

**MINUTES OF THE
TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
JUNE 18, 2021**

Chairman Jeff Hmara called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. and welcomed everyone. He led the pledge of allegiance and requested roll call. Thomas Lanahan, Council's Executive Director, took roll and announced a quorum was present.

The following attended in person:

Indian River County: Commissioner Earman, Alternate
 Mayor Dodd
 Mayor Foley
 Councilmember Minuse, Alternate

Martin County: Commissioner Smith
 Mayor Clarke

St. Lucie County: Commissioner Mitchell

Palm Beach County: Commissioner Marino
 Commissioner Bernard
 Commissioner Weiss
 Vice Mayor Weinroth, Alternate
 Mayor Gerwig
 Councilman Hmara
 Commissioner Linden

Gubernatorial Appointees: Michael Houston
 Michael Davis
 Reece Parrish

Ex-Officios: Kathy LaMartina, SFWMD

Council Staff: Thomas J. Lanahan
 Kim DeLaney
 Liz Gulick
 Stephanie Heidt
 Dana Little
 Terry Ann Paulo
 Jessica Seymour

Council Attorney: Keith Davis

The following participated remotely:

Indian River County:	Commissioner Adams Commissioner Moss, Alternate
St. Lucie County:	Commissioner Townsend
Martin County:	Commissioner Hetherington
Palm Beach County:	Vice Mayor Gottlieb Vice Mayor Reed, Alternate
Gubernatorial Appointees:	Douglas Bournique
Ex-Officios:	Vicki Gatanis, FDOT Jon Moore, FDEP
Council Staff:	Sarah Kammel Kathryn Boer

Agenda Item 3: Agenda Approval

Council Action: Mayor Clarke from the City of Stuart moved approval of the revised Agenda. Councilmember Minuse from the City of Vero Beach seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 4: Consent Agenda

Chairman Hmara asked if anyone from the public wished to comment on the Consent Agenda. There were no public comments.

Items on the Consent were: 4B1, Financial Report – April 30, 2021; 4B2, Minutes – May 21, 2021; 4B3, Florida Power & Light (FPL)/Gulf Ten-Year Power Plant Site Plan 2021-3030; 4B4, Indiantown Amendment No. 21-01ESR (De-Annexation of 60.3 acres); and 4B5, Wellington Amendment No. 21-04ESR (Revise Equestrian and Transportation Elements).

Council Action: Commissioner Smith from Martin County moved approval of the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Mitchell from St. Lucie County seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 5: Legislative Update – Representative Toby Overdorf

Representative Overdorf stated that his time as a Council member gave him an aptitude for dealing in negotiations, which has proven to be very useful in Tallahassee dealing with individuals from both the public and private sectors, and other elected officials. He noted that typically each Representative is allowed to introduce six bills. However, this year the House Speaker allowed them to submit one additional bill for a total of seven. He stated that through his office they were able to get 11 bills passed. Those bills included:

House Bill 217 which renamed the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area as the Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area after the late Representative.

House Bill 783 which gives the Attorney General the ability to prosecute poachers by adding a racketeering provision that allows for higher level sentencing of those convicted.

House Bill 669 which authorizes the sale of Florida largemouth bass by an aquaculture producer certified by Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services.

House Bill 883 which prohibits anonymous code enforcement complaints but contains a provision to allow for emergency instances where there is eminent danger.

House Bill 1309 which ratifies the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (FDEP) rules regarding biosolids management and monitoring and creates new standards for agricultural irrigation and long-term protection of the public water supply in Central Florida. Representative Overdorf noted this is a statewide issue that will not go away just because legislation has been passed. He indicated he will continue to work on this issue. He noted there is a project underway in northern St. Lucie County, known as Scott 6000, that captures excess surface water from regional canals which is then diverted to a water farm.

House Bill 401 which ratifies the way new building codes can be brought forward by local governments and provides a legislative process for builders to challenge local building codes. The bill also prohibits a local government from requiring certain design standards for homes that are not within a planned community or community redevelopment area if they do not have an established architectural review board.

