

RESTORE Act Advisory Board

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

February 11, 2015

Attendees:

Dr. Lisa Beever	+
Peter Guptil	+
Michael Haymans	+
Thomas Hecker	+
Ed Hill	+
Howard Kunik	+
Julie Mathis	+ (advised she'd be arriving late)
Annette Nielsen	+
W. Kevin Russell	+
Kelly Shoemaker	+
Elizabeth Staugler	+
Caitlin Weber	+
Mindy Collier – staff	+
Ray Sandrock	X
Janette Knowlton	X
Gayle Moore, Charlotte County, Recording Secretary	+
Scott Andrichack	
Andy Stevens, Natural Resources	+

Ms. Weber called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm; Board members introduced themselves; and then the minutes of January 28th were approved by unanimous vote, on the request of Chair. There followed a brief discussion on ensuring that all Board members received a copy of future suggested corrections to the minutes, in order to better track any changes made.

Review of revised application and submittal criteria from the 2/10 Commission meeting

Ms. Shoemaker covered the content of the Commission meeting, including the Commissioners' requests for clarity on who would be receiving the application submittals or answering any questions applicants may have; she indicated to the Commissioners that it would be the individual who is overseeing the application process (e.g., herself for the time being, and then whoever is hired to be the RESTORE Coordinator.)

Another issue concerned the Goals, a couple of which were missing on the draft; additionally, the Board has just added Infrastructure, so now there are nine goals.

Additional comments about the budget were given by the Commissioners, specifically the suggestion to indicate that all costs are given in 2015 dollars on the forms, but since dollars could be released years into the future, these costs will inevitably change, and may impact funding ability in the future.

Ms. Shoemaker spoke about the discussion in general terms, noting that the Commission is on board and enthusiastic; Mr. Kunik, who was also present at the Commission meeting, confirmed this impression.

Ms. Weber asked if there was anything further to be considered regarding the application; none were mentioned. She then turned to the Evaluation Criteria; Ms. Shoemaker indicated there had been no questions or additions from the Board. Ms. Weber asked if Board members had any further comments on criteria; none were offered.

Cover letter for application

Next to be discussed were options for the cover letter, which Ms. Shoemaker suggested could be an expansion of the existing cover sheet, or turning that into a separate letter; she solicited suggestions from those Board members who regularly fill out grant applications. Dr. Beever suggested keeping any letter as simple and straightforward as possible, keeping the application-pertinent information on the cover sheet; Mr. Hecker agreed. No further suggestions being offered, Ms. Weber asked if Ms. Shoemaker would be creating a first draft, which Ms. Shoemaker said she would send out to everyone and then receive member comments in return, in order to speed up the process.

Dr. Beever then motioned: Direction to Kelly Shoemaker to draft additional language for a cover letter, which will then be sent out to members for comment in return, followed by a final draft provided to members for final approval; second by Mr. Kunik, approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Weber asked for any further discussion on the cover letter; Dr. Beever commented she would just emphasize that applicant eligibility parameters and what type of projects are eligible should be laid out since that is the first thing any potential applicant needs to know. Mr. Russell observed that any such information must not in any way contradict the application contents, and can be minimalist as the application speaks for itself. Ms. Staugler noted that the checklist covers what's important, including who could apply. Further comments were offered on the information that needs to be provided to applicants, and whether that can be found in the cover sheet, the application itself, or should be mentioned in the cover letter. Ms. Weber summarized the discussion, particularly that the cover letter could incorporate the pre-screening criteria.

Discussion of application submittal schedule

Ms. Weber then turned to the time frame to be available for actually filling out the application; Ms. Shoemaker summarized the discussion held at the previous meeting and the agreement that there should be 60 days during which the application will be publicly available to be submitted. She suggested the group aim to have the document out next week, by Tuesday, the 17th for 60 days which would be to Friday April 3rd as the due date (this date was amended later in the meeting.)

Mr. Russell asked if, should additional money be available later, the group would still refer back to these originally-submitted applications; Ms. Shoemaker indicated yes, noting that was part of yesterday's Commission discussion, and goes back to the concept of the multi-year implementation plan. If an applicant's project is chosen to be included in that plan, that means the project would be available for any of the "pots" of funding. Recognizing that the initial funding (\$600,000) is small for projects of the type anticipated, the idea is to make sure there is a list of projects ready to turn to when additional, more appropriate funds are released. At that point, of course, those funds will have their own criteria and there might need to be another application to be filled out by the selected applicant at that point.

Mr. Guptil noted that the 60 day window would put the next stage at April 18th not April 3rd; Because the 18th is a Saturday, a deadline of Friday April 17th was agreed on.

Ms. Weber then asked for any further discussion on the submittal schedule, and Mr. Kunik asked about advertising. Ms. Shoemaker indicated there would be a press release, the draft for which will come to members along with the cover letter. However, she indicated, she still does need recommendations for individuals and organizations that would be appropriate recipients of this information; specific contact information would be best.

Dr. Beever asked about the hiring of the Coordinator, and Ms. Shoemaker advised that the ad period had ended and they were getting ready to interview the selected candidates.

