



Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization Regular Meeting

~ Minutes ~

Thursday, September 23, 2021, 1:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 23, 2021, at Lecanto Government Center, 3600 W Sovereign Path, Room 166, Lecanto, Florida.

Attendee Name	Title	Attendance
Joe Meek	Alternate, City of Crystal River	Present
Elizabeth Narverud	Member, Hernando County	Present
John Allocco	Member, Hernando County	Present
Robert Battista	Member, City of Brooksville	Present
Steve Champion	Member, Hernando County	Present
Jeff Kinnard	MPO Chairman, Citrus County	Present
Cabot McBride	Member, City of Inverness	Present
Jon Jouben	Hernando County Attorney	Present
Carlene Riecsc	Transportation Planner III	Present
Cayce Dagenhart	Transportation Planner II	Present

Prior to the invocation, Chairman Kinnard addressed the recent passing of the MPO Executive Director, Steve Diez. He stated Steve was always available to discuss any issues or concerns and would provide honest feedback even if it was not what he wanted to hear. He mentioned how shocking the news of his passing was and expressed sadness that Steve did not get to enjoy his retirement which included his plans to go to Italy. The Chairman extended condolences to his family and friends.

Invocation

Commissioner Allocco led the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Allocco led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MPO Board & Staff Introductions

The Chairman asked the MPO Board and Staff to introduce themselves. Commissioner Allocco thanked the MPO staff for their efforts during this difficult time.

Please Silence Electronic Devices

Chairman Kinnard asked that all electronic devices be silenced.

Enter Proof of Publication into the Record

Ms. Riecse entered the proofs of publication into the record.

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA (Limited to Board and Staff)

Commissioner Champion made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Allocco and carried 6-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Meek made a motion to approve the August 19, 2021, meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilman McBride and the vote carried 6-0.

Approval of Minutes for Regular Meeting of August 19, 2021

RESULT:	ACCEPTED [6 TO 0]
AYES:	Meek, Allocco, Battista, Champion, Kinnard, McBride
ABSENT:	Elizabeth Narverud

MPO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CONSIDERATION

Ms. Riecse stated that the MPO Board decided to readvertise the MPO Executive Director position after their August 19, 2021, meeting. There were 3 applications received. The review committee interviewed all 3 candidates and recommended 2 applicants for consideration, Mr. Joel Graeff and Mr. Robert Esposito.

Mr. Joel Graeff was called in to interview for the MPO Executive Director position. It was noted that Commissioners Champion and Battista were not present at the August 19, 2021, meeting when Mr. Graeff was initially interviewed.

Mr. Graeff indicated he has 40 years of professional planning experience, he holds an American Institute of Certified Planning (AICP) professional certification and has two degrees, one in Urban Planning and a master's degree in Business Administration. He felt his professional credentials made him particularly qualified for this position. He indicated he has worked in many facets of transportation planning from public agencies to private engineering and planning firms. He has experience with private/public partnerships so understands working with Boards.

Commissioner Allocco asked Mr. Graeff to identify the MPO needs for the future, and those of the MPO Board. Mr. Graeff stated the MPO does a lot of different things. One key thing is to have a coordinated UPWP. He commented he did not notice many bicycle/pedestrian or capacity projects that need to be done. He said that balancing goods and movement is important, these are two factors we need to focus on.

Commissioner Allocco mentioned that during Mr. Graeff's first interview, he seemed to have reservations about budgeting issues. Mr. Graeff responded that the UPWP is a big deal, and we have to make sure we set up our scopes in a manner to meet state and federal needs. He said sometimes money does move around in the UPWP, so it is

important to make sure that we have projects funded to the appropriate degree. He stated that he has run budgets, so he did not see this as an issue for him.

Commissioner Champion stated he missed the last meeting. He remarked that Mr. Graeff's resume reflected experience in big cities and counties. He mentioned that the Hernando/Citrus MPO area is different. We comprise 2 rural counties that have different needs than larger areas. Commissioner Champion stated that we do not want to look like large areas, he likes the rural atmosphere.