Representative Overdorf noted that other bills that passed were a sales tax bill for on-line retail purchases, which is projected to bring in as much as \$1.5 Billion annually; funding for the statewide resiliency and flooding program; a school choice bill that allows students to choose where they will go to school; liability protections for businesses against employee claims related to the Coronavirus Pandemic; and over \$700 Million worth of funding for environmental protection initiatives.

Mayor Gerwig from the Village of Wellington asked if the code enforcement reporting applies to municipalities. Representative Overdorf stated it applies to all local governments.

Councilmember Bournique, Gubernatorial Appointee from Indian River County, thanked Representative Overdorf for his leadership. He noted that the Scott 6000 project has been the second most impactful project to get water we do not want out of our basin and put where it can be utilized and reused.

Commissioner Weiss from Palm Beach County thanked Representative Overdorf for his presentation and asked what the state's priorities and plans are for utilizing American Rescue Plan funding. Representative Overdorf stated the approximately \$7 Billion the state will receive will go to projects that would have not otherwise been fully funded such as environmental and affordable housing projects, as well as replenishing unemployment benefits stock. He stated that current projections from the Florida Chamber Foundation have Florida at 101% of our pre-COVID economy. He said that the state is fiscally sound heading into the future, which can be attributed to making hard decisions during lean times not to borrow but instead to cut back, so the state is in a situation to build its reserves. He noted that the Governor vetoed a \$1 Billion allocation of federal dollars that would have been used

by the Division of Emergency Management during future emergencies; based on the rules associated with that federal money, it did not comply, therefore the money has gone back into general revenue and will need to be allocated.

Chairman Hmara stated that one of the bills that he is concerned with is the home-based business bill. Representative Overdorf stated that many representatives felt was a positive as we come out of COVID and will be an emerging issue coming forward. He noted that many other states are allowing for home-based businesses, and the basis of this bill is to allow for these types of businesses. He stated that the bill had not yet been signed by the Governor, so if there are concerns now would be the time to talk to the Governor. Chairman Hmara thanked Representative Overdorf for his presentation and leadership.

Representative Overdorf noted that a bill to fight human trafficking passed this year. He stated that Florida is number 3 in the country for human trafficking, noting it is not just sex trafficking but labor trafficking as well. He stated he is working with various sheriffs' offices on this issue. He also noted that he is working hard to ensure that regional planning councils can continue in their vital role. He noted that he is currently working with Mr. Lanahan on a local issue related to development impacts across jurisdictional lines. He thanked the Council members for allowing him to speak and provided his cell phone number.

Agenda Item 6: Palm Beach County Broadband Partnership – Archie Satchell, PBC Chief Information Officer

At the May Council meeting, it was requested that staff schedule an agenda item related to Palm Beach County's broadband expansion efforts. Commissioner Weiss introduced Archie Satchell, Chief Information Officer, and Michael Butler, Director of Network Services, who provided a presentation on the County's efforts to bridge the digital divide. Commissioner Weiss noted that many agencies are part of the Palm Beach County Broadband Coalition, but it is primarily being led by the County and School District. The project endeavors to provide free Wi-Fi to students in their homes. He indicated that the program impacts over 25,000 homes, providing service to over 100,000 residents not only in rural areas, but in underserved urbanized areas as well. He indicated that he is proud of what they have been able to accomplish to bring access to education, healthcare, and business opportunities through this effort to deploy and expand broadband service throughout the County.

Mr. Satchell provided an overview of the Palm Beach County digital network infrastructure and related digital initiatives and the current Digital Inclusion Initiative. He noted that the network is the underlying foundation of switches, fiber optics, cabling, and routers that provide connectivity. The County's network includes over 1,000 miles of fiber optic cable that serve 489 connected county and constitutional facilities, healthcare, and educational institutions. He noted that the system averages over 10 million public Wi-Fi sessions per month, mainly at the airport, convention center, libraries, court houses, and on Palm Tran buses. The County's network connects to Florida LambdaRail, which provides high-speed fiber optic networks to governmental entities and is approved for uses that promote advanced research, education, and economic development.