Mr. Guptil mentioned the recent article in the Charlotte Sun Herald as a good start; Ms. Shoemaker indicated she would like to use Ray Sandrock's newspaper column in the near future as another place to talk about RESTORE. Members indicated they had been contacted by the paper but some had not felt ready to talk about the project; Dr. Beever indicated that she did comment to the paper. Mr. Russell suggested that in future, the Chair should be the one to speak on this; Dr. Beever clarified that it was just the RESTORE Act in general that she spoke on.

Ms. Weber suggested a review of publicity options: information will be given in a column, and on the County website; she asked if it would be on CCTV as well. Ms. Shoemaker indicated that during televised Board meetings, during the breaks, there is a cycling display of screens which it could be part of; likewise during the "shorts" that are sometimes shown to fill-in time when a meeting ends early. Mr. Hill mentioned other online sites, such as the various Chambers; Ms. Shoemaker agreed and mentioned the Chambers' newsletters also. Mr. Guptil mentioned posting on the public information boards in the County building, and Ms. Shoemaker noted that various County buildings offer this option. Mr. Haymans suggested that Clear Channel would probably agree to run a 60 second PSA, which he indicated he could help to coordinate. He also mentioned the local Bar Association and local engineering firms, as well as the Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency, noting that at the last meeting, he had spoken to Deb Forester, the County's CRA Manager, about it. Ms. Shoemaker indicate she would do a blast email as well.

Ms. Weber asked whether the press release would have a link to the application; Ms. Shoemaker indicated it would. Mr. Hill asked if there would be any harm in distributing paper copies at various locations; members generally agreed that outlets such as libraries would be good distribution spots.

Ms. Weber then reviewed the submittal schedule and asked if there were further questions; none were offered. In summary, the submittal deadline will be April 17th, and members should send in their suggestions for contacts to Ms. Shoemaker.

Items for next meeting

Ms. Shoemaker noted that one of the discussion points at the prior meeting was about the possibility of interviews with applicants; during the Commission meeting yesterday, the Board indicated that they thought this would just delay the process and they thought perhaps there could be some standard questions that would help in the scoring decisions. She solicited members' feedback on this, and asks them to envision how their process will proceed once the evaluations have begun.

Mr. Hill responded with a question concerning applications that come in early; Ms. Staugler remembered that at the last discussion, the consensus seemed to be to wait for all applications to be in hand before proceeding with evaluations. Other members agreed with this recollection, and Dr. Beever commented that members should get all applications at the same time, spend quiet time with them, then meet to discuss our scored sheets.

Mr. Russell asked whether, at that point, would the group interview applicants; or do members come up with questions and let staff handle that part. Mr. Kunik commented that members probably don't really want to interview 50 or more applicants, and there was general agreement; Mr. Haymans pointed out that once the pool of likely projects has been narrowed down to e.g. three or so, then the group might want to interview those select three; he indicated he wouldn't want to foreclose that option. Dr. Beever suggested members could submit questions through the Coordinator's office during the review period, which could then be redistributed to all other members for consideration; Ms. Shoemaker indicated members don't have to make this decision today, but need to think about it and be ready for April 17th.

Mr. Haymans requested that members get feedback between February 17 and April 17 on where the matter has been publicized, so that they can fill any gaps, if need be. Mr. Kunik noted that it appears the group won't need to meet again until April 17th, which was affirmed.

Ms. Weber addressed the amount of time members would have for review between receiving applications at the close of the submittal period and meeting to discuss them. Ms. Shoemaker recapped that she would communicate to members about how the matter was publicized and, in the interim, about the amount of applications that have been coming in. That will help in considerations about how much time will be needed for the scoring process. After a brief discussion regarding the actual closing of application acceptance, it was decided that 5pm on April 17th would be the official deadline, and applications would be distributed to members for review on the following Monday. It was also agreed that the applications would be digitally distributed to members.

Ms. Weber noted that information should be included on application indicating where the filled-out application can be turned in, and Ms. Shoemaker agreed, indicating that the application would be updated to include both the 5 pm deadline and submittal location.

Ms. Weber called for any other items for next meeting; Mr. Kunik observed that's when the work will really get started, and indicated he anticipates many applications coming in. After some discussion, it was agreed that there would be two weeks allotted for review, so that the first meeting after the application deadline and distribution to Board members would be the

first Wednesday in May (May 6th). It was confirmed that scoring will be done individually, before the meeting.

Discussion was also had on the procedure if a member receives an application and realizes there is or may be a conflict; the definition of "conflict" in this circumstance was also discussed.

With regard to the process for signaling a conflict, it was agreed that a communication to Ms. Shoemaker would be appropriate. With regard to a useful definition of a conflict, it was agreed that while many existing standards involve having a financial interest in an outcome, this group was also sensitive to perceptions the public might have; it was generally agreed to define conflict as whether or not a member had a responsibility for a project, e.g., the responsibility of making a budget-related recommendation, and to always be sensitive to possible perceptions about the member's role.

Ms. Shoemaker recapped that the next meeting, on May 6th would be to hand in review scores; Mr. Kunik observed that was likely to be a long meeting, and asked Ms. Shoemaker if member should send in scores ahead of time? Ms. Shoemaker said that would be helpful for getting them into the spreadsheet. So, the timeline was agreed to be:

- Members receive applications (digital distribution) on April 20
- Members will convene again on May 6, to discuss scoring
- Members may submit scores in advance (these totals should be sub-section totals)

After a short period of comment on the timetable, Ms. Weber adjourned the meeting at 1:50 p.m.