Mr. Graeff discussed his experience with a rural county north of Philadelphia. He was raised in an area with 2500 people, so he is aware of rural areas. Commissioner Champion stated that there is a difference between Citrus and Hernando County as well so even though we are one MPO, the priorities for each county may be different.

Mr. Graeff indicated he would conduct a listening tour with commissioners. He felt he could learn more about the area and priorities by sitting down with Commission members than doing research. He further mentioned that he would make coordination with other jurisdictions a priority.

Commissioner Allocco mentioned that he and Commissioner Champion came in at the same time. Sidewalks became an issue because of changes to the busing rules so the board had to react to this issue.

His interview concluded.

Mr. Bob Esposito entered the Board room to be interviewed. Commissioner Narvred joined the meeting.

Commissioner Kinnard asked Mr. Esposito to introduce himself and describe his experience. He indicated he has worked at the FDOT for 8.5 years and has been involved in all aspects of government affairs with elected officials at state and local levels. He has 25 years of professional experience in both public and private settings.

Commissioner Allocco asked him what he saw as this MPO's priorities that we need to focus on. Mr. Esposito responded that the budget, administrative costs, studies and reporting to maintain compliance are priorities.

He stated that he has developed relationships and has many contacts with people who will be resources for the position. He stated that when developing the UPWP, we have to work closely with Justin Hall's group. the MPO will need to regularly review the LRTP and TIP which will include understanding various aspects of the projects, budget forecasts, meeting with staff and consultants and members of the board. He mentioned that County Line Road between Hernando/Pasco Counties is a major priority need and coordination with Pasco County is essential.

Mr. Esposito discussed the extension of the Suncoast Parkway and the interchange at 486 and US 41 as being important projects.

Commissioner Allocco thanked Mr. Esposito for doing his homework regarding the MPO area.

When asked about his lack of planning experience, Mr. Esposito stated he will work with the planners on staff, and county planners from Hernando and Citrus. He said he has connections with FDOT and believes his role is to help connect the dots.

Mr. Champion appreciated his resume. He remarked that Mr. Esposito has worked a lot in politics most recently with the FDOT. He asked about recommendations from the FDOT. Mr. Esposito indicated that he has recommendations from Secretary David Gwynn and Ming Gao at FDOT 7, and Ralph Massullo, M.D.

Mayor Meek thanked Mr. Esposito for his comments. He stated that he has worked with Mr. Esposito in the past and that he is aware of the issues we face as a community, he appreciated that knowledge. He is familiar with the issues we have today and has a great working relationship with FDOT.

Councilman McBride asked Mr. Esposito whether he had directly supervised employees. He responded negatively but offered that he knows how to build relationships, will coordinate with staff on a regular basis and would be a member of the team with an open door policy. He would plan to meet with MPO members on his first day, and then coordinate with planners in Hernando and Citrus, as well as municipalities as Councilman McBride mentioned.

Mr. Esposito was asked to step out of the room while the Board discussed the interviews.

Commissioner Kinnard indicated that Mr. Esposito is our liaison with the FDOT. When he became a County Commissioner, he relied on guidance from prior MPO Director, Dennis Dix and Bob Esposito. He felt they were qualified in different ways, but both are capable.

Commissioner Allocco expressed concern over Mr. Graeff's resume (very extensive with no dates corresponding to the work). He mentioned particularly the lack of familiarity with the community that he applied to lead. Mr. Esposito does not have management experience but the relationships he has with our partners are important. He felt Mr. Esposito would be the best candidate to take the MPO in the direction we want to go.

Commissioner Kinnard stated he was surprised that Mr. Graeff did not update his resume after the first interview. Commissioner Champion thought that both candidates were qualified but he was concerned about the number of jobs listed on Mr. Graeff's resume.

