

RESTORE Act Advisory Board

**Administration Conference Room
18500 Murdock Circle, 5th Floor
Port Charlotte, FL 33984**

January 21, 2015

Attendees:

Dr. Lisa Beever	+
Peter Guptil	+
Michael Haymans	+
Thomas Hecker	+
Ed Hill	X excused
Howard Kunik	+ City Council day; arrived 1:06 pm
Julie Mathis	+
Annette Nielsen	+
W. Kevin Russell	+
Kelly Shoemaker	+
Elizabeth Staugler	+
Caitlin Weber	+
Mindy Collier – staff	+
Scott Andrichack, citizen	+ arrived 1:04 pm
Gayle Moore, Charlotte County, Recording Secretary	+
Ray Sandrock	X
Janette Knowlton	X

Ms. Weber called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm; roll was taken as Board members declared themselves present; The minutes of January 14th were approved by unanimous vote, on the request of Chair. Mr. Kunik arrived moments later from his City Council meeting, and citizen Scott Andrichack also joined the meeting just after 1:00 pm.

Discussion of Project Submittal Criteria

Ms. Weber called for discussion of the first agenda item under Old Business with reference to materials provided to the group earlier by Ms. Shoemaker. Ms. Staugler led the discussion, asking about whether this group would be ranking all items on the Criteria list equally, as Collier County had done on the original of this form; she noted that Walton County, on their version of the form, had weighted items differently with, e.g., greater weight given to job growth considerations.

Mr. Guptil commented next, noting the Pre-Screening "litmus test" yes/no items would eliminate any completely unsuitable applications. On the following sections such as Allowable Uses and Alignment with County Goals, he observed that even some good applications might not meet every single use or goal enumerated; he suggested that these sections be a worth a single point value (whether 40 as currently assigned, or some other value) so that missing one of those several uses questions within the section would not be a deal killer for any given application. He also suggested changing the ranking numbers to reach a total of 100 points rather than 185.

Ms. Mathis asked whether a project that didn't meet any of the Allowable Uses would even be considered; Mr. Guptil clarified that his point was about having to meet ALL of the allowable uses. Ms. Weber addressed this discussion, asking the group whether there was any feeling that an application meeting ANY County goals would get a certain number of points, or whether there should be something more like a sliding scale. Mr. Guptil pointed out that, under the Pre-Screening, you would have to have met AT LEAST one Allowable Use and at least one of the County goals; what doesn't appear to be required is meeting every individual goal.

Mr. Haymans responded on Mr. Guptil's approach to the Allowable Uses and noted that he seemed to feel some Allowable Uses could be considered more important than others, and if that was so, did he want that one item to be awarded a higher ranking score than the 5 points allotted on the form. Mr. Haymans then posed a question on the importance of the sheer numbers, and whether this is an objective number-based ranking entirely, or is that ranking then modified by the members' subjective judgment on the criteria; in other words, does the high scorer become the project or does the high score then admit that proposal to the "preferred category" which would be further discussed. Mr. Guptil allowed that his approach was a bit more subjective than that.

Ms. Nielsen raised the issue of the weighting of County goals possibly being lower (e.g., 1-3) than the other measures; she noted that most of the projects' value in the point system came from the later sections dealing with quality of the projects. This would also help move to possible total down to 100 total rather than the present 185. Mr. Haymans asked for the group's consensus on moving to a total of 100 basis points; a motion was made by Mr. Haymans, seconded by Mr. Kunik, and carried unanimously, that the total possible points awarded should be 100 points.

Mr. Kunik comment on 'getting to 100' and asked where Mr. Haymans and Mr. Guptil saw the priorities there – are all items awarded equal points, or not? Mr. Guptil responded with the following suggestion:

Section	Possible Point Total
Allowable Uses	20
Alignment with County Goals	20
Quality of Project	35
Added benefits when combined	5
Matching Funds Available	15
Aligned with County Priorities	5 (@ 1 each)

Ms. Weber observed that the last section on page 6 essentially duplicated section 2 on County Goals and should probably be eliminated. Ms. Beever spoke to the first section, and it was noted the Pre-Screening addressed the point she raised.

