

**MINUTES OF THE
TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 17, 2021**

Chairman Hmara called the meeting to order at 9:35 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 O'Bryan
 Commissioner Moss, Alternate
 Mayor Dodd
 Councilmember Minuse, Alternate

Martin County: Commissioner Smith
 Commissioner Jenkins, Alternate

St. Lucie County: Commissioner Johnson, Jr.

Palm Beach County: Mayor Gerwig
 Councilman Hmara

Gubernatorial Appointees: Douglas Bournique

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

Council Attorney: Keith Davis

The following participated remotely:

Indian River County: Commissioner Adams
 Commissioner Earman, Alternate

Martin County: Mayor Eula Clarke

St. Lucie County: Commissioner Townsend
 Councilman Pickett, Alternate

Palm Beach County: Commissioner Marino

Commissioner Weiss
Commissioner McKinlay, Alternate
Vice Mayor Gottlieb
Commissioner Linden
Vice Mayor Reed, Alternate

Gubernatorial Appointees: Michael Davis

Ex-Officios: Jon Moore, FDEP
Lois Bush, FDOT
Loraine Cargill, SFRTA
Vicki Gatani, SFRTA

Council Staff: Kathryn Boer
Sarah Kammel
Dana Little

Agenda Item 3: Agenda Approval

Council Action: Commissioner Smith from Martin County moved approval of the Agenda. Commissioner Johnson from the City of Fort Pierce seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 4: Consent Agenda

Chairman Hmara called for public comment on the Consent Agenda. There was no public comment.

Items on the Consent were: 4A1, Financial Report – June 30, 2021; 4B2, Financial Report – July 31, 2021; 4B3, Minutes – July 23, 2021; 4B4, 2021-2022 Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Contract Agreement Modification; 4B5, Palm Beach County Amendment No. 21-05ESR (All Seasons AGR to INST/AGR; Lake Worth Drainage District Preserve Areas; Arden PUD Conditions; Coconut Palm Plaza RR to CL/RR; Kirk Road and 10th Avenue TIM; Library Services; Natural Areas Update); 4B6, Palm Beach County Amendment No. 21-07ESR (Property Rights Element); 4B7, Palm Springs Amendment No. 21-02ESR (Property Rights Element); 4B8, Port St. Lucie Amendment No. 21-03ESR (Southern Grove NCD District); 4B9, Port St. Lucie Amendment No. 21-04ESR (Property Rights Element); 4B10, Port St. Lucie Amendment No. 21-05ESR (18.51 acres from CG to CG/RH and RM); and 4B11, Intergovernmental Coordination and Review Log.

Council Action: Commissioner Smith moved approval of the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 5: Regional Transit and Passenger Rail Update and Safety Initiatives – Steven Abrams (SFRTA) and Katie Mitzner (Brightline)

Steven Abrams, Executive Director of the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA), and Katie Mitzner, Public Affairs Manager for Brightline, provided updates regarding Tri-Rail and Brightline operations, construction, and development activity.

Mr. Abrams indicated that Tri-Rail has had one of the biggest comebacks related to the impacts of COVID-19 of any commuter railroad in the country with ridership nearly tripling the national average with service back to 92%. He noted they welcomed their 100 millionth rider in July, which represents 100 million cars off the roads since Tri-Rail's inception 32 years ago, which is the equivalent of one lane of traffic off I-95 each day. He stated that they are adjusting to the "new normal" and are seeking to enhance ridership on both the Florida East Coast Corridor to the east and the South Florida Rail Corridor to the west. He indicated that Tri-Rail has 18 stations from Mangonia Park down to the Miami International Airport, however, it only owns the property at 4 of those stations. He stated they are pushing forward with transit-oriented development at those sites with requests for proposals already issued for the Boca Raton and Miami Metrorail Transfer stations, and similar activities will follow at the Boynton Beach and Cypress Creek stations. He indicated they are also working to expand ridership through last-mile connections, with Council staff assisting on station area bicycle/pedestrian studies.