Mayor Meek agreed with the pro and con assessment. He was a supporter of Mr. Esposito because of the relationships he has, and the understanding of our community.

Councilman McBride stated that Citrus County is months away from entering a new era with Suncoast Parkway II. He felt that Mr. Esposito has an understanding of the

community. While he commented Mr. Esposito has no direct supervisory experience, he appreciated his demeanor.

Commissioner Narverud stated that since she arrived late and missed the first interview, she did not feel it was fair for her to vote.

Discussion regarding the employment process ensued.

Michelle Posewicz, Hernando County Human Resources Director, stated through the administrative services agreement with the MPO, HR and the Chairman can negotiate the parameters of the employment agreement.

A motion was made by Commissioner Allocco to begin negotiations with Mr. Robert Esposito for the MPO Executive Director position. The motion was seconded by Mayor Meek. The vote carried 6-0 with Commissioner Narverud abstaining because she was not present when the first candidate was interviewed.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [6 TO 0]
MOVER:	John Allocco, Member, Hernando County
SECONDER:	Joe Meek, Alternate, City of Crystal River
AYES:	Meek, Allocco, Battista, Champion, Kinnard, McBride
ABSTAIN:	Narverud

CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE/INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Prior to the presentation, Commissioner Kinnard acknowledged Mr. Kimbrough, who was in the audience, as a supporter of the Suncoast Parkway terminating at US 19 in Red Level.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Master Plan - FDOT Presentation

April Combs from Florida Department of Transportation, Central Office, presented FDOT's Electric Vehicle Master Plan via ZOOM.

This project has been in development for some time, but it has been approved and released.. FDOT is required by statute to develop the Electric Vehicle master plan which is a recommended plan for infrastructure along the state highway system.

Ms. Combs stated there are 4 key elements: GIS gap analysis, electric grid impacts and providers, policy outreach and education projects and revenue strategies. She proceeded with the PowerPoint presentation and discussed the various components of the plan. She stated that the EV master plan is available online and encouraged the members to contact her with questions.

Mayor Meek thanked her for the presentation but did express concern regarding funding. Gas taxes are the revenue source for roadway infrastructure so without these taxes, he questioned how the EV plan would be funded.

Ms. Combs stated that the plan included modeling for the gas tax but indicated that there is still a lot of analysis that needs to occur.

Commissioner Allocco stated he was not comfortable spending tax dollars paid for by petroleum and using it to pay for roadways that EVs will use. It was his position they should pay their fair share. He did not support the local government providing free charging stations. He discussed the electricity supply issues in California. He commented that there is not enough electricity to support homes let alone EVs. He stated that 1/5 EV drivers have gone back to gas vehicles in CA. Adequate charging stations at residential homes is also challenging.

Commissioner Narverud said a lot of folks who paid gas taxes are converting to EV. She felt the government should not be paying for charging stations, but the push is on, and we need to be thinking about it.

Commissioner Champion opined that politics is driving the EV effort. He said it is an attack. Based on his research, it is not feasible to sustain EVs. He stated that less than 2% of the people in the world drive EVs. He was certain that if we get a new president in 2024, the focus on EVs will dissipate. He said the government is pushing Americans to drive EVs, he does not like politics driving this effort.

Mayor Meek asked the status of revenue options. Ms. Combs stated there is no solution at this time. Discussion will need to occur at the national level. Commissioner Kinnard asked Ms. Combs whether she was familiar with the state of Tennessee's fees for EVs. Ms. Combs indicated affirmatively; however, she pointed out differences between Tennessee and Florida. Tennessee has one utility provider where Florida has many. Also, Florida does have issues relating to evacuation routes which Tennessee does not. There are a lot more players involved in the Florida efforts so she anticipates that it may be more challenging.

Commissioner Allocco stated that if there a need for EV, he believes the private sector should step up to the plate. Charging stations could be installed by car dealerships or at gas stations.

