

**MINUTES OF THE
TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
APRIL 15, 2005**

Acting Chairman Minsky called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He led the pledge of allegiance and requested roll call.

The following members and alternates were present:

Indian River County:	Councilman Ahrens, Alternate Councilmember Neglia
St. Lucie County:	Commissioner Coward Commissioner Craft Mayor Minsky
Martin County:	Commissioner Valliere Commissioner Smith Commissioner Bausch Mayor Connolly, Alternate
Palm Beach County:	Commissioner Newell Councilmember Brinkman Mayor Golonka Mayor Ferreri Commissioner Exline Mayor Jacobson, Alternate
Gubernatorial Appointees:	Susan Haynie Kevin J. Foley Ramon Trias Daniel Miteff Herman Baine Eugene Gibbins Charles Collins
Ex-Officios:	Larry Hymowitz, FDOT, Alternate Karen Smith, SFWMD
Council Staff:	Marcela Camblor Kim DeLaney Elizabeth Gulick Sandy Gippert Wynsum Hatton Stephanie Heidt Terry L. Hess Dana Little Peter G. Merritt

Gregory Vaday
Joan Young

Council Attorney: Roger Saberson

The Deputy Director announced a quorum was present.

AGENDA/CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Smith moved approval of the Agenda and the Consent Agenda. **MOTION**
Commissioner Valliere seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mayor Ferrari noted that he has a potential conflict with Agenda Item 6E, City of Palm Beach Gardens Comprehensive Plan Amendment and submitted the proper paperwork. Acting Chairman Minsky pointed out that Mayor Ferrari abstained from voting on the Consent Agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council staff noted that this year Regional Planning Councils (RPCs) are funded at three million dollars in both the Florida House and Senate budgets. The RPCs have not been funded at this level since 1985. Thank you letters will be sent to the House and Senate committee members. Staff also thanked councilmembers who asked their legislators to support this increased funding to the RPCs.

Council staff announced that the University of Florida will hold a two-day Planning Officials Training Program May 4-5 at the Schreiber Conference Center in Port St. Lucie. The training is primarily for Local Planning Agency members, however the program is open to the public. Councilmembers are invited to attend. Brochures were distributed to Council.

Over the past couple of years, Staff has reported on a number of joint initiatives between the South Florida Regional Planning Council and Council. Staff suggested the two RPCs meet to discuss how to complement each other's work program. Staff will contact the Regional Issues Committee about a joint meeting.

Staff indicated that it would be scheduling a meeting for the Regional Issues Committee to provide input and guidance on a workforce housing initiative. This initiative would include a workforce housing symposium in the fall and other activities.

Acting Chairman Minsky announced a meeting on workforce housing scheduled for May 21, 2005, from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Until recently, the City of Port St. Lucie has an oversupply of workforce housing, however the cost of housing and unimproved property is skyrocketing and pricing workforce people out of the area. Fannie Mae will be there to discuss programs they can offer. Additionally, realtors, builders, and mortgage brokers have been invited to attend the meeting to network on how workforce housing issues will be addressed. Acting Chairman Minsky also related that Florida Power & Light will be building a plant within the Treasure Coast Region. The new plant will exacerbate the lack of workforce housing since plant construction workers will take up much of the rental properties and hotel rooms.

PROPOSED BUDGET AMENDMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004-2005

Council staff reported that the Budget/Personnel Committee met on April 4, 2005 to discuss a proposed budget amendment for Fiscal Year 2004-2005. Commissioner Smith furthered by pointing out that Staff's workload has increased dramatically and is expected to increase even more. Additional staff should be hired to ensure that Staff's reputation for high-quality work does not suffer. Moreover, providing local governments with technical assistance should remain Staff's highest priority. The committee voted unanimously to recommend that Council approve the proposed budget amendment. The Florida House and Senate appropriation of the \$3 million was not known at the time of the Budget/Personnel Committee meeting. Commissioner Smith asked staff to provide an update on how this additional funding will be allocated. Staff pointed out that the increase will be for the next fiscal year but an update will be provided. Commissioner Coward moved approval of the proposed budget amendment. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Foley, which carried unanimously.

