

NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL  
MINUTES

Virtual Meeting  
Via Communications Media Technology

January 28, 2021  
7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

**Anthony Adams, Lafayette County**  
Mary Alford, Alachua County  
David Arreola, City of Gainesville  
Patricia Bouie Hutchinson, City of Hawthorne  
Robert Brown, Hamilton County  
LaBarfield Bryant, City of Jasper  
James Catron, City of Madison  
**Charles Chestnut IV, Alachua County**  
Mark Clark, City of Newberry  
Frank Davis, City of Live Oak  
Louie Davis, City of Waldo  
Fletcher Hope, City of Archer  
John Meeks, Levy County  
**Janice Mortimer, City of Starke**  
Tim Murphy, Columbia County  
Daniel Riddick, Bradford County  
Reina Saco, City of Gainesville  
Gigi Simmons, City of Gainesville  
David Stegall, City of Lake Butler  
Jody Stephenson, Dixie County  
James Tallman, Union County  
*Lorene Thomas, Dixie County*  
Donnie Waldrep, Madison County  
**Robert Wilford, City of Alachua**  
Stephen Witt, City of Lake City

NON-VOTING DELEGATE PRESENT

Kristyn Adkins, City of High Springs

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES

Ben Glass, Suwannee River Water  
Management District  
Tom Mirti, Suwannee River Water  
Management District  
Daniel Penniman, Florida Fish and Wildlife  
Conservation Commission  
David Tyler, Florida Department  
of Transportation

COUNCIL ATTORNEY PRESENT

Jonathan Wershow

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mike Deming, City of Perry  
**Thomas Demps, Taylor County**  
Linda Jones, City of High Springs  
Travis Land, Suwannee County  
Kenrick Thomas, Gilchrist County  
Marihelen Wheeler, Alachua County

OTHERS PRESENT

Diana Davis  
Stew Lilker  
Jerry Parrish  
Jeannie Scheibert

STAFF PRESENT

Scott Koons  
Tara Tucker  
Lauren Yeatter

**Executive Committee Members names are bold**  
*Gubernatorial Members names are italicized*

I. INVOCATION

Noting a quorum of the Council being present, Chair Chestnut called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. Mayor Louie Davis gave the invocation.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Council and guests pledged allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

III. INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Chestnut welcomed and introduced Diana Davis, Executive Director, Alachua County League of Cities and wife of Council Member Louie Davis; Jeannie Scheibert, citizen; and Stew Lilker, Columbia County Observer.

IV. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes - December 10, 2020
- B. Monthly Financial Report - November 2020
- C. Interagency Agreement with Central Florida Regional Planning Council to Assist with Local Government Comprehensive Plan Study
- D. Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board Appointments

Chair Chestnut asked if there were any questions regarding the items on the Consent Agenda and requested that these items be approved.

**ACTION: Mayor Bryant made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Bouie Hutchinson to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried unanimously**

V. APPROVAL OF REGULAR AGENDA

**ACTION: Mayor Bryant made the motion, with a second by Mayor Louie Davis to approve the regular agenda. The motion carried unanimously.**

VI. GUEST SPEAKER - Jerry Parrish, Chief Economist and Director of Research  
Florida Chamber Foundation

Scott Koons, Executive Director, introduced Jerry Parrish, PhD, Chief Economist and Director of Research for the Florida Chamber Foundation. Dr. Parrish gave a presentation to the Council concerning economic trends in Florida and the north central Florida region. Chair Chestnut thanked Mr. Parrish for his presentation.

VII. CHAIR REPORT

- A. New Members - Travis Land, Suwannee County  
Donnie Waldrep, Madison County

Chair Chestnut welcomed new Council member County Commissioner Donnie Waldrep, Madison County. He also stated Suwannee County recently appointed County Commissioner Travis Land as their representative to the Council.

