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RURAL LANDS STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL MEETING

August 1, 2003
Tallahassee

MEETING SUMMARY

Attendance:

Council Members:

Chuck Aller	Director, Office of Agricultural Water Policy, Florida Department of Agriculture, Tallahassee
Michael Busha	Executive Director, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, Stuart (via phone)
Ernie Cox	Gunster, Yoakley & Stewart, West Palm Beach
Chris Doolin	Vice President, Robert P. Jones & Associates; Legislative Consultant to the Small County Coalition, Tallahassee
Eric Draper	Director of Policy, Audubon of Florida, Tallahassee
Allison DeFoor	State Coordinator, EarthBalance; former "Everglades Czar" for Gov. Jeb Bush
Craig Evans	President, Stewardship America, Inc.
Val Hubbard	Division Manager, Comprehensive and Environmental Planning, Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department, Tallahassee; incoming President, Florida Chapter of American Planning Assoc.
Sue Mullins	Government Relations Manager, The Nature Conservancy, Tallahassee
Al Reynolds	President and CEO, Wilson-Miller, Naples (via phone)
Peter Spyke	Grove Manager, Arapaho Citrus (via phone)

Guests:

Chuck Hungerford	Florida Legislative Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, Tallahassee
Kim Love	Water Resource Manager, Martin County
Cari Roth	Former General Council, Department of Community Affairs, Tallahassee
Lisa Walsh	Marion County Planning Department, Ocala
Barbara White	Loxahatchee River Coalition, Martin County
Chappy Young	Martin County Agricultural Landowners (MCAL), Inc., Palm City (via phone)

Absent:

Colleen Castille	Secretary, Florida Department of Community Affairs, Tallahassee
Rick Drummond	Growth Management Director, Alachua County Growth Management Department, Gainesville
Dave Fisk	Deputy Executive Director, St. John.s River Water Management District, Palatka
Mark Glisson	Environmental Administrator, Florida Department of Environment Protection, Tallahassee
Tom Jones	Barron Collier Company, Naples
Chuck Littlejohn	Executive Director, Florida Land Council, Tallahassee
Pamela Mac'Kie	Deputy Executive Director, Land Resources, South Florida Water Management District, West Palm Beach
Charles Pattison	Executive Director, 1000 Friends of Florida, Tallahassee
Don Ross	President, Earth Balance (formerly Florida Environmental), Murdock
Jon Steverson	Government Liaison, Florida Association of Counties, Tallahassee
Denver Stutler	Deputy Chief of Staff, Executive Office of the Governor, Tallahassee

Meeting Summary

Agenda Items 1-3: TELECONFERENCE CONNECTIONS/INTRODUCTIONS/OVERVIEW OF AGENDA/APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

Ernie Cox, a land use attorney with Gunster, Yoakley & Stewart, P.A., who represented landowners during development of the Collier County Rural Lands Stewardship Area, was introduced and welcomed as the newest member of the Council. Minutes from the May 15, 2003 Council meeting were approved as reported.

Agenda Items 4 & 5: REPORT ON JULY 16, 2003 MEETING OF PRESENTATIONS, WORKSHOP AND SYMPOSIUM COMMITTEE.

Mike Busha reported on the July 16, 2003 meeting of this Committee and discussed the one-day symposium for the Treasure Coast region to be held December 5, 2003. The event will be held in the Schreiber Center at the Florida Atlantic University/Indian River Community College (FAU/IRCC) Campus in St. Lucie West. A draft agenda, Attachment #1, can be viewed at <http://privatelands.org/RLSP/RLSP.htm#Meetings>. The purpose of the symposium is to provide education to the public, landowners, policy makers, community developers and others regarding rural planning issues and alternatives. The workshop will be held by the Rural Land Stewardship Council, with staff support from the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. According to Mike Busha, 1.5 million people are projected to move to the Treasure Coast region in the next 30 years, and approximately two-thirds of the region consists of "unplanned" lands with residential densities ranging from one unit per five acres to one unit per 20 acres.

The symposium will be held in St. Lucie County at the Schreiber Center, which will hold approximately 400 people. There may be a reception the evening before the symposium for speakers, for which sponsors would be sought, if a reception is to be held. The concept is for elected and appointed local government officials to attend and learn, but for the symposium to be a non-political educational forum. Plans are for it to be recorded on both video and audio, with a follow-up report.

Discussion was held that many planners and policy makers are not familiar with rural planning issues, as the focus of the Growth Management Act and its implementation has, to date, been primarily upon urban planning, with the rural areas of most counties being left “for later.”

Discussion was also held regarding the need for a multi-faceted approach to rural planning, including support of profitable agriculture, sustainable economic development, environmental and ecosystem protection and restoration where available, and innovative and creative methods to accommodate the projected population. The Council generally agreed that such a program would benefit the community, the individual landowners, the economy and the environment, if it is done correctly. The Council also discussed the possibility of looking at a much longer planning horizon for rural lands.