Mr. Satchell indicated that the Palm Beach County Broadband Coalition was formed in 2006 by an interlocal agreement between the County, the School District, Florida Atlantic University, the South Florida Water Management District, Palm Beach State College and, at the time, the Palm Beach County Education Commission with the mission of leveraging technology for the group and the community. The goals were a digital inclusion program to provide computers and internet access for

homes in underserved areas and find a solution to address existing digital inequity in the County. Within the Coalition, the County is responsible for the infrastructure to provide broadband access while the agencies are responsible for buying computers and Wi-Fi extenders, as well as support and training. He provided information on completed pilot projects in Pleasant City and Delray Beach and investments for installation of fiber to the Glades region. At that point, the work came to a stop.

Mr. Satchell noted that with the onset of the Coronavirus Pandemic, they began to identify and address the lack of access in rural and underserved areas. A “heat map” and survey were created based on students who participated in the free and reduced lunch program, which showed that a high percentage of those students had inadequate or no internet access. The School District identified 98 target schools for the creation of wireless coverage areas over the neighborhoods served by those schools. He noted that the School District took on the responsibility for funding, purchasing, and deploying Wi-Fi extenders and computers, to ensure each student’s home would have quality internet access. He explained how Wi-Fi mesh systems were installed to allow them to create and maintain a sustainable, long-term infrastructure solution capable of addressing the digital divide issues by providing quality broadband access to previously unserved areas. The work was funded with County and School District CARES Act dollars as well as from host cities and Florida Power and Light Company.

Commissioner Smith asked how far the radios on the neighborhood poles can transmit and receive. Mr. Butler stated each radio has a range of about 800 feet from the pole. He stated that they try to plant the poles within 1,600 feet of each other to effectively cover an area, and where there is thick foliage they install additional radios. Additionally, on every fourth to fifth pole they attached the pole to fiber optics so that it has a base from which to get back to the main network.

Councilmember Davis, Gubernatorial Appointee from Palm Beach County, asked if the Ring Cameras have any relationship to the mesh network. Mr. Butler indicated that the Ring Cameras are separate and done through the Amazon Sidewalk Initiative.

Commissioner Smith stated that he has heard that a lot of people are now buying routers or subscriptions to Wi-Fi services such as Comcast to get their internet signal. Commissioner Weiss noted that to be on the Comcast system you must buy a subscription and they will provide you an access point to their network through their router.

Mr. Lanahan asked, from the County’s perspective, what would be the first step to take for a community wanting to go down a similar path. Mr. Satchell stated the first step is to have infrastructure in place, or have chosen the infrastructure that you want to install and identify the underserved areas to ensure that your underlying network infrastructure is capable of supporting. Then you can create coalitions and do pilot projects, such as what the County did with the School District. Mr. Butler noted that Palm Beach County was at a large advantage because they had been building a very extensive fiber optic network for over 20 years. Commissioner Weiss noted that there is a Boca Raton company that provides cell towers as their main business, and is doing a project in Indianapolis, as a public private partnership, to provide Wi-Fi to their underserved areas. Mr. Satchell noted that there is a pilot project in Maryland being done through the housing authority where they picked 40 units to test the quality of their broadband signal.

Chairman Hmara asked if the County is able to monitor the connectivity quality. Mr. Butler indicated that the radios are monitored on a 24/7 basis, so they can see if there is a lost connection, or additional ground noise that will interfere with the connections. They can then adjust the frequency channels based on what they are seeing. Mr. Satchell noted that the County’s program selected which students

will get the access, so the signal is not available for everyone, just those homes that have the Wi-Fi extender allocated to them by the School District.

Chairman Hmara thanked Commissioner Weiss, Mr. Satchell, and Mr. Butler for their presentation. He noted that this is a great example of an effective public private partnership.