- B. Resolutions of Appreciation - Ken Cornell, Alachua County  
Don Hale, Suwannee County

**ACTION: Commissioner Simmons made the motion, with a second by Mayor Bryant to approve Resolutions of Appreciation for former Council members Ken Cornell, Alachua County and Don Hale, Suwannee County. The motion carried unanimously.**

- C. Transportation Disadvantaged Program Resolutions of Appreciation -  
Don Hale, Suwannee County  
Darlene Strimple, Career Source Florida Crown

**ACTION: Vice-Mayor Wilford made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Bouie Hutchinson to approve Transportation Disadvantaged Program Resolutions of Appreciation for former Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board members Don Hale and Darlene Strimple. The motion carried unanimously.**

- D. Committee Appointments

**ACTION: Mayor Bryant made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Simmons to ratify the appointment by the Chair of LaBarfield Bryant to the Clearinghouse Committee and Patricia Bouie Hutchinson as Vice-Chair of the Clearinghouse Committee; Marihelen Wheeler to the Finance Committee and Gigi Simmons as Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee; Daniel Riddick to the Nominating Committee; Travis Land and Donnie Waldrep to the Program Committee; and Gigi Simmons and Marihelen Wheeler to the Regional Planning Committee. The motion carried unanimously.**

- E. Middle and Lower Suwannee River and Withlacoochee River Task Force Appointments

**ACTION: Commissioner Bryant made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Bouie Hutchinson to ratify the appointment by the Chair of Dixie County Commissioner Jody Stephenson, Hamilton County Commissioner Josh Smith and Madison County Commissioner Brian Williams to the Middle and Lower Suwannee River and Withlacoochee River Task Force; and ratify the appointment by the Chair of Levy County Commissioner John Meeks as Chair and Suwannee County Commissioner Don Hale as Vice-Chair of the Middle and Lower Suwannee River and Withlacoochee River Task Force. The motion carried unanimously.**

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Executive Committee

1. Proclamation Declaring February 22-28, 2021 Hazardous Materials Awareness Week

Mr. Koons stated that the North Central Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee has designated the week of February 22, 2021 thru February 28, 2021 as Hazardous Materials Awareness Week and that the Executive Committee recommends that the Council join in this public outreach effort by proclaiming the week of February 22, 2021 thru February 28, 2021 as Hazardous Materials Awareness Week in the north central Florida region.

**ACTION: Mayor Louie Davis made the motion, with a second by Mayor Bryant to approve the attached proclamation declaring the week of February 22, 2021 - February 28, 2021 as Hazardous Materials Awareness Week in north central Florida region.**

2. Resolution No. 2021-01 Recognizing 100th Anniversary of Dixie County

Mr. Koons stated that Dixie County was incorporated on April 25, 1921. He noted that the County is celebrating its 100th Anniversary this year. Mr. Koons stated that the Executive Committee recommended that the Council adopt a resolution congratulating Dixie County on its 100th Anniversary.

**ACTION: Mayor Bryant made the motion, with a second by Mayor Louie Davis to adopt the attached Resolution No. 2021-01 recognizing the 100th Anniversary of Dixie County. The motion carried unanimously.**

3. Resolution No. 2021-02 Recognizing 100th Anniversary of Union County

Mr. Koons stated that Union County was incorporated on October 1, 1921. He noted that the County is celebrating its 100th Anniversary this year. Mr. Koons stated that the Executive Committee recommended that the Council adopt a resolution congratulating Union County on its 100th Anniversary.

**ACTION: Commissioner Bouie Hutchinson made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Commissioner Tallman to adopt attached Resolution No. 2021-02 recognizing the 100th Anniversary of Union County. The motion carried unanimously.**

4. Resolution No. 2021-03 Supporting Access to Affordable, Reliable High-Speed Internet Throughout Florida

Mr. Koons stated the Florida Small County Coalition and Florida Association of Counties are requesting boards of county commissioners and other organizations to adopt a resolution expressing support for the implementation of a broad-based effort to close the internet gap that exists throughout the state. He stated the absence of access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet service prevents communities from achieving their full potential in the areas of virtual learning, remote working, telemedicine, public safety communications and economic development efforts.

Mr. Koons stated these initiatives are based on House Bill 969 passed by the Florida Legislature, during the 2020 Legislative Session, creating the Florida Office of Broadband within the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. He stated the Florida Office of Broadband is required to create a strategic plan that has goals and strategies for increasing the use of broadband internet service in the state. He also stated the Florida Office of Broadband is also to address the need to define accurate and up-to-date mapping quantifying the internet needs of the public and private sector.

**ACTION: Commissioner Clark made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Brown to adopt the attached Resolution No. 2021-03 Supporting Access to Affordable, Reliable High-Speed Internet throughout Florida. The motion carried unanimously.**

5. Resolution No. 2021-04 Opposing Senate Bill 62 Concerning Regional Planning Councils

Mr. Koons stated Senator Bradley has filed Senate Bill 62 concerning regional planning councils. He stated the bill repeals the regional planning section of the State and Regional Planning Act. Mr. Koons stated this section of the Act provides for the establishment of regional planning councils; specifies boundaries for regional planning councils; specifies duties and responsibilities for regional planning councils; provides for gubernatorial appointees to regional planning councils; and provides for preparation and maintenance of strategic regional policy plans by regional planning councils. He stated the bill also removes regional planning councils from all other state statutes.

