

ALACHUA COUNTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RURAL CONCERNS
MINUTES –July 21, 2020

This is a Virtual Public Meeting through Zoom

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Candace Aho, Jean Chance, Rodney Clouser (Vice Chair), Christopher De Cubellis, Larry Hall, Janet Hearn, Winston Rushing, Cindy Sanders, Ward Scott (Chair)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

DeWayne Baines, Randy Johnson

STAFF PRESENT:

Ken Zeichner, Principal Planner, Growth Management

Ken McMurry, Planner, Growth Management

Regina Williams, Planning Assistant, Growth Management

General Public:

Travis Edmund

Sally Beachcord

December Mc Sherry

Brendan Shortley

Neil ? (no last name given)

The meeting began at 4:05 PM after confirming that there was a quorum of members connected via zoom due to some weather-related effects on internet service.

I. Approval of Agenda:

Chair Scott's connection via Zoom was temporarily disrupted due to effects of weather on internet. Ken Zeichner suggested the Vice Chair, Dr. Clouser could start the meeting with approval of Agenda.

Vice Chair Clouser continued and asked if everyone had a chance to look at the agenda for any additions or corrections. Mr. Zeichner said he would like to highlight some information on the Agenda for the benefit of the public. He stated that the meeting is a virtual public meeting per State and County Emergency Orders, and the public has been invited to participate by joining the Zoom meeting to view and/or listen to the discussion and will be given an opportunity to comment at the appropriate points on the Agenda.

Ms. Chance made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Sanders.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Zeichner asked Mr. McMurry to watch and see if the Chair comes back by phone or if anyone else comes into the meeting.

Chair Scott rejoined the meeting, first by phone then by internet with video.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Ms. Chance made a motion to approve the minutes from June 16, 2020, seconded by Mr. Hall.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

III. Attendance Report:

Mr. Zeichner reviewed the attendance report, which Mr. McMurry shared on screens with Committee members, and noted the new attendance requirements that were approved by the County Commission in January 2020 and said no one at this point is in jeopardy of violating attendance requirements for not attending this meeting. He said two members are not present today, Mr. Baines and Mr. Johnson. He said Mr. Johnson would have to attend next meeting or he would be in violation. Any member whose attendance is 50% or less of the last 6 consecutive meetings shall automatically be removed from the committee unless there are extenuating circumstances approved by the Manager or designee.

IV. Chair's Comments:

Chair said he liked the public participating at this meeting and appreciate all the committee does. He said the old meeting place Extension Office is no longer available for meeting and that the committee is now looking for a new meeting place to meet. He said in the meantime we are doing a great job of Zooming. He said he appreciated everyone for checking in. He recognized the public participation with the Rural Concerns Advisory Committee and that he appreciates all the committee does.

V. New Business:

- a) Rural Concerns Advisory Committee Annual Workplan: FY 2020-2021 and Accomplishments Report: FY 2019-2020

The Committee reviewed the draft document and discussed the items listed in the work plan. The Chair asked the committee if they see anything in the work plan that they need looked at or have any questions to please do so. He noted what they do as a committee and said this is the only rural committee advising the County Commission and it does that in a responsible data-based way.

Staff shared the draft Workplan on the screen that was provided in last week's email to the committee. Mr. Zeichner explained to the committee some of the Major Accomplishments in FY 2019-2020 and some ideas of how the Workplan is laid out. The first part of the Accomplishments report is basically a repeat of the what the Committee approved last year as Goals and Objectives for the year October 1, 2019 through Sept. 30, 2020; the second part of the Accomplishments lists the accomplishments this past year by subject area including information on when the meetings held and any presentations on a subject, and any recommendations made by the Committee. The Chair noted the committee had made comments to the County Commission pretty regularly. Staff noted the second part of the draft Workplan is the Goals and Objectives that were approved last year and the Committee should look at that to see if they want to change, add or update any of those Goals and Objectives for October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021. Staff noted that the Goals and Objectives relating to the portion talking about the Evaluation and Appraisal of the Comprehensive Plan which was completed last year and you should delete the reference to Evaluation and Appraisal and just say Monitor the Comprehensive Plan; Ms. Sanders said to correct the title of the "Alachua County Agriculture and Equestrian Center and UF/IFAS Extension Site" ; Committee also wanted to make it clear that the list of Goals and Objectives was not in any particular order of priority.

