

The Board of County Commissioners of Citrus County, Florida, met in special session on the above date at the Fort Island Trail Park, 12073 West Fort Island Trail, Crystal River, Florida, for the purpose of conducting a Goal Setting Workshop. The Chairman called the meeting to order. Commissioner Wooten led in the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

<b>Commissioners:</b>	Jim Fowler, Chairman; Gary Bartell, First Vice-Chairman; Josh Wooten, Second Vice-Chairman; Roger Batchelor and Vicki Phillips
<b>Attorney:</b>	Robert B. Battista
<b>Administrator:</b>	Richard Wm. Wesch
<b>Clerks:</b>	Glenda Brown and Theresa Steelfox, Deputy Clerks

---

## 2003 GOAL SETTING WORKSHOP

The Chairman distributed a handout from Ron Miller titled The Coastal Springs National Estuarine Research Reserve, A Vision for Citrus County (filed with the Clerk's agenda). He stated that Mr. Miller requested that the item be scheduled for a time certain on a future Board's agenda.

The Commissioners proceeded to discuss their goals as follows:

### COMMISSIONER JOSH WOOTEN

- 1) Reevaluate the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) Five-Year Plan to possibly include SR-41 south from SR-200 to SR-44, due to the development of traffic in that corridor. Concern with Croft Road and SR-41, both major roads leading into Inverness, being under construction at the same time.
- 2) Direct staff to proceed with the cumbersome land acquisition process to purchase the right of ways in busy corridors; e.g., CR-486 and CR-491.
- 3) Investigate an Access Management Plan for SR-44, due to the growing commercial activity; e.g., Super Wal-Mart and possible Lowes Home Improvement Store.
- 4) Consider building a service road behind the SR-44 commercial corridor, off Croft Road, to relieve traffic and provide access to the rear of businesses.
- 5) Include the enhancement of the intersection of Croft Road and CR-486, in front of the Hernando Elementary School, in the CR-486 Land Acquisition Project in order to save mobilization costs and remedy the congested traffic problems.
- 6) Budget \$250,000 in order to collaborate with the Army Corp of Engineers (Corp) for lake restoration projects that could take place during the course of the Corp Study.

- 7) Build a public fishing pier, create access points, and develop a master plan on parking around Lake Hernando.
- 8) Create a Waterfront Beautification Project in Hernando (plant native and flowering trees, etc.) by using part of the \$5,000 State funding for improvements and landscape enhancements at SR-200 and SR-44.
- 9) Adopt the logo designed by Gold & Associates for the Tourist Development Council, that could be affixed to the sides of County vehicles.
- 10) Allow small businesses that could not afford expansion of water line services to use occupational license fee funds on a cost reimbursement basis, which would be replenished, with hookup fees paid by other businesses along the corridor.
- 11) Authorize staff to conduct a presentation to the Board on the history and future of the Coastal High Hazard Area and the Mixed Use District (MXU).
- 12) Consider hiring an outside independent consultant to revamp the 13-year old Land Development Code (LDC) to avoid confusion and possible lawsuits, and develop clear rules for developers and landowners to follow.
- 13) Allow County employees to observe the Martin Luther King holiday.
- 14) Establish and implement a Youth Commission to serve as advisors in each Commissioner's district.

**COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

- All Commissioners agreed that the Youth Commission was a wonderful idea.
- Occupational license fees should be used only for infrastructure.
- Release the \$250,000 in funds from occupational license fees previously obligated to the delayed Pro-Line Boat Project for other business infrastructure.
- No problem with observing Martin Luther King holiday; however, there were concerns of budgetary impacts and that it would lead to requests to observe other holidays.
- Road and water projects should be addressed in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Workshop.
- The LDC was reviewed annually in the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR).
- Schedule an outside attorney to give a presentation on quasi-judicial procedures for land use issues.

- Opposition to hiring a consultant for revamping the LDC because the changes should be decided by the citizens and the Board.
- Clarification and review needed on the planning concept and the quasi-judicial proceedings.

**COMMISSIONER VICKI PHILLIPS**

- 1) Need contingency funds in this year's budget to lessen the impact of legislative budget cuts to three major State programs: Medicaid, Department of Juvenile Justice, and Article V. The only other options would be to cut services or increase taxes.
- 2) Redefine the language in the LDC regarding junkyard conditions and old vehicles, and give staff the tools to be able to enforce the rules.
- 3) Establish an ordinance that would allow the County to mow the grass of neglected property or property of absentee property owners in subdivisions of close proximity, and charge the property owner.
- 4) Authorize staff to prepare a policy whereas citizens could collaborate with the County to improve and beautify landscaping in subdivisions within the FDOT standards. Suggested the use of the Extension Office and the Master Gardeners.
- 5) Create a policy that would give staff direction on land use applications as to whether or not to bring recommended denials or those with extensive conditions to the Board.
- 6) Establish e-mail addresses for all Commissioners.
- 7) Give staff direction to approach the Board with suggestions on solving problems.

**COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

- All Commissioners agreed with redefining the code enforcement issues, beautifying neighborhoods, establishing e-mail addresses for Commissioners, and establishing a grass-mowing ordinance.
- The Board should still review all land use applications.
- The Board could not deny a property owner the right to bring any application before them.
- Concerns with the code enforcement inspection staff and the system failing. Mr. Wesch should make recommendations that would help solve the code enforcement problems.

- An ordinance for grass mowing should be countywide, and might be accomplished by looking at densities relative to certain square foot areas. (I-B)

**The meeting was recessed and reconvened at 10:36 A.M.**

**COMMISSIONER JIM FOWLER**

- 1) Direct staff to send a letter informing the company (Grubb's Emergency Services) who withdrew from removing the Bonner Lee sunken vessel from Kings Bay, that a Request for Proposal (RFP) would be sent out for another contractor to assist the County with disaster recovery services.
- 2) Employ a special master to assist with legal rulings pertaining to property rights and land use in quasi-judicial hearings.
- 3) Direct staff to bring to the Board, during the budgetary process, information on the creation of a family park recreation complex with a swimming pool, water slide, skateboard park, ball fields, tennis courts, batting cages, etc.
- 4) Determine a method to provide water and sewer systems in environmentally sensitive areas; i.e., lakes regions, due to grant funds becoming nonexistent in the future. Suggested mapping out districts, estimating costs, and determining fees for hookup and rates. Borrowing funds might be necessary for start up costs. Possibly, establish a Municipal Service Benefit Unit (MSBU) for water and sewer upgrades and improvements. Develop a Water Reuse Program in areas such as the Inverness Golf and Country Club. The current Board of Commissioners should map and plan for water, sewer, transportation, recreation, public safety, etc. for the County.

**COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

- Agreed with sending a letter to Grubb's Emergency Services that the County would be hiring another contractor to assist with disaster recovery services.
- Continue to pursue efforts in the removal of the Bonner Lee, contact the Coast Guard for assistance, and contact the Game and Fish Commission to possibly expand the grant funds.
- Introduce the family park recreation complex and Hernando fishing pier during the CIP Workshop; however, the other park projects that were already in the CIP should be made a priority.
- Review the possible exchange of approximately 100 acres of County owned property in the Withlacoochee State Forest for State owned property on SR-44 for a family park recreation complex.

- Consider a Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) as well as a MSBU for water and sewer, due to it being less cumbersome to implement, would supplement the shortfall, etc.
- Consider the possibility of transferring unused water and wastewater tax credits from developments to lower the costs to other areas in the County.
- Concern with the cost effectiveness of placing water and sewer systems in rural areas.
- The State should accept responsibility of faulty septic systems. Also, the Health Department could possibly inspect septic systems and require those systems to be brought into compliance. Accelerate the removal of septic tanks in Old Homosassa.
- Go to the voters again about the one-cent sales tax, with definitive plans for water, sewer, and other projects.
- Do not rule out grant funds for water and sewer systems; however, an agreement with the City of Inverness must be in place to release the territorial areas.

Lengthy discussion was held on quasi-judicial issues. Key concerns and suggestions were as follows:

- The Board might feel compelled to agree with a special master's recommendation.
- Citizens being better served by the Board than by a special master when making land use decisions.
- Unite with other counties to address the legislature about removing the quasi-judicial procedure from land use issues.
- Hire another full time attorney rather than a special master.
- The Board should rely on its own professional staff for advice on land use issues.
- Questions of what would transpire if the Board agreed with staff rather than the recommendations of a special master.
- Hiring a special master would not reduce public comment, and the Board would still make the final decision.
- The expense of hiring a special master.
- Even if a special master was hired, an applicant could still challenge a decision in a court of law.

- Clarification of the County Attorney's role in regard to advising the Board of judgmental and relevancy issues, procedures, and if the County Attorney could represent the Board as well as staff.
- Ex parte communications were relative if the Commissioners heard or had made comments that could sway their decision.
- The Board's role in the decision process with regard to weighing evidence, and the Chairman's role in regard to seeking advise on a ruling or asking for a determination on issues such as relevancy, etc.
- Relieving the Chairman of obligations in making legal rulings without legal training, and increasing public participation.
- Special master's role being duplicative of the Chairman's duty.
- Competent substantial evidence defined as being fact based sworn testimony, and the weighing of the evidence presented. (II-B)

**The meeting was recessed and reconvened at 12:33 P.M.**

**COMMISSIONER ROGER BATCHELOR**

- 1) Direct staff to work with the FDOT to eliminate the problems of water runoff in sensitive areas on US-19.
- 2) Direct staff to proceed with suggested uses for the Fort Island Trail Park facility due to further deterioration and upkeep problems.
- 3) Continue to develop amenities (restrooms, pavilion, well for drinking water, small meeting room, etc.) at the Citronelle Park, and continue the development of small community parks in the County.
- 4) Continue to support the Suncoast Parkway Toll Road.

**COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

- Staff should talk to landowners for interest in building a County boat ramp north of the Cross-Florida Barge Canal, where the gambling boat used to be, which would take pressure off the Kings Bay area.
- Staff should contact the State regarding the status of the Greenways and Trails marina and boat ramp.

- Due to the Levy County traffic in the area of the Cross-Florida Barge Canal, if a boat ramp were constructed in that area, it could be the first boat ramp to charge user fees.

**COMMISSIONER GARY BARTELL**

- 1) Water and sewer projects should be a priority goal.
- 2) Continue to look for water supply for future needs. Identify public and private abandoned limerock pits along SR-41 to possibly interconnect to the Withlacoochee River when we have floods and store it in surface bodies.
- 3) Improve and change code enforcement standards.
- 4) Staff should take advantage of the Florida Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) assistance in resolving land use issues before reviewing the need for a consultant.
- 5) Continue to build infrastructure necessary to accommodate future needs. (III-A)

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

 Dave Conant supported code enforcement changes, thought the beautification partnership was a great idea, and felt it would be beneficial for an outside attorney to sit with the Chairman during quasi-judicial proceedings. He added that he thought the County Attorney should represent staff in those hearings.

Mr. Wesch responded to Mr. Conant's question regarding the Martin Luther King holiday by stating that the current procedure was that if an employee wanted Martin Luther King Day off, the employee could use a vacation day. Otherwise, it would be at the supervisor's discretion whether to allow the employee the day off without pay. Mr. Conant stated that some companies allowed employees to observe certain religious holidays without penalty even though the office remained open. He offered that as a suggestion for Martin Luther King day.

Mr. Conant also stated that he was very interested in fire services, suggested a possible need for a part time Public Information Officer, and questioned the long range plans, activities, and needs of constitutional officers and jails.

Commissioner Phillips advised that the constitutional officers were invited to participate in the CIP process to express their needs and concerns. She added that the Public Safety Coordinating Council (Council) met quarterly, and was open to the public. She stated that the Council was keeping a close watch on the inmate population, and was working on alternatives, such as monitoring devices and construction of buildings. She added that when a viable program was in place, the Council would inform the public.

Commissioner Wooten added that the Supervisor of Elections additional space needs request were granted, and that he was not aware of any other requests for space needs of constitutional officers.

Mr. Conant concluded by stating that he thought the citizens would support the one-cent sales tax if it were for a proper activity.

Commissioner Bartell commented that there was a press file at the County Administrator's office that was also available to the public.

 Ron Lieberman remarked that he thought sewer problems were one of the most important County issues, and that with continued growth there would be more problems. He suggested that the County consider using impact fees to assist with affordable housing. He mentioned the lack of code enforcement in the building industry, and suggested that the County review Hernando County's Code Enforcement Program.

Discussion followed regarding options for assisting low income housing, such as increasing impact fees, waiving sewer, water, and transportation fees, creating some type of fund, etc.

 Jim Bitter stated that he thought the County had a Public Information Officer in the past. He advised that the Homosassa River Alliance had requested that the Board consider the Federal Estuarine Study Program, which might provide information on lakes and rivers.

The Chairman replied that the Federal Estuarine Study Program would be scheduled on a future agenda, and that Mr. Miller would give a short presentation.

 Ed Fitzpatrick suggested that the County Attorneys meet with the Chairman prior to each quasi-judicial proceeding for a review of the rules, and give the Chairman an opportunity to ask any questions before each hearing. He favored the idea of storing water and recommended that the County also sell stored water.

 Marilyn Serianni stressed the importance of reviewing changes to the LDC, and stated that it should be a major project due to the problems of land use issues.

 Bill Serianni expressed concern about the Nuclear Power Plant (Plant) being so close, and asked if preparations had been made for catastrophic events, controlling aircraft impact, contacting the military for community protection, etc.

The Chairman responded to Mr. Serianni's concerns by stating that he had attended two-day security drills at the Plant, where every circumstance had been thought of, and that procedures were in place for any catastrophic event. He added that an army of people would be mobilized to respond to situations, and that numerous agencies would be in charge of taking care of any happenings. He added that he felt the community was safer due to the Plant.

Discussion ensued regarding the Plant being designed to withstand a 757 aircraft impact, military scrambling, contacting John Stevenson at Florida Power for information on the emergency plan that was in place at the Plant, etc.

There being no other business to come before the Board, the Chairman adjourned the meeting. (III-B/1:24 P.M.)

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_, Clerk \_\_\_\_\_, Chairman