MOTION

ORIENTATION SERIES ON TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - MIX OF USES

Staff gave a presentation on Mixed-Use, the seventh in a series explaining principles found in the "Vision" Section of the *Strategic Regional Policy Plan*. Mixed-Use can be used at three levels: building, parcel or district. Uses may include residential, commercial, and office. The full presentation along with the PowerPoint presentation will be posted on Council's website. The item was presented for informational purposes only.

Commissioner Smith noted that he had attended a presentation at the Public Officials Design Institute in Abacoa the previous evening that showed how a Walmart and Publix had been incorporated to become neighborhood stores. Staff noted that corporations are slowly warming to the idea of mixed-use.

Mayor Golonka cautioned that when considering mixed use, careful thought should be given to design. However, local governments should not impose more regulations, but compatibility between the type of uses and their locations should be carefully considered. She related an example in Abacoa where a bar is too close to residences. Residents complain that the area is too loud and active during normal sleeping hours.

WORKFORCE HOUSING

Staff gave a presentation on workforce housing. Due to the soaring cost of housing on the Treasure Coast, middle-income households find it increasingly difficult to find housing they can afford in proximity to their work. This causes many to seek housing outside the region's major job centers.

Mayor Golonka thanked staff for the presentation and noted that she is pleased that the Council is taking the lead regionally by providing information on this important topic. She asked that staff provide assistance to local governments in determining what to do with neighborhoods that are already built out and inclusionary zoning is not possible.

Developers may not be receptive to the idea of workforce housing. She emphasized the need to address workforce housing.

Commissioner Craft stated that the biggest challenge is not just providing the workforce housing, but maintaining the affordability. He asked staff to provide examples of programs in place in other communities to help maintain the affordability. Staff reported that there are various mechanisms that can be utilized. Some communities have adopted a workforce ordinance wherein affordability is maintained for at least twenty or thirty years. Even if the unit is sold three or four times within that twenty or thirty year time, there are income restrictions on who can buy the unit and at what price it can be sold. Commissioner Craft then asked if this would put a restriction on the appreciation growth of that property. Staff responded there is a formula that normally takes the form of a deed restriction or a covenant that runs with the title. Staff stated that the desired affordability factor should be longer than five or ten years.

Commissioner Smith related that there had been two presentations on workforce housing to the Martin County Commission over the last month. Winter Park presented a project wherein they set up a land trust that was the starting point for acquiring land so they could control the pricing and scale long-term. They asked the architectural community to create designs. The goal of the project was to retain families of firefighters, nurses, and teachers. This project included seventeen to twenty models of homes priced at \$125,000. The homes were well-constructed and designed with great amount of detail. Winter Park proves that affordable workforce can be provided in a positive way. He asked staff to provide more examples such as this in the future.

Councilmember Trias stated that one of the most important principles of community building is providing housing for all members of the community. The biggest change in society in the past 100 years is in the amount of money households spend on transportation. If people can spend less on automobile transportation, they can put more money toward housing. Transportation is directly related to the design of the community which is directly linked to the affordability of the housing. Further work needs to be done to examine affordability within the context of transportation.

Councilmember Baine stated the he believes workforce housing is a good thing, but he does not believe in price ceilings. Price ceilings have failed and been abandoned by large cities such as New York. Let the marketplace dictate the price. He stated that when the government dictates prices individuals and builders no longer have an incentive to improve the community. Councilmember Baine also pointed out that Florida is a low-wage state. The incomes of people who live in workforce housing units may have increased an average of about 3.8% so local governments should ensure that housing prices do not increase more than 3.8%. However, prices should not have a ceiling.

Councilmember Foley emphasized that local government should not subsidize workforce housing. If people moving from other states cannot afford to live in Florida, they should not come here. Local governments should not subsidize them. Florida sunshine has a price.

Councilmember Miteff noted that Council needs to be strong and effective on the subject of workforce housing. He supported producing a white paper to illustrate the importance of mixed-use and densities in workforce housing.

