



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0090, **Version:** 1

Agenda Item Name:

Redefining the Role/Mission of the Joint Water Policy Committee

Presenter:

Chris Bird and Stacie Greco, EPD

Description:

This is a response to a Board request the existing “Joint City/County Water Policy Committee” be renamed to “Joint City/County Climate and Water Policy Committee” to better coordinate local climate change and water policies and practices.

Recommended Action:

Direct City and County staff to return to their respective Boards with any instruments necessary to establish a Joint City/County Climate and Water Policy Committee.

Prior Board Motions:

On January 14, 2020 the BoCC voted to request the Joint City/County Water Policy Committee expand its purpose to include climate change policy.

Fiscal Consideration:

None

Background:

An emerging local concern is preparing and planning for climate change. Forecasts for North Central Florida suggest that we can expect more frequent and extreme flooding and drought. To adapt to these more extreme weather events, our local adaptation framework is going to require us to continue to protect our drinking water, watersheds, wetlands, and natural resources through the continued support of our land conservation programs and strong local regulations and further strengthening and development of collaborative planning efforts. The expanded roles of the Joint City/County Climate and Water Policy committee will better position us locally to strategically identify policy implications and opportunities for intergovernmental and regional collaboration.

The Joint City/County Water Policy Committee was reinstated on April 13, 2015 with Commissioners Cornell and Pinkoson from Alachua County and Commissioners Warren and Carter from the City of Gainesville. Alachua County Environmental Protection Department staffed the committee, while Commissioner Cornell served as the Chair until February 6, 2017. GRU is currently serving as the staff liaison as Commissioner Ward became the Chair at the August 26, 2019 meeting.

In the summer of 2016 the Committee was expanded to include a Commissioner from one of the smaller municipalities, with Sue Weller from High Springs being the first to fill this seat.

The Committee has been instrumental as the Countywide Water Quality Code has expanded to include stormwater, irrigation, and fertilizer requirements that apply within the municipalities. Staff often provides joint presentations and even created a joint report on the urban creeks. Currently the Committee is focused on the future of septic systems.