With respect to Coastal Link, Mr. Abrams stated the initiative to provide commuter service is being pursued county-by-county, starting in Miami-Dade, which is the furthest along in their negotiations with Brightline on an access fee. He stated Broward County has embarked on a feasibility study to determine what it would take to provide commuter rail service, and there have been preliminary discussions with Palm Beach County to extend that service. He stated SFRTA would operate the service across all three counties and connect to their existing service. As a future vision of what he calls "Tri-Rail Western Link," is a mirror of what they are intending to do in Miami-Dade County at the South end of their service, which is to bring the trains to Miami Metrorail Transfer, where half of the trains continue to Miami International Airport as they do now and then the other half go across that connector into downtown Miami. The western link service would involve Tri-Rail trains heading northwest on the CSX corridor to provide service to the western communities in Palm Beach County. As the transit service provider, Tri-Rail intends to provide stops that will allow individuals to live in affordable neighborhoods and travel to employment locations. He noted that Tri-Rail remains ground zero in addressing climate change, with Tri-Rail being really the only mode of transit that actually takes vehicles off of the roads and will ultimately go a long way toward reducing our carbon footprint.

Ms. Katie Mitzner, presenting from the Brightline station at the Orlando International Airport, which will serve to connect the two congested regions of South and Central Florida indicated that Brightline will be relaunching their commuter service between Miami and West Palm Beach in November, with a stop in Fort Lauderdale. She indicated that the Orlando expansion, which is the 168 mile corridor from West Palm Beach to Orlando, is more than 60% complete; the recently announced Disney Springs station is under development; and Brightline is working on the plans to extend service with an extension to Tampa. She stated that as they prepare for the relaunch of the southern service, they have increased COVID protocols with mostly autonomous services, such

as purchasing food and beverages, which are cashless and touch-free. She also noted that they will be launching a mobility service platform that will help passengers with the last mile of their journey through apps on their cell phones. She stated that they are hiring 200 new team members over the next few weeks at a starting wage of \$18 an hour with a \$750 sign-up bonus.

With respect to the Orlando extension, Ms. Mitzner indicated that 100% of the 168 miles has been cleared, with work at different stages being done throughout the entire corridor that has 155 railroad crossings and 56 bridges. She provided a video that showed a bird's eye view of that work that is being done between West Palm Beach and Orlando. She provided an update of all the work that is being done throughout the Region and how they are working with local governments and mariners to ensure they are communicating any services that will not be operational as the work is done. She stated that future projects include stations at Aventura and Boca Raton and the Miami-Dade/Broward County commuter rail. Ms. Mitzner reviewed some of the safety initiatives they are undertaking to communicate to the public when trains will be running and the importance of being aware of the trains traveling in the corridor. This outreach is being done with the homeless, school children, and the general public and they have hired safety ambassadors to help launch this public service program.

With respect to Quiet Zones, Kim DeLaney of Council staff indicated she is working with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and local government officials to assist in the process of establishing quiet zones. FRA staff will be available to join local government staff to look at select grade crossings to further train those staff to understand how to certify that equipment is existing so that quiet zones can be established. Additionally, Council will be assisting the FRA to hold a Trespass Prevention Summit, which will introduce programmatic activities to help everyone understand that being on the tracks is the wrong place to be and the only way to prevent tragedies is for the rail corridor to be treated as private property. She indicated the summits are free and open to the public and are intended to provide an overview of trespassing, strategies of how to prevent trespassing, and tools available for suicide prevention to help local governments understand all the funding resources that are available to add trespass mitigation improvements and strategies in their communities.

Councilmember Bournique, Gubernatorial Appointee for Indian River County, asked if a decision has been made yet to build a station in Martin, St. Lucie, or Indian River County. Ms. Ali Soule from Brightline indicated a lot of outreach has been done in the Treasure Coast Region, however a decision has not yet been reached at this time on where a station would be located. She indicated they are regrouping internally to reprioritize this topic once they have reopened their services in South Florida.

Commissioner Smith asked if there is an update on the St. Lucie River Bridge. Ms. Soule indicated they are doing a full rehabilitation of the bridge, which will start early next year. She stated that Ms. Mitzner will be the contact for information on the infrastructure improvements and timing, and information will be provided to the community. She stated they are obviously interested in a more general discussion on the replacement of that bridge, and conversations have started with some of the stakeholders in the Region, but it is important to make the distinction that what Brightline is doing for Phase Two is a rehabilitation of the single-track bridge, not a replacement. Commissioner Smith asked if there are plans to have a connection to the Hard Rock Stadium where

the Miami Dolphins play. Mr. Abrams indicated that SFRTA works with other transit providers when special events occur at the stadium to provide connections. Commissioner Smith suggested that some of these connections could be funded with some of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding that is available to create service to sports events and all the port venues for the northern part of the Region.

