings will continue to be offered remotely, or if that will be discontinued, he wanted to bring this to the entire Council for discussion.

Mr. Keith Davis, Council’s attorney, indicated that pre-COVID, as with all collegial bodies, Council operated under a structure that required a quorum to be physically present at the meeting to conduct business. He noted that in 2020 the Governor’s office imposed a number of emergency declarations that suspended the in person quorum requirement. These executive orders ended in October of 2020, thus removing the suspension of the physical in person quorum. However, in 2020 there was an amendment to the Administrative Procedure Act, Chapter 120 of the Florida Statutes, that allows any regional planning council in the state with three or more counties to operate with a one-third in person

quorum, with the balance attending either by telephone or video. Mr. Davis indicate that regardless of what policy decision Council decides to make regarding virtual meetings, this allowance will be in effect unless the statute is repealed.

Councilmember Bournique noted that of all the boards he serves on, Council is the only one that does not meet physically in its entirety and allows a quorum to be made of in person and virtual attendance. He stated that he feels that the virtual component of the meeting is a distraction and that it is better to require in person attendance.

Mayor Gerwig asked if Council is compelled to offer the meetings virtually, or if that is provided as a convenience. Mr. Davis stated that the statutory provision is not mandatory, it is simply an opportunity to make up quorum through virtual participation. However, the downside to not having the virtual option is that if a physical quorum is not present, then Council could not conduct business as needed.

Mayor Gerwig asked if the current room would accommodate the entire board and members of the public if the intent is to maintain social distancing. She also asked if there is an expense for providing the virtual option. Mr. Lanahan indicated that a few months ago there were twenty-four members present which were easily accommodated with the current configuration. He stated that since the license to use the virtual software is an expense that is an on-going cost and necessary for doing business, there is no incremental expense of providing the remote meeting capability. From a staff perspective, it is more work in the set up of the meeting, but that is minimal. Mayor Gerwig stated that she likes the idea of returning to full in person attendance, but does not want to take away the ability to participate from a member who may be ill and not able to attend in person.

Commissioner Linden stated that it is the consensus from the other boards he serves on to remain with a combination of in person and virtual. He suggested continuing with the hybrid setup for another six months and revisiting this again after that time.

Commissioner O'Bryan stated that he believes Council has much better discussions when all members are present since it is sometimes difficult to hear those that are participating virtually. Also, just because a member is logged on to the meeting, if their camera is not on it is hard to verify if they are participating. He stated that he is fully supportive of returning to in person meetings only but in the interest of compromise he would suggest leaving the virtual option open to Council members until the September meeting. Councilmember Minuse agreed with this. Mayor Searcy disagreed, stating that she believes that offering a remote option is important because of the distance for members to travel, particularly those who have a full-time job.

Councilman Hmara agreed that it is difficult to hear those members that are participating remotely. He stated that he likes that the virtual option gives members a way to participate, but he questioned how effective on-line participation is to the discussions if they cannot be heard. He stated that he supports Commissioner O'Bryan's suggestion to begin requiring in person attendance at meetings starting in September.

Commissioner Moss from Indian River County asked if the votes of members attending virtually are counted. Mr. Lanahan indicated that they are counted. Commissioner Moss asked how their votes are verified if a roll call is not taken. Chair Townsend stated that with all votes members are given the chance to respond in the affirmative or negative for each vote taken.

Commissioner Adams from Indian River County stated she agrees that it is a very long drive for her,

but she makes every effort to attend in person. She stated that it is very frustrating as a board member that does travel further than most, when she sees members who are much closer attending virtually. She stated that she believes that the virtual option should remain available for those times a member really cannot attend in person.

Mayor Gerwig stated that the drive is also far for her, however she feels members have made a commitment to serve on Council and it is important to attend in person. She stated she supports returning to the in person meeting requirements in September, but perhaps having the option for the Chair to call for an emergency virtual meeting to obtain quorum.

Commissioner Linden stated that it could be made a requirement to have the camera on during the meeting for any member attending virtually.

Commissioner Peduzzi stated that while he agrees it is better to attend the meetings in person, it is difficult for those members that are further away, or have other obligations and work full-time, to always attend in person. He asked Council members to consider keeping the hybrid option to allow members who have a legitimate conflict to appear remotely.

Councilman Bonna with the City of Port St. Lucie noted that he fully intended to attend the meeting in person, however last-minute circumstances prevented him from getting to the meeting on time. He stated that he agrees that a physical quorum is important and participation is more meaningful in person. However, he stated that a hybrid option would be beneficial because it would allow those people that cannot physically attend to participate and vote.

Chair Townsend stated she supports Commissioner O'Bryan's recommendation because when someone is attending a meeting virtually, it is very easy to get distracted. She stated there is value interacting in person that you cannot get with virtual attendance. She also reminded everyone that if they cannot attend in person, their alternates should be contacted to attend in their place. She asked Mr. Davis if it could be a requirement that only in person votes are counted but keep the virtual option for members to still watch the meeting. Mr. Davis stated that Council can make the decision to not offer virtual attendance and require a physical quorum be present to take action. He noted that the statutory provision of having one-third present, and making up the difference for quorum virtually is not mandatory, it is only an option available for use by Council.

Mayor Searcy stated that if cameras are required to be on and a member had to run to the bathroom, it would be the same as having their seat empty at the meeting. She stated that the reality is that members cannot always come to the meetings in person and they should not be excluded from participation by insisting that they be physically present.

Commissioner O'Bryan stated that he understands some members have a long commute and other commitments, but they have agreed to serve on Council and there are alternates who can attend when necessary.