Ms. Staugler asked about whether allowable uses was supposed to just be one score for constituting an allowable use, rather than handing out multiple scores; Mr. Guptil agreed, pointing out that few applications would meet all allowable uses, so they would be penalized points for the ones they did not meet, and that might mean a lower overall score. Mr. Guptil said he felt that was the section that should and could be more approached more subjectively. Further discussion ensued on this point.

Mr. Haymans commented that there were ways for weighing in opinion on which were the more important allowable uses; he said there could be less weight given to e.g., things that improved state parks but used County money whereas he said he would be more impressed by job creation. Mr. Russell expressed his agreement with Mr. Haymans on this point, and Mr. Guptil agreed also. Mr. Kunik commented that this preference for results important at a local level would then be expressed in the overall point totals awarded to each project.

Ms. Weber asked for clarification about the point total approach vs. weighting the individual allowable uses, and further discussion ensued. Mr. Haymans suggested that the group might need to use a whiteboard approach where everyone states their preference and indicates their subjective ranking on each item. Ms. Mathis commented on how closely this follows the sales tax projects, and stated her feeling that it should be a group ranking vs. an individual ranking.

Mr. Haymans suggested that the group should be able to tell people who want to apply which kind of projects the Board is going to look more favorably on. Further discussion then ensued between Mr. Haymans and Ms. Mathis, who indicated she didn't want to go in this direction if it might preclude hearing about projects the group might not have envisioned. Mr. Russell also said he didn't want to limit or stifle ideas by putting our priorities out in front. In the ensuing discussion, Mr. Haymans elaborated on his concept suggesting that there could be an interview part of the process to let the applicant influence the decision making above and beyond the sheer numbers rating. He reminded the group that this Board is just making recommendations to the County Commission, and they will separately be influenced by others as well.

Mr. Haymans asked if everyone was comfortable with the general categories, so that the group could now rank the line items under each category; Mr. Kunik expressed some concern that approach would be difficult and noted that the approach suggested by Ms. Mathis seemed more flexible; that is, in the first part a proposal could get up to 20 points, where each Board member reviews the proposal, determines how many points it will get under that category, and then all those various point awards can be averaged out and a final number assigned. And so on, through all the categories. Otherwise, the prospect is daunting. Mr. Guptil said that he agreed that the public should know how they will be graded, and told here's what we'll be looking at, here's how much those things will count; tell applicants the top line score the category can get, but not the line item values.

Ms. Weber asked Ms. Shoemaker if she knew of any other county that have used the approach of the point system; Ms. Collier responded that each county does it differently; Ms. Mathis noted that Walton County did do a ranking, and she pointed the group to the material in the binder. Ms. Shoemaker responded to Ms. Weber that there was no reason why additional research couldn't be done and reported back to the group. She raised some issues about how it might turn out if the individual line values were eliminated.

Mr. Haymans then requested the group go back to reconsidering the categories, asking if the feeling was that matching funds were important enough to merit 15 of the points, e.g., while

Quality of Project only merits 20 points. Ms. Weber responded with concerns with the weight given to Quality of Project, noting that just submitting a complete proposal could earn 10 points compared to allowable uses which only claim 5 points each; she suggested "completeness of proposal" should rank below actually meeting the criteria. She said she also agreed that it would be valuable to make it clear how the criteria would be valued without necessarily getting into the details of how each of the members might be evaluating these things differently. Mr. Guptil asked her to clarify the comment, and Ms. Weber commented further.

