

RESTORE ACT ADVISORY COMMITTEE, PASCO COUNTY, FLORIDA

ANNOTATED MINUTES

MARCH 1, 2016

**PREPARED IN THE OFFICE OF
PAULA S. O'NEIL, CLERK & COMPTROLLER**

**THE MINUTES WERE PREPARED
IN AGENDA ORDER AS
PUBLISHED AND NOT IN THE
ORDER IN WHICH THE ITEMS WERE HEARD**

6:00 P.M.

**WEST PASCO GOVERNMENT CENTER, BOARD ROOM
8731 CITIZENS DRIVE, NEW PORT RICHEY, FLORIDA 34654**

Committee Members:

Jack Mariano, Board of County Commissioners
Kathryn Starkey (Alternate), Board of County Commissioners - **ABSENT**
Cynthia Armstrong, School Board Representative
Dr. Randy Stovall, College/University Representative - **ABSENT**
David Sumpter, Science or Fisheries Representative
Jeffrey Lowe, Job Creation Industry Representative
VACANT, Pasco Economic Development Council Rep
Kristin Tonkin, Tourism Representative
Bob Robertson, Citizen Representative - **ABSENT**
Bruce Mills, West Pasco Chamber of Commerce Rep

Staff: Mr. Curtis Franklin, RESTORE Act Program Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mariano called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

INVOCATION PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Katie McCormick, Deputy Clerk, gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ROLL CALL

All members were present except Commissioner Starkey, Dr. Stovall, and Mr. Robertson, who were absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Citizens are given an opportunity to comment on any proposition coming before the Committee during Public Comment. The Committee also takes Public Comment on items to be placed on a future RESTORE Act Advisory Committee agenda.

Chairman Mariano asked if anyone wished to speak.

No one spoke.

1. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Minutes Approval from the October 6, 2015 RESTORE Act Advisory Committee Meeting

Motion to approve the October 6, 2015 minutes; motion carried.

2. Committee Member Reappointments

Mr. Franklin noted that the Committee was guided by Resolution 13-250 which required member appointments every two years. He spoke regarding the members who were up for reappointment which included one absent member, Dr. Randy Stovall. Mr. Franklin requested permission to contact Dr. Stovall for confirmation.

Chairman Mariano agreed to serve another two year term.

Ms. Armstrong agreed to serve another two year term.

3. Update on RESTORE, BP, Projects in MYIP

Mr. Franklin spoke regarding current RESTORE funding proposals, funds that were based on BP and the Federal Government accepting the Consent Decree, the agreement approval process, the timeframe allowed to generate a solid spending plan after the Consent Decree was approved, additional funding sources, a list of organizations that Pasco County joined, previous limitations of the Natural Resource Damage Assessment, Federal Grants Management training given by the Department of Treasury, a requirement that funds be distributed to multiple projects, grant allotments, projects selected by the Committee members, Pasco County led the way in getting grant application responses, and projects that were near completion.

Chairman Mariano and Mr. Franklin held discussion regarding the Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP) Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund process; funding that was set aside for administration costs; the Department of Treasury accounts that continued to earn interest; and increasing the amounts requested on grant applications.

No action was taken. The item was for information only.

4. Key Vista Presentation

Mr. Mike Smith, Parks & Recreation Supervisor, gave a PowerPoint presentation which reviewed the history of the Key Vista project and its location, previous submittal notations, the updated proposal, shoreline stabilization, construction of observation and fishing platforms, how to improve flushing of the bayou, two culverts located on the Swartz property that were in need of repairs, optional improvements included a kayak launch and nearby trail, water levels in the channel, and the dredge portion of the project which was removed.

The Committee and Staff held discussion regarding the number of residents living on the bayou; the location and condition of a kayak launch; riprap pricing; the benefits of shore stabilization; the dredging process; maintenance requirements and costs; the possibility of sharing equipment and costs with neighboring counties; dredge activities had to be permitted and approved by the Army Corps of Engineers; mitigation surrounding the project; the storage, operation, and maintenance costs of purchasing dredging equipment; the possibility of using RESTORE funds for initial investment costs; invasive plant species in the area; flushing projects were a good form of mitigation; culvert repairs versus dredging; shoreline stabilization would improve the natural flow; the current condition of culverts owned by the Swartz family; the expectations and desires of the Army Corps of Engineers; the initial proposal from Gator Dredging; updating septic/sewer systems; rescoring the project due to the previous alterations; and ensuring that the Swartz family was in favor of the project.

Mr. Franklin was tasked with identifying additional information and returning that to the Committee.

5. School Board Presentations

A. Coastal Environmental Research Network

Mr. Rob Aguis, Marchman Technical College Principal, introduced Mr. Josh McCart, Environmental Resource Educator, and Ms. Laura Rulison-Lange, Environmental Education Program Coordinator. Mr. Aguis noted that the Coastal Environmental Research Network (CERN) Project was also known as the Pasco Institute of Environmental Research & Restoration (P.I.E.R.R.). He gave a PowerPoint presentation which reviewed the history of the project, a State wide research network for partnership collaboration, coastal restoration and environmental stewardship, mitigation of the Deepwater Horizons, habitat monitoring and restoration, and regional partnerships across all school levels.