There was discussion of the timing of this report and when the Committee had to take action. Mr. Zeichner noted typically Advisory Committees to approve these by September or October, and the Chair of the Committee can then present it to the County Commission in October or November. Staff suggested the Committee could approve a motion for staff to make edits and updates based on the discussion today, and then bring it back to the Committee for confirmation like a consent item at its next meeting.

Ms. Chance moved that staff make the edits and updates as discussed and bring it back to the Committee for confirmation like a consent item at its next meeting. Seconded by Mr. Hall.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Old Business:

- a) Location for future in-person meetings of Committee (County Extension Office conference room unavailable for approximately 18 months during construction of new office)

Mr. Hall provided information in follow-up to his suggestion of the Farm Credit building located near Alachua at 12300 NW US Hwy. 441 in Alachua. He said the building had adequate space and parking. Mr. Zeichner and the Chair discussed the requirements under the Sunshine Law, noting that meetings must be accessible to the public without discrimination and must be ADA Accessible; Mr. Zeichner noted the need for the building to be open after 5 pm for the public to come in for evening meetings. He noted that so far, in addition to the suggestion from Mr. Hall, staff had received an email from one member of the Committee providing input indicating that they were ok with meeting downtown. He said if Committee members had other ideas or input they should email staff so we could compile for consideration by the Committee.

Mr. Zeichner said if committee has any other ideas on locations, to email staff.

VII. Committee Member Comments:

Mr. Zeichner referred to the 4 positions that have their terms expiring in September, mentioning the Active in Agriculture or Silviculture positions occupied by Mr. Scott and by Mr. Hall, the Residing in Unincorporated Area outside Urban Cluster designated in Alachua County Comprehensive Plan position occupied by Ms. Hearn, the County Extension Representative position occupied by Ms. Sanders, as well as the Alternative Member Chosen at Large position that is vacant, and that if current members would like to be considered they should apply through the Advisory Board Website. When enough applications are received, staff would put on County Agenda.

VIII. General Public Comments:

Ms. Sally Beachcord brought up the proposed Solar Farm being considered by the County. Ms. December McSherry shared her and others concern about Solar Farms being brought to their area in Archer. She said several calls had been put in to the Commission on this issue. They had concerns about the dislocation of all the wildlife that travel through their property. She said there is a church and cemetery on the property as well. She wanted to know if the committee could assist or if

the committee could tell them where to go. Staff noted that information can be provided by planners at the County Growth Management Department. Chair Scott asked if where this was, in the City of Archer or the unincorporated area. She said this property is not in the City of Archer. Mr. DeCubellis asked what is the property was being used for now and how many acres? Ms. McSherry said it has 640 acres and was being used for a tree farm. Chair Scott asked if this land is zoned for Rural Agriculture and was there a need for change in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Zeichner said there is a hearing scheduled for August 19th by the Planning Commission. He said this is a rezoning matter so it is quasi-judicial and there are process requirements that decisions need to be based on evidence with notice at a public hearing and the Planning Commission is the advisory committee designated with responsibility for making recommendations on such matters to the County Commission. Chair Scott said there was nothing the committee could take up on this right now.

Ms. McSherry thanked the committee for allowing her to sit in on the meeting and that she learned a lot about the function of the committee.

IX. Next Meeting: August 18, 2020

Dr. Clouser asked about the Litter, Trash Pick/Up Report the Committee had requested from Public Works several meetings ago, and if someone from Public Works could come to the next meeting and provide report. Mr. Zeichner noted that the report had been provided to the Committee members by email in early March, just before the March meeting was canceled due to COVID 19, and staff had asked Committee members to email any questions to staff to compile for Mr. Gavarrete, Director of Public Works. The Chair said he'd like to have discussion of this at the next meeting; also the information on change in County Commission policy regarding use of prison labor that Commissioner Wheeler said she'd look into. Mr. Zeichner said he'd look into availability of the Public Works Director and Commissioner Wheeler and follow-up with the Chair depending on their availability; he noted that staff hadn't received any comments or questions from Committee members on the Trash/Litter Pick/ Up Report from Public Works, so Committee members should email any questions to staff to be compiled for Mr. Gavarrete, Director of Public Works Department.

X. Adjourn

Dr. Clouser made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Chance

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Scott called the meeting to a close at 5:40 pm.

Approved August 18, 2020