Agenda Item 7: COVID-19 Business Impact Survey

Terry Ann Paulo, Disaster Economic Recovery Coordinator, provided a summary of Council's COVID-19 business impact survey results. The survey was developed to further understand operational changes businesses have implemented since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and evaluate the impact private and public funding has had on businesses' ability to stay afloat. She noted that the results of the survey indicate that many businesses in our region have faced difficult financial decisions and have had to learn, grow, and adjust due to changed rules and regulations. At least 64% of survey respondents conveyed an overall negative economic impact on their businesses by the pandemic. When asked what businesses were using to address negative impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, financial programs to mitigate layoffs such as the Payroll Protection Program was the top response, followed by reduction in expenses and use of personal savings. Additionally, the most requested resource when respondents were asked what resources, beyond financial assistance, would be most helpful, communications, marketing, and social media to reach their customers were cited. Ms. Paulo indicated that the entire report can be found on Council's website. Chairman Hmara thanked Ms. Paulo for her presentation.

Mayor Gerwig asked if the Small Business Administration (SBA) loans are required to be repaid. Ms. Paulo indicated that these are loans, not grants, that require personal guarantees and must be repaid. She stated that the benefit of receiving the SBA loan is that it has better terms and lower interest rates. Mr. Lanahan noted that it was interesting that one of the business owners stated that when the pandemic began, no one was sure how long it would last and the guesses made by businesses likely drove their financial choices. He noted that these survey results will be the basis for the work of Council's COVID Response and Recovery Task Force as they develop Council's foundation documents for pandemic response.

Agenda Item 8: American Rescue Plan – Consensus Approach Recommendations

Mr. Lanahan noted that at the last two Council meetings there has been discussion of the opportunities the American Rescue Plan funding represents to address significant, long-standing needs in our communities. At the direction of Council, Mr. Lanahan has been working with the Executive Director of the South Florida Regional Planning (SFRPC) to explore a range of potential projects that would have positive impacts across the seven-county region. He noted that what has coalesced is the idea of identifying consensus ideas that can be supported throughout all the counties in both regions, such as septic to sewer conversions, which will provide benefits to waterways that cross county boundaries. Mr. Lanahan noted that another thing that came out from the discussions is there are policy level things the two regional planning councils can work on together that would help at both the local government and regional levels.

For Council discussion, Mr. Lanahan provided a common set of project criteria to facilitate projects and shared efforts across the seven-county region as well as policy approaches to pursue with the federal government. Project criteria included projects that are: long-lasting; impactful and inspirational; large-scale; able to leverage other funding; legacy projects; and consensus priorities

such as water and wastewater infrastructure, biosolids, the coral reef tract, and affordable housing. Policy priorities include safeguards that the federal government will not attempt to claw back funding for projects that have received approval; and infrastructure projects need to include new infrastructure investment that support economic vitality, replaces deteriorated existing infrastructure; and will result in completed work of lasting value.

Councilmember Davis suggested adding an overarching policy that projects must also apply sustainability, resiliency, and adaption principles to projects. He stated that this should resonate well since the source of this funding is the Biden administration, and may help to avoid possible claw backs.

Mayor Gerwig stated that she believes the top two priorities should be water and transportation connections. She stated that although we are concerned with other things such as agriculture and tourism, without water and transportation none of the other things can be accomplished.

Commissioner Bernard from Palm Beach County asked all Commissioners from Palm Beach County not speak in specifics on this issue now to avoid Sunshine issues.

Commissioner Smith suggested identifying generational projects that both councils can fundamentally and philosophically agree on that can be presented to both the Congressional and Legislative delegations.

Councilmember Houston, Gubernatorial Appointee from Martin County, stated he finds the discussions at the joint meetings very helpful, especially the specific water quality issues related to the coral reefs. He stated that is a great way to capture the imagination of the region, because the coral reefs and their survivability are essential to tourism and the south Florida way of life.

Commissioner Smith noted that elected leaders at both the state and federal levels do not want to have to pick losers and winners. He stated that if we can go to them as a large region that represents over six million people with agreed upon policies and priorities, it will be a home run for them.