Under public comment, Drew Martin with the Sierra Club thanked the presenters and noted that he is an active user of Tri-Rail, which he stated works very well and is clean. He stated that he appreciates the mask mandate, however he does not feel that it is being enforced well enough. He indicated that he believes Tri-Rail has an excellent schedule and is amazed that there are not more riders considering how crowded it is on the freeways. With respect to the discussion of having Tri-Rail go to downtown Miami, he noted that there is currently a good connection through Metrorail in place and questioned that the money might be better spent elsewhere. He asked if commuters would need to have the ride sharing apps on their phones to access those services, noting that not everyone has that capability. He stated he is looking forward to Brightline's service to Orlando but would like to see the ability for individuals to purchase tickets in ways other than electronically. Mr. Abrams indicated they do support the federal mask mandate on transit, so he will look into improving the enforcement of that. He noted that there is access to downtown Miami via Metrorail, however giving Tri-Rail passengers the ability to go straight downtown without having to make a transfer will be much more convenient and enhance ridership. He noted that Tri-Rail does have a good connection to Marlin Park via transfers and the availability of ridesharing and taxicabs. He also noted that there are written materials available at the stations that will help riders make their connections without necessarily having to use apps on their phones.

Mr. Lanahan asked if there has been any discussion, by either Tri-Rail or Brightline, about the New River tunnel or bridge in Fort Lauderdale in Broward County. He indicated that this is a project that could potentially be funded with ARPA or through the infrastructure bill. Mr. Abrams stated that he does not know if it is about funding or a question of satisfying the interests of the Mayor of Fort Lauderdale, and whether the bridge should be replaced or a tunnel should be built underneath the river. He stated this has been a huge focal point of discussion and debate in Broward County as they study the Coastal Link commuter service. Ms. Soule noted that with all rail corridor projects a Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) study will need to be done. This will happen for any bridge work that will be done in the rail corridors and help to determine what the alternatives can be and collect public comment.

Councilmember Bournique asked the Brightline representatives if it is possible to take freight service off the east coast and bring it west to Lake Okeechobee along those rail lines then up to Orlando. Ms. Soule stated the Brightline will only carry passengers and not freight. She stated that the Florida East Coast Railway has said very publicly that they will continue to use their rail corridor to serve all their clients, which includes freight. She indicated that the project he is referring to is a long-time Florida Department of Transportation project that Council is involved with, so staff might be able to provide a better update.

Chairman Hmara noted that there are a lot of innovative plans that will make a big difference for commuters not just in our Region but throughout the state. He thanked the presenters for all their hard work.

Agenda Item 6: U.S. Economic Development Administration American Rescue Plan Funding Opportunities

Stephanie Heidt, Council's Economic Development and Intergovernmental Programs Director, provided an overview of the investment which is being funded through ARPA. She indicated that in July 2021, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) announced \$3 billion in funding opportunities to invest in distressed and underserved communities impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic. Ms. Heidt provided detailed information on the six different funding opportunities under what EDA is calling its *Investing in America's Communities Program*. The programs are designed to support economic development focused on advancing equity, creating good-paying jobs, helping workers to develop in-demand skills, building economic resilience, and accelerating economic recovery for the industries and communities hit hardest by the Coronavirus pandemic. She indicated that through the funding opportunity, EDA will invest in infrastructure, innovation, and workforce training to create good-paying American jobs, and strengthen our nation's global economic competitiveness. She noted that some of the opportunities have a component that allocates part of the funding to States only, with the remaining funding in that program available through a competitive process. EDA has sent out invitations to all the states and who will need to respond to those invitations if they are interested in receiving that funding. Ms. Heidt also provided some helpful hints for those interested in applying for funding.

Ms. Heidt noted that Council staff has been developing potential projects that can be funded under these EDA opportunities. Those projects include working with the county tourism directors and transportation planning agencies to identify expansion work for the East Coast Greenways Trail; developing sources of funding for small businesses in the region that are having challenges with accessing needed capital; and developing a strategic plan and updating a valuation study to create an industry cluster that will support coral reef enhancement and restoration. Mr. Lanahan noted that staff can help with identifying projects as well as determining which grant opportunity is appropriate for each project. He noted staff is here to help facilitate the grant application process and potentially looking at how projects can be done through regional collaboration, which is very important to EDA.