Peter Spyke also reported on an Agro-ecology Conference to be held in Fort Pierce on September 17, 2003.

The Committee will continue to work on the agenda for the symposium and there will be an aggressive marketing and public information campaign so that the Council can have as many participants as possible.

Agenda Items 6 & 7: REPORT ON RURAL LANDS DISCUSSIONS IN MARTIN COUNTY.

Ernie Cox and Kim Love of Martin County provided an update on current discussions in Martin County regarding the County’s rural and agricultural lands and the creation of a new entity known as the Martin County Agricultural Landowners, Inc. The Executive Director of MCAL, Chappy Young, also participated in this discussion by telephone. In summary, Martin County has conducted six public workshops on rural and agricultural land use issues, including preservation alternatives and a presentation by Craig Evans on the Collier County Stewardship concept. At this point, Martin County has not embarked upon any program or approach but is considering potential options to deal with the rural and agricultural lands, currently designated in the comprehensive plan with a density one unit per 20 acres.

MCAL counts as members the owners of approximately 100,000 acres of agricultural lands in Martin County, and will be heavily involved in any efforts by Martin County to study or evaluate or plan the western lands.

Discussion was held regarding the issues presented by very low density residential development and the affect that may have on ecosystems, agriculture and the provision of public services. The consensus was that alternative strategies need to be developed in order to assist counties with rural lands to properly prepare for the future, including the accommodation of population in a way that protects and enhances quality of life for everyone.

Discussion was also held that the Rural Land Stewardship program is but one of many available tools for dealing with rural planning issues, and that further discussion, education and analysis would be needed. The Council discussed the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act and the need for it to be funded by the legislature, although there was recognition that with the current fiscal situation, that would be unlikely.

Martin County is considering the purchase of agricultural or conservation easements; however, the funds that may be generated may not be sufficient to make a significant impact. It was agreed that the information to be presented and discussed at the TCRPC symposium this Fall would be very helpful in formulating community consensus and vision for the future.

It appears that the approach to be taken in Martin County will be to involve interested parties and stakeholders in the process and discussion and it is hoped that full analysis will be conducted before any decisions are made. Members of the Council expressed interest in assisting and being kept informed.

Agenda Items 8 & 9: PLAN OF ACTION/FUNDING FOR THE RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

The first year of operation of the Council was funded by a \$20,000 grant from the Elizabeth Ordway Foundation, which has not been renewed. To date, the following organizations have contributed \$1,000 each as dues for the coming year, for which the Council expresses its thanks:

EarthBalance
Gunster, Yoakley & Stewart
Littlejohn, Mann & Associates
Small Counties Coalition
The Nature Conservancy
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
WilsonMiller

We are hopeful that others may be able to assist with contributions this year as well.

According to Craig Evans, approximately \$20,000 per year will provide the minimum funding for Stewardship America to operate the Council at its current level; however,

more funds would allow the Council to do additional work. The initial budget proposal to the Elizabeth Ordway Foundation was for \$75,000, which would have allowed for additional staff for facilitated workshops, education materials, presentations to interested counties, etc. It was generally agreed that no other organization is specifically dealing with rural land issues and that the focus of the Rural Land Stewardship Council was rural planning.

One item of discussion was whether the Council could act as a consultant and produce workshops similar to the Urban Land Institute. Such an alternative presents certain concerns for the public members of the Council, and so, no action was taken on that particular idea. Educational workshops might also provide a funding mechanism. Generally, it was agreed that the Council would attempt to obtain additional contributions by ways of dues for the current year and that the Council would continue to evaluate potential funding alternatives.

As to the plan of action, it was agreed that the Council, through its diverse membership, could have a significant impact on the future of rural planning in Florida and have a very positive influence on the future of the State of Florida. It was reported that the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association is working on a series of white papers, including efforts to get people to think beyond the immediate project-by-project planning exercise, to think about what new growth is going to look like, and ways to create incentives to encourage growth to evolve according to a community's "vision" for its future. Discussion was held about the Council being a clearinghouse for information on rural planning issues, options and experiences, including incentives rather than additional regulations.

Discussion was held about the positive attributes of agriculture and the delicate nature of agriculture's profitability, given the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), increasing overseas competition and regulation. It was recognized that without profit, agriculture will no longer exist and that efforts to require agriculture preservation that don't address that fundamental issue will not be successful.

Discussion was also held regarding the possibility of merging agricultural needs with the needs of urban areas. For instance, the group discussed the need for agriculture to use manure as fertilizer in certain circumstances, yet the government is paying to have certain wastes taken away, and ag producers are paying to have these same wastes delivered for on-farm use. Perhaps there is a way to integrate the agricultural community with the local community and create a truly innovative waste disposal system whereby ag producers are paid to turn urban wastes into useful products that can benefit the urban community.

