

**MINUTES OF THE
TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
JANUARY 15, 2021**

Chairman Jeff Hmara called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m. and welcomed everyone. He asked for a moment of silence for Capitol Police Officers Brian Sicknick and Howard Liebengood who died as a result of the attack on the US. Capitol last week. 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 Mayor Foley
Martin County:	Commissioner Smith Mayor Clarke
St. Lucie County:	Commissioner Townsend Commissioner Mitchell
Palm Beach County:	Commissioner Bernard Vice Mayor Weinroth, Alternate Mayor Gerwig Vice Mayor Hmara
Gubernatorial Appointees:	Douglas Bournique Reece Parrish
Council Staff:	Thomas J. Lanahan Kathryn Boer Phyllis Castro Kim DeLaney Liz Gulick Stephanie Heidt Dana Little Terry Ann Paulo Jessica Seymour
Council Attorney:	Keith Davis

The following participated remotely:

St. Lucie County:	Councilman Pickett, Alternate Mayor Oravec Commissioner Johnson, Jr.
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Palm Beach County: Commissioner Marino
Commissioner Weiss
Mayor Brennan
Vice Mayor Gottlieb
Commissioner Peduzzi, Alternate
Commissioner Bohlen, Alternate
Commissioner Linden, Alternate
Councilmember Reed, Alternate

Gubernatorial Appointees: Michael Davis

Ex-Officios: Lois Bush, FDOT
Jason Andreotta, FDEP
Loraine Cargill, SFRTA
Vicki Gatanis, SFRTA

Council Staff: Sarah Kammel

Agenda Item 3: Agenda Approval

Mr. Lanahan indicated a bill has been filed, Senate Bill 62, regarding regional planning councils. He stated he would like to present a resolution for Council consideration and asked for it to be added to the agenda for discussion after the Consent Agenda.

Council Action: Vice Mayor Weinroth from Palm Beach County moved approval of the amended Agenda to add Resolution #21-01, opposing elimination of statutory authorization for regional planning councils in Florida as proposed in Senate Bill 62. Councilmember Bournique, Gubernatorial Appointee from Indian River County, 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, Annual Audit Report – Fiscal Year 2019-2020; 4B2, Financial Report – November 30, 2020; 4B3, Minutes – December 11, 2020; 4B4, Boca Raton Amendment No. 20-01ESR (Water Supply Plan); 4B5, Boca Raton Amendment No. 20-02ESR (Liv on 5th 12.08 acres from RL to RH); 4B6, Fort Pierce Amendment No. 20-02ESR (Jenkins Point 32.83 acres from RM to RH); 4B7, Jupiter Amendment No. 20-03ESR (Transportation Element); 4B8, Palm Springs Amendment No. 20-04ESR (Gulfstream Road Overlay); 4B9, Port St. Lucie Amendment No. 20-04ESR (Western Grove Conceptual Land Use Plan); and 4B10, Wellington Amendment No. 20-03ESR (Capital Improvements Element Re-Write).

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

Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council Resolution #21-01 - Proposed Senate Bill 62

Mr. Lanahan indicated that Senate Bill 62 proposes to eliminate regional planning councils (RPCs) from state statutes. He stated that Council's legislative representative is working to determine why this bill has been filed. He noted that about six years ago there was a similar effort driven by concerns of RPCs' regulatory authority as well as problems with the way one RPC was operating. Through that effort the one RPC was eliminated and the remaining RPC boundaries were reset. Mr. Lanahan noted that over time RPC regulatory functions have gone away, the most recent being related to Developments of Regional Impact. Mr. Lanahan noted that the reason behind the current effort is not yet known. He indicated that the proposed resolution was added late to the agenda because he had hoped to be able to address the specific issues of concern related to the bill. He noted that the resolution lists the activities that RPCs perform for their local governments and makes the point that those activities are at the direction of their member local governments, with no cost to the State. He asked for Council direction on how to proceed.

Council Action: Commissioner Smith from Martin County moved approval of the Resolution. Councilmember Bournique seconded the motion for discussion.

Mayor Gerwig from the Village of Wellington expressed her concern that if this bill does not move forward, the content will be put into another bill. She asked that the resolution be re-worded to ensure that does not happen.