**ACTION: Commissioner Bouie Hutchinson made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Simmons to adopt the attached Resolution No. 2021-04 opposing Senate Bill 62 or similar legislation concerning regional planning councils. The motion carried unanimously.**

#### B. Clearinghouse Committee

Commissioner Hope, Chair of the Clearinghouse Committee, reported that the Clearinghouse Committee met virtually via communications media technology earlier in the evening and reviewed the following local government comprehensive plan amendments which were included on the Council agenda for consideration.

- #21 - Taylor County Comprehensive Plan Adopted Amendment (DEO No. 19-1ESR)
- #23 - City of High Springs Comprehensive Plan Adopted Amendment (DEO No. 20-3ESR)
- #24 - City of Lake City Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-4ESR)

Commissioner Hope stated with regards to these items, the Committee found that the local government comprehensive plans as amended were not anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts to regional facilities, Natural Resources of Regional Significance or adjacent local governments. He stated that the Committee recommends forwarding these findings to the respective local governments and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Hope made the motion, with a second by Bouie Hutchinson to approve the Clearinghouse Committee recommendations concerning Item #21 - Taylor County Comprehensive Plan Adopted Amendment (DEO No. 19-1ESR); Item #23 - City of High Springs Comprehensive Plan Adopted Amendment (DEO No. 20-3ESR) and; Item #24 - City of Lake City Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-4ESR). The motion carried unanimously.

IX. EX-OFFICIO MEMBER REPORTS

David Tyler, Planning and Environmental Office, Florida Department of Transportation District 2, stated that the District is currently soliciting Small County Road Assistance Program grant applications, Small County Outreach Program grant applications, Transportation Regional Incentive Program grant applications and County Incentive Grant program grant applications until February 26, 2021. He also stated that District 2 held a public hearing on the Department's Tentative Five-Year Work Program for Fiscal Years 2021-22 to 2025-26 on January 14, 2021 at the District 2 Urban Office in Jacksonville and that comments concerning the Tentative Work Program were due by January 28, 2021.

Ben Glass, Legislative and Community Affairs Chief, Suwannee River Water Management District, stated the District is currently reviewing springs cost share applications and alternative water supply cost share applications submitted to the District by local governments. He also stated that the District proposed minimum flows and levels for the Lower Santa Fe River and Ichetucknee River are currently undergoing peer review. Finally, he stated that the District is continuing the process of updating its Water Supply Plan.

Tom Mirti, Deputy Executive Director, Suwannee River Water Management District, reported that the Madison County Health Department and Hamilton County Health Department issued public health advisories concerning no human contact with the waters of the Withlacoochee River for the period January 3, 2021 to January 4, 2021 due to elevated E. coli bacteria levels originating from non-point sources.

X. CITIZEN COMMENTS - None

XI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

A. Florida Regional Councils Association Monthly Activity Report

Mr. Koons reported that the Florida Regional Councils Association is the statewide organization of the ten regional planning councils. He stated that the Association strengthens Florida's regional planning councils, partners with government and the business community to enhance regional economic prosperity and improves the consistency and quality of regional planning councils programs to ensure they add value to state, regional and local initiatives. Mr. Koons stated that the Association strives to accomplish these goals by carrying out the activities listed in the December 2020 activity reports included in the Council meeting packet. He reviewed the activities listed in the December 2020 reports.

B. Florida Regional Councils Association Policy Board Forum Report

Mr. Koons reported that he attended the semi-annual forum of the Florida Regional Councils Association Policy Board along with the Immediate Past Chair Robert Wilford and Former Chair Lorene Thomas held virtually via communications media technology on January 8, 2021. He

stated the Policy Board heard presentations from Secretary Kevin Thibault, Florida Department of Transportation and Director Jared Moskowitz, Florida Division of Emergency Management. Mr. Koons stated the Policy Board heard reports on various projects of regional planning councils throughout the state and received the 2019-20 Florida Regional Councils Association Annual Report. Mr. Koons stated the Policy Board also heard a legislative report and a report concerning the update of the Statewide Regional Evacuation Study.