Mr. Kunik indicated that he is ignoring the numbers for now, and wanted to return to Mr. Haymans's point that the 15 points for matching funds is too high; it's good to have such funds, but because not everyone will have that option, he asked if 15 points was too high a value. Mr. Haymans agreed that leverage was a positive aspect, but he suggested that there may be a great project with no similar support that could be a "hero" project. Ms. Staugler agreed, noting also that it's not more important than the combined-project benefit. The suggestion was eventually made to drop the values for both those sections to 5 and 5; Dr. Beaver commented that all this speaks to the value of the project in terms of cost-effectiveness; Ms. Staugler agreed that maybe 10 and 10 would be appropriate, and Mr. Kunik agreed also.

Mr. Kunik then turned to the last category, "Aligns with county priorities" raising the question again whether it isn't duplicative of section 2; Ms. Shoemaker suggested it carries Section 2 a bit further in terms of getting at specifics. Ms. Weber again suggested removing Section 6 because it is duplicative; Mr. Kunik asked where those five points would go. Discussion ensued with Ms. Staugler suggesting they go into Quality of Project; Mr. Russell noted that the same thing could be said of 4 and 5, which are 20% of project rating. After suggestions from several Board members, Mr. Guptil suggested the group needed to define "quality of project" – is that quality of paperwork? He noted that many of the questions point to quality of the submittal paperwork; by comparison "impact on coastal resources" clearly isn't about the paperwork. He said he felt that weight of real world impacts should be counted heavier than 'quality of paperwork'. Ms. Mathis indicated that she didn't disagree with that point, but that she is more focused on things like realistic deadline for the project work, not for submitting the application.

Mr. Haymans suggested that Section 3 items a, b, c, g, h are the items that speak to 'quality' and that items d, e, f are inappropriate in that category. Ms. Staugler asked where those three elements would go then; Mr. Haymans agreed they were more appropriate in the Allowable uses section. Further discussion ensued on this topic, including whether further changes to the points are needed to maintain the percentages, and how to weight the various items to account for their individual important in the overall process.

Mr. Russell proposed a motion to eliminate the 5 points under Section 6; second by Mr. Haymans; passed with unanimous approval.

Mr. Haymans then motioned for removing items 3. d, e, and f from their current position; Ms. Nielsen then amended that motion to change the category title, because now it would only be addressing the application submittal, not the project itself. Some discussion continued, with Mr. Haymans pointing out that realistic deadlines and achievable permitting are items that are still measuring the project. Ms. Mathis suggested the new section title "Quality of the Proposal" (instead of Project) and Ms. Nielsen agreed with that and seconded the motion, while Ms. Weber seconded the amendment of the motion. By voice vote, changing "project" to "proposal" received unanimous approval; by second voice vote, removing Section 3 items d,e, and f also received unanimous approval.

Mr. Haymans noted that the group still needed to decide on the value to be assigned to that, and that brings up the question of weight of uses in general.

Mr. Kunik made a motion: To eliminate all references to the columns with the possible scores; Mr. Haymans seconded the motion for discussion, asking whether that will come back in some way, or do you anticipate someone could just put "20" without providing a breakdown of how that weight was arrived at. Mr. Kunik agreed; Mr. Guptil seconded the motion, which the received unanimous approval.

Continuing the discussion on weighting, Mr. Haymans suggested that now, while something could get "20" for meeting a criteria, it could also just get "1" for simply meeting a criteria that subjectively a particular Board member does not value highly ... or do members have to arrive at the top number in each category? The response was no, because it is not required to get to 100. There was general agreement on this concept.

Dr. Beever noted that now the group has moved those items to Section 1, we should move points with it; Mr. Guptil suggested there is now a bulk or category number not line-item values. To Mr. Haymans, he said, we took out degree of job creation, noting that this concept is covered under Section 1, item d: Workforce development and job creation. The question is what should its weight be; Mr. Kunik asked whether the group wants to spend its time coming up with individual weights for every line item. Dr. Beever clarified that her concern was weighting between the sections, which is off now.