Commissioner Moss from Indian River County asked for an explanation of how the local dues are assessed as well as examples of local and state contracts. Mr. Lanahan noted that the dues are assessed at the county level and are based on the population of the entire county, including the municipal areas, and are charged at a rate of \$0.43 per capita. Regarding local government contracts, he noted that currently Council is under contract with the City of Port St. Lucie for a planning exercise related to the Southern Grove property that includes a financial aspect. He stated that all the RPCs are working with the state to do updates to the Statewide Regional Evacuation Study. Commissioner Moss asked if the source of the opposition to RPCs is known. Mr. Lanahan indicated that is not known at this time, but the legislative representative is working on this and will hopefully have an answer soon.

Mayor Clarke from the City of Stuart stated she is going to support the resolution because the RPCs programs for economic development and regional planning positively impact our communities. She encouraged everyone to talk with our legislators and make sure they understand the value of RPCs. Mr. Lanahan thanked Mayor Clarke for her comments, noting that Council's legislative representative is developing a strategy to work with the legislators. He noted that he will be connecting with Council members and providing key talking points on the benefits of RPCs.

Vice Mayor Weinroth stated that collapsing government to make it more efficient is a laudable objective, but we all should agree that our problems are becoming more regional, which is being demonstrated with the pandemic. He noted that the next presentations on the agenda related to Brightline and the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA) prove that we have regional issues. He stated that he believes there is a necessity for maintaining regional opportunities for representatives from municipal and county governments to come together and he supports the resolution.

Commissioner Smith noted that Ron Book, the Executive Director of the Florida Regional Councils Association (FRCA) and a lobbyist in Tallahassee, has expressed a sense of urgency to get letters of support for RPCs and opposing Senate Bill 62 as quickly as possible. He noted that the Martin County Board of County Commissioners met this past Tuesday and passed a resolution of support for RPCs. He recommended the other Council members bring a similar resolution to the one presented today or mirror the one used by the Martin County Commission, to their respective local boards. With respect to Mayor Gerwig's concerns, he amended the motion to include adding language to the resolution indicating that Council not only oppose Senate Bill 62 but any other legislation that would eliminate RPCs. He asked if language should also be added with respect to protection of Home Rule at the regional level. He noted that it appears the Governor puts a high level of importance on Home Rule.

Commissioner O'Bryan from Indian River County asked for new members to provide their email addresses to Liz Gulick of Council staff so he can have FRCA send them the quarterly newsletter that highlights all the activities of the 10 RPCs. He stated that Home Rule may be important to the Governor, but he believes that it would not be supported by the Legislators.

Mayor Dodd from the City of Sebastian indicated that the main emphasis for the Florida League of Cities this year, as it has been the last four years, is protecting Home Rule. He noted that many small cities depend on RPCs to represent them on a local level, not as part of a state-wide objective. The RPCs have the local knowledge of issues that is not found at the state level. He indicated that Patricia Christensen with the Treasure Coast League of Cities is putting together a series of legislative delegation meetings to bring local priorities to the legislative delegation. He noted that since there is little money in the state budget this year, it will be about policy and not appropriations, and it would be a shame to see them destroy RPCs because they do not have anything else to do.

Councilmember Bournique noted that this is not the first time RPCs have come under attack in Tallahassee and it will not be the last. He stated the good news is that we have a very strong Treasure Coast legislative delegation that can help with this. He suggested getting with the delegates as soon as possible. He agreed with Commissioner O'Bryan that Home Rule is a sensitive issue. He noted that because of the growing population in our Region, we need regional planning and visioning now more than ever.

Commissioner Smith stated that he would suggest that the resolution be amended to include language related to any legislation to eliminate RPCs and would be happy to leave out any references to Home Rule if that is the consensus. Chairman Hmara called for a vote on the amended motion, which carried unanimously.

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

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

Mr. Abrams welcomed Palm Beach County Commissioner (and Council member) Marino as the newest SFRTA board member. He stated that he appreciates the relationship with Council and would like to see Senate Bill 62 defeated. He indicated that before COVID, Tri-Rail was enjoying its highest ridership, noting that they are looking forward to welcoming the 100 millionth rider, which is the equivalent of taking one lane of traffic off I-95 each day. With COVID, there was an 80% drop of ridership, but with safety precautions in place and people going back to work, the rates are increasing and are back up about 90% full service. He indicated that supply chain shipping has continued on the CSX, keeping the South Florida Rail Corridor very busy. He outlined crossovers in Pompano Beach (planned) and in Hialeah (built) that will bring Tri-Rail into the Miami Central Station. SFRTA is working closely with Brightline to implement Positive Train Control (PTC), which is a crash avoidance system required by the Federal Railroad Administration for all passenger trains that share tracks with freight trains. He noted that Tri-Rail is an affordable commuter service with station stops about every three miles that is used mostly by workers and students, and Brightline is an inter-city passenger service with more limited stops and a limited schedule that is geared more toward tourists.