Commissioner O'Bryan put forward a motion that Council suspend the virtual meeting attendance option beginning with the September meeting and allow the Chair and Executive Director, serving as Council leadership, to provide the virtual option for future meetings on an emergency basis. Mayor Gerwig seconded the motion. Upon being put to a roll call vote, the motion carried by a vote of 9 to 6. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner O’Bryan	Yes
Commissioner Moss	Yes
Councilmember Minuse	Yes
Commissioner Townsend	Yes
Commissioner Clarke	Yes
Mayor Gerwig	Yes
Councilman Hmara	Yes
Councilmember Bournique	Yes
Councilmember Parrish	Yes
Commissioner Adams	No
Commissioner Mitchell	No
Councilman Bonna	No
Commissioner Peduzzi	No
Commissioner Linden	No
Mayor Searcy	No

Agenda Item 8: FRCA Board

Mr. Lanahan indicated that Council has three seats on the Florida Regional Councils Association (FRCA) Policy Board, three primary and two alternates. He stated that in June the Policy Board is meeting to consider nominations for officer positions. FRCA would like to have jurisdictional diversity as well as geographic diversity for the officer positions. This calls for a municipal representative from South Florida to be added as an officer. Since Commissioner O’Bryan, who serves as a primary member, will be leaving office as a county commissioner in November, Mr. Lanahan asked Council to approve swapping Commissioner O’Bryan as a primary member with Councilman Hmara, who serves as alternate, to maintain continuity of representation and potentially have a Council member serving in an officer position at FRCA.

Council Action: Commissioner O’Bryan moved approval of the FRCA Policy Board appointments as presented by Mr. Lanahan. Commissioner Linden seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 9: Announcements

Mr. Lanahan noted that in the Communications Package there is an article from Florida Trend Magazine about the use of foreclosure as a blight elimination tool. Also in the Communications Package is Representative Overdorf’s March newsletter which mentions the Treasure Coast and South Florida Joint Council meeting held on March 18th and the Regional Economic Development Summit on March 25th.

Mr. Lanahan announced that Council has been awarded a \$500,000 Brownfields assessment grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to do assessment work in the Region.

Mr. Lanahan noted that the FRCA Policy Board meeting will be held on June 10th in St. Petersburg.

Agenda Item 10: Chairman’s Comments

Chair Townsend thanked Council members for their participation and wished everyone a good Memorial weekend.

Agenda Item 11: Council Member Update

Commissioner O'Bryan stated the County is finishing up the visioning process for development of the western lands, which has gone very well. Councilmember Minuse noted the County expanded their visioning to incorporate the cities as well, with a series of workshops already beginning. She noted that Representative Mast is introducing legislation to address the pollution that is coming out of Lake Okeechobee and going into the northern estuaries. She stated that the City of Vero Beach passed a resolution supporting Representative Mast in what is being called the Northern Estuaries Restoration Plan.

Mayor Searcy thanked Council for all the work that has been done over the years in North Palm Beach. She stated that they are finally executing components of the master plan that was passed in 2016. She also noted that this weekend Brightline is offering \$3 tickets.

James Cannon with the St. Johns River Water Management District noted they currently have twenty job openings available at headquarters and in the regional offices. He asked Council members to help with recruiting by mentioning this to individuals they may know that would be interested.

Commissioner Mitchell stated that tourism is at an all time high for the County. He noted that County Attorney Dan McIntyre was recently presented with the Ralph Marsicano Award, the highest merit afforded municipal government attorneys, by the Florida Bar.

Kathy LaMartina from the South Florida Water Management District noted that the past week was Water Re-Use week. She stated that on June 4th she will be at the Port St. Lucie Civic Center for the Hurricane Expo. She invited everyone to attend this event to get information to help prepare for hurricane season.

Commissioner Moss asked if staff could provide an overview of funding opportunities available to local governments for such projects as roadway improvements, stormwater facility upgrades, and water quality efforts. Ms. LaMartina noted that she has a distribution list for grants that come across her desk. She indicated she would add Commissioner Moss to the list. Mr. Lanahan stated that staff can also look into programs that are offered by other agency partners.

Commissioner Linden noted that yesterday was the ribbon-cutting for Nautilus 220 condominium project. He stated that on Memorial Day the VFW will be hosting events at Kelsey Park.

Mayor Gerwig stated that she does not want to stop any efforts to protect the Indian River Lagoon, however she wants to ensure that what occurs there does not negatively impact the Lake Worth Lagoon or be detrimental to water use plans of other communities, noting Wellington uses water from Lake Okeechobee to replenish their well fields. She noted that as of March 20th Wellington is a golf cart community.

Councilman Hmara noted that the Village hired Council to provide recommendations for redevelopment of the State Road 7 commercial corridor. He stated that there has been some resistance, but hopes that this work will provide some insightful information to help move forward in a way that will serve the Village well into the future.

Agenda Item 12: Public Comment

Drew Martin from the Sierra Club stated that with the Stuart plan he liked the idea of having more trees, which make for a better walkable environment. He stated he believes the plan should include much more stormwater capture in the old parking lots and incentivize upgrades of this infrastructure. With respect to virtual meetings, he stated that it is a long drive to make a three minute comment at the end of the meeting. He stated that if the public is not allowed to comment on each agenda item, then the capability to attend virtually should be maintained for at least the public to use.

Agenda Item 13: Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Cathy Townsend adjourned the meeting at 12:11 p.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 May 20, 2022 meeting of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council.

Date

Signature