

Tuesday, March 4, 2021 – 10:00 A.M.
John R. "Jack" Durrance Auditorium
County Administration Building
12 Southeast First Street
Gainesville, Florida

The Alachua County Board of County Commissioners met for the Special Meeting.

PRESENT: Chair Ken Cornell; Vice Chair Marihelen Wheeler, Commissioner Mary Alford, Commissioner Charles S. Chestnut IV and Commissioner Anna Prizzia

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Michele Lieberman, County Attorney Sylvia Torres, and Deputy Clerk Steve Donahey

Commissioners Prizzia, Commissioner Wheeler, and Commissioner Chestnut toured the facility prior to the meeting. No conversation between Commissioners took place or business addressed by the Board. Facilities provided a guided tour and discussed the projects that will be taking place. Also on the tour were County Manager Lieberman, Assistant County Manager Tommy Crosby, Assistant County Manager Carl Smart, Chief of Staff Gina Peebles, County Attorney Torres, and Deputy Clerk Steve Donahey

Approval of Agenda

Items for Discussion

1. Board Strategic Planning Workshop 21-0180

Fiscal Consideration: N/A

Recommended Action: Board level discussion to develop Strategic Plan

Facilitator John Streitmatter presented the above item.

Commissioner Alford and Chair Cornell presented comments.

Themes from Interview Process

Commissioner Alford, Chair Cornell, and Commissioner Prizzia presented comments.

Public Safety

Governance

Natural Resources

Chair Cornell presented comments.

Social Strength and Well Being

Chair Cornell and Commissioner Prizzia presented comments.

Economic Opportunity

Infrastructure and Capital Improvements

Most important Priorities

The top 4 priorities:

- Address the Housing Crisis
- Build Systems for Prosperity
- Criminal Justice Equity
- Make Progress on Infrastructure

The next priorities:

- Provide for basic needs
- More integrated approach to sustainability
- Cultivate collaborative relationships
- Fertile environment for economic development
- County facilities and building plan

Commissioner Alford, Chair Cornell, Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Chestnut, Commissioner Alford, Chair Cornell, Commissioner Prizzia, and Commissioner Alford presented comments.

Important Policies of the Future

Chair Cornell, Commissioner Alford, Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Wheeler, Commissioner Alford, Commissioner Chestnut, Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Alford, Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Wheeler, Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Chestnut, Commissioner Alford, Chair Cornell, Commissioner Prizzia, Chair Cornell, Facilitator John Streitmatter, Chair Cornell, Commissioner Alford, and Commissioner Prizzia presented comments.

COMMISSION RECESSED AT: 12:12 P.M.
COMMISSION RECONVENED: 1:02 P.M.

Wealth Building/Cycle of Poverty

Facilitator John Streitmatter, Chair Cornell, Commissioner Wheeler, Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Chestnut, Commissioner Alford, Commissioner Prizzia, and Commissioner Alford presented comments.

Mental Health

Facilitator John Streitmatter and Commissioner Wheeler presented comments.

Criminal Justice Equity

Chair Cornell Commissioner Alford, Chair Cornell, Commissioner Alford, Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Alford, Chair Cornell, Commissioner Prizzia, and Facilitator John Streitmatter presented comments.

Make Progress on Infrastructure

Chair Cornell, Commissioner Alford, Commissioner Wheeler, Chair Cornell, Commissioner Chestnut, Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Alford, Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Wheeler, Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Cornell, Commissioner Alford, and Facilitator John Streitmatter presented comments.

Summary of Changes

Below are the summary of proposed language changes per topic as discussed by the Board of County Commissioners.

What are the most important priorities or ideas for the future?

Address the
Housing Crisis

- In order to address social strength, opportunity, and infrastructure we need to fundamentally address our housing crisis.
- Need to shore up our regulatory environment as well as other approaches to keep properties up to standards, and reduce costs as a result.
- Determine how to use the Housing Trust Fund. Will need to determine how and what we're going to fund with that, and to determine the various roles that the cities, county, and other agencies will play in support of the community.
- One potential use - create incentives for focusing on increasing efficiencies and reducing demand. For instance, upgrading housing stock (AC, windows, etc.) in exchange for agreements for keeping it affordable.
- Believe that we need to help the landlords (they've been hit hard too), while at the same time making progress on the housing stock.
- Housing is a City issue, but County's role is to provide the services to support those families, like case management and social service delivery. The Cities are the infrastructure part of the community, and the County is the people and management part.
- Consider an infrastructure sales tax that would run for 10 years concurrent with Wild spaces, public spaces. Would use the incremental half penny for housing issues, in conjunction with the cities – using the roles of City for infrastructure and County for services and case management.
- Eventually we're going to have increased senior living needs, especially with the working class people.

What are the most important priorities or ideas for the future?

Build Systems for Prosperity

- Have to break the cycle of poverty. Jobs, education, the ability to learn, vocational training, living wage, the justice system all need to work together for our community.
- The root cause of so many of our issues (housing, food, economic opportunity) is the fundamental ability for people to be able to provide for themselves without needing a safety net.

Potential ideas:

- A vocational school would be an important part of enabling the workforce to attract businesses to fill the middle.
- Collaborate with our workforce partners to move the needle on equity.
- Work with schools and the school board to improve equity.
- Innovation hub that provides job opportunities in the longer term.
- Need to be sure to take advantage of the tremendous amount of healthcare resources – like UF Health, HCA, VA.
- that resource. Integrating those resources along with our own is the best thing for our community as a whole.
- Long term we need to invest in early education for our kids. The Children's trust fund was helpful, but far from complete. We need all groups (agencies, governments, others) to align around taking care of our kids.
- We need to partner with the City to make progress in regard to homelessness. Rapid re-housing, and support services for that population will need to be addressed to get them back on their feet.
- The Housing issue has created transportation issues. There aren't transportation lines to get people from the outlying areas into the employment centers, or in some cases from parts of the City to the employment centers of the City.

What are the most important priorities or ideas for the future?

- Invest in road maintenance
- Consider not building a new administration building and instead invest that money in road maintenance.
- Leverage the fact that money is historically cheap.
- Commit to be ready to take advantage of federal infrastructure investments that are likely to come – shovel ready.

Make Progress on Infrastructure

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What are the most important priorities or ideas for the future?

- We have a lot of information about what's wrong, but don't have a clear articulation of what the actions are that we should take.
- We need to work on equity with respect to health, especially mental health and addiction, and we need to work on equity with respect to the criminal justice system.

Potential ideas:

- Help create diversion programs and monitoring programs that give people options to going to jail while they're awaiting trial. Court services should be providing the judge with all the information necessary to determine the right options and not be advocating for a course of action, and should be tapping into the available options.
- Work to have the sheriff's department not be the first responders in issues of mental health, addiction and alcohol use, homelessness, and perhaps even some nonviolent offenses like shoplifting. Instead, send social workers, substance abuse specialists and mental health counselors.
- Central receiving facility so that we use our limited resources in the best possible way.
- Recognize bail as an outdated incentive to return to court and utilize other methods of tracking our citizens.
- Focus less on work release and focus more on reentry programs including education, job training programs and housing needs.

Criminal Justice
Equity

Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Alford, Chair Cornell, Commissioner Chestnut, and Commissioner Wheeler presented comments.

Closing Comments

There were no comments offered.

Public Comment

There were no comments offered.

Commission Comment

There were no comments offered.

There being no further business before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 4:39 P.M.