Commissioner Weiss from Palm Beach County asked if Florida will be pursuing any of the EDA invitations for the state-directed funding. Ms. Heidt indicated that it has not yet been announced if they intend to apply for that funding, which could mean they are still in the process of putting together their plan on how they will allocate the funding. She stated she will check with EDA and provide an update when available. Commissioner Weiss asked if there is a provision for how money will be re-allocated if a state does not accept the invitation. Ms. Heidt indicated that would be a question for EDA because EDA carefully allocated that funding in order to ensure that the states most impacted by the Coronavirus were receiving the funding they would need to recover.

Under public comment, Mr. Martin asked if projects to do septic to sewer conversions and improve stormwater infrastructure are eligible uses under these programs. He noted that in the City of West Palm Beach the surficial water system had some problems recently with algae and they need to improve the filtration. He stated that this money could be used to address stormwater runoff not

being properly treated and negatively affecting the seagrass that feeds the manatees and damaging our coral reefs. He also asked if the funding could be used to advance low impact development that it is less damaging to the environment and for creating alternative sources of energy, such as rooftop solar. Ms. Heidt indicated those types of projects can be funded under these opportunities. She noted that there is a Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation funding program that can do activities like stormwater infrastructure improvement. She also noted that one of EDA's investment priorities is advancing resilient infrastructure, and methods that are environmentally friendly. She indicated that these are the types of transformative, impactful projects Mr. Lanahan has been promoting to the local governments as they receive their direct ARPA funding. She stated any potential projects need to be submitted to her for vetting with our EDA representative.

Agenda Item 7: Traditional Planning Principles: 5. Public Open Space

Jessica Seymour, Council's Regional Planner, presented "*Public Open Space.*" This is the fifth presentation in Council's series on traditional planning principles. Ms. Seymour discussed how different forms and types of public open space are designed for different conditions. Ranging from the regional active or passive park to the plaza in the center of town, this presentation illustrated the wide variety of public open spaces utilized in traditional town planning. The next presentation in the series will be "*Civic and Public Buildings.*"

Councilmember Bournique noted that the country of India spent \$6 billion planting 220 million trees. He stated he believes our country and Florida would benefit by all our green spaces having more trees wherever we can to provide a canopy that will combat things like global warming.

Commissioner Smith noted that in the past Council staff has done economic modeling that provided the value of a project based on things such as open space. He stated this is very helpful for a local government when they get push back or debate on what counts as open space and what the return on investment would be, for example, if it is better to build a natural berm or a wall around a development. Mr. Lanahan indicated that Council partners with another regional planning council to do this type of modeling, and it would be of great value to see the potential relative value between money invested in elaborate perimeter buffers versus centralized recreation areas.

Commissioner Moss from Indian River County noted that they have the Pelican Island Audubon Society whose goal is to plant 100,000 trees in the county over the next 10 years. She indicated that live oak trees the County grows in greenhouses are available for free to the public.

Mayor Gerwig from the Village of Wellington indicated that they have several neighborhood parks tucked away everywhere, which is part of their success. She noted she recently visited Sonoma and Napa in Northern California. She stated they preferred to do things in Sonoma because they have a public square that really enhances the downtown.

Commissioner O'Bryan from Indian River County stated he does not think Florida will ever change from having subdivisions with walls and gates. He noted that he and his wife visited Columbus Ohio over the summer and noticed that conditions are very different there. He stated they did not have gates, buffer walls, or even privacy fences around homes. He indicated that neighborhood entrances were defined with landscaping, and because you could look through the

neighborhoods and back yards it felt bigger and more welcoming. He stated it would be nice if we could have that model here.

Dana Little, Council's Urban Studio Director, emphasized the importance of policy decisions made by the elected officials related to public amenities. He stated whether it is at the beach or the intracoastal in West Palm Beach, it is important to keep the edges of the space public, so everyone has visual and physical access to it, as opposed to what has become sort of the fallback position of privatizing all these things. He stated that West Palm Beach is an interesting example, because Flagler Drive along the Intracoastal to the north and south is privatized, so if you are driving along that road you do not realize how close you are to the Intracoastal. However, in the long stretch through downtown everyone has access to the water with that amenity being showcased.

Commissioner Smith noted that in the Garden District of New Orleans the trolley system runs through the middle in an open linear park for miles where, because the tracks run through the grass, people walk along the tracks. He noted that we could not design that today due to liability, but it is amazing to watch how people use the green space park that also functions as public transportation infrastructure.

