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RURAL LANDS STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL MEETING

November 10, 2003
Offices of WilsonMiller, Inc.
Naples, Florida

MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting & Tour Sponsored by WilsonMiller, Inc.
Minutes Prepared by Janet Cantrell, WilsonMiller, Inc.

Attendance:

Council Members:

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| Bevin Beaudet (new member) | Vice President, CH2M Hill, Inc., Deerfield Beach |
| Rick Budell (alternate for Chuck Aller) | Deputy Director, Office of Agricultural Water Policy, Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (via phone) |
| Michael Busha | Executive Director, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, Stuart (via phone) |
| Colleen Castille | Secretary, Florida Department of Community Affairs (via phone) |
| Brad Cornell (alternate for Eric Draper) | Director, Collier Audubon Florida Audubon |
| Ernest Cox | Gunster, Yoakley & Stewart, P.A., West Palm Beach (via phone) |
| Rick Drummond | Growth Management Director, Alachua County Growth Management Department, Gainesville |
| Craig Evans | President, Stewardship America, Inc. |
| Jim Farr (alternate for Mark Glisson) | Florida Department of Environmental Protection (via phone) |
| David H. Graham (new members) | Vice President of Planning and Development, The Bonita Bay Group |
| Tom Jones | Water Management Specialist, Barron Collier |
| Sue Mullins | Government Relations Manager, The Nature Conservancy |
| Charles Pattison | Executive Director, 1000 Friends of Florida, Tallahassee (via phone) |
| Alan D. Reynolds | President & CEO, WilsonMiller, Inc., Naples |
| Peter Spyke | Grove Manager, Arapaho Citrus, Ft. Pierce (via phone) |

Guests :

Dick Cuda
Maryann Devanas

Art Dobberstein
Andy Dodd
Tim Durham
Margaret Emblidge
Drayton Farr
Ken Heatherington
David Holmes
Chuck Hungerford

Mitch Hutchcraft
Anita Jenkins
(alternate for Al Reynolds)
Bruce Johnson
Grady Miars
(alternate for David Graham)
Sandra Palm
Lou Parrot
Jeff Perry
Erik Peterson
Bob Raynes
(alternate for Ernie Cox)
Karla Scott
Ted Shirmacher
Richard Staundinger
(alternate for Bevin Beaudet)
Amy Taylor

Florida Babcock Company
Sr. Planner, Collier County Community Planning and
Development
Educational Facilities Planner, School Board of Collier Co.
Peninsula Property
WilsonMiller, Inc.
Vice President of Planning, Collier Enterprises
Florida Babcock Company
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
Florida Babcock Company
Florida Legislative Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs
(via phone)
The Bonita Bay Group
WilsonMiller, Inc.

WilsonMiller, Inc.
Project Manager, The Bonita Bay Group

Planning Specialist, Collier County School Board
Executive Director, Green Horizon Land Trust
WilsonMiller, Inc.
Polk County Planning Department
Gunster, Yoakley, & Stewart, P.A., West Palm Beach

WilsonMiller, Inc.
Senior Associate, Sasaki Associates, Watertown, MA
Land Development Services, CH2M HILL, Inc.

Collier County School Board Planning Department

Absent:

Samuel Ard (new member)
Allison DeFoor
Chris Doolin

David Fisk

Charles B. Littlejohn
Pam Mac'Kie

Alan Shelby
Jonathan Steverson
Denver Stutler

Ard, Shirley & Hartman, P.A., Tallahassee
State Coordinator, EarthBalance, Tallahassee
Vice President & Legislative Consultant to Small Counties
Coalition, Robert P. Jones & Associates
Deputy Executive Director, St. John's River Waste
Management District, Palm Bay, FL
Executive Director, Florida Land Council, Tallahassee
Deputy Executive Director, Land Resources, South Florida
Water Management District
Governmental Liaison, Florida Forestry Association
Governmental Liaison, Florida Association of Counties
Chief of Staff, Executive Office of the Government,
Tallahassee

Meeting Summary:

1. Agenda Items 1-5: INTRODUCTIONS/WELCOME/OVERVIEW OF AGENDA: Craig Evans

Attendees introduced themselves.

Colleen Castille, Secretary of Department of Community Affairs via phone: Commented regarding the importance of Council meetings to bring the a new organization together. Purpose as a council is to educate planners and the agricultural community regarding the rural lands stewardship program.

