

ALACHUA COUNTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RURAL CONCERNS
MINUTES – May 17, 2022

Meeting - Virtually and In Person
Alachua County UF/IFAS Extension Office
22716 W Newberry Rd., Newberry, FL

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

In person: Dewayne Baines, Jordan Callaham, Jean Chance, Rodney Clouser (Chair), Larry Hall (Vice Chair), Janet Hearn, Curtis Loftus, James Longanecker, Juan Salva

Virtually: Dewayne Baines (*first 12 minutes of meeting followed by in person*)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Christopher DeCubellis, Cindy Sanders, Sandra Werner

STAFF:

Ken McMurry, Planner, Growth Management, *in person*

Regina Williams, Planning Assistant, *in person*

Ben Chumley, Principal Planner, Growth Management, *in person*

Other:

Sean McLendon, Alachua County Economic Development & Food Systems Manager, *virtual*

Public:

Sherri Krienke, *in person*

Chair Clouser started the meeting at 4:05 pm. Six members were physically present at the start of the meeting, which was confirmed to satisfy the requirement for at least a quorum physically present under County Advisory Board Guidelines (Ms. Longanecker and Mr. Salva joined the meeting in person shortly after approval of the agenda; Mr. Baines attended the meeting virtually the first 12 minutes then attended in person). Chair Clouser said that, per the County Advisory Board Guidelines, members participating remotely cannot vote and Mr. Salva, as Alternate member and physically present, can vote today.

I. Approval of the Agenda

Staff shared the Agenda on the Zoom screen. Chair Clouser asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Motion was made by Ms. Chance to approve the agenda; seconded by Mr. Hall.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Clouser reviewed the information on the agenda regarding public participation virtually by CMT and in person. There was one member of the public present in person and they were recognized by the Chair.

II. Chair Comments

Chair Clouser said that there was discussion at the April meeting on the topic of farmland preservation area and there had also been some preliminary discussions related to that topic at the April 19th County Commission meeting. There were questions and discussion by Committee members about agricultural preservation tools including land use value assessment, time-based land use agreements, and transfer of development rights; recent increases in land sales prices; and ongoing trends towards large, corporate-scale agriculture.

Chair Clouser said the referendum related to single district County Commissioner elections would be on the ballot this November. He said the County can only engage in neutral education, not advocate a position, and there is probably not a role for the Committee regarding this issue.

Chair Clouser said it was encouraging that there have been no attendance issues and most members have attended in person. He said the Committee voted at the April meeting to take breaks in June, July, and December to be reconfirmed at today's meeting, and there was consensus among members in support of that schedule. He said if there was a need to meet or have a discussion before the next meeting in August, for example on new developments on the agricultural preservation issue, then the Committee could have a virtual workshop, and if there is a report on the broadband planning team from Ms. Sanders then staff could pass it on by email.

Chair Clouser said that there are currently four RCAC members' terms that will end in September. Mr. McMurry said that those terms would be advertised beginning in July, any members interested in reapplying should do so by mid-August on the County Advisory Board website, and staff will plan to take those applications and any from the public to the County Commission in September for consideration for appointment to 3-year terms for each of those 4 positions.

III. Attendance Report

Mr. McMurry shared on the Zoom screen the current Attendance Report previously sent to the Committee. He said that no one is currently in jeopardy with attendance issues and if members ever have any questions about their attendance status, they should contact staff for clarification.

IV. Approval of minutes for 4-19-22 meeting

Motion was made by Mr. Hall to approve the minutes for the 4-19-22 meeting; seconded by Ms. Chance.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

V. New Business:

- a. **Discussion of Joint City/County Food System Policy Board's recent work and potential areas for RCAC contribution** – Sean McLendon, Alachua County Economic Development & Food Systems Manager

Mr. McLendon gave a description of the Joint City/County Food System Policy Board (JCCFSPB) and said their recent work has been focused on the Good Food Purchasing Program, developing a foodshed map, the Healthy Corner Store Initiative, Community Grocery Store Project, and how those projects might positively impact the surrounding agricultural community. He said that the County Growth Management Department is taking the 10-county food shed concept map developed by UF IFAS and Geoplan and creating a user interface. He said that user interface would be able to accept new information over time and would serve not only consumers, but policy makers and researchers, and enable analysis that would contribute to things such as the Good Food Purchasing Program and Healthy Corner Store Initiative. He said that when the user interface is complete there will be an opportunity for RCAC to contribute additional data and information.

There were questions and discussion by Committee members regarding the food shed map, the type and amount of data collected so far, the timeline for release, and whether this could be a pilot project for other locations around the state. Mr. McLendon said the data collected so far was not intended to be complete but has helped build the initial structure, to check back for project completion updates, and the project could be expanded to other locations and would need multiple entities to manage and keep the data current. Mr. McMurry shared on the Zoom screen the current food shed concept map webpage developed by UF and displayed some of the current data layers. Mr. McLendon said the JCCFSPB meets bimonthly with the next meeting on June 8th, and he will send meeting information to staff to share with RCAC.

VI. Old Business:

a. Update on local broadband planning team – Cindy Sanders

Chair Clouser asked Mr. McMurry to read an email report that Ms. Sanders had previously sent to staff due to her absence today. Mr. McMurry read the email from Ms. Sanders that said she was currently out of town without adequate service to join today's meeting remotely and that the broadband planning team had a short meeting last week, is currently waiting for counties to get responses back from the Department of Economic Opportunity's internet speed test, and that nothing new was discussed.

Chair Clouser said there has been recent activity at the state and federal levels on "last mile" broadband funding and he would like to hear the broadband planning team's approach to that issue. He said that each county on the broadband planning team has a "champion", that Alachua County's, Commissioner Alford, had recently resigned from the County Commission, and it isn't yet clear how the County will address that champion position. Sherri Krienke said there is a significant rural population with no internet access and there needs to be a way to document that. Chair Clouser suggested she communicate with Tommy Crosby, Assistant County Manager for Budget & Fiscal Services, and she said she would.

VII. Committee Members Comments

Mr. Baines said he would like for the Committee to consider discussing at a future meeting the topic of support for small farmers. Ms. Longanecker said she would like for the Committee to consider discussing how to assist small farmers with development of and access to markets, and information about grants. Chair Clouser said the County's Small-Producer Agriculture Capital Support Grant program had a big response for a small number of grants and that program needs to be sustained. Chair Clouser asked if any of the 3 members included in the recent letter to Dr. Houchen had been contacted and none had yet; Chair Clouser said they could also follow up with Sean Mclendon.

VIII. General Public Comments

There were no public comments.

IX. Next meeting: August 16, 2022

Mr. McMurry confirmed the next meeting will be at the Extension Office and the Committee should begin reviewing the Annual Workplan in August for approval in September.

X. Adjourn

Motion was made by Mr. Hall to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ms. Longanecker.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Clouser called the meeting to a close at 5:11 pm.

Approved 8-16-2022