Chairman Hmara agreed that it is important to plant more trees, because it is not only more attractive but provides essential shade protection from the hot weather. He noted that another challenge is how to deal with defunct golf courses in an innovative and economical way. Commissioner Smith suggested they could be used for stormwater treatment areas. Ms. Seymour suggested trails and other public recreation activities.

Under public comment, Mr. Martin stated he agrees with all the comments and is especially glad to hear about the live oaks. He stated that it is important to have native trees and open space that benefits the entire community. He noted that when all the planned unit developments were established many people bought homes in them because they had a golf course. He stated we need to ensure that we do not lose that open space, and it is particularly important that in the parks that we reduce the amount of herbicides and pesticides being used there and increase the number of native trees and plants. He stated it is particularly attractive to have native birds and butterflies as well as a tree canopy that can reduce the temperature by as much as 40 degrees. He stated that he was told by the Palm Beach County Development Department that one of the developers took out a number of native trees and just paid a fine. He stated that he believes penalties need to be much stronger because then no one would remove native trees.

Agenda Item 8: Announcements

Mr. Lanahan indicated that he had the extraordinary pleasure yesterday of participating in a live in-person reading of the U.S. Constitution at an event hosted by the City of Stuart. He stated he was fortunate to be able to recite the Preamble, which is an amazing, forward-thinking document with principles that are still relevant today. He encouraged everyone to read the first paragraph again because as we are trying to find our way on a host of issues it provides a good basis for how we should be making decisions today.

Mr. Lanahan noted that he has been meeting with all the State Representatives and Senators for our Region. He indicated that Ms. Paulo of Council staff did a fantastic job of setting up all the meetings where he took the opportunity to familiarize the Legislators with Council's programs and legislative priorities, as well as the work we have been doing to explain and inspire projects for funding under the ARPA opportunities. He noted that these meetings are important, especially considering the efforts under Senate Bill 62 during the last legislative session to eliminate regional planning councils in the state. He stated that many times the Legislators do not know about all of Council's different program areas and the benefits we provide.

Mr. Lanahan indicated that Council staff will be hosting an Access to Capital Summit on October 7th. He noted that one potential outcome from the summit could be to start a revolving loan fund program to assist the Region's small businesses.

Mr. Lanahan noted that there will be a joint meeting with the South Florida Regional Planning Council on October 15th at Nova Southeastern University in Davie.

Chairman Hmara stated that with respect to Senate Bill 62, it is important to demonstrate in a tangible, meaningful way that will resonate with everyone the value of regional planning councils. He noted that at a recent 911 remembrance ceremony a retired Fire Chief spoke about his experience of being called to New York City on September 12, 2001 as part of an urban services rescue task force. Chairman Hmara stated that the training of these first responders is another very important service that Council provides, which is overseen by Ms. Boer of Council staff.

Chairman Hmara indicated that it is important during the upcoming legislative session to get our tree statutes fixed so the local governments will regain the ability to maintain, as they see fit, the canopies that are needed here in this Region. He asked Mr. Martin to carry that message forward.

Agenda Item 10: Council Member Update

Councilmember Bournique stated that two of the biggest diseases that have affected the citrus industry, canker and greening, came through the Port of Miami and quickly spread throughout the state. He stated the devastation from the two diseases includes the loss of millions of acres of citrus, leaving only about 350,000 acres that are currently in use. He stated that on the Treasure Coast we went from employing 30,000 people in 42 packing houses with 1,600 growers to now just having 200 growers and 6 packing houses. He stated that the region has gone from a \$3 billion industry here regionally to about \$700 million.

Commissioner Smith stated that he knows there are some challenges with the U.S. Highway 27 freight rail project, but feels that it is one of those transformational projects that will make a real difference. He stated that the construction of the C-44 reservoir has been completed. He asked if there could be a discussion of trees on a future agenda, noting that there was a movement several years ago to look at the DNA of trees and cloning trees to promote cross-pollination with younger trees to create a stronger strain that is more resistant to disease and hurricanes.

Commissioner Johnson thanked Dr. DeLaney for her help as the City of Fort Pierce embarks on several major projects that include creating a master overlay plan for the South Beach area as the

water reclamation plant is moved off the island. He noted that the City will be hosting the national World Firefighter Games November 2nd through the 6th. He invited everyone to attend the competitions, noting that the St. Lucie County Firefighters are the defending champions.