2. Agenda Item 6: COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mission, Guiding Principles & Concept Refinement Committee – Part 1: Colleen Castille (via phone) and Craig Evans--Draft document describing proposed mission, purpose, vision and goals distributed to attendees.

Mission of the Rural Lands Stewardship Council: "Communicate information about effective rural planning techniques, approaches and tools to rural landowners, policy makers and other stakeholders in Florida counties."

Purpose of the council will be to:

- Act as a convener and coordinating council;
- Bring together diverse groups with a stake in the future of Florida's rural lands – including private landowners and agriculture and forestry interests; state agencies, water management districts and regional planning councils; growth management organizations; land use planners; conservation and environmental organizations; and county associations and coalitions;
- Provide a “neutral, non-judgmental” forum for discussing issues affecting Florida's rural lands; and
- Serve as an advocate for techniques, approaches, planning tools, educational programs and policies that gain consensus support of the council.

Vision:

A diversified economy built upon:

- a strong agricultural foundation,
- a healthy natural environment, and
- thriving communities surrounded by extensive areas of open space

will be an essential and integral feature of rural Florida through the 21st century.

A motion was made and carried to accept the draft Mission, Purpose, and Vision portions of the statement, with continued refinement of the Goals section, with subsequent vote to be taken.

Mission, Guiding Principles & Concept Refinement Committee – Part 2: Alan Reynolds--Draft document distributed to attendees, which included:

- Proposed list of guiding principles
- A 5-step process for rural land planning

- Alternative tools to help plan for the future of rural lands (Rural Land Stewardship Area Program, Optional Section Planning Program, Minimum Lot Size, Agricultural Districts, Agricultural Zoning)
- Examples of different planning techniques [Collier County, Florida-Rural Lands Stewardship Area Overlay*; Planning Studies, including Eastward ho!; Sarasota County, Florida ULI Advisory Services Panel Report; Southwest Florida Feasibility Study; Palm Beach Agricultural Reserve Master Plan; Blueprint 2000 and Beyond (Tallahassee); Mesa/Powderhorn Plan; Bluegrass Tomorrow; The Green Valley Initiative; Pittsford's Greenprint Initiative]

*Al Reynolds, WilsonMiller, gave an overview of the RLSA Overlay program in Collier County, reporting that the program was established under Florida Statute, over a three-year period, at a initial investment of \$800,000, with an additional \$200,000 for future legal fees and site plan for the area's first rural town, (Ave Maria University). Public cost of the program is \$5.40 per acre, compared to PDR and PACE programs costing an average of \$2029 per acre on a national basis, and up to \$40,000 an acre in some areas of Florida, (such as Palm Beach County's Agriculture Reserve). At current land prices, traditional land protection tools would cost \$280 million in this part of Collier County, rather than the \$800,000 spent for the RLSA Overlay program.

The report was accepted. Further action was deferred, pending additional refinement of the concepts by the committee.

3. Agenda Items 7-9 : BALANCE OF COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Policy Guidelines Committee (Ernie Cox, chair) will meet within the next 30 days
- Presentations, Workshops & Symposium Committee Mike Busha, chair, reported that a day-long symposium was scheduled for December 5, 2003, in Port St. Lucie ("The Future of the Region's Countryside"). At the time of the RLSC meeting 80 people had registered for the conference; (more than 210 attended in a space designed for 200).
- Education & Promotion Materials/Fundraising Committee: Craig Evans and Sue Mullins, co-chairs. A teleconference meeting was held October 9. Stewardship America's website has a series of pages devoted to the Rural Lands Stewardship Program and the Rural Lands Stewardship Council, describing how the rural lands stewardship program can be tied in with what planners are doing in Florida. The web site can be found at <http://privatelands.org/rural/index.htm>

Craig distributed an article by Chris Demers, University of Florida Forest Stewardship Coordinator. The article, "The Rural Land Stewardship Act: Testing a New Method of Protecting Rural Lands" had been prepared for publication the Fall 2003 issue of

Anita Jenkins reported that several foundations have been identified for which funding may be sought for RLSP projects. Also, a proposal is pending with the Dunn Foundation.