Ms. Mathis made the motion: Sections 1 and 2 move up to 30 each; Section 3 goes to 20, and that the new points distribution would then be: 30/30/20/10/10; the motion was seconded by Dr. Beever. Mr. Russell indicated he had a problem with the last two sections being 10 points each, and suggested 5 and 5 instead with 10 points going to Quality; Ms. Staugler suggested that the most emphasis should be placed on the merit of what the person is proposing to do; that has shifted to Allowable Uses, and any moved points should go there. Ms. Weber indicated she agreed.

The motion at that point remained 30/30/20/10/10; Mr. Haymans said he agreed with Mr. Russell, that there was too much weight given to matching funds, etc. Ms. Staugler then amended the motion, as follows: Section rankings to be as follows: 40/30/20/5/5. Ms. Mathis and Dr. Beever indicated they would accept that amendment. It's a "friendly amendment" and thus has been accepted; by voice vote, the Board indicated their unanimous approval.

Mr. Haymans then gave a notional example for the purpose of asking about how the process will work to weight the category when not all individual items are met, when there is no line-item scoring? Mr. Kunik suggested that members take their best shot. Ms. Neilsen reminded the group that they don't have to come up with the top score available in any given category. Mr. Guptil offered the thought that one does a mental exercise, and provides a subjective value between the items met and those not met, adding that he honestly doesn't believe the group will get any applications that hits them all. He indicated he is opposed by subtracting value from an otherwise good application simply because it doesn't meet one line item.

Mr. Haymans continued with his train of thought, asking about a situation where every application hits the values subjectively, and now they all get 40 points; he asked: Where are we in distinguishing between projects if they all rank the same; how does that help the

process? Members of the group responded: Not necessarily; Ms. Mathis pointed out that while Mr. Haymans might give a proposal 40, she might give it 20. Ms. Nielsen made a similar point, noting that the individual opinions are going into the matrix and combining to an overall opinion. Mr. Haymans indicated he wants to do a test run before any final adoption of the criteria, and make sure the process works; Mr. Kunik agreed but indicated he would prefer if that process didn't take a lot of time.

Dr. Beever suggested that it doesn't matter if group evaluations are consistent with each other; they should just be consistent across all the applications being reviewed. Ms. Weber asked Ms. Shoemaker whether the group would have to submit the criteria along with the multi-year implementation; Ms. Collier responded that would not really be necessary as a separate item, because the criteria will be on your submittal.

Discussion on Draft Application

Ms. Weber opened the discussion with comments about the origin of the draft she had prepared, and invited comments and questions; she commented on each of the pages, particularly on the reference to administrative costs activity, which she had removed from the draft.

Mr. Kunik asked if this form requires too much information; Dr. Beever commented that this is comparatively really simple; most is check-boxes, and the most difficult part will be best available science. Mr. Kunik asked, what if a project doesn't have that component; Ms. Staugler responded that's only pertinent if it is a restoration project. Dr. Beever added, that part of an application can be some work if you need to do it. Further discussion ensued.

Ms. Mathis moved approval of the application, seconded by Mr. Kunik; Dr. Beever offered some discussion of language on page six ("Is the project part of an existing federally approved conservation management plan?") noting that the word "comprehensive" needs to be added ("comprehensive conservation management plan"). Mr. Kunik accepted the amendment in his second.

Ms. Staugler asked about whether the applicant's qualifications to do the project should be required; not a resume, but if you are doing restoration, then what are your qualifications, what restoration projects have you done in the past. Ms. Mathis suggested the application ask who would manage and complete the project and what are their qualifications; that suggestion was accepted by Ms. Staugler, and Ms. Mathis approved the amendment to her initial motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Communication Ideas

