

NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
MINUTES

Virtual Meeting
Via Communications Media Technology

February 25, 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
James Catron, City of Madison
Charles Chestnut IV, Alachua County
Frank Davis, City of Live Oak
Louie Davis, City of Waldo
Thomas Demps, Taylor County
Fletcher Hope, City of Archer
Travis Land, Suwannee County
John Meeks, Levy County
Janice Mortimer, City of Starke
Reina Saco, City of Gainesville
James Tallman, Union County
Lorene Thomas, Dixie County
Donnie Waldrep, Madison County
Marihelen Wheeler, Alachua 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

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

LaBarfield Bryant, City of Jasper
Mark Clark, City of Newberry
Mike Deming, City of Perry
Linda Jones, City of High Springs
Tim Murphy, Columbia County
Daniel Riddick, Bradford County
Gigi Simmons, City of Gainesville
David Stegall, City of Lake Butler
Jody Stephenson, Dixie County
Kenrick Thomas, Gilchrist County

OTHERS PRESENT

Barbara Byram
Margie Caparelli
Diana Davis
Christian Doolin
Edith Eudy
Stew Lilker
Toni Ricard
Larry Sessions

STAFF PRESENT

Lynn Franson-Godfrey
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 7:01 p.m. Commissioner Demps 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 Barbara Byram, Co-Founder, Levy County Citizens for an Engaged Electorate; Marjorie Caparelli, Citizen, Suwannee County; Edith Eudy, Citizen, Suwannee County; Toni Ricard, Citizen, Suwannee County; Diana Davis, Executive Director, Alachua County League of Cities and wife of Council Member Louie Davis; and Stew Lilker, Columbia County Observer.

IV. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes - January 28, 2021
- B. Monthly Financial Report - December 2020 and January 2021
- C. Amendment to Memorandum of Agreement with Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council Concerning Regional Economic Modeling, Inc.
- D. Transportation Disadvantaged Planning Program Grant Resolutions - Fiscal Year 2021-22
- E. Transportation Disadvantaged Program - Community Transportation Coordinator for Dixie County
- F. Transportation Disadvantaged Program - Community Transportation Coordinator for Gilchrist County
- G. Transportation Disadvantaged Program - Community Transportation Coordinator for Union County
- H. Transportation Disadvantaged Program - Community Transportation Coordinator Selection for Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee Counties

Chair Chestnut asked if there was a motion to approve the consent agenda.

ACTION: Commissioner Meeks made the motion, with a second by Mayor Louie Davis to approve the consent agenda.

Margie Caparelli, Edith Eudy and Stew Lilker requested that item IV. H. Transportation Disadvantaged Program - Community Transportation Coordinator Selection for Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee Counties be removed from the consent agenda and placed on the regular agenda.

ACTION: Commissioner Meeks amended the motion and Mayor Louie Davis agreed to the motion, as amended, to remove item IV. H. Transportation Disadvantaged Program - Community Transportation Coordinator Selection for Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee from the consent agenda and place it on the regular agenda as item VIII. A. 3. and approve the consent agenda, as amended.
The motion carried 20 yeas, 1 nay.

V. APPROVAL OF REGULAR AGENDA

ACTION: Commissioner Bouie Hutchinson made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Demps to add item IV. H. Transportation Disadvantaged Program - Community Transportation Coordinator Selection for Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee to the regular agenda as item VIII. A. 3. and to approve the regular agenda, as amended.
The motion carried unanimously.

VI. GUEST SPEAKER - Christian Doolin, Legislative Consultant
Florida Small County Coalition

Scott Koons, Executive Director, introduced Christian Doolin, Legislative Consultant, Florida Small County Coalition. Mr. Doolin gave a presentation to the Council concerning issues facing small counties in the north central Florida region and an outlook for the 2021 Legislative Session. Chair Chestnut thanked Mr. Doolin for his presentation.

VII. CHAIR REPORT - New Members - Travis Land, Suwannee County

Chair Chestnut welcomed new Council member County Commissioner Travis Land, Suwannee County.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Executive Committee

1. Letter of Support Concerning State Road 26 (University Avenue)
Pedestrian Safety Modifications

Mr. Koons stated that at the January 28, 2021 Council meeting, the Council requested staff to prepare letters to be reviewed by the Council at their February 25, 2021 meeting to be sent to the City of Gainesville and Alachua County supporting their efforts to encourage the Florida Department of Transportation to make pedestrian safety modifications on State Road 26 (University Avenue) adjacent to the University of Florida campus in Gainesville. He noted that letters to be sent to the City of Gainesville and Alachua County prepared by staff for signature by the Chair were included in the meeting packet.

ACTION: Vice-Mayor Wilford made the motion, with a second by Vice-Mayor Mortimer to authorize the Chair to sign letters to the City of Gainesville and Alachua County supporting their efforts to encourage the Florida Department of Transportation to make pedestrian safety modifications on State Road 26 (University Avenue) adjacent to the University of Florida Campus. The motion carried unanimously.

2. American Flood Coalition Agreement to Assist with the Development of North Central Florida Regional Resiliency Collaborative

Mr. Koons stated the American Flood Coalition is offering the Council a grant of \$15,000 to support the development of a regional resilience collaborative. He stated such resilience collaborative would be among the local governments in the north central Florida region similar to the recent resiliency collaborative formed by the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council and the resiliency coalition formed by the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council.

ACTION: Commissioner Wheeler made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Demps to authorize the Chair to sign a grant agreement with the American Flood Coalition for \$15,000 of funding to assist with the development of the North Central Florida Regional Resiliency Collaborative. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Transportation Disadvantaged Program - Community Transportation Coordinator Selection for Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee Counties

Mr. Koons stated the Council is the Designated Official Planning Agency for the Transportation Disadvantaged Program in Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee Counties. He noted that the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged requires that the designated official planning agencies recommend a Community Transportation Coordinator at the end of each contract period.