Mr. Abrams noted that Brightline is in discussions with Miami-Dade and Broward counties to provide commuter rail access on their corridor. Also, Palm Beach County is in preliminary discussion with Brightline to provide commuter service as well, which will most likely be provided by Tri-Rail. He stated that the future of South Florida depends on maximizing rail corridors, because even with the uncertainty we are now facing, three things will never change: continued development will create traffic congestion; the region is a service-based economy, so many workers are not able to telecommute for their jobs; and we are at ground-zero for climate change so we need to reduce carbon emissions from transportation.

Ms. Mitzner noted that along with the installation of PTC, Brightline has been upgrading crossing with safety equipment and doing bridge improvements. She stated the Orlando extension work (a \$2.7 billion dollar investment for rail service for 170 miles between West Palm Beach and Orlando) is approximately 50% complete. She stated that Brightline provides an interesting transportation opportunity to re-imagine what it means to travel by train in America. She indicated Brightline has announced they will be building a station in Disney Springs and are working on a Tampa extension as well. Outside the Region, Brightline West will be breaking ground in the second quarter of 2021 to construct service from Las Vegas to California. She also noted that they have completed three operational stations, Miami Central, Fort Lauderdale, and West Palm Beach, with new stations coming online in the next two years in Aventura, Boca Raton, and Port Miami. Brightline is anticipating completing the Orlando extension track in the last quarter of 2022 with revenue service starting in 2023.

Ms. Mitzner showed a video of what is known as Box Jacking, which shortens the time to build an underpass below a roadway for rail from 10 months to 10 days with much less impact to traffic. The process takes two prefabricated concrete boxes that are built off site and then installed by pushing them through the underside of the overpass. With respect to sealed corridors, she noted they are installing center medians at various crossings to make it more challenging for vehicles to get around the closed gates and to cross the tracks. She also noted that there are 29 bridges in the railway corridor with construction underway at eight of those including the Sebastian River Bridge in Sebastian; the South Canal in Vero Beach; Pear Creek in Fort Pierce; Earman River in Palm Beach Gardens; Rio Waterway in Stuart; and the Loxahatchee River Bridge in Jupiter. She stated that they expect to begin work on the additional 21 Bridges throughout the corridor this year.

In terms of COVID-19, Ms. Mitzner noted they are implementing many protocols, including low to no touch accessibility; apps for riders to use their phones to purchase tickets; and air filtration systems. She indicated that weekly construction updates are available on Twitter. She stated that they are also closely working with the communities that are being impacted by construction to keep them updated of what will be occurring in their area.

Dr. DeLaney noted that Council staff continues to be the point of contact for the coordination of Quiet Zones, which have been installed from Boca Raton to West Palm Beach. The next phase will be establishing quiet zones from West Palm Beach up to Tequesta. Staff will be working with Tri-Rail, the Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency (PBTPA), the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the Federal Rail Administration, and local governments and will be providing updates as this process moves forward.

Commissioner Smith asked if the information related to Box Jacking as well as the video and drone footage presented could be shared. Ms. Mitzner indicated she would forward that information. Commissioner Smith asked if there have been any internal updates or discussion on the Saint Lucie River Bridge as to what is proposed next. Ms. Mitzner indicated they are currently analyzing the scope and the timing of the repairs and the potential need for replacement. He noted that there has been discussion in the past of seeking federal grant funding for work on that bridge. He offered the County's support, indicating they can contact Kloe Ciuperger, the County's legislative coordinator.

Commissioner Smith asked Mr. Abrams if the crossover from the airport to downtown Miami is operational. Mr. Abrams indicated they will serve as a tenant on that railway that will be controlled by FEC Railway and Brightline and once PTC is implemented they will be able to start service. Commissioner Smith asked if the route will require connecting over onto a different train to get to downtown, or will it be a through train, going from point to point. Mr. Abrams indicated that it will be a one seat ride, with half the trains continuing to Miami International Airport, and the other half veering off toward downtown. Commissioner Smith asked if there has been discussion about branching out to the Hard Rock Dolphin stadium. Mr. Abrams indicated that the tracks do not go to that stadium, however there is a connection to the stadium in Fort Lauderdale where the Miami soccer team plays.