Discussion was also held regarding use of Florida's population growth to provide funds for conservation, protection and preservation. It was generally agreed that the Council needs more "win/win" relationships regarding our rural lands.

Also discussed was the notion that it would be difficult to write a 50-year plan but that it might be possible to develop a 50-year vision for a particular community.

Other Discussion Points - 3 Key Issues

RURAL LAND USE PLANNING

“MOST PLANNERS DON’T UNDERSTAND THIS ISSUE ... [In fact,] most planners know very little about rural planning ... There are no planning tools to allow rural areas to develop in a way that maintains their rural character ...

So how do you create incentives to get people to think beyond the incremental, project-by-project creep of development?” – VAL HUBBARD, INCOMING PRESIDENT, FLORIDA CHAPTER, AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION (STATEMENT MADE AT THE AUGUST 1, 2003 RURAL LANDS STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL MEETING).

LAND USE ECONOMICS

“FAR TOO MANY LAND USE DECISIONS ARE MADE WITHOUT A FULL KNOWLEDGE OR AWARENESS OF THE LONG-TERM ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THOSE DECISIONS ...

“By failing to address the true costs of population growth, both past and future, we continue to borrow against future revenues, while the quality of life in our communities slowly dissipates. As we respond to new growth and address our existing infrastructure deficits, communities must [have the tools available to] evaluate their choices in a fiscally responsible manner.” THE GOVERNOR’S GROWTH MANAGEMENT STUDY COMMISSION, FINAL REPORT, FEBRUARY 2001, “TIME FOR BOLD CHANGE,” P.15.

LARGE-SCALE LANDSCAPE PLANNING/COORDINATION OF ISSUES

“THERE IS A TENDENCY TO EQUATE NEW DEVELOPMENT AS THE ONLY CAUSE OF GROWTH RELATED PROBLEMS rather than to recognize that new development is a free market way of accommodating the demands of our state’s rapid population and economic growth.

“We cannot continue to erroneously conclude that techniques that target only the effects (development) will somehow change the root cause (population growth), and that a regulatory framework applied on a *project-by-project level* [the typical approach to dealing with most issues today] will be more effective than a broad and innovative incentive-based approach.” THE GOVERNOR’S GROWTH MANAGEMENT STUDY COMMISSION, FINAL REPORT, P.13.

It was noted that for the Council's efforts to be successful it will be important for the participants to spend time together socially, preferably over meals. It was generally agreed that the process is very important in order to have any chance of success and that it needs to be a grassroots cooperative effort.

Agenda Items 10 & 11: COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND WORK ASSIGNMENTS.

Three individuals volunteered to chair or co-chair committees at the May 15, 2003 meeting. The balance of the committee chairs were selected August 1, 2003. Committee chairs are as follows:

Ernie Cox, chair, Guidelines Committee

Pam Mac'Kie, provisional chair, Pilot Programs Committee. Mac'Kie was absent so could not defend herself from being nominated by unanimous consent of the other committee members present

Craig Evans & Sue Mullins, co-chairs, Education & Promotion Materials/Fund Raising Committee

Michael Busha, chair, Presentations, Workshop & Symposium Committee

Peter Spyke, chair, Agriculture & Rural Landowners Committee

Colleen Castille & Chuck Littlejohn, co-chairs, Mission, Concept Refinement & Guiding Principles Committee

Committee assignments

The Workshop Committee chaired by Mike Busha will continue working on the symposium scheduled for December 5, 2003, and other members will assist in spreading the word on this symposium.

The Guidelines Committee chaired by Ernie Cox will attempt to convene by conference call prior to the next Stewardship Council meeting to discuss how the stewardship concept may be made more readily adaptable to other places and, particularly, the processes that could be followed.

The Education and Promotion Materials Fundraising Committee will have further discussions with other Council members as to possible funding alternatives.

The Concept Refinement/Mission/Guiding Principles Committee will continue working on a mission statement. **It was requested that all Council members provide their thoughts on the draft purpose statement to the Committee by September 24.** (Please email comments to Craig Evans, craig@privatelands.org, for him to pass on to the committee.) Three new members were added to the committee at the request of Sec. Castille – Jon Steverson, Michael Busha and Peter Spyke.

The committee also will be discussing the appropriate structure for the Council. The Council currently is operated as a public education project, under the direction of

Stewardship America, Inc., which has been responsible for all of the Council's fundraising, and which has provided staff support for operation and promotion of the Council. This structure has been useful for launching the Council, but for a variety of reasons, it may be preferable if the Council is established as an independent entity. A teleconference call among members of this committee is scheduled for September 30, 2003.

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held in Collier County, Florida, hopefully at the office of WilsonMiller so that the process of the Collier County stewardship plan can be fully explained and evaluated.

Agenda Item 12: MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AND THOSE THAT COULD
MAKE IT HAD LUNCH TOGETHER TO CONTINUE
DISCUSSING THE ISSUES AND OPTIONS