Ms. Laura Rulison-Lange, Environmental Education Program Coordinator, continued the PowerPoint presentation which reviewed the Pasco County Schools Environmental Programs. She spoke regarding the Energy Marine Center, students and researchers working side by side, partnership developments included Gaydos Hydrologic Services-GHS Environmental, implementation targets, program improvements, the P.I.E.R.R. phased approach, and the amount of funding needed for a research vessel.

Mr. Josh McCart, Environmental Resource Educator, continued the PowerPoint presentation which reviewed the current restoration projects. He spoke regarding tar balls from the BP oil spill found in 2014 on a beach in Pensacola, the critical role oysters played in Pasco County's environment, data collection stations, a WeatherStem system project, a tidal gauge donated by Mosquito Control, FDOT-GNSS reference station, an aquaponics greenhouse where students were transplanting mangroves to the shorelines, a nursery where Spartina grass was grown and harvested for local restoration projects, and how research could be expanded with a research vessel.

Mr. Aguis thanked the Committee for considering the proposal for funding a research vessel. He spoke regarding the growth of the project and student involvement.

The Committee, Staff, and speakers held discussion regarding the costs associated with a research vessel; the funding addendum process; harvesting opportunities created from dredging; sharing a research vessel with various partners; the Economic Development Council (PEDC); types and visions of business partnerships; creating oyster beds and canal mitigation; scallop harvesting in Hernando County; retaining the population of Pasco County; EcoTourism; price comparisons of research vessels; the procurement process; SunWest Park hosting a fundraiser to help fund a research

vessel; allocated and unallocated funding; the project ranking process; and amendments to the MYIP.

Motion to approve the use of Transocean unallocated funds toward a research vessel, equipment, and lab for the CERN project; motion carried.

B. Living Shorelines Presentation

Ms. Dana Gaydos, GHS Environmental representative, stated that she and Ms. Peggy Mathews would present the item on behalf of the City of New Port Richey. Ms. Gaydos gave a PowerPoint presentation which reviewed the concept of the Living Shoreline Project, a map of projects in the Cotee River Corridor, the Green Key Beach project, the Orange Lake Restoration project, river basin studies, project summaries, a potential seahorse project, and educating the youth of Pasco County.

Ms. Peggy Mathews, GHS Environmental representative, continued the PowerPoint presentation which reviewed the components of the Living Shoreline Project, habitat restoration, the Green Shores project in Pensacola Florida, the Cotee River Blueway, the recreational and environmental benefits, and the Artificial Reef Grant.

Mr. Peter Altman, New Port Richey Finance Director, spoke regarding Ecotourism on the west coast of Pasco County, connections of coast to coast Ecotourists and bicycle paths, the Energy and Marine Education (EMC) center, sanitary sewer projects, a study on water quality by USF, and future partnerships.

The Committee, Staff, and speakers held discussion regarding the addition of fingerling fish to the shoreline areas; requirements for power plants to breed fish; a research component with monitoring aspects; identifying pollution sources for clean-up; the Energy and Marine Education (EMC) center; ownership of the property; research opportunities; and the proposed phases of the project.

No action was taken. This item was for information only

6. Discussion on State Expenditure Plan Strategy

Mr. Franklin explained the item. He noted that the Gulf Coast Consortium agreed to split the funding evenly between twenty-three Counties. He spoke regarding the amount of available funding, assembling of the State Expenditure Plan, and having a combined plan to execute Pot 3 funding.

The Committee and Staff held discussion regarding how Pasco County would execute their portion of the available funding; how the Committee would like Staff to present the plans; designating future funding to specific projects; a requirement that the Governor would approve the State Expenditure Plan; reporting requirements; the federal funding process; a plan executed by the Gulf Coast Consortium; Staff's understanding of County needs; the Committee's input on Pot 3 funding allocations; improvements to the Gulf; representation at the Tampa Bay Estuary meeting; and Chairman Mariano's role in the Gulf Coast Consortium agreeing to the funding being split evenly.

Chairman Mariano noted that he applied for the Executive Member Board of the Gulf Coast Consortium.

7. Other Business

Mr. Franklin provided updates on three projects submitted to the Department of Treasury for grant funding. He spoke regarding the grant application process, requirements for executing grants, and expedition of the process.

Ms. Cathy Pearson, Assistant County Administrator Public Services, noted that Environmental Lands was transferred to the Parks & Recreation Division and now included Natural Resources.

Ms. Kelley Boree, Parks, Recreation, & Natural Resources Director, introduced herself to the Committee. She spoke regarding her career history.

Mr. Mike Smith, Parks & Recreation Supervisor, introduced himself to the Committee. He spoke regarding his involvement with RESTORE, construction of artificial reefs, and water ways.

Mr. Bill Cronin, Pasco Economic Development Council (PEDC) President, spoke regarding creating workforce development, a better place to live, and his career history.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURN

The Committee adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

RESTORE ACT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 1, 2016

(SEAL)

Office of Paula S. O'Neil, Clerk & Comptroller

Prepared by: _____
Tammy Glisson, Records Clerk I
Board Records Division