Mayor Jacobson took issue with Councilmember Foley's comments. He stated that he hoped we never enter into a restrictive society or restrictive state. He said he is opposed to any concept of restricting people who want to come to the state of Florida. Industry and private enterprise must work together and meet this challenge willingly as it will take a union of all elements of society to address this issue and overcome it.

Acting Chairman Minsky noted that this is the first time he can recall that because of the price escalation people cannot afford to buy the houses in which they live. He also noted that with the three percent cap that has been holding down the assessed values of homes, people cannot downsize because they cannot afford the taxes on a smaller home. A lot of the increase in cost is not being driven by local people getting more prosperous, but by those individuals coming into the area who are willing to pay top dollar.

Commissioner Bausch noted that if we want to have firefighters, teachers, policemen, nurses and secretaries able to afford housing, we are going to have to compete with the earnings of the private marketplace. He noted that although politicians do not like to increase taxes, those who can afford to buy the houses can afford the taxes. Since Florida does not have a state income tax, the real estate and sales taxes are government's revenue source. Unless government increases the revenue sources to pay the teachers, firemen, and policemen a competitive wage, government will continue to subsidize housing.

Councilmember Foley stated that we can provide workforce housing either by subsidizing wages, or by subsidizing the price of the housing. He noted that due to decreasing profit margins for home developers, the development community will not be able to stay in business if they are forced to build workforce housing.

Commissioner Bausch emphasized that it is not competitive to provide subsidies. Subsidizing to give policemen, firemen, and other civil servants a living wage is not competitive with the private sector.

Councilmember Collins noted that governments consider that the national economic system has changed. Individuals are finding that there is a bigger return when investing in real estate than with the stock market. Therefore, large amounts of money are being invested in Florida real estate.

Commissioner Valliere thanked staff for the presentation and expressed her pleasure that Council is moving forward with this important issue. She pointed out that those in retail and other services also need workforce housing opportunities. If workforce housing is not properly addressed, the entire economy will suffer.

Mayor Golonka indicated that local government initiatives and policies will not solve the problem of an insufficient amount of workforce housing. The solution will need to include all the elements of the economy including the private sector.

Councilmember Miteff stated that it is important to realize that no one segment is going to solve the problem by themselves. Industry, state government, and city government need to work together.

LONG-TERM TRANSIT FUNDING FOR THE SOUTHEAST FLORIDA REGION

Isabel Cosio Carballo from the South Florida Regional Planning Council summarized a policy paper entitled “Funding the Future: The Case for Establishing Dedicated Long-Term Funding Sources for the Region’s Transit Needs”. This paper was presented to Council to help the members better understand transit needs and funding opportunities for the current and future transportation needs of the Treasure Coast Region.

Commissioner Smith commented that Martin County is very interested in participating in these types of studies. However, due to differing economies, it is hard for the smaller counties to participate at the same levels of funding as the larger counties. The \$2 million fee required for participation in the FEC Corridor Study precludes Martin County from participating.

Commissioner Bausch asked who the members of the community are that pay the tax to fund the various transportation projects in the South Florida region.

Ms. Carballo replied that it is a sales tax. The paper describes different sources of funding such as gas tax, ad valorem tax, and registration fees. The South Florida Regional Planning Council found that sales tax was probably the best alternative. Also, the use of a sales tax means that tourists will pay a share of the cost. Tourists benefit from the transportation system. This paper is being presented to Council to show that there is currently a small window of opportunity for funding in Tallahassee. Now is the time to define what is wanted and move forward.

COUNCIL MEMBER INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Staff noted that a legislative update from the staff of the Florida Regional Councils Association was distributed to Council. A number of different growth management bills are being considered by the legislature.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

STAFF COMMENT

Council expressed its preference to meet at the Indian River Community College location rather than the prior location. Mayor Ferrari moved approval of the IRCC location. Commissioner Exline seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

MOTION

CHAIRMAN’S COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Acting Chairman Minsky adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m. This signature is to attest that the undersigned is the Secretary or a designated nominee of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, and that the information provided herein is the true and correct Minutes of the April 15, 2005, meeting of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council.

Date

Signature