Ms. Weber next called for discussion on the list of Communication Ideas that had been circulated. Mr. Guptil commented on time horizons, noting that the process can't be open-ended. There should be a beginning and ending date for the application submittal; then these communication elements can be better defined. He suggested the group can define adequate time periods, e.g., for public notice. Ms. Staugler asked for clarification on what this is for – putting out a request for proposals, just introducing the general idea of funds availability to the public, or something else. Ms. Mathis suggested it was for the request for proposals; Ms. Shoemaker countered that it was a little bit of both: Here's what the committee is doing; here is our call for proposals. Mr. Guptil noted that this is a call to the public (distinct from the way

RFP go to specific entities.) Mr. Russell commented that this is the group's public awareness phase; at some future point, this becomes accepting applications. Mr. Guptil asked how aware the public is at this point, and Mr. Russell responded that they are probably not very aware, although they acknowledged that Mr. Kunik had mentioned the matter in his weekly column in the newspaper. Further discussion ensued on matters of public awareness of government initiatives.

Ms. Weber asked if anyone had anything to add to the list; Ms. Staugler suggested that when the group gets to accepting proposals, then they should look to the organizations that have good distribution within the science community; the Chambers also have good public outreach. Mr. Haymans noted that it is engineers who usually do this kind of project, and also their clients are the types who do much of these projects; Ms. Mathis commented that prior submitters should get a copy of the new application also. Mr. Kunik said he felt there will be plenty of input.

Ms. Shoemaker returned to the question of how information outreach will be funded, noting that this will be part of what the County staff does for this committee; she also said staff would be glad to draft some ideas for the Board to review and edit, and then County staff would take it from there.

Ms. Mathis commented that the group should be able to get the application out to the public within a month or less; she asked if others agreed. Mr. Kunik noted that the form has been approved, but mentioned that the criteria still needs to be finalized. Ms. Nielsen felt the changes which had been discussed could be finalized and included; Mr. Haymans agreed, mentioning the need to also do the test run, which could be a 'homework' assignment given out next week along with the updated materials. Mr. Kunik suggested that exercise could be done during the meet; pick a project and do it right here next week. Ms. Shoemaker asked Mr. Kunik if he had the list of projects already submitted to FDEP, which he did: The sewer expansion, the Charlotte Harbor Watershed Plan, Charlotte County Erosion Mitigation and Habitat Conservation; other projects included the Boca Grande Stormwater Improvements and multiple projects under the Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan. Ms. Nielsen asked Ms. Shoemaker to have a scoring matrix available; Mr. Guptil commented that the group needs one that at least gets through the Pre-screening questions. Dr. Beever suggested using a project from outside the county, so people are not pre-judging an application that they might end up reviewing later; she indicated she has several that could be used, and said she would forward some examples to Ms. Shoemaker. Some additional discussion ensued on this approach.

Ms. Shoemaker summarized, noting that next week the Board would get a new criteria sheet based on today's discussion plus a matrix for tallying the scores during the exercise, along with some draft ideas for press releases and publications. Mr. Guptil asked if anyone had been thinking about what the cutoff points should be; Ms. Weber indicated she had left blanks for this to be indicated, along with who the contact person would be. Discussion then ensued on the time frames, with a distinction being made between the time any individual would have to fill out and submit the form vs. the amount of time the Board will be open to receiving applications. Mr. Kunik felt it should be 30 days from whenever the group initiates its public outreach; Ms. Nielsen felt that would be a tough turn-around time, and Dr. Beever agreed, especially if an applicant needs to seek matching funds or other sorts of partnering. After brief discussion, general agreement settled on 60 days for getting the word out and then an

application time period of 30 days after that. Dr. Beever felt two months for application and just one month to get the word out would be preferable; Ms. Staugler agreed.

Ms. Weber then recapped what the next meeting would involve, based on Ms. Shoemaker's earlier comments: Using the final criteria sheet and a practice project suggested by Dr. Beever, the group would test their adopted changes; also there would be review of any draft communications. She asked if there were any other agenda suggestions; none were offered.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:23 p.m.

Accepted on behalf of the RESTORE Act
Advisory Board

By: _____