Commissioner Moss noted that in Indian River County they have a very proactive judge that has developed a plan to bring tenants and landlords together to resolve rental assistance issues. She noted that the County Commissioners voted unanimously to fund the mediation efforts. She thanked Mayor Dodd from the City of Sebastian for agreeing to share information related to this effort and hosting an outreach event. She noted that the Vero Beach City Council has agreed to help as well.

Councilmember Minuse with the City of Vero Beach stated they are deeply concerned about the passing of HB 403, which requires local governments to amend their comprehensive land use plans and allow a retail business as a permitted use in a single-family residential neighborhood. She noted that the City has created a cultural arts overlay district that allows this, however allowing it in a single-family residential neighborhood really could be disruptive. She noted that this could cause unintended consequences, such as illegal immigration, human trafficking, and criminal and terrorist activities. She noted that there is also a very unprecedented escalation in mental health issues because of the COVID crisis, and now, with this new mandate, there will be parking, noise and safety issues in residential neighborhoods. She stated they have reports of the MS13 gang in Florida and this could put an enormous burden on our law enforcement in terms of a barrage of complaints. She stated that Senator Mayfield indicated repealing this bill would be very difficult, however amendments could be done to perhaps delay the implementation to provide time to re-evaluate the bill.

Commissioner O'Bryan noted that the County's Recycling staff has been busy developing a couple of innovative programs last month, one of which is a recycling app "CARTer's Corner" that is preloaded with over 200 different common items that a user can look up to see if it can be recycled. They have also rolled out a food sharing program that allows individuals to drop off food that they are not using at a neighborhood refrigerator for those who may need it to take.

Mayor Clarke from the City of Stuart noted that on September 22nd the City will be rededicating Shepherd Park on U.S. Highway 1 where they have redone portions of the park as well as the boat ramp area.

Commissioner Linden from the Town of Lake Park noted that he attended the 911 memorial service in Royal Palm Beach and thanked Chairman Hmara for hosting the event. He stated that in the Town they now have a 100-space parking lot in their downtown that is going to alleviate all the parking issues for local businesses. He noted that Lake Park has its own Tree Planning Council that does a great job of providing information and guidance on trees.

Commissioner Weiss indicated that in 2020 legislation was passed to create the Florida Office of Broadband (FOB) within the Department of Economic Opportunity. He noted he serves on the Florida Association of Counties Select Committee on Broadband, which will be working with the FOB. He stated the FOB will be creating local technology planning teams and will be requesting

appointments from each County. He stated he is bringing this to everyone's attention because they are planning to form the teams and deliver findings in February of 2022.

Commissioner Marino from Palm Beach County stated she is looking forward to seeing all the County Commissioners next week at the Florida Association of Counties' Innovation and Policy Conference being held at PGA National in Palm Beach Gardens.

Mr. Lanahan noted that in response to Commissioner Weiss' previous question on the state ARPA funding invitations, we have now learned that the state has responded "yes" to both the Tourism and Statewide Planning invitations they received from EDA and are currently working to develop scopes of work on how that funding will be utilized.

Chairman Hmara suggested that the ARPA funds could be used to prepare for hurricanes by hardening some of the emergency facilities and other activities to help prepare for future pandemics.

Agenda Item 11: Public Comment

Mr. Martin thanked Council for the courtesy of allowing him to participate in the conversation on many of the agenda items. He stated that there were several excellent agenda items and he believes that the Council has an important role in providing information to the public and giving the elected officials the opportunity to get together and share ideas. He stated that he is very concerned about the high rates of manatee deaths due to the loss of seagrasses. He stated a lot of this appears to have to do with the use of glyphosate, which is being used in water bodies as well as on the land and may be playing a role in killing the seagrass, which is the primary diet of the manatees. He stated there is an issue with people over-fertilizing their lawns, particularly in the rainy season. He noted the legislature has attempted to pre-empt local government decisions related to this, but he feels all counties should have fertilizer ordinances that are enforced with training for residents on the proper use of fertilizers. He stated that he thinks the water quality on the East Coast is better than the water quality on the West Coast, where they have had a number of red tide issues.

Agenda Item 12: Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Jeff Hmara adjourned the meeting at 12:00 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 September 17, 2021 meeting of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council.

Date _____ Signature _____