RESULT: PRESENTED

Administrative Authority During Executive Director Vacancy

Ms. Riecse indicated that while the Executive Director position was vacant, administrative duties associated with the position still required action. Ms. Riecse stated that the MPO staff is requesting the Board grant her signature authority pending hiring a new director.

Mr. Allocco asked Michelle Posewitz, Hernando County Human Resources Director, to comment on the authorization. Ms. Posewitz stated it was prudent to designate a member of MPO staff with signature authority to ensure continuity of operations.

Chairman Kinnard opened to the public. There was no comment. Mr. Allocco made a motion to approve, it was seconded by Mr. Champion and carried 7-0.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Allocco, Member, Hernando County
SECONDER:	Steve Champion, Member, Hernando County
AYES:	Meek, Narverud, Allocco, Battista, Champion, Kinnard, McBride

MPO ACTION ITEMS

Crystal River/Turkey Oaks Bypass Study - Kimley Horn and Associates, Inc.

Ms. Riecse introduced the scope of services for the Crystal River/Turkey Oak Bypass study. The staff was requesting the MPO Board approve the scope for \$248,500 and authorize staff to issue notices to proceed as the funding becomes available.

Ken Frink, City of Crystal River, expressed his support for this project and thanked the MPO Board.

Commissioner Allocco questioned wording in the project scope, namely that the study would determine the suitability of using Crystal River/Turkey Oak Bypass. Mr. William Roll, Project Manager from Kimley Horn and Associates, addressed the question.

Mr. Roll stated there is legislative support for this type of project. There will be significant impacts on US 19 going through downtown Crystal River with the Suncoast Parkway. This project is intended to identify specific improvements and costs, it is more than a planning study, it is a mini PD&E. The goal is to have the project ready for design when funding is available. He stated this is not a "throw away" study, the vision is to make long term improvements that will continue to provide benefit after the extension of the Suncoast is completed. The term suitability was misleading. He indicated that cost of the project would be approximately 12-14 million dollars.

He also stated that there is a component of the project that will analyze impacts to other roadways.

Mayor Meek thanked Mr. Allocco for his questions and Mr. Roll for his explanation. Councilman McBride questioned the term "interim". Mr. Roll indicated ITS (intelligent transportation system) will be used once the parkway opens, that would include dynamic messaging.

Councilman McBride stated he supports the study but is in sticker shock regarding the cost. Mr. Roll clarified that this project includes coring samples of the pavement, and some extensive engineering analysis, it's not a planning level study.

Commissioner Allocco questioned ITS because of the advancements with technology and GPS systems. Mr. Roll countered by discussing his recent purchase of a new vehicle with a dynamic GPS system. The route the GPS gave him to get to this meeting was via I-4 which from experience, is a route he would avoid. He continued that the

purpose of the ITS is to get traffic out of the core. The technology will serve its' useful life and when the Suncoast Parkway is completed and open, replacement of the ITS can be addressed.

Commissioner Narverud mentioned that she sells vehicles and a lot of the older customers do not use the "infosystems" in the vehicles, they rely on signage.

Chairman Kinnard opened the item to public comment. There was no public wishing to speak.

Councilman McBride made a motion to approve the Crystal River/Turkey Oak Bypass Study Scope of Services as presented, Commissioner Narverud seconded, and the motion carried 7-0.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Cabot McBride, Member, City of Inverness
SECONDER:	Elizabeth Narverud, Member, Hernando County
AYES:	Meek, Narverud, Allocco, Battista, Champion, Kinnard, McBride

Citrus County Transit Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) -Tindale Oliver and Associates

Ms. Riecsc introduced the Citrus County Transit Operational (COA) scope of services for review and approval by the MPO Board. She reminded the MPO that the COA was incorporated into the UPWP during the update last spring. Staff is recommending that the MPO approve the scope of services to Tindale Oliver and Associates in the amount of \$86,987. The project will be phased as funding is available.

Mr. Kinnard asked for any board or public comment, there was none.