Mayor Gerwig stated that not all septic tanks are created equal, because those located closer to water bodies can be more harmful to the environment. She stated we need to recognize home rule in that some are more critical than others and dictating that all should be eliminated is a bit obtuse, in her opinion.

Councilmember Minuse agreed that without water we have no future. She indicated that she recently attended a meeting of the Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District where the same concerns were expressed over water and state attacks on home rule.

Commissioner Weiss agreed that home rule is important. However, with respect to septic there are new technologies available, and it would be appropriate to ask people to move to more modern systems. Mr. Lanahan noted that on June 28th the SFRPC will be having presentations from the utilities departments of Miami-Dade and Broward counties and the City of Hollywood on ocean outfalls and what they are doing to meet statutory requirements. He noted there have also been conversations about having a water summit. He offered to revise the priorities to include more of a focus on water quality concerns, noting that chances for success and effectiveness is increased when all are working toward a common purpose, even though doing projects are being done individually.

Chairman Hmara indicated the purpose of this agenda item it to adopt the recommended approach for the use of American Rescue Plan funds as presented by Mr. Lanahan. He noted that language can be added that would suggest the next step toward some agreement on specific projects.

Council Action: Commissioner Marino from Palm Beach County moved approval of the staff recommendation. Mayor Gerwig seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 9: Emergency Authority Provisions – Resolution 21-04

Mr. Lanahan noted that, at the beginning of the Coronavirus Pandemic, Council passed an emergency authority resolution that would allow the Executive Director to take certain actions during the COVID emergency that ordinarily would require the approval of the whole Council. He noted that at the time there was discussion of having a more general resolution that would only go into effect when an emergency is declared by either the state, one of the member counties, or the Council office-based City of Stuart. The proposed resolution recognizes that future emergencies might not afford Council the opportunity to meet prior to impact and asks for relief from some specific provisions of the interlocal agreement that relate to approvals of reports, spending limitations, and check signing authorities; and lays out an order of succession. The order of succession is necessary because the interlocal agreement does not have provisions that allow these actions to be done by anyone but the Executive Director.

Council Action: Mayor Clarke moved approval of the proposed resolution. Mayor Dodd from the City of Sebastian seconded the motion.

Commissioner Weiss stated that it would be better to not include the names of employees, just the designated positions, in case those individuals are not there at the time of an emergency. He also suggested that there should be a provision that requires Council ratification of expenditures and decisions made when the board meets again. Mr. Lanahan indicated that was not included in the COVID emergency resolution; however, he periodically reported back to Council on actions which would have typically been presented to Council for approval.

Mayor Gerwig asked how ratification would affect a decision that had already been made. She stated that if ratification is required, then the Executive Director will not be able to move forward with any decisions. She suggested requiring the reporting back of decisions made and actions taken, which will keep Council informed of what has occurred without affecting the continuance of Council operations. Commissioner Weiss stated that ratification by the Council board would only be done to acknowledge members are aware of what has occurred. Mr. Keith Davis stated that ratification would be a ministerial act and would serve the same purpose as reporting. He stated that if the Executive Director bound Council to an agreement, it would not be appropriate for the Council members to attempt to undo that. He stated that ratification and acknowledgement are the same if Council grants authority under the proposed resolution. The consensus was that a requirement for notification with acknowledgement by the Council be added to the resolution.

Chairman Hmara asked if the amendments are acceptable to the motion maker and the seconder. Both Mayor Clarke and Mayor Dodd indicated they accepted the amendments to the motion.

Council Action: Upon being put to a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 10: Announcements

Mr. Lanahan noted that in the Communication Package there is an announcement that Cheney Brothers is opening a new distribution center at the Southern Grove site in Port Saint Lucie, which is part of the Port St. Lucie Southern Grove Master planning effort Council assisted with last year.

Mr. Lanahan noted that also in the Communication Package is a report done by Council staff on unemployment assistance and wage rates, as well as factors to consider related to poverty levels in response to community conversations about the potential affect of unemployment compensation encouraging people not to go back to work.