Mr. Koons reported that the Suwannee Valley Transit Authority is the designated Community Transportation Coordinator for the Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee multi-county service area. He stated that the Suwannee Valley Transit Authority's Memorandum of Agreement will expire June 30, 2021. Mr. Koons stated that Florida Statutes authorizes the Council, serving as the Designated Official Planning Agency, to recommend a governmental entity, such as the Suwannee Valley Transit Authority, as the Community Transportation Coordinator without using a competitive selection process. Finally, he stated that staff and the Executive Committee recommend that the Council authorize the use of the non-competitive selection process to recommend the designation of the Community Transportation Coordinator for the Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee multi-county service area.

ACTION: Mayor Louie Davis made the motion, with a second by Vice-Mayor Mortimer to authorize the use of the non-competitive selection process to recommend the designation of the Community Transportation Coordinator for the Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee multi-county service area.

Edith Eudy, Margie Caparelli, Toni Ricard and Stew Lilker requested that the Council use a competitive request for proposals selection process to recommend the designation of the Community Transportation Coordinator for the Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee multi-county service area. The following action was taken concerning the motion to authorize the use of the non-competitive selection process to recommend the designation of the Community Transportation Coordinator for the Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee multi-county service area.

ACTION: 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.

#25 - Levy County Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendments (DEO No. 21-1ESR)

#26 - City of Alachua Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 21-1ESR)

#27 - City of Alachua Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 21-2ESR)

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 Vice-Mayor Mortimer to approve the Clearinghouse Committee recommendations concerning Item #25 - Levy County Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 21-1ESR); Item #26 - City of Alachua Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 21-1ESR) and; Item #27 - City of Alachua Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 21-2ESR). The motion carried unanimously.

IX. EX-OFFICIO MEMBER REPORTS

David Tyler, Planning and Environmental Office, Florida Department of Transportation District 2, thanked the Council for authorizing letters to be sent to the City of Gainesville and Alachua County supporting their efforts to encourage the Florida Department of Transportation to make pedestrian safety modifications on State Road 26 (University Avenue) adjacent to the University of Florida campus in Gainesville. He also 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.

Tom Mirti, Deputy Executive Director, Suwannee River Water Management District, reported that the District is soliciting cost share river grant applications at this time. He stated that flooding is occurring on the Withlacoochee River, Middle Suwannee River and the Santa Fe River resulting from rainfall in January 2021 and the first part of February 2021. Mr. Mirti stated that the status assessment for the minimum flows and levels for the Lower Santa Fe River and the Ichetucknee River prepared by the District indicates that the Lower Santa Fe River is designated as preventive status and the Ichetucknee River is designated as recovery status. Finally, he stated that the District is continuing outreach efforts concerning the update of the District Water Supply Plan.

X. CITIZEN COMMENTS - Stew Lilker, Columbia County Observer, discussed the proposed state legislation that would allow local governments to post public notices on their web sites in lieu of publishing public notices in newspapers, Suwannee Valley Transit Authority operations and regional transit services.

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 January 2021 activity reports included in the Council meeting packet. He reviewed the activities listed in the January 2021 reports.

B. 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 February 2021 Scorecard™ that was included in the Council meeting packet.

C. 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 concluded the week of February 15, 2021. Mr. Koons reported on the status of bills of interest to the Council and its member local governments.

D. Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Regional Broadband Workshops

Mr. Koons stated the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Office of Broadband recently partnered with the ten regional planning councils to facilitate virtual regional workshops. He stated the virtual regional workshop for the north central Florida region was held on February 10, 2021.

Mr. Koons stated the virtual regional workshops included leaders from various sectors of the state, including libraries; K-12 education; colleges and universities; local healthcare providers; private businesses; community organizations; economic development organizations; local governments; tourism, parks and recreation; agriculture; and internet service providers. He stated the virtual regional workshops were hosted by the Department and facilitated by the respective regional planning council to assist the Florida Office of Broadband in understanding the regional availability and accessibility of broadband internet throughout the state. Mr. Koons stated the information shared during the workshops will also be used in the development of the Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband.

Mr. Koons also stated the Department has posted a survey concerning broadband needs on its website at Florida Office of Broadband - Survey on the Availability and Accessibility of Broadband Internet Service. He noted that interested persons are encouraged to complete the on-line survey by March 1, 2021.

E. Enterprise Florida Site Preparation Grant Award Program

Mr. Koons stated the following communities and organization in the north central Florida region recently received funding from the Enterprise Florida Site Preparation Grant Program - Columbia County Economic Development Department \$24,900; Hamilton County Development Authority \$25,000; Levy County Nature Coast Business Development Council \$25,000; North Florida Economic Development Partnership, Inc. \$25,000; and Suwannee County Economic Development Department \$24,250. He noted that the grants are used to assist rural communities with the development and enhancement of sites to make them build ready and competitive for site selection projects.

XII. COUNCIL MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-Mayor Wilford stated that Merrie Shaw, Assistant Director of University of Florida Innovate/Sid Martin Bio-Technology Center at Progress Park in Alachua recently retired. He noted that the Council prepared the feasibility study that resulted in the development of the Progress Center. Vice-Mayor Wilford stated that, since 1995, the University of Florida Innovate/Sid Martin Bio-Technology Center has secured \$9.2 billion resulting in the creation 8,000 jobs.

Vice-Mayor Wilford also stated that the Alachua County Turkey Creek Preserve will be dedicated on March 1, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. in Alachua. He invited Council members to attend the dedication.

XIII. NEXT MEETING

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.



Charles S. Chestnut IV, Chair

3/25/21
Date