Commissioner Champion made a motion to approve the Citrus County Transit Comprehensive Operational Analysis scope of services as presented, Commissioner Narverud seconded, and the motion carried 7-0.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Steve Champion, Member, Hernando County
SECONDER:	Elizabeth Narverud, Member, Hernando County
AYES:	Meek, Narverud, Allocco, Battista, Champion, Kinnard, McBride

FY 2021-FY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment

Ms. Riecsc reported that the FY 2022 5305(d) grant allocation was received in the amount of \$87,211. An amendment to the UPWP was required to update the actual amount of the allocation, the UPWP approved in May estimated the grant amount. In addition, the funding application, Planning Transportation Grant Agreement (PTGA) with the addendum, and resolution granting the MPO Chairman authority to execute all of the required documents to reflect the allocation must be approved.

Chairman Kinnard opened the item to public comment. There was no public wishing to speak.

Councilman McBride made a motion to approve the UPWP Amendment as presented, and it was seconded by Mayor Meek. The motion carried 7-0.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Cabot McBride, Member, City of Inverness
SECONDER:	Joe Meek, Alternate, City of Crystal River
AYES:	Meek, Narverud, Allocco, Battista, Champion, Kinnard, McBride

FY 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) -Amendment

Ms. Riecse reported that the FY 2022-FY 2026 Transportation Improvement Program was also required to be amended to reflect the FY 2022 5305(d) allocation subject of the prior agenda item. The amendment requires a roll call vote.

Chairman Kinnard opened the item to public comment. There was no public wishing to speak.

Commissioner Champion made a motion to approve the TIP amendment as presented and it was seconded by Councilman McBride. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried 7-0.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Steve Champion, Member, Hernando County
SECONDER:	Cabot McBride, Member, City of Inverness
AYES:	Meek, Narverud, Allocco, Battista, Champion, Kinnard, McBride

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Appointment

Ms. Riecse indicated that Ms. Barbara Flora's term on the Citizens Advisory Committee is expiring in September 2021. Ms. Flora had applied to continue serving on the committee. Her new term would expire September 23, 2023.

Chairman Kinnard opened the item to public comment. There was no public wishing to speak.

Mr. Champion made a motion to approve the appointment, Mayor Meek seconded, and the motion passed 7-0.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Steve Champion, Member, Hernando County
SECONDER:	Joe Meek, Alternate, City of Crystal River
AYES:	Meek, Narverud, Allocco, Battista, Champion, Kinnard, McBride

Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) Appointment

Ms. Riecse indicated that staff is requesting the MPO Board appoint Ms. Holly Ferguson to be the alternate representative on the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board for Veteran's Services. Commissioner Allocco mentioned that the regular member serving in the role is Mr. Tony Graham.

Chairman Kinnard opened the item to public comment. There was no public wishing to speak.

Commissioner Allocco made a motion to approve the appointment, Councilman McBride seconded, and the motion carried 7-0.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Allocco, Member, Hernando County
SECONDER:	Cabot McBride, Member, City of Inverness
AYES:	Meek, Narverud, Allocco, Battista, Champion, Kinnard, McBride

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Chairman Kinnard opened the meeting up to public comment. No members of the public wished to address the Board.

BOARD COMMENTS

Commissioner Allocco indicated that as the Chairman of the Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB), he has added member presentations on the agenda. He stated it helps to make everyone aware of needs, services and responsibilities of other agencies and individuals on the Board. He suggested that the Chairman of the Citrus County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board use the same type of process.

He also mentioned that Hernando County TDLCB was challenged to ride the transit line and report back at the next meeting regarding their experience.

There were no other Board comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kinnard adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next regular meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization is scheduled for Thursday, November 18, 2021, beginning at 1:30 p.m. at the Lecanto Government Building, 3600 W. Sovereign Blvd., Room 166, Lecanto, FL.

The meeting agenda and back-up materials are available online at <http://hernandocountyfl.ig2.com/citizens> or at www.hernandocounty.us/mpo.