Mr. Lanahan noted that on Monday, June 21st, Council staff, along with the Florida American Planning Association Treasure Coast chapter, is hosting a presentation on the Regional Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Mr. Lanahan reminded everyone that tomorrow will be Juneteenth, which commemorates the end of slavery in the United States.

Agenda Item 11: Chairman's Comments

Chairman Hmara thanked Council members for their discussion and staff for all the work they are doing to help us recover from the pandemic.

Agenda Item 12: Council Member Update

Mayor Gerwig stated that the Village is holding a Unity and Health event tomorrow that will offer information as well as COVID-19 vaccinations.

Commissioner Linden from the Town of Lake Park stated that next Thursday will be the ribbon-cutting for Nautilus 220, a 330-unit condominium building on the waterfront. He noted that 15% of the units have already been pre-sold, and for every unit sold the developer will be donating \$500 to a local charity. He indicated that the City of Riviera Beach will be having their Juneteenth celebration from 1:00pm to 9:00pm at the Marina Park.

Mayor Clarke stated that the City of Stuart will be doing their Juneteenth celebration tomorrow starting at 1:00pm and a Father Fest at 9:00am to celebrate Father's Day. Also, they will be having a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Resource Center for a new covered basketball area.

Commissioner Bernard noted that Palm Beach County is also celebrating several events that include Juneteenth and Father's Day. He wished everyone a restful Father's Day, especially Commissioner Mitchell.

Commissioner Earman from Indian River County stated that tomorrow night there will be a country music concert at the fairgrounds. Also, there will be a golf tournament tomorrow for the Veterans Association.

Mayor Dodd stated that in Indian River County residents will be able to celebrate the Fourth of July in Sebastian on the 3rd and in Vero Beach on the 4th.

Councilmember Minuse stated that the City of Vero Beach has entered into an agreement with the Navy Blue Angels, who will be performing at the airport next year April 29th through May 1st.

Commissioner Weiss noted that Palm Beach County's unemployment rate continues to decline. He stated the May rates show the County at an unemployment rate of 4.6% versus 5% for the state, and 5.5% for the United States.

Commissioner Mitchell indicated the County's Juneteenth Celebration of Freedom will be tomorrow from 11:00am to 7:00pm at the Lincoln Park Community Center. He noted that Commissioner Bernard was wishing him a Happy Father's Day, because he is honored to have six children and seven grandchildren that will be celebrating the holiday with him.

Jon Moore with the FDEP indicated that they have launched a water protection grant proposal portal, which will serve as a one-stop shop for local governments to submit proposals for water related grant programs. He noted that FDEP is accepting proposals for the upcoming fiscal year for projects geared toward water quality enhancement and projects related to wastewater. He provided the following link to the grant portal: <https://protectingfloridatogether.gov/state-action/grants-submissions>. He thanked Representative Overdorf for his assistance with getting funding for these programs and encouraged Council members to share this information so the Region can really take advantage of this funding for beneficial water projects.

Commissioner Moss from Indian River County indicated they are currently updating their water studies and encouraged all other counties to do the same so they can understand exactly what is available in terms of quality and quantity of water going forward.

Chairman Hmara noted that there was a recent shooting at a Publix in Royal Palm Beach. He stated that it is one thing to read about these events, but quite another to have it come to your neighborhood. He indicated that his first thought was this event will not define them, but it does change perspectives for what you can do as an elected official, and the phrase "See something, say something" takes on a whole new meaning. He noted that the Village has been working with Feeding South Florida for 15 months and has delivered just under 3 million pounds of food to about 40,000 families.

Agenda Item 13: Public Comment

None.

Agenda Item 14: Adjournment

Mr. Lanahan noted that there are conflicts with the July 16th Council meeting date, so he will be looking for a date in July to hold the Council meeting. He noted that Council is required to adopt the budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022, so the meeting cannot be canceled. He stated that he would let everyone know of the new date once it has been established.

There being no further business, Chairman Jeff Hmara adjourned the meeting at 11:41 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 June 18, 2021 meeting of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council.

Date

Signature