Councilmember Bournique asked what other stops are being considered between West Palm Beach and Orlando. Ms. Mitzner indicated Brightline is planning to add stations on both the Treasure and Space coasts within five years of revenue service starting, but specific locations have not yet been identified.

Chairman Hmara thanked Mr. Abrams and Ms. Mitzner for their updates.

Agenda item 6: Committee Appointments – 2021

Chairman Hmara indicated Council has three standing committees: Budget and Personnel, Policy Board for the Florida Regional Councils Association, and Nominating Committee. A list of his Council member appointments for each committee for 2021 was presented. Chairman Hmara asked for additional volunteers from Palm Beach County for the Nominating Committee.

Council staff read into the record the following amended Committee appointments for 2021:

BUDGET/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Commissioner Susan Adams	(Indian River County)
Commissioner Peter O’Bryan	(Indian River County)
Commissioner Doug Smith	(Martin County)
Commissioner Chris Dzadoovsky	(St. Lucie County)
Commissioner Cathy Townsend	(St. Lucie County)
Councilmember Michael Davis	(Palm Beach County)
Vice Mayor Jeff Hmara	(Palm Beach County)
Commissioner Mack Bernard	(Palm Beach County)

FRCA POLICY BOARD COMMITTEE

Members:

Commissioner Peter O’Bryan	(Indian River County)
Commissioner Doug Smith	(Martin County)
Councilmember Reece Parrish	(St. Lucie County)

Alternates:

Councilmember Michael Davis	(Palm Beach County)
Vice Mayor Jeff Hmara	(Palm Beach County)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Commissioner Susan Adams	(Indian River County)
Commissioner Peter O’Bryan	(Indian River County)
Councilmember Michael Houston	(Martin County)
Commissioner Doug Smith	(Martin County)
Councilmember Reece Parrish	(St. Lucie County)
Commissioner John Linden	(Palm Beach County)
Mayor Anne Gerwig	(Palm Beach County)
Councilmember Chelsea Reed	(Palm Beach County)
Commissioner Maria Marino	(Palm Beach County)
Vice Mayor Robert Gottlieb	(Palm Beach County)

Chairman Hmara called for a motion to ratify the committee appointments as amended.

Council Action: Commissioner Smith moved approval of the Committee Appointments as amended. Commissioner O’Bryan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 7: Council Work Program

Mr. Lanahan provided a summary of Council’s Work Program for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. Highlights included:

- Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulation Clarification Assistance for six Martin County Community Redevelopment Areas (CRAs).
- FEC Railway Quiet Zone Designation Assistance for Local Governments in northern Palm Beach County.

- Riviera Beach CRA Plan Update and associated Water Quality, Signage, Ocean Mall, and Multi-modal Transportation components.
- Delray Beach CRA Plan Update.
- Master Plan for 1,200 acres in Port St. Lucie’s Southern Grove “Jobs Corridor.”
- Economic Analysis and Development Planning for State Road 7 and the Mall at Wellington Green in the Village of Wellington.
- Urban planning for the City of Stuart US 1 Corridor and Gateway Triangle.
- Council’s Working Relationship with SFRTA, FDOT, and PBTPA.
- Joint meetings with the South Florida Regional Planning Council scheduled for March and October.

Agenda Item 8. Council Member Orientation

Mr. Lanahan provided an overview of the Treasure Coast Region, how the ten regional planning councils throughout the State work together, and the responsibilities and duties Council has to its member local governments. He noted that Council is in the connection business, which includes connecting one another through education and solutions to common issues; connecting the local governments to state and federal funding; connecting Council members with staff to expand expertise and capacity; and connecting to other regions.

Stephanie Heidt, Council’s Economic Development and Intergovernmental Programs Director, provided an overview of Council’s economic development program and the planning assistance Council provides as the Economic Development District for the Region. She noted that Council staff works under a planning assistance grant through the U.S. Economic Development Administration to assist local governments, businesses, and agencies in the region by supporting economic resilience and initiatives that promote a healthy economy for the Region.

Ms. Heidt indicated that Council is statutorily authorized to review comprehensive plan amendments to determine if proposed amendments will have any adverse effects on regional resources or facilities; or if there will be any extrajurisdictional impacts to other local governments. She noted that Council also serves as the regional clearinghouse for review of federal funding requests and projects requiring National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review. She provided an overview of Council’s Brownfields program, which includes funding through two grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for assessments and remediation activities through a revolving loan fund. She also noted that Council has done several projects related to the protection of our natural resources.

Dana Little, Council’s Urban Design Director, stated that over the years the Urban Design Studio’s work has been driven by public outreach that has served to bridge the gap between architects, planners, policy makers, and communities. He provided an overview of many projects that include: facilitating a transit-oriented development pilot project with the Federal Transit Administration and South Florida Regional Transportation Authority to assist local governments along the FEC Corridor in establishing train station and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) plans for future Tri-Rail Coastal Link service; assisting local governments with creating and updating redevelopment master plans; creating a new chapter in the Martin County comprehensive plan and updating the land development regulations for the County’s six CRAs; and development of design guidelines.

He noted that when Council does design work for a community, it is tailored to what that community needs and is looking to do. He also noted that the team is made up of not only Council staff, but private sector individuals such as engineers and economists that provide specialized expertise. Mr. Little noted that one of the things that we are working on is the area around the intersection of Forest Hill Boulevard and State Road 7 where the Wellington mall is located. He noted that the uses at this intersection are located in a way that does not make it easy for the residential and retail uses to be easily, or safely, accessed by any other mode of transportation other than a car.

Kathryn Boer, Council's Emergency Management Programs Director, provided an overview of Council's different emergency management related programs, which include: the Treasure Coast Local Emergency Planning Committee; Chemical Hazards Analyses; Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness plans; Small Quantity Waste Generator inspections; the State Homeland Security Grant program; and development, implementation, and updates to the Statewide Regional Evacuation Study.

Kim DeLaney, Council's Director of Strategic Development & Policy, and Phyllis Castro, Council's Accounting Manager, will provide an overview on their individual programs at the next scheduled Council meeting.

Commissioner Smith noted that it would be helpful to condense all of this information into one page that could be provided to the legislators to help them understand all the valuable work that RPCs perform.

Agenda Item 9: Announcements

Mr. Lanahan noted that Council, in partnership with East Central Florida Regional Planning Council and Northeast Florida Regional Council, was awarded \$1.5 million in Community Development Block Grant Mitigation Funds for Regional Mitigation Planning. With Council staff's assistance, St. Lucie County also received a resilience planning grant from the State.

Mr. Lanahan noted that the Annual Report for 2020, which highlights the many projects Council has done over the past year, was given to each Council member. He also noted that the Audit Report had been provided. He indicated that Council received an unqualified report from the auditors, which in "audit speak" is good.

Mr. Lanahan also noted that Council's attorney has changed the name of his firm to Keith Davis and Associates.

Agenda Item 10: Chairman's Comments

Chairman Hmara stated that he would be passing the gavel to Vice Chair Townsend for the remainder of the meeting because he needed to leave for a doctor's appointment. He expressed his appreciation for being elected to serve as the 2021 Chairman.

Agenda 11: Council Member Update

Commissioner Weiss from Palm Beach County noted that there are two commissioners from Florida serving on the National Association of Counties Broadband Task Force and he serves on

one of the subcommittees of that task force. He noted that if Council members have thoughts or concerns for increasing access to broadband in their local community should they reach out to him and he will bring that forward. With respect to broadband study and expansion at the national level, he noted that the federal government has included funding in their stimulus bill, and the National Association of Counties is funding a project to develop an app that can be downloaded that will provide data related to actual broadband access and speed of broadband around the country. This will be important for understanding how areas are served, or underserved, with broadband access.

Mayor Gerwig noted that like everyone else, the Village is experiencing difficulties getting the COVID-19 vaccinations to all their residents.

Commissioner Townsend stated that they are having good outcomes with getting residents COVID-19 vaccinations, noting that they are receiving a lot of individuals coming from Martin and Palm Beach counties. She noted that there is a lot of activity going on at the Port with the arrival of the large boatlift for the mega yacht operation; Malibu Boats acquiring Maverick Boat Group; and the update to the Port Master Plan. She also noted that the Board of County Commissioners will be discussing potential development on King's Highway. She noted that Commissioner Adams is not present because she is preparing for the Frog Leg Festival in Fellsmere that will begin on January 21st.

Agenda Item 12: Public Comment

None

Agenda Item 13: Staff Comment

Mr. Lanahan thanked Council members for their participation. He noted that he has meetings planned to meet with the new Council members do discuss Council's work programs and answer any questions they may have.

Agenda Item 14: Adjournment

There being no further business, Vice Chairwoman Cathy Townsend adjourned the meeting at 12:05 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 January 15, 2021 meeting of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council.

Date

Signature