

Minutes

Agricultural & Natural Resources Advisory Committee
Thursday, January 15, 2009 – 9:00 A.M
Charlotte County Administrative Center
18500 Murdock Circle, Room #119
Port Charlotte, FL 33948-1094

MEMBERS PRESENT

Alton Cheatham, Chairman
Chris Hencher
Arnie Sarlo
Andy Dodd
Matthew Sullivan, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT

Inga Williams, Principal Planner
Ralph Mitchell, County Extension Director
Jane Starr, Recording Secretary
Jeff Ruggieri, Director

MEMBERS EXCUSED

Mike Jones, Vice-Chairman
Dan Ryals
Orrin Webb

GUESTS

Ron Hamel, Gulf Citrus Growers
H. M. Ridgely, Evans Properties

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

The **January 15, 2009** meeting of the **Agricultural and Natural Resources Advisory Committee** was called to order at 9:00am by **Chair Alton Cheatham** noting a quorum was not present.

Chair Cheatham announced Bill Federer has retired from the Committee and has been replaced by Fred Walters.

II. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Cheatham entertained a motion to approve the September 18, 2008 and November 20, 2008 minutes of the **Agricultural and Natural Resources Advisory Committee** as written. Moved by **Chris Hencher** and seconded by **Arnie Sarlo**, the vote passed unanimously.

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS - None

V. NEW BUSINESS

Election of Officers

ACTION: A motion was presented by Chris Hencher to nominate Alton Cheatham to continue as Chairman. This was seconded by Andy Dodd. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

ACTION: A motion was presented by Chris Hencher to nominate Mike Jones to continue as Vice-Chairman. This was seconded by Andy Dodd. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

ACTION: A motion was presented to nominate Andy Dodd as Secretary. This was seconded and a vote was called. The motion passed unanimously.

Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program – “Reservoirs” Workshop

Chair Cheatham provided information and stated at last discussion, two types of workshops are being planned for February or March. Details will be forthcoming and attendance is recommended.

On-going Excavation Concerns

Chair Cheatham provided members with a copy of a letter from Barbara Carlton, Peace River Valley Citrus Growers Association, relative to excavation issues. **Chair Cheatham** offered additional information and referenced a letter from the Department of Agriculture expressing concern about the Right to Farm Act. He stated Assistant Attorney Derek Rooney has advised he will be in contact with the Department of Agriculture and anticipates they will notify the appropriate parties that Charlotte County is no longer going to require the EIS for Group 4 excavations. **Chair Cheatham** has requested Assistant Attorney Rooney keep the Committee informed as to the disposition of this matter and suggested forwarding Ms. Carlton’s letter to the Commission. The floor was opened for discussion. **Andy Dodd** felt the main issue is a duplication of effort and stated his view that Mr. Rooney’s comments handle the primary issue covered in the letter and felt forwarding the letter to the Commission would be sufficient. **Ron Hamel** stated he supports Ms. Carlton’s initiative and would encourage the Committee to go before the Commission to raise awareness of the Committee and issues that will have a long term impact on agriculture. **Chair Cheatham** confirmed he will provide the letter to the Commission.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

East County Plan Update

Inga Williams provided an update regarding the outcome of the East County Stakeholders Large Property and Environmental Meetings and stated the minutes are available on the County website. Questions were addressed and a brief discussion ensued.

Smart Charlotte 2050 Update

Ms. Williams provided an update on the progress to date and advised multiple Charrettes are scheduled for mid-February. At this time, it is anticipated to go before the Board in June.

H. M. Ridgely stated Evans Properties has organized landowners to follow the process and offered comments regarding the East County Guide. He added he feels the loss of mining as a use in the AG land is an erosion of value. Additional comments were offered regarding East County. **Chair Cheatham** invited **Mr. Ridgely** to return and provide updates and input.

Ron Hamel went on record stating he will also be working with and providing input to Land Owners and Citrus Growers in East County. It is his view that this is critical to long term and sustaining AG in the region and there are many types of activities that could be adjusted and adapted in this part of the county.

Chair Cheatham spoke on the Shell Prairie Joshua Creek Meeting and the challenging issues that were discussed facing Citrus. Long term planning as well as the plans presently in place were discussed.

Arnie Sarlo provided information regarding turkey and quail hunts at Babcock Ranch.

Matt Sullivan made known that trees have been contracted for the acreage lost due to canker. To date, 20,000 trees have been planted with an additional 120,000 more planned to be planted between April and October of this year.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Nothing further was reported.

VIII. STAFF COMMENTS

Ralph Mitchell provided an update on the upcoming activities and programs offered through the Extension Office. Handouts were provided to members on the Landscaping Gardening Program. **Mr. Mitchell** added that next year is the 75th anniversary of Extension in Charlotte County.

Inga Williams presented information on the Planning and Zoning Board meeting held on January 12, 2009 and discussed agenda items that were of interest to the Committee. She will provide a jpg of the new county-wide map showing the new designations and prohibited areas. Discussion continued regarding upcoming petitions.

(Jeff Ruggieri arrived at 9:39)

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

X. MEMBER COMMENTS - None

XI. FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

Chair Cheatham reiterated he will provide to Commissioners the letter that was forwarded from Peace River Valley Citrus Growers Association and the comments received from the Assistant County Attorney.

Ron Hamel provided information concerning the Hendry County Extension Office and the Committee's support of the concept of multi-county AG agents being cost shared by surrounding counties. **Chair Cheatham** stated this will be discussed further as an item of New Business next month.

XII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for **March 19, 2009** at 9:00 a.m. in Room #119.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:44a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Starr

Jane Starr
Recording Secretary