C. Florida Regional Councils Association Monthly Forward Newsletter

Mr. Koons reported the Florida Regional Councils Association is the statewide organization of the ten regional planning councils. He stated the Association strengthens Florida's regional planning councils, partners with government and the business community to enhance regional economic prosperity and improves the consistency and quality of regional planning councils programs to ensure they add value to state, regional and local initiatives. Mr. Koons stated the Association distributes an electronic newsletter each month to approximately 2,600 elected officials, state agencies, partner organizations and interested individuals statewide.

Mr. Koons note that an excerpted article from the November/December 2020 monthly Forward Newsletter featuring the activities of the Council serving as the administrative entity and fiscal agent for the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area was included in the meeting packet. He stated the article highlights the work that the Council recently completed for the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization concerning the update of the Long-Range Transportation Plan for the Gainesville Metropolitan Area. Mr. Koons also stated the Plan identifies projects for highway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities for the next 25 years.

D. 2019-20 Florida Regional Councils Association Annual Report

Mr. Koons reported that the 2019-20 Annual Report for the Florida Regional Councils Association was included in the meeting packet. He stated the Florida Regional Councils Association is the statewide association of all ten regional councils in Florida. Mr. Koons stated it is governed by a Policy Board made up of three representatives (county, municipal, gubernatorial) from each Council who are in turn advised by the Executive Directors Advisory Committee comprised of all ten executive directors. He stated that Charles Chestnut IV, Chair; Lorene Thomas, Former Chair; and Robert Wilford, Immediate Past Chair currently serve on the Florida Regional Councils Association Policy Board. Mr. Koons stated Immediate Past Chair Wilford currently serves as the 2nd Vice-President of the Association. Finally, he stated the activities of the Council are featured on pages 3, 4, 6 and 10 of the Annual Report.

E. Florida Chamber Foundation Scorecard™

Mr. Koons reported that the Florida Chamber Foundation has developed the Florida Scorecard™ to provide Florida leaders the metrics needed to secure Florida's future. He stated that the Florida Chamber Foundation's objective to developing a 20-year, statewide strategic plan requires a commitment to measuring our current status and progress toward the stated goals of the Six Pillars 20-year Strategic Plan. Mr. Koons noted that the Scorecard reports metrics for each of the following Six Pillars: Talent and Supply Education, Innovation and Economic Development, Infrastructure and Growth Leadership, Business Climate and Competitiveness, Civic and Governance Systems, and Quality of Life and Quality Places. He reviewed the January 2021 Scorecard™ that was included in the Council meeting packet.

F. Legislative Report

Mr. Koons reported that the 2021 Legislative Session will convene on March 2, 2021 and is scheduled to adjourn on April 30, 2021. He also stated legislative committee meetings began the week of January 11, 2021 and will conclude the week of February 15, 2021. Mr. Koons reported on the status of bills of interest to the Council and its member local governments.

G. 2045 Florida Transportation Plan Policy Element and Performance Element

Mr. Koons reported that the Florida Transportation Plan is the single overarching statewide plan guiding Florida's transportation future. He stated it is a plan for all of Florida created by, and providing direction to, the Florida Department of Transportation and all organizations that are involved in planning and managing Florida's transportation system, including statewide, regional and local partners. Mr. Koons stated that every five years, the Department updates the Florida Transportation Plan. He reported that the Department recently released the second and third components of the updated Florida Transportation Plan, the Policy Element and the Performance Element. Finally, Mr. Koons noted that copies of the Policy Element and Performance Element were included in the meeting packet.

XII. COUNCIL MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Witt stated that both the mother and father of Jordan Green, Transportation Support Manager, Florida Department of Transportation District 2, recently died as a result of the COVID-19 virus.

Mayor Louie Davis stated former Bradford County Commissioner Kenny Thompson recently shared with him very positive comments concerning the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council and Executive Director Scott Koons.

Commissioner Simmons asked that the Council send a letter of support to the City of Gainesville and Alachua County concerning safety modifications for pedestrians along West University Avenue (State Road 26) adjacent to the University of Florida campus in Gainesville.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Simmons made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Alford to request staff prepare a letter to the City of Gainesville and Alachua County concerning support for safety modifications for pedestrians along West University Avenue (State Road 26) adjacent to the University of Florida campus in Gainesville for review by the Council at its February 25, 2021 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

XIII. NEXT MEETING

Chair Chestnut informed the Council that the next Council meeting is scheduled to be held on February 25, 2021.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.



Charles S. Chestnut IV, Chair

2/25/21  
Date