Craig reported that he has discussed with the USDA in Washington funding for counties wishing to participate in the RLSP program. USDA has the potential to provide significant funding for the rural lands stewardship program, since the RLSP offers a way of protecting \$350 million worth of farmland for every \$1 million spent. However, rules on how the USDA's farmland protection funds can be spent must be changed before these funds can be used for planning purposes.

- Craig recommended that **David Graham**, VP of Planning and Development, Bonita Bay Group, be appointed to the Council, with Grady Miars as alternate, to represent the viewpoints of developers. He also recommended that **Sam Ard** be appointed to represent agriculture, and that **Beavin Beaudet**, Vice President of CH2M HILL, Inc., be appointed to as a senior executive of an engineering/planning firm that specializes in the design, construction and operation of infrastructure systems. Recommendations were approved by the Council; appointments confirmed.
- Craig also recommended that invitations be extended to **T. Niles Glasgow**, State Conservationist for Florida, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service; and **“Rock” Salt**, special assistant to the Secretary of the Interior, liaison to other agencies regarding ecosystem restoration activities in South Florida; to represent federal government interests. In addition, he recommended **Michael Martin**, Vice President, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), at the University of Florida, to represent the university system and, in particular, IFAS. These recommendations also were approved and Craig was asked to extend the invitations.
- Craig Evans distributed a white paper which been prepared by FAPA (with the assistance of FAPA members David Graham and Tom Beck of WilsonMiller, Inc.) was adopted October 3, 2003. The paper praised the Rural Lands Stewardship Program and suggested four amendments that would help make the program work better. Craig then asked five members to serve with him on a legislative drafting committee – Chuck Littlejohn, Al Reynolds, David Graham, Sue Mullins and Bevin Beaudet – along with Sheri Coven, President of the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association (FAPA), to work on legislation to improve on the Rural Lands Stewardship Program.

4. Agenda Item 10: QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION: (Points/issues)

- Rick Drummond, Growth Management Director, Alachua County: An advisory council is now in place in Alachua County, and has requested a presentation from the Rural Lands Stewardship Council. County has reached a settlement agreement on a comprehensive plan amendment which will go to final hearing in the near future. Requires rural area development be clustered with 60-80% open space. Additional density is granted for open space, more if designated as conservation.
- Polk County Planners Tom Wodich and Erik Peterson: Polk County is now in crisis and needs ideas and information on ways to preserve agriculture (citrus)-- property owners are selling land to developers. Bok Tower Gardens is being

surrounded by affordable housing subdivisions and golf courses. State is subsidizing residential development in exorbitant amounts, with none for agriculture development.

- Don Ross, EarthBalance: Comment on the proposed goals statement for the Council--Economic issue language needs to be stronger. Landowners need to be able to benefit from the RLS program in order to participate.
- Andy Dodd, Charlotte County: County is interested in funding for rural lands stewardship program.
- Peter Spyke, Arapaho Citrus: Growers' challenge is economic--fruit production is not as profitable as development. Economy is moving fruit production offshore to Brazil. Brazil is lobbying for legislation to remove the tariff on citrus imports. If removed, no citrus grower will be able to compete and growers will sell their credits. Discussion of "switchpoint", the point where the value of citrus isn't high enough to meet the economic value of the land. Currently agriculture land net value is \$5,000 per acre, development value is as much as \$20,000 per acre.
- Ernie Cox, Attorney, Gunster, Yoakley & Stewart: Counties without large volumes of conservation areas are challenged with regard to RLS participation. Attributes and values that can be attached to land need to be identified. Collier County is moving toward development/conservation only, with no agriculture.
- Current law requires that credits must be within a single county; legislation is needed to provide for collaborative efforts by neighboring counties.

5. Agenda Item 11: PowerPoint Presentation by Al Reynolds, CEO, WilsonMiller, Inc.:

Process that was followed to develop the Collier County Rural Lands Stewardship Overlay and an Update on the Ave Maria Site Plan/Awards.

General Discussion:

- Issue to be addressed--convincing counties of the viability of the RLS program when no development is on the horizon, as it was with Ave Maria University
- Tim Durham, WilsonMiller, Inc. discussed environmental issues--flowways, wetlands, which must be addressed in RLS projects.

6. Agenda Item 12-17: Tour of Ave Maria University site, with Tom Jones of Collier Enterprises pointing out areas